



PRETTY RAW:

After and Around Helen Frankenthaler

February 11-June 7, 2015

Organized by the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University

Curator: Katy Siegel, Curator at Large, Rose Art Museum

Pretty Raw interweaves Helen Frankenthaler's work and that of related artists in the 1950s and 1960s with broader artistic effects we might gather under her name.

The stage is set in the second generation of the New York School, with figures including Frankenthaler, Grace Hartigan, Frank O'Hara and others in the Tibor de Nagy Gallery — artists and writers who matched the experimentalism of Abstract Expressionism with a light spirit and references to everyday feelings and experiences. These artists located personal freedom within a seemingly impersonal abstraction, expanding the expressive possibilities of a formalist mode.

Working outwards from this moment, the exhibition/book traces several related phenomena: the artistic innovations of poured paint and stained raw canvas; the social implications of decoration; authorial control vs. materiality; the body and painting; and the image of the woman painter and related questions of gender and identity. The later sections of the show embrace the intersection of feminism and painting, in easel paintings, large-scale works and performances by feminist artists in the 1970s and early 90s. Women assert their right to make assertive "pure" painting, and, conversely, men embrace embodied materiality and decorative motifs. As we approach the present moment, when abstraction is enjoying a wild flowering, *Pretty Raw* seeks to reveal the sensibility, social implications, and physical beauty of this history.

Selected artists: Helen Frankenthaler, Grace Hartigan, Al Leslie, Morris Louis, Jules Olitski, Sam Gilliam, Friedl Dzubas, Frank Bowling, Ralph Humphrey, Miriam Schapiro, Lynda Benglis, Harmony Hammond, Andy Warhol, Christopher Wool, David Hammons, Polly Apfelbaum, Marilyn Minter, Ross Bleckner, Laura Owens, Mary Weatherford, Sterling Ruby, Carroll Dunham, Jacqueline Humphries.