

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****Ethel Schwabacher: The Early Sixties* | March 13 - April 12, 2025 | Opens at Berry Campbell**

**February 20, 2025, New York, NY**—Berry Campbell is pleased to present its second exhibition of works by Ethel Schwabacher (1903-1984). *Ethel Schwabacher: The Early Sixties* features a selection of paintings and works on paper, offering a focused exploration of Schwabacher's artistic production during this pivotal period. Several years ago, Schwabacher joined the gallery's roster of women artists whose ambitious, independent, and insightful art is essential to a complete historical understanding of the downtown New York art scene from the late 1940s to 1980s.

The gallery's first exhibition of Ethel Schwabacher's work in 2023 featured paintings from the 1950s. This exhibition highlights Schwabacher's works from the early 1960s, a transformative period for the artist in which she transitioned from gestural abstraction to more nuanced exploration of color. This marks a significant evolution in her artistic practice. Many of the works featured have not been on view since they were shown at her 1962 exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, including the large-scale center piece to the show entitled, *Longnook III* (1960). *Ethel Schwabacher: The Early Sixties* focuses on Schwabacher's unique brand of abstraction, which is characterized by sweeping broad brushstrokes, but enhanced with a newfound emphasis on bold, bright colors.

Patricia L. Lewy, writes: "The works on view in the exhibition at the Berry Campbell Gallery, New York, in the spring of 2025 mark an exceptional moment in Schwabacher's artistic formation, one as distinct from her earlier Abstract Expressionist paintings as they are from her later figurative narratives based on myth and epic poetry. Yet whether working with gesture, geometry, or narration, Schwabacher sought to express her exquisite sensitivity to color and color forms in a visual language that would convert psychic pain—the piercing anguish of personal loss, abandonment, and betrayal—into images of calm, stability, awe, and sheer joy."

As part of the resurgence of women artists, Ethel Schwabacher was one of the twelve artists included in the landmark traveling exhibition *Women of Abstract Expressionism* organized by the Denver Art Museum in 2016. She was recently included in *Action, Gesture, Paint*, at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, that traveled to the Van Gogh Foundation in Arles, France, and the Kunsthalle, Bielefeld, Germany. Berry Campbell also presented a solo presentation of Ethel Schwabacher at Frieze Masters London in the Spotlight section curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver, the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Berry Campbell's exhibition is accompanied by a 32-page fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Patricia L. Lewy, Ph.D., Director, Friedel Dzubas Estate Archives. *Ethel Schwabacher: The Early Sixties* opens with a reception on Thursday, March 13, 2025, 6 - 8 pm and continues through April 12, 2025.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm or by appointment. For further information please call at 212.924.2178 or visit our website at [www.berrycampbell.com](http://www.berrycampbell.com). Press inquiries should be made to Laurel Megalli, Sutton Communications at [laurel@suttoncomms.com](mailto:laurel@suttoncomms.com) or 212.202.3402.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Ethel Schwabacher (1903-1984) was at the center of the New York art world from the 1940s through the 1970s. She was represented by Betty Parsons Gallery, the leading showcase for the avant-garde,

where she had five solo exhibitions and was in fourteen group shows. Her friends and acquaintances included leading artists of the era. In addition to painting, she was a skilled writer and published her first book, in 1957, on the life and work of her friend and mentor Arshile Gorky. Her authentic and interpretive account emphasized how Gorky's Surrealist method, stressing a "freedom from the purely conscious," was of foundational significance to the Abstract Expressionist movement. She also wrote extensively on the nature of art and on the work of other artists, including the painter John Charles Ford (1929 - 2014). Schwabacher was featured in Whitney Museum annuals almost every year between 1949 and 1963. Committed to the Civil Rights movement, she actively opposed segregation in the 1950s and 1960s and expressed the battle for a just humanity as a mythic and epic event in her art. In 1987, a traveling retrospective of her work was organized by the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University. It was curated by the art history professors Greta Berman (Juilliard School) and Mona Hadler (Brooklyn College, City University of New York), both of whom contributed to the show's catalogue. Schwabacher's daughter Brenda S. Webster and the poet Judith Emlyn Johnson were the co-editors of a volume containing excerpts from the journal she kept from 1967 to 1980, *Hungry for Light*, published in 1993 by Indiana University Press. Belonging to the first generation of Abstract Expressionist women artists, Schwabacher achieved recognition and respect in the New York art world for both her work and her intellect.

Schwabacher's works belong to numerous museum collections including the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Denver Art Museum, Colorado; the Jewish Museum, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota; the Mint Museum, North Carolina; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Yale University Art Gallery, Connecticut.

## **ABOUT THE GALLERY**

Christine Berry and Martha Campbell founded Berry Campbell in 2013. Now housed in a custom-built, 9,000 square-foot location on one of Chelsea's most prestigious blocks, Berry Campbell has cemented its position among New York City galleries as a champion of artists historically marginalized due to gender, race, age, and geography.

Central to Berry and Campbell's collective vision is a blend of scholarly dedication and enduring desire to honor their artists' lives and work. Focusing on a selection of postwar and contemporary artists, the gallery addresses a critical gap in art history. Notably, since its inception, Berry Campbell has elevated the profiles of postwar Abstract Expressionist women like Bernice Bing, Lynne Drexler, Perle Fine, Judith Godwin, Ethel Schwabacher, and Yvonne Thomas, presented alongside a growing roster of contemporary talents such as Nanette Carter and Beverly McIver, to name a few.

Berry Campbell's signature ability to construct new narratives for artists lost to art history has caught the attention of the wider art world, with participation in renowned fairs like Art Basel and Frieze and artist placement within prestigious institutions worldwide. Situated at 524 W 26th Street, the gallery's current location boasts 4,500 square feet of exhibition space, including a skylit main gallery, four smaller galleries, private viewing areas, a library, and extensive on-site storage.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday 10 am to 6 pm or by appointment. For further information, visit the gallery's [website](#) and follow on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

# BERRY CAMPBELL

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