

TIBOR DE NAGY GALLERY

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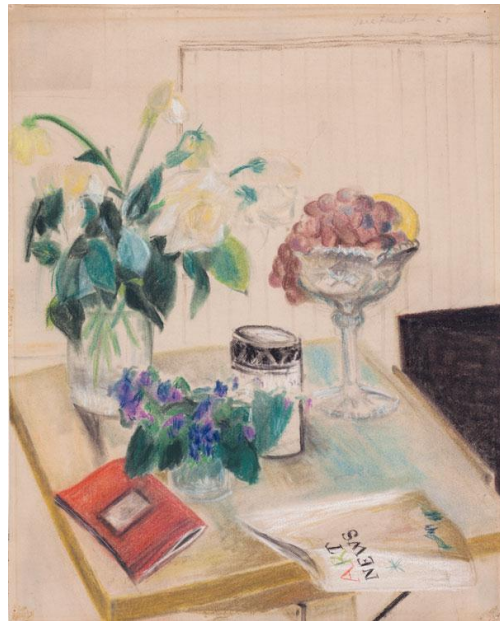
Jane Freilicher

By Ali Pechman

This exhibition, “Painter Among Poets,” gathered letters, books, manuscripts, and films together with Jane Freilicher’s paintings and works on paper to illuminate the subtle yet vital role the New York School poets played in her life and work.

The accompanying catalogue includes original manuscript pages, many letters to and from the artist, and an introduction by Freilicher’s friend, poet John Ashbery, who pinpoints the painter’s central place in the close-knit constellation of artists and writers.

In the pastel work *Untitled (Still Life with Copy of ARTnews)*, ca. 1963, domestic objects sit lightly on a table, set against a peach-beige background; the magazine, where many of the Freilicher’s friends wrote and worked, hangs precariously off the table. Punctuating the show were the artist’s signature flower works, their bouquets sometimes soft and plush, other times crisp. And there were the portraits of Ashbery, James Schuyler, and Frank O’Hara, among others. *Jimmy Schuyler* (1965) traces the poet’s pink and rounded jowls, floating against a plain off-white background, much as her flowers do in the still lifes.



Jane Freilicher, *Untitled (Still Life with Copy of ARTnews)*, ca. 1963, pastel on paper, 23" x 18". Tibor de Nagy.

In grander canvases, such as the 1963 *Cover Crop*, a lime-green meadow, blurred and vibrating, is intercepted by calligraphic strokes of rust and gray; houses materialize out of the mass; and the canvas is caught between painterly realism and abstraction. Freilicher further toys with abstraction in paintings marked by blotted, wet, water-stained colors that call to mind the fields and dunes surrounding her Long Island studio.

Music drifted into the galleries from a back room that showed mostly later works, including two films by Rudy Burckhardt featuring Freilicher—one with a jazzy Duke Ellington score, the other with Frank O’Hara on the piano. The poetry and elusiveness of her work is beautifully captured by Bill Berkson in the excellent catalogue, where he muses on “how the vase of jonquils felt to be on the window sill in that day’s light.”

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