

TIBOR DE NAGY

11 Rivington St New York NY 10002 212 262 5050 info@tibordenagy.com

Nell Blaine

Interiors and Flowers
paintings and watercolors, 1961 to 1990

March 20 to April 24, 2021



Nell Blaine *Red Candles and Four Bouquets*, 1978 oil on canvas 26 x 30 inches (66 x 76.2 cm)

Tibor de Nagy Gallery is pleased to present **Nell Blaine** – *Interiors and Flowers, 1961 – 1990*, an exhibition of paintings and watercolors.

By the early 1960s, Nell Blaine's best known painting subjects were her table top still lifes and flowers. These complex and colorful paintings were the culmination of her decades of practice and experimentation and became her signature style. A typical interior painting depicted a room with chairs, table, flowers, sketches tacked on the wall, an open book, in front of a window, opening onto a landscape or harbor view that act as a painting within a painting. This geometric structure allowed her to hold

together a diversity of irregular shapes; once she created a grid, the flowers enabled a free play of an active painterly brushwork. Blaine initially established herself as an abstract painter, but she gradually returned to representational painting through the decade of the 1950s. Of this fusion of approaches she said, "I was always trying to find the natural and honest way, looking to be more direct and clearer, with less artifice. However, I never really left abstraction; the sense of organization and the way of putting a picture together come from the abstract days. I can approach nature with confidence because of that."

This body of work is especially notable since all the works in the exhibition were made in the decades after she recovered from polio which she had contracted in 1959 while traveling in Greece. After becoming seriously ill on the island of Mykonos, she returned to the US and spent months in an iron lung and then years recuperating to regain mobility in her legs and arms. She could no longer lift her right arm to paint on an easel, so she had to learn how to paint using her left hand and work from a wheelchair. After surgery, she still could work in watercolor with her right hand because it could be done on a lateral surface. Blaine, always the life of the party, had a wide circle of friends who helped her through that time. The condition, more importantly, never lessened her passion for painting, and she continued to paint and travel as vigorously as she had before

Nell Blaine arrived in New York City in 1942 to study with Hans Hofmann. Her first gallery exhibition was at the Jane Street Gallery in 1945, the first serious artist cooperative dedicated to Modern Art. It was there that she showed and won early acclaim for her hard-edged abstract paintings. She began showing at Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1953 and collaborated with Kenneth Koch in one of the gallery's first poet/artist editioned projects. She became an influential member of the second-generation New York School. She has long been associated with a group of representational painters including Larry Rivers, Jane Freilicher, Louisa Matthiasdottir, Leland Bell, Al Kresch, and Robert de Niro, Sr.

Nell Blaine has been the subject of over seventy-five museum and gallery exhibitions throughout the United States. She was recently included in the group exhibition *(Nothing But) Flowers* at Karma, New York. Her work is in the public collections of many museums including, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Museum of Modern Art. A monograph, *Nell Blaine, her art and life*, was published in 1998 with an essay by the artist's friend, art critic Martica Sawin.

Upcoming exhibitions:

assume vivid astro focus | May 2021