

Modernists of the Southwest

Addison Rowe Gallery highlights Northern New Mexico modernism in its summer exhibition

Through July 7

Addison Rowe Gallery

229 E. Marcy Street

Santa Fe, NM 87501

t: (505) 982-1533

www.addisonrowe.com

Summer is a time for galleries to show their greatest hits, the breadth of their collections and interesting themes. Addison Rowe Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has been in the advance guard of reviving interest in American modernism, and will show works by modernists who lived and worked in the Southwest.

The gallery notes, “Over the past few years the gallery has acquired several artists’ estates. Included among these are the estates of Raymond Jonson, Florence Miller Pierce and William Lumpkins, who were all members of the Transcendental Painting Group.” It will display works by these artists and others in the exhibition, *Gallery Highlights 2017*, through July 7.

Pierce (1918–2007) was the youngest member and only one of two women in the Transcendental Painting Group. Jonson (1891–1982) and Emil Bisttram (1895–1976) founded the group in 1938 “to carry painting beyond the appearance of the physical world, through new concepts of space, color, light and design.”

In 1969, Miller spilled resin on a sheet of aluminum and was fascinated by how it was translucent, sitting above the shiny metal surface. She then began experimenting with resin on mirrors capturing shifting, ethereal light emanating from behind their minimalist surface. She experimented with the technique for the rest of her life.

Jonson was first influenced by the modern art he saw in the *Armory Show* when it made its Chicago appearance in 1913. Later, the philosophy and paintings of Wassily Kandinsky and the teachings of the Theosophists had a great impact.

Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891) was a cofounder of the Theosophical Society in 1875. She wrote, “The INFINITE

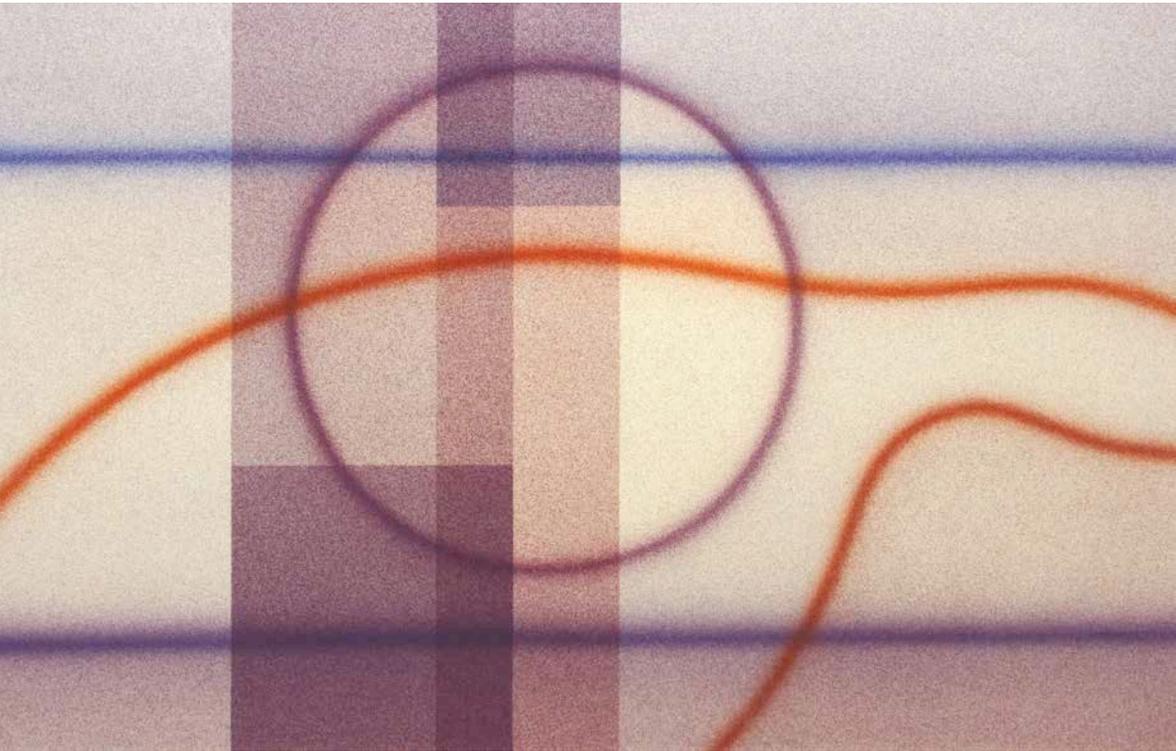


Raymond Jonson (1891–1982), *Watercolor No. 9, Sequence - A Trilogy Vista Two*, 1948. Watercolor on paper, 35 x 22 in., signed and dated bottom center.



William Lumpkins (1909-2000), *Early Snow*, 1970. Watercolor on paper, 16¼ x 22¼ in., signed and dated lower right.





Raymond Jonson (1891-1982), *Watercolor No. 34*, 1944. Watercolor on board, 22 x 35 in., signed and dated lower right.

cannot be known to our reason, which can only distinguish and define—but we can always conceive the abstract idea thereof, thanks to that faculty higher than our reason—intuition, or the spiritual instinct...”

Discovering the airbrush in the '30s and his later use of acrylic paint allowed Jonson the freedom to explore and to express aspects of spirituality he had not been free to do before.

Lumpkins (1909-2000) was a Renaissance man, building over 2,000 buildings in Santa Fe and pioneering in passive solar design. As a watercolorist, he was also a pioneer, working in abstract expressionism before it caught fire in the east. He said, “Architecture is discipline—painting is freedom. I need both.”

Lumpkins was one of the few early modernists who was actually born in New Mexico, with the light and the landscape bred in his bones. He was



Florence Miller Pierce (1918-2007), *Untitled #370*. Resin relief, 16 x 16 in.



Florence Miller Pierce (1918-2007), *Untitled*, 1970.
Sumi ink on rice paper, 39 x 29 in.

influenced by Peter Hurd, Cady Wells and Andrew Dasburg and inspired by an exhibition of John Marin's New Mexico watercolors in Taos.

"Marin's paintings were leaning against the wall and as I glanced at them, I was totally mystified," he wrote. "I guess one problem was that I was looking at them upside down, I found out that didn't matter. It worked either way. They were wonderful."

Gallery Highlights 2017 is an excellent opportunity to see work by the greats of Northern New Mexico modernism, often overshadowed by their peers on both coasts, but now receiving the recognition they deserve. ■

William Lumpkins (1909-2000), *Untitled (0148)*, 1961.
Watercolor on paper, 11 x 14 in., signed and dated lower right.

