



Exhibitions at
PAAM

The Radiance of Color

The Paintings of Sam Feinstein

CURATED BY DR. BARBARA WOLANIN
ON VIEW JUNE 21 - SEPTEMBER 2, 2024
IN THE HOFMANN GALLERY

Sam Feinstein's powerful gestural abstractions are composed of pure colors placed to interact with each other and to guide the viewer's eye. His goal was to evoke expressive movement and the radiance of light. His vision was nurtured while painting during twelve summers in Provincetown. He came here in 1949 to study with Hans Hofmann, becoming his friend and collaborator and participating in the art community. Later he painted and taught on Cape Cod in the summer and in New York, Philadelphia, and other locations for the rest of his long life.

During the 1950s, Feinstein exhibited his paintings in Provincetown, New York, and Philadelphia. He served on juries for the Provincetown Art Association and wrote about art exhibitions in Provincetown, New York, and Philadelphia for Art Digest magazine. He worked with Hofmann to create the first documentary film about his teacher's art and philosophy. He organized forums and exhibitions in Philadelphia to nurture the understanding and appreciation of abstract art.

This is a rare opportunity to enjoy the masterful paintings Sam Feinstein created to convey the spiritual essence of life, for he stopped exhibiting or selling his work by 1960. Consequently, he got left out of the history of the Abstract Expressionist movement he was a part of. He gave titles only to paintings he exhibited before 1959 or in his last show in 1986, leaving many of the canvases seen here untitled, identified by catalog numbers. He did not sign or date most of his paintings, staying free to work on them for years, some over decades.

Feinstein remained dedicated to intuitive and expressive gestural abstraction and to creating the sensation of radiance with color, building on the principles and convictions he had espoused in Provincetown.

This exhibition was made possible by the Samuel L. Feinstein Trust.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Samuel L. Feinstein (1915–2003) was born in Ukraine, then part of Russia, emigrating with his family after the Russian Revolution. He lived in Philadelphia from age seven, drawn to making art as a boy. He graduated from the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Arts, winning early prizes and recognition.

He worked in commercial art and advertising and headed the art department in a private school until serving in the military during World War II. Training gained while serving led to work in animation and filmmaking, until he realized he wanted to paint and that he could earn his living by teaching.

An articulate and inspiring teacher, Feinstein was a philosopher of art and an artist with words as well as pigment. Late in life, he summarized his purpose as a painter and the essence of his art:

"In painting I try to get energy and spirit across through a sense of radiance... Painting is simply working with units of color to make forms emerge that will express the essential spirituality of all life."

Feinstein created the paintings in this exhibition over decades of research into the "units of color" that he applied, often with a palette knife, stroke by stroke to evoke radiance. They do not depict objects or scenes but rather convey feelings experienced in nature and from human life. His paintings are best appreciated by sustained looking.

ARTWORK LIST

Unless indicated, all works are from the collection of the Samuel L. Feinstein Trust.

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| 1. Untitled cat. 123 (Harbor), 1947 (signed and dated on verso)
Casein and pastel on paper, 18" x 24" | 13. <i>Ascension</i> , cat. 45, 1970s
Acrylic on canvas, 53" x 44.5" |
| 2. Untitled cat. 168, c. 1949
Watercolor and ink on paper, 18" x 24"
PAAM Collection, Gift from the Estate of Ruth Hiebert, 2004 | 14. <i>Opposing Elements</i> , cat. 47, early 1980s
Acrylic on canvas, 81" x 33" |
| 3. Untitled cat. 110 (Harbor), 1947
Casein and pastel on paper, 20" x 26" | 15. <i>The Cry</i> , cat. 39, early 1980s
Acrylic on canvas, 79" x 65" |
| 4. Untitled cat. 454, 1955
Watercolor and pastel on paper, 19" x 24" | 16. Untitled cat. 344, 1990s–2002
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 71 ½ inches |
| 5. <i>Pieta I</i> , cat. 65, 1950s
Oil on canvas, 50" x 40" | 17. <i>Resurrection</i> , cat. 41, early 1980s
Acrylic on canvas, 75.5" x 66.5" |
| 6. Untitled cat. 366, 1953
Oil on Bristol, 26" x 20" | 18. Untitled cat. 18, 1990s–2002
Acrylic on canvas, 55" x 65" |
| 7. Untitled cat. 499, early 1950s
Casein and pastel on paper, 20" x 26" | 19. <i>Nightscape</i> , cat. 33, 1980
Acrylic on canvas, 52" x 40" |
| 8. Untitled cat. 373, 1951
Oil on Bristol, 26" x 20" | 20. Untitled cat. 607, late 1950s
Oil on canvas, 82" x 72" |
| 9. Untitled cat. 518, early 1950s
Casein and pastel on paper, 22" x 28" | 21. Untitled cat. 591, late 1950s
Oil on canvas, 48" x 36" |
| 10. <i>Crucifixion</i> (also called <i>Requiem</i>), cat. 20, 1990s
Acrylic on canvas, 77" x 84" | 22. <i>Starry Night</i> , cat. 162, 1970s–1980s
Acrylic on canvas, 45" x 86" |
| 11. Untitled cat. 187, 1950s
Oil on canvas, 48" x 36"
PAAM Collection, Gift of the Samuel L. Feinstein Trust, 2019 | |
| 12. Untitled cat. 72, 1990s
Acrylic on canvas, 83" x 94.5" | |

Note: Sam Feinstein rarely titled, signed, or dated his paintings. Works with titles are those he gave when he exhibited them before 1960 or in 1986. He signed and dated some works many years later. Catalogue numbers (cat.) provided for the mostly untitled paintings are those assigned by Patricia Stark Feinstein for the catalog raisonné. Estimated dates by decades are based on her personal knowledge and research.