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WOMEN OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM AT THE RITA BLITT GALLERY

Topeka, Kan. – An exhibition of paintings and drawings curated from the Rita Blitt Legacy Collection presented with works by Elaine de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, and Joan Mitchell is on exhibit at the Mulvane Art Museum through February 2025. Abstract Expressionism came to the world’s attention in the mid-twentieth century in New York city where the New York School dominated. De Kooning, Frankenthaler, Krasner, and Mitchell were among a handful of women who were part of the first and second generation of women artists working at the center of the movement in the mid-twentieth century.

As scholars, art historians, and curators dig deeper into the traditional narrative of Abstract Expressionism, a more complex history is emerging. Far from New York City, mid-twentieth-century artists were contemplating post-war political and social environments. Conversant in abstraction, they explored and expressed their concerns in a new vocabulary of expressive gesture and color. Rita Blitt was one such artist working outside the mainstream.

The Mulvane holds more than two thousand works on paper, paintings, and sculptures created by Blitt over the past five decades. Altogether the works chart the iterative process of Blitt’s exploration of color, light, and movement through her sculptures and paintings as well as video. Beginning in the 1990s, Blitt embraced the expressionistic minimalism of line while

continuing to work in a variety of media. She has produced hundreds of paintings and drawings that serve as a bridge between Abstract Expressionism and contemporary abstract art.

The Mulvane Art Museum galleries are open to the public Tuesdays, 12-7pm; Wednesdays through Fridays, 12-5pm; and Saturdays, 12-4pm.



Rita Blitt, *Seeking Truth*, 1989, ink on paper

Seeking Truth is one of the earliest Abstract Expressionist paintings Blitt created. Subject matter is absent, and the wash of red and pink, interrupted by vigorous bold black strokes, enunciates a passionate and dynamic command of the vocabulary of expressionism.

(High resolution image of Seeking Truth available upon request).