

Kayne Griffin Corcoran is pleased to present a solo exhibition of paintings by Mary Obering, her first at the gallery.

For the last fifty years, Obering has painted geometric abstract compositions exploring the essence of color through the lens of reductivism.

The exhibition will include a series of early works from the 1970s in which she explored color and space by creating monochrome fields of color in acrylic on canvas. She then cut the canvases into horizontal and vertical panels that she attached, one on top of the other, onto a large-scale monochrome field. This idea of layering, of creating space with minimal two-dimensional color field relationships, can be thought of in the broader context of painting in New York at the time but also through the enduring influence of Josef Albers and his investigations of shape and color.

At the encouragement of Carl Andre, whom she met in Italy, Obering moved to a Soho loft in 1971. With the new availability of a bigger studio space, she was able to work on a larger-scale, laying the paintings on the floor and assembling the cut canvas panels forming geometric abstract arrangements. It was also her new found community of artist friends, such as Donald Judd, that encouraged this modular approach to abstraction. In a 1974 Artforum review of Obering's work at Artists Space, Roberta Smith writes of these paintings, "This physical construction is countered by a perspectival illusion which the placement of the pieces creates. Obering's muted color is reminiscent of Marden's and the work vaguely suggests a semi-abstract Classical landscape."

Continuing her color and spatial experimentation, a shift in her technique occurred in the mid-1970s. Obering moved away from canvas and began to employ the old master process of egg tempera, gold leaf on gessoed panel. With the rise in New York in the 1970s of multimedia, performance, and the broadening influence of conceptual art, painting seemed to be under siege. However, a group of New York painters were radically returning to traditional methods of application. The technical aspect of painting with these materials appealed to Obering's interest in scientific engagement, and she has subsequently employed these materials to explore scientific concepts such as particle physics and natural phenomena; a nod to her studies in the late 1950s.

Mary Obering was born in Shreveport, Louisiana. She received a BA in Experimental Psychology at Hollins College and her MA in Behavioral Science studying under B.F. Skinner at Harvard. In 1971 she received an MFA from the University of Denver. She has lived and worked in New York City since 1971. Obering's works have been included in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Artists Space, the Wadsworth Atheneum,

The Denver Art Museum and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art among others. Her works are in the permanent collections of institutions, among them; The Whitney Museum of American Art, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, The Detroit Institute of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Wadsworth Atheneum.

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