

Surrounded by Forms: Abstract Scenes from the Johnson Collection

TJC Gallery

January 18, 2023 – April 8, 2023

Traditional landscape art presents viewers with mostly recognizable images, from sweeping mountain vistas to lush meadows, tangled marshes, urban panoramas, and pastoral countryside. Whether familiar or foreign, actual or imagined, such picturesque scenes allow artists to communicate all manner of spiritual allegory and agrarian nostalgia. By contrast, the modernist painters featured in this exhibition bring to their scenes the techniques and perspectives of abstraction.

The Latin root of 'abstract' means to draw back or pull away, which in painting can take the form of distorting a perspective or blurring individual details. But abstraction also allows artists to “pull away” from traditional landscapes in more radical ways, such as the celestial standpoint of [Lamar Dodd's *Planet View*](#). In some cases, abstraction can enhance a scene's recognizability by highlighting some essential character or contour in broader strokes. For example, abstraction helps capture the dense and refracted atmosphere of [Corrie McCallum's *Rainy Night*](#). In other cases, however, abstract artists were happy to fully sacrifice their subject on the altar of sheer line and color. The storm in [Balcomb Greene's *Thunder Over the Sea*](#), for instance, is transfigured into a clash of jagged shapes and cool tones. And many scenes, such as [David Driskell's *Masked Forest*](#), have become so totally abstracted as to be unrecognizable without looking to their accompanying title. In all cases, abstraction challenges us to reconsider what counts as a landscape and to reflect on the forms that surround us.

Featured artists include [David Appleman](#), [Chevis Clark](#), [Joe Cox](#), [Lamar Dodd](#), [David Driskell](#), [Balcomb Greene](#), [Peter Grippe](#), [Lee Hall](#), [William Halsey](#), [Gregory Ivy](#), [Gina Knee](#), [Edmund Lewandowski](#), [Edith London](#), [Corrie McCallum](#), [Henry Pearson](#), [Arthur Rose](#), [Brian Rutenberg](#), [Merton Simpson](#), [Theodoros Stamos](#), [Will Stevens](#), [Maltby Sykes](#), [Howard Thomas](#), and [Eugene Thomason](#)