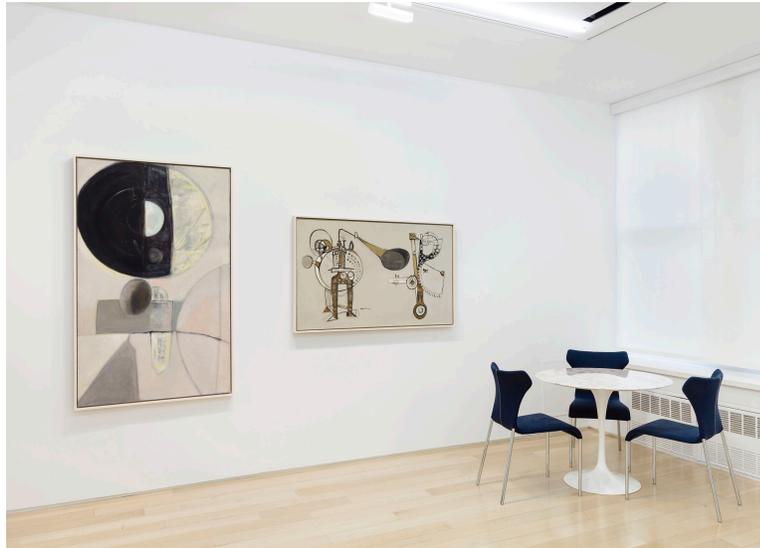


# VAN DOREN WAXTER



Left: Untitled, 1953, Oil on canvas, 60 x 36 in. (152 x 91 cm)  
Right: *Antro II*, 1949, Oil on canvas, 31 ½ x 51 in. (80 x 130 cm)  
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Van Doren Waxter is pleased to announce our representation of The Hedda Sterne Foundation. A special presentation of works by Hedda Sterne (1910-2011) will be exhibited in the gallery's Viewing Room beginning Thursday, April 2, 2015.

Most commonly associated with the first generation of the New York School, Sterne was famously the sole woman included in the 1951 *Life* magazine photograph of "The Irascibles," a portrait of prominent Abstract Expressionists who had all signed an open letter of protest to the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art who they felt was "hostile to advanced art." Sterne's diverse oeuvre defies classification; she herself felt it a *malentendu* to be considered an Abstract Expressionist, as she never considered herself part of any group and felt her independence showed in the continuous evolution and exploration of her work.

Hedda Sterne was born in Bucharest, Romania. Introduced to Surrealism by a close family friend, Romanian artist Victor Brauner, Sterne's work was at first most closely aligned with the Surrealist movement. Her collages were included in a group show in Paris in 1938 organized by Hans Arp, through whom Sterne was recommended to Peggy Guggenheim. Sterne's work was included in the pioneering exhibition *First Papers of Surrealism* in 1942 organized by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp in New York, where Sterne had been forced to flee from Europe in 1941. Settling in the United States, a place Sterne considered "more wildly Surrealist than what the wildest Surrealists imagined," Sterne became involved with the circle of artists with whom she is most often connected. She exhibited at Guggenheim's gallery, Art of This Century, and in a solo show at the Wakefield Gallery in 1943 organized by Betty Parsons. Three years later, Parsons opened her own gallery and became Sterne's long-time dealer and an early advocate of the great Abstract Expressionists.

# VAN DOREN WAXTER



Vertical Horizontal # 7 ½, 1963, Oil on canvas, 72 x 54 in. (183 x 137 cm)  
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Sterne drew inspiration from the motion, architecture and scale of her new home, New York. She began incorporating farm machinery into her work in the 1940's following a visit to Vermont with her husband and fellow artist Saul Steinberg. Sterne and Steinberg married in 1944 and separated in 1960 but never divorced. The construction sites and harbors of the city, however, continued to offer material for her *Machine series* in which Sterne anthropomorphized mechanical elements (*Antro II*, 1949 illus. above). By the 1950's, these works had evolved into a series about motion itself in which she sometimes employed the use of a commercial spray gun in order to better invoke a feeling of speed inspired by her travels on highways around the United States. In the 1960's, Sterne began a much quieter, meditative series, *Vertical Horizontals*, which invokes an expansive landscape, while simultaneously confining the horizontal reach of each painting within a vertical format (*Vertical Horizontal # 7 ½*, 1963 illus. above). Sterne consistently pushed away from familiar forms, taking her work into new directions, always influenced by her surroundings and perpetually in flux. While she has been grouped with the Abstract Expressionists, Sterne moved freely between figurative work and abstraction throughout her career. It was this independence and absence of a "signature style" that made her difficult to pin down in historical context and in relation to her peers.

Sterne's works are represented in the collections of The Art Institute of Chicago, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York and The Tate Modern, London. Retrospective exhibitions have been mounted at the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey in 1977 and *Uninterrupted Flux: Hedda Sterne, A Retrospective* at the Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2006.