

CHARLOTTE PARK (1918-2010)

Like many women of the Abstract Expressionist movement, Charlotte Park's (1918-2010) important contributions have only recently been acknowledged. Park was a steadfast and passionate artist for almost eighty years, but it was not until a 2010 exhibition that Charlotte Park's paintings and works on paper began to receive a flurry of critical praise. Writing in the *New York Times* just before Park died in late 2010, Roberta Smith called Park "a natural painter and a gifted colorist" who "is as good as several of the artists – both men and women – in the Museum of Modern Art's current tribute to the movement." Overshadowed by the attention given to the work of her husband, James Brooks, Park kept a low profile over the course of her career while painting some of the strongest and most brilliantly colored canvases of her time. As Robert Pincus-Witten wrote about her in *Artforum* in 2011, "The case of Charlotte Park is exemplary; hers was a major gift all but stifled by a happily embraced domesticity and by the critical bullying of a brutally doctrinaire art world." Her art is a strong argument against the idea prevalent from the 1950s onward that women were incapable of the muscularity and confidence necessary to be action painters.

Born in Concord, Massachusetts, Park studied from 1935 to 1939 at the Yale School of Fine Art. She met James Brooks while working at the Office of Strategic Services in Washington, D.C. during World War II. The two moved to New York City in 1945, where Park studied privately with the Australian artist Wallace Harrison. Brooks and Park soon became part of the circle of Jackson Pollock and his wife Lee Krasner. They rented a studio space that had been occupied by Pollock and joined Pollock and Krasner, along with other young artists working in new styles, in establishing studios on Long Island. They stayed first in Montauk, but after their studio was destroyed by a hurricane in 1954, they moved to a cottage in Springs, East Hampton, which became their full-time residence.

Park initially worked in a monochrome palette, which liberated her to focus on form. By the mid-1950s, she reintroduced color into her art, evolving a lyrical style, in which suggestions of the natural world appeared to pulsate with organic life. By the middle of the decade, she was producing larger canvases with complex compositions and charged relationships of color. She did not shy away from strong contrasts and bold, forthright shapes. Uniting painting and drawing, she formed a vocabulary featuring clustered loops, black curvilinear forms that both define and liberate, and tensed and sensual anatomical suggestions. Figurative elements seem to taunt and loom in her art but are either suppressed or diffused. In the late 1950s, Park explored collage concurrently with her contemporaries Krasner and Conrad Marca-Relli. For these works, she drew passages of color from her earlier paintings, setting them into new contexts. Later in life, Park was drawn to Piet-Mondrian's Neo-plasticism and created open compositions that conveyed permanence and infinity.

In the 1950s, Park exhibited her work broadly. She participated in her first group exhibition in 1952 at the Peridot Gallery, New York. In 1953, her work was included in the Whitney Museum of American Art's painting annual and at Tanager Gallery's annual exhibition. From 1954 to 1958 she exhibited in the Stable Gallery's annual show, a continuation of the 1951 *Ninth Street Show*. Her first solo show was at Tanager Gallery in 1957. In deference to her husband, however, she began to withdraw from the art world in the 1960s, a

position many women artists took during this time. Charlotte Park did not exhibit her work publicly again until 1973 when a solo show of her art was held at The Elaine Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton, New York. In the twenty years that followed, she was included in numerous exhibitions on Long Island and in New York City. She was also represented in *Seventeen Abstract Artists of East Hampton: The Pollock Years, 1946-1956*, held in 1979 at the American Cultural Center of the United States Embassy in Paris. In 2003, Park's art was featured, along with that of Dan Christensen and Allan Wexler in the exhibition, *Three East End Artists*, held at the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill. In 2013, the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center held a solo exhibition of her work. In 2016, her work was featured in the exhibition catalogue for *Women of Abstract Expressionism* at the Denver Art Museum. Currently her work is included in *Action/Gesture/Paint*, which began at the Whitechapel Gallery, London and is currently at the Van Gogh foundation, Arles, France.

In addition to solo and group shows at Berry Campbell, New York, Park's paintings have been included in a number of museum and gallery exhibitions in recent years, including Setareh Gallery, Düsseldorf, Germany (2018-2019); Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina (2019); Kasmin Gallery, New York (2019); Art Student's League, New York (2019); and Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York (2021), among many others. Park's work is included in the collections of American University, Washington D.C.; Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina; Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York; Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Telfair Museums, Savannah, Georgia; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

CV

1918 Born, Concord, Massachusetts

1935-39 Yale School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut

2010 Died, East Hampton, New York

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Tanager Gallery, New York, 1957.

The Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York, 1973.

The Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York, 1976.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, 1979.

Ingber Gallery, New York, 1980.

Louise Jimelfarb Gallery, (along with James Brooks), Water Mill, New York, 1981.

Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, *3 East End Artists*, 2002-3.

Spanierman Gallery, East Hampton, New York, 2006.

Spanierman Gallery, New York, 2008.

Spanierman Gallery, New York, 2010.

Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, New York, 2013.

Berry Campbell, New York, *Charlotte Park (1918-2010)*, 2016.

Berry Campbell, New York, *Charlotte Park: Works on Paper from the 1950s*, 2022.

Berry Campbell, New York, *Charlotte Park: Gathering*, 2023.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Peridot Gallery, New York, *Invitational Show*, 1952.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Painting Annual*, 1953.

Tanager Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1953.

Tanager Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1954.

Stable Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1954.

Hampton Gallery and Workshop, Amagansett, New York, 1954.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *15 Artists of the Region*, 1954.

Tanager Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1955.

Stable Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1955.

Watkins Gallery of the American University, Washington D.C., 1955.

Tanager Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1956.

Stable Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1956.

Camino Gallery, New York, *June Salon—120 Sculptors, Painters*, 1956.

Stable Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1957.

Signa Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *A Review of the Season*, 1957.

Abstract American Painters, New York, *Invitational*, 1957.

Signa Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Third Exhibition*, 1957.

Signa Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *8 Painters*, 1957.

Stable Gallery, New York, *Annual Show*, 1958.

James Gallery, New York, *Invitational Annual*, 1960.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Festival of the Arts*, 1960-61.

Gallery North, Setauket, New York, *Seven East Hampton Artists*, 1965.

Alonzo Gallery, New York, *His and Hers*, 1969.

Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, *The Summer Place*, 1970.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Interaction of Color*, 1972.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Young Collectors Gallery*, 1970-73.

Upstairs Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Group Show*, 1974.

Landmark Gallery, New York, *18 Artists*, 1974.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York and Sotheby's Park, Bernet, New York, *Artists of the Hamptons, Paintings, Sculpture, Auction Exhibitions*, 1975.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Artists of the Region*, 1976.

Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Points of View*, 1977.

The Laundry, East Hampton, New York, *Three Person Show*, 1978.

The Laundry, East Hampton, New York, *Women at the Laundry*, 1979.

American Cultural Center of the U.S. Embassy, Paris, France, *The Pollock Years, 1946-1956*, 1979.

Zabriskie Gallery, New York, *Seventeen Abstract Artists of East Hampton, The Pollock Years, 1946-56*, 1980.

The Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York, *Then and Now: Part 11*, 1984.
Bologna/Landi Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *The Hampton Scene: Then and Now*, 1984.
383 West Broadway, New York, *5 Artists*, 1984.
Artviews, East Hampton, New York, *Celebration: East End Artists*, 1985.
Ingber Gallery, New York, *Survival of the Fittest*, 1985.
Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *East Hampton Star 100th Anniversary Portfolio*, 1985.
Arbitrage Gallery, New York, *Hampton Artists*, 1985.
Fine Arts Museum of Long Island, Hempstead, New York, 1985.
Benton Gallery, Southampton, New York, *Opening Show*, 1986.
Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York, *East Hampton Avant Garde—A Salute to the Signa Gallery 1957-1960*, 1990.
Elston Fine Arts, New York, *The New York School—Works on Paper 1950s–1960s*, 1991.
Sidney Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College, New York, *Paths to Discovery, The New York School Works on Paper from the 1950s & 1960s*, curated by Ellen Russotto, 1992.
Renee Fotouhi Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Twentieth Century Prints of the East End*, 1992.
Stuart Levy Gallery, New York, *American Vanguard—Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner & Friends*, 1992.
Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, New York, *Intimates & Confidants in Art: Husbands, Wives, Lovers & Friends*, 1994.
Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, *Women of the Fifties*, 1995.
Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *A Matter of Synthesis: Collage & Assemblage*, 1995.
Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *The Reach of Abstraction*, 1995.
Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Artists of The Springs Invitational Exhibit*, 1995.
Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Abstraction: The Subjective Impulse*, 1996.
Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, *Abstract Paintings and Sculpture Part 11*, 1996.
Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Affairs of The Heart*, 1997.
Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Artists of The Springs Invitational Exhibit*, 1997.
Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Wall to Wall*, 1997.
Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, *The Centennial Open*, 1998.
The Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York, *Old Friends*, 1998.
Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Artists of the Springs Invitational Exhibit*, 1998.
Katharina Rich Perlow Gallery, New York, *A Winter Group of Artist Couples*, 1998.
Artsentry, Sarasota, Florida, *In Context: An Intimate View; Syd Solomon & His Circle of Friends*, 1998.
Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Artists of the Springs Invitational Exhibit*, 2002.
Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, *Women of the 50s*, 2002.
Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, *Charlotte Park: Work from the Fifties*, 2002.
Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, *Three East End Artists*, 2002-3.
Spanierman Gallery, New York, *Hot and Cool Abstractions: 1940s to the Present*, 2009.
Spanierman Gallery, New York, *Gallery Selections*, 2010
Spanierman Gallery, New York, *Abstract Expressionism and Its Legacy*, 2011
Spanierman Gallery, New York, *Gallery Selections*, 2012

Spanierman Gallery, New York, *Abstract Strength*, 2012
McCormick Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, *Her Work*, 2015.
Berry Campbell, New York, *Summer Selections*, 2015.
Quidley & Company, Nantucket, Massachusetts, *Savage Nature: The Importance of Place in Early American Modernism*, 2016.
Berry Campbell, New York, *Summer Selections*, 2017
Eric Firestone Gallery, East Hampton, New York, *Montauk Highway: Postwar Abstraction in the Hamptons*, 2017.
Berry Campbell, New York, *Summer Selections*, 2018.
Setareh Gallery, Düsseldorf, Germany, *A Gesture of Conviction: Women of Abstract Expressionism*, 2018-2019.
Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, *A Life With Art: Gifts from Dwight and Sue Emanuelson*, 2019.
Kasmin Gallery, New York, *Painters of the East End*, 2019.
Berry Campbell, New York, *Summer Selections*, 2019.
Art Students League, New York, *Postwar Women*, curated by William Corwin, 2019.
Berry Campbell, New York, *Women of Abstract Expressionism*, 2020. [online exhibition]
Berry Campbell, New York, *Artist's Choice: Interconnected*, 2020. [online exhibition]
Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, *Affinities for Abstraction: Women Artists on Eastern Long Island, 1950–2020*, 2021.
Ashawagh Hall, East Hampton, New York, *Community*, 2022. (Organized by Berry Campbell)
Whitechapel Gallery, London, *Action/Gesture/Paint: A Global Story of the Women of Abstraction 1940 – 1970*, 2023.
Southampton Arts Center, New York, *Heroines of the Abstract Expressionist Era: From the New York School to The Hamptons*, 2023.
Berry Campbell, New York, *Perseverance*, 2024.
Long Island Museum, Stony Brook, New York, *The Power of Two: Artists Couples of Long Island*, 2024.
Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, New York, *Seeing Red: From Renoir to Warhol*, 2024.

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

American University, Washington D.C.
Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina
Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York
Femmes Artistes Musée Mougins, France
Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York
Telfair Museums, Savannah, Georgia
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut