

Deborah Remington

“Deborah Remington: Abstract Artist, Dies at 79”

by Roberta Smith, *The New York Times*, May 18, 2010

The New York Times

Deborah Remington, Abstract Artist, Dies at 79

By ROBERTA SMITH

MAY 18, 2010

Deborah Remington, a New York painter who countered the accepted trends of her time by incorporating a sense of real light and space into her abstract images, died April 21 in Moorestown, N.J. She was 79 and had homes in New York and Chester County, Pa.



Deborah Remington when she was a young student at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute).

The cause was cancer, her cousin Craig Remington said.

Ms. Remington's work is represented in many museums throughout the United States and Europe and was the subject of a 20-year survey at the Newport Harbor Art Museum in California in 1985.

In the late 1960s and '70s, when Ms. Remington was starting out, abstract painting was supposed to be as object-like as possible. Illusions of light and space were considered obsolete.

But Ms. Remington — a first cousin twice removed of the Western artist [Frederic Remington](#) — painted as painters had since the Renaissance and embraced illusion as the *raison d'être* of painting, abstract or not.

Her surfaces were smooth and tight, devoid of signs of the hand. Her palette — almost as fixed as Mondrian's — emphasized shades of gray and silver heightened by undiluted fields of red, blue and green. Her images centered on reflective shards and metallic fragments that suggested bits of space crafts, car bodies, shields or mirrors. They usually floated before a void of infinite, glowing space, like signs from another dimension that were trying to tell us something.

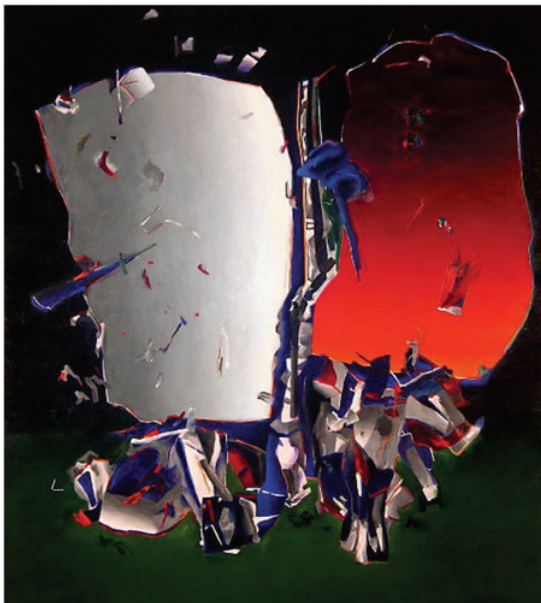
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Although she always listed her birth year as 1935, Ms. Remington was born in 1930 in Haddonfield, N.J. She decided early on to be an artist and enrolled in the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art. She earned a B.F.A. in 1955 from the San Francisco Art Institute, where she studied with [Clyfford Still](#).

By then she belonged to the Bay Area’s burgeoning Beat scene. She was one of six painters and poets — and the only woman — who in 1954 founded the Six Gallery. It was there, on Oct. 7, 1955, that Allen Ginsberg first read his incendiary poem “Howl” in public.



Deborah Remington's "Encounters" from 2007. Credit Courtesy of Estate of Deborah Remington

After art school Ms. Remington went to Japan, where she studied calligraphy while working as a cook, a translator and an actress of bit parts on television and in B-grade movies. Returning to San Francisco, she had three solo shows at the Dilexi Gallery and one at the San Francisco Museum of Art, exhibiting works full of Abstract Expressionist splintering and angst. In 1965 she moved to New York, by which time she was streamlining her surfaces and forms.

She made her New York debut in 1967 at the Bykert Gallery, the premier New York gallery for new art at the time. She had three more solo shows there before it closed in 1975.

Ms. Remington taught at the Cooper Union from 1973 to 1997 and at New York University from 1994 to 1999; her solo gallery shows in New York were intermittent. The last two were at the Jack Shainman Gallery in 1986 and the Mitchell Alpus Gallery in 2001.

At the moment, her work can be seen in an exhibition at the San Antonio Museum of Art titled “Psychedelic: Optical and Visionary Art Since the ’60s.”

No immediate family members survive.

Correction: May 29, 2010

An obituary on May 21 about the abstract painter Deborah Remington misstated her relation to the Western artist Frederic Remington. She was his first cousin twice removed, not his grandniece.

A version of this article appears in print on May 21, 2010, on page B10 of the New York edition with the headline: Deborah Remington, 79, Painter of Abstract Images.