

Teruko Yokoi

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Floor 1

Press Release

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Marlborough New York is pleased to present an exhibition on the Japanese-born Swiss painter, Teruko Yokoi. The exhibition will also mark the artist's first ever solo presentation in New York and the first exhibition since the artist's passing in 2020.

Teruko Yokoi's story is one of courage and tenacity. She arrived in the United States of America as an outsider and persevered through barriers of race and gender. Yokoi was born in 1924 in Tsushima City, near Nagoya, Aichi, Japan, and from a young age was exposed to a variety of different artistic influences. The daughter of a calligraphist and poet, Yokoi began taking painting lessons, and in 1949, relocated to Tokyo to become a student of the renowned painter Takanori Kinoshita. Yokoi received a scholarship to attend the California School of Fine Arts (later renamed San Francisco Art Institute), where she was one of two Japanese students entrenched in a milieu of artists and writers.

In 1955, Yokoi moved to New York, where she enrolled in the art classes instructed by the Abstract Expressionist Hans Hofmann. In 1957, Yokoi met Sam Francis, whom she married and lived with briefly in the Chelsea Hotel. It was during this time that Yokoi met Kenzo Okada, an Abstract Expressionist Japanese-born painter working in America, who moved from Tokyo to New York in 1950. In 1960, the artist moved to Paris, where she was invited by David Anderson to participate in a group exhibition at the storied Martha Jackson Gallery in New York. It was in Paris where she would also meet Arnold Rüdinger, a meeting that would lead to her first major museum exhibition in Basel at the Kunsthalle in 1964. In 1962, the artist permanently relocated to Bern, Switzerland, where she would remain until her death in 2020.

Formally, Yokoi's work combines elements of American modern abstraction with traditional elements of Japanese figuration and poetry. Her earliest abstract works created during her time in San Francisco evoke a distinctly metropolitan, modern sensibility. After her move to New York, Yokoi grew increasingly concerned with the use of color, producing works that put varying colors in direct conversation with one another. Beginning in 1958, a shift took place in Yokoi's work, resulting in a dramatization of composition, surface treatment, and choice of color. The fields of color allude to the natural environment, yet, in keeping with the traditional style of Japanese landscape painting, remain flat enough to evoke a Greenbergian late-modernist approach as exemplified in Abstract Expressionism.



Shizen - Natur, 1960
oil on canvas
57¼ × 44¾ in. / 145.1 × 113.3 cm

The exhibition will present a full survey of the artist's work and will highlight a wide range of Yokoi's output. Spanning over eighty years, works on view will range from paintings, to drawings, to watercolors, to gouaches. A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by writer and curator Anke Kempkes will be available for purchase at the time of the exhibition.

Teruko Yokoi has held over ninety exhibitions including the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco; Martha Jackson Gallery, New York; and Galerie Kornfeld, Bern. In 2020, the Kunstmuseum in Bern presented her last major retrospective entitled *Teruko Yokoi. Tokyo—New York—Paris—Bern*.

Marlborough

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