

“How I Began to Paint

Once in my life there was an extended period when my past occupation had ended and my future one not only had not yet begun, but was not even known. I did not realize then that in that gap everything was open to me. I felt rather lost but nonetheless I sought my new way with intensity, cultivating several paths simultaneously. And when creativity began to blossom in many areas of my life, I understood a little what finding your life through losing it means. Although it is true that to go on growing, the path has had to be renewed more than once, this description is about only that first conscious experience of the death of one way of seeing and the birth of a view which brought me closer to myself.”*

*Excerpt from “*Notes for an Autobiography (Part VII)*” in *Dorothy Iannone: Werke Von 1961–1966*, published on the occasion of the opening of Iannone’s exhibition of the same name at Petersen Galerie in April, 1989. Peres Projects is pleased to present early abstract works by Dorothy Iannone, shown together for the first time since their exhibition in West Berlin in 1989.

With these earlier paintings, created throughout the early 1960s during her time in America, Iannone commenced her exploration of vibrant color structures and intimate visual narratives. While these works have their roots in Abstract Expressionism, one can also observe early instances of her own style of figuration and textually grounded themes of erotica, mysticism, and liberated female sexuality – all of which would become central to Iannone’s oeuvre.

What is perhaps most captivating is the way in which these years provided an important time for Iannone to begin to play and express a freedom of spirit that became intrinsic to her visual language, ultimately beginning the path towards her encapsulating theme of ecstatic love.

“... Perhaps one could say that the spontaneous handling of paint which one no longer sees in my later paintings transmuted itself into the spontaneous songs sung over the years, the spontaneous recordings on cassettes, the spontaneous lectures here and there [...] – into the many forms in other words which arose out of that creativity which had begun pervading my life. Anyway it seems that from the beginning spontaneity itself was there waiting to be released.”*

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