



Denver Art Museum Selects Anna Walinska's 1956 Landscape For Permanent Collection of Women Abstract Expressionists

DAM Continues to Shine a Spotlight on Talented Women of the Abstract Expressionist Movement, Highlighting Anna Walinska Alongside Artists Including Joan Mitchell, Grace Hartigan, and Jay DeFeo.

New York, NY | January 25, 2017



The Denver Museum of Art (DAM), which has been seeking to grow its collection of abstract art by women following the groundbreaking 2016 exhibition *Women of Abstract Expressionism*, has recently acquired Anna Walinska's *Landscape, 1956*, a casein painting on heavy paper.

Like many artists featured in the collection, Walinska's work was overshadowed by her more celebrated male peers. In many ways a woman and an artist ahead of her time, Walinska (1906-1997) studied in Paris in the 1920s, opened her own New York Gallery in the 1930s, and traveled around the world in the 1950s. Throughout her career, she created more than 2,000 works on canvas and paper.

Walinska's *Landscape* was first shown publicly in 1959 at the Baltimore Museum of Art, where she was the only woman featured in a group exhibit that included Fernando Botero, Ellsworth Kelly and Wilfredo Lam. It was the painting that appeared on the invitation to the opening reception for that show. Most recently, *Landscape* was showcased in a 2015 retrospective exhibition of Walinska's *Abstractions from the Fifties & Sixties* at Lawrence Fine Art in Easthampton, NY.

Gwen Chanzit, DAM's curator of modern art, calls *Landscape*, "an extraordinary example of Walinska's work." Elaborating that it, "is a very personal, freely worked response by an individual. Rather than painting in a realistic mode, where every blade of grass would be depicted with precision, Walinska painted her own abstract response to place. It is beautifully executed with fluid, delicate rendering."

Chanzit notes the work reminds her, "of the freedom of expression we see in some much-celebrated artists, such as Arshile Gorky." In fact, Anna Walinska championed Gorky and actually gave him his first solo show in New York at her Guild Art Gallery in 1935.

Adding this piece to the collection which includes works by Elaine DeKooning, Joan Mitchell, Betty Parsons, among others, moves forward Chanzit's mission to establish the Denver Art Museum as, "the place where future curators and art lovers will go to explore the art of abstract expressionist women."

Rosina Rubin, Walinska's niece and the conservator of her impressive body of work, met with Chanzit after visiting DAM's *Women of Abstract Expressionism* show over the summer to discuss the possibility of adding Walinska's work to the collection. Rubin agreed with the choice of *Landscape* for the museum. (*continued*)



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"I had a feeling this would be Gwen's choice. Aside from it being a wonderful painting, its history speaks to Gwen's mission of demonstrating that the women were right there with the men in the early days of the Abstract Expressionist movement," explains Rubin. "This is an important work by Walinska that shows her place in the canon of abstract art, and I'm happy to see it find a home in an important collection."

Landscape is on view at the Denver Art Museum through August 6, 2017.

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About Anna Walinska

Anna Walinska's life and art spans the century of American modernism, paralleling the history of the New York school and the American Jewish experience. Known for her exhilarating joie de vivre, the irrepressible adventuress was born in London in 1906, moved to New York with her family in 1914, and by 1918 (at the young age of 12) had begun her education at the Art Students League.

Walinska created more than 2,000 works on canvas and works on paper over nine decades, with significant influences coming from her extended stays in Paris and Burma. Her body of work also includes several hundred works on the theme of the Holocaust and a series inspired by the 17th century Japanese erotic Shunga prints, which she began at the age of 76. Her work is found in numerous public and private collections in the U.S. and abroad. Since her death in 1997, her work has been showcased in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad.

Her work, Walinska wrote, "sought to convey the spirit of a search without boundaries."