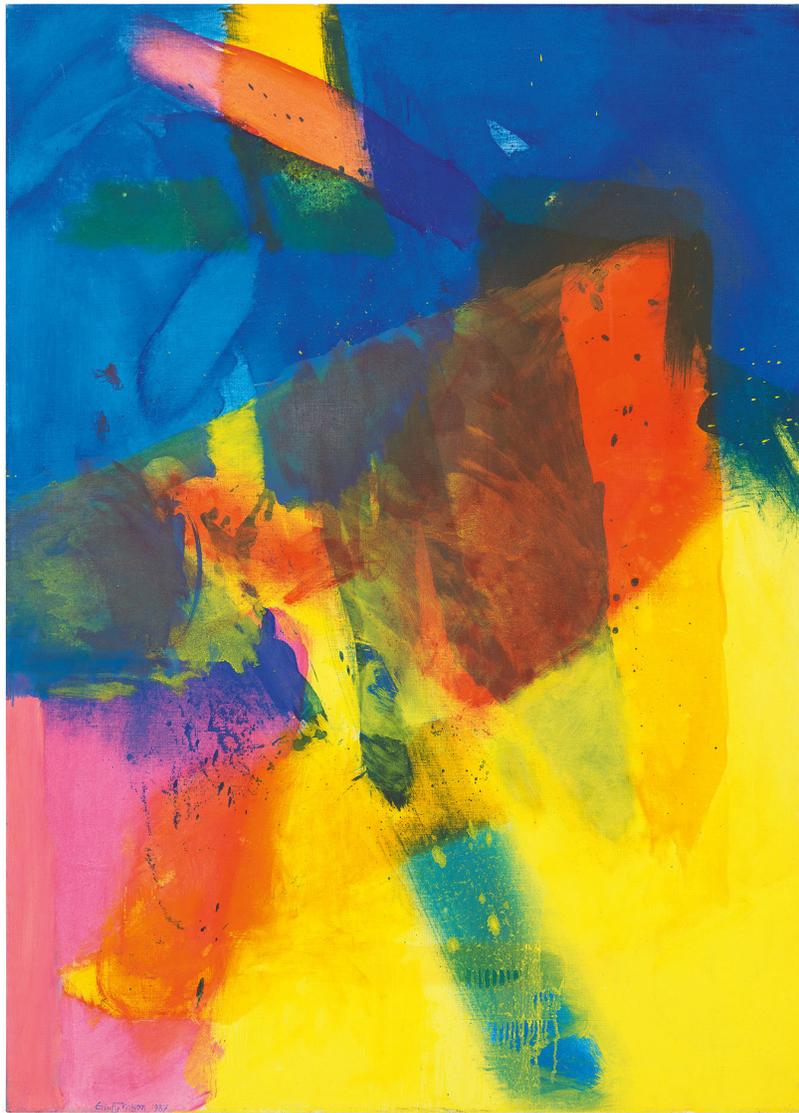


The New York Times

4 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Jack Pierson's assembled works; Marsha Pels's conceptual jewels; Gordon Hookey's takes on racism; and Emily Mason's exuberant abstract paintings.

27 January 2021



Emily Mason's *The Bullock Farm* (1987), in which an orange triangle crashes across a deep blue sky into yellow ground.
Credit: The Emily Mason and Alice Trumbull Mason Foundation and Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY

Emily Mason: Chelsea Paintings

Through 13 February

Miles McEnery Gallery, 520 West 21st Street, Manhattan; 212-445-0051; milesmcenery.com.

In 1979, the abstract painter Emily Mason quit a shared studio and took over an enormous loft on 20th Street in Chelsea. Mason, who died at the age of 87 in 2019, was the daughter of the great midcentury Abstract Expressionist Alice Trumbull Mason, and the painter she'd been sharing a studio with was her husband, Wolf Kahn. So it probably stands to reason that the canvases she produced in her own new space — 22 examples make up *Chelsea Paintings*, her first posthumous New York gallery show — were larger and more exuberant than the work she'd made before. (There's also a show of Klimt-like but fantasy-colored views of birch woods by Kahn, who died last year, at the gallery's other space.)

Her colors are so splashy, in fact, that I confess they put me off at first. Cascading tides of bright yellows and pinks can easily look garish, and so can the often raggedy edges between them. It takes a little while to get used to the volume and pick out the subtleties. But once you do, you find constructions as delicate and deceptive as spider silk.

The most successful of the paintings, or anyway my own favorite, is *The Bullock Farm*, 1987, in which an orange triangle crashes across a deep blue sky into yellow ground. The composition is balanced, but not exactly in harmony, and none of the overlaps are quite what they seem. As you try to get your bearings, the whole thing recedes like a desert mirage. — WILL HEINRICH