

# VAN DOREN WAXTER

**Milton Resnick**

*Hawkeye*

November 3 – December 23, 2022

2nd & 3rd Floor Galleries



*Hawkeye 12*, 1972, acrylic on paper, mounted on linen, 50 x 38 inches

*"Paint is as much a thing of life, precious and important to me. I wait upon it as servant rather than master."* - Milton Resnick

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to announce *Milton Resnick: Hawkeye*—an exhibition of paintings and works on paper made by the artist (1927-2004) in the 1970s, on view at 23 East 73rd Street from November 3 to December 23, 2022. Organized with the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, the presentation includes a special loan of archival and historical material; a public program to take place at the gallery's uptown 1907 townhouse; and a fully illustrated exhibition catalogue with an essay by Klaus Ottmann, curator, writer, and chief curator emeritus of the Phillips Collection. A concurrent downtown presentation at the Foundation of work made by Resnick in the following decade, *Milton Resnick: 1980s*, further explores the artist's all out embrace of scale, density, and surface between the 1970s and 1980s.

The gallery exhibition includes nine canvases and five works on paper made by Resnick between 1972 and 1979. The year prior, 1971, the artist was the subject of a one person traveling museum exhibition organized by the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, during which the late director Henry Hopkins enthused of Resnick, "the method is an all-over frontal attack." Taking place across all floors of Van Doren Waxter and with a vitrine of biographical material that explores this period in his life and art practice, the presentation marks the first time works from the artist's subtly charged and geologic "Hawkeye" series (1972)—a period when his fascination with paint as a material intensified and he began making denser paintings and in a darker palette—have ever been shown together.

“Hawks are a symbol of power,” Ottmann writes in the show’s essay, and, “Resnick’s paintings of the 1970s have the power to devour: light, color, one’s self, and the world.” Ottmann, in his lyrical and scholarly text, adds a remark by Resnick that appeared years earlier in *ARTnews*, “What I like is a painting to act in many different directions at once, so strongly that it will shatter itself and open up a small crack, which will suck the world in.”



*Hawkeye 6*, 1972, Acrylic on paper, mounted on linen, 50 x 38 in

*Hawkeye 6* and *Hawkeye 15*, both 1972, are sublime and radiant acid green oils with yellow and blue brushstrokes with thickly layered crusts, while the creamy acrylic *Hawkeye 12* (1972) in darker, romantic hues has an absorbing, enveloping quality. The critic Robert Hughes declared that same year in *Time* that “light drifts slowly up through the paint and glows silently on the surface” of Resnick’s canvases and is “controlled by an iron will to form.” Reviewing the same show of work by the artist on view in New York, David L. Shirey writing in *The New York Times*, asserted that Resnick’s “large, loaded surfaces” are “forceful and original.”

The show includes an immensely scaled 1979 oil measuring six feet across from his “Elephant” (1979-1983) paintings, which Ottmann describes as “surfaces built up with thick impasto until they resemble an elephant’s hide, or appear fortified like protective armor.” The presentation also includes five vertical acrylic on paper sheets measuring three by two feet across in a myriad of earthy, romantic hues, recalling the late Linda L. Cathcart’s assertion that Resnick’s “vast canvases of color are evocative of the processes of change found in nature...the passages of color pull at one another and pierce one another, and the strokes form shapes tight and loose, open and closed.”

*Hawkeye* is Van Doren Waxter’s inaugural presentation of Milton Resnick since announcing exclusive representation in 2021. The artist, whose decades-long career was characterized by revolutions, departures, and an obsession with paint—“*paint*, that’s all I have”—is today celebrated for his later monumental paintings remarkable for their immensity and materiality. The Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, exhibits, publishes, and preserves his work in the artist’s former home and studio, [resnickpasslof.org](http://resnickpasslof.org).

### **Public program**

On Thursday, November 17 at 5:30 p.m., join Klaus Ottmann, curator, writer, and chief curator emeritus of the Phillips Collection and Geoffrey Dorfman, painter, Milton Resnick biographer, and a trustee of the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, at the gallery’s 23 East 73rd townhouse for a discussion about the artist.

**About the artist**

Milton Resnick was born in Ukraine in 1917, and immigrated to New York City with his family in 1923. He grew up in the Lower East Side and entered the American Artists School in 1933. In the 1930s he was on the WPA artist project, and met Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, John Graham and other downtown artists. In 1940 Resnick was drafted and served in the U.S. Army through all of World War II. After returning to New York in September 1945, Resnick immediately began painting abstractions thereby cementing his historical position as a member of the first generation of American Abstract Expressionists. He was a founding member of the Artists' Club of the 1950s.

Over his long career, Resnick painted "through" classic Abstract Expressionist action painting, to arrive at works that gave the impression of all-over monochromatic fields, although in fact comprised of myriad hues. Through the 1970s and 1980s his paint application became increasingly dense, and his palette generally darkened, resulting in canvases of subtle, almost topographical presence. In the last years of his life, Resnick turned his painterly touch to visionary figure paintings alternating darkness with humor. He died in 2004.

For more, the artist's biography can be found [here](#).

**Gallery Information**

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