



ELIZABETH DWORKIN



*Help*, 2021, oil on board, 38 x 42 inches

# ELIZABETH DWORKIN

*Paint*

September 28 - November 4, 2023

Wednesday - Saturday 11 - 5 pm

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“[Dworkin’s] paintings look more thought out than organic, more sinewy than luxurious, as if limits were drawn and duties assigned before the paint was let loose. The results are compositions in which the range of textures-slippery here, sandy there, often a combination of both-works with the vocabulary of quirky forms-pinched tubular shapes and jammed volumetric triangles-to suggest landscapes exactly animated by their own disciplined working through.”

“As a colorist Dworkin is often brilliant, always odd.”

-Holland Cotter

“Elizabeth Dworkin at Victoria Munroe.”

*Art in America*, November 1986.



*Memory*, 2022, oil on board, 36 x 30 inches



*Close Orange*, 2023, oil on canvas, 30 x 48 inches



*Second White*, 2022, oil on board, 30 x 36 inches



*Fen*, 2023, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches



*Tracks in the Snow*, 2022, oil on board, 24 x 18 inches



*Cavern*, 2022, oil on board, 30 x 36 inches



*Strike*, 2020, oil on board, 12 x 12 inches



*Circuit Board*, 2015, oil on board, 9 x 12 inches



*Marching*, 2021, oil on board, 24 x 24 inches

“Her subject is, first and foremost, painting.”

Stephen Westfall  
1986 exhibition catalog essay



*Wait*, 2021, oil on board, 24 x 30 inches





*Ode to Charles*, 2020, oil on board, 24 x 18 inches



*Tiny*, 2019, oil on board, 10 x 10 inches



*Pond*, 2023, oil on board, 18 x 24 inches

Featuring recent oil paintings on canvas and on board, this exhibition highlights the unique compositional strategies Elizabeth Dworkin invents with her swift gestural brushstroke and strident palette.

Born in Rochester, NY, Elizabeth Dworkin graduated from Cornell University with a B.F.A. in 1965. She moved to Boston where she showed at the Nielsen Gallery for two decades and helped found the Boston Visual Artists Union which called for public institutions within Boston to exhibit and collect contemporary art. In 1979, Dworkin moved to New York City into her Lower East Side loft where she still resides and maintains her studio.

The move to New York had a profound impact on her paintings. As a reflection of the density of her new city, her abstracted forms, previously given negative space to breathe on the canvas, became layered rectangles of jumbled color suggesting urban skylines. The movement in her energetic brushwork and singular palette became signature characteristics of her ambitious canvases in the 1980s and 1990s and continue to set her apart as an abstract painter of distinction. As in *Cavern*, 2022 and *Memory*, 2022, patches of oil paint seem to have landed on the substrate and could be called to leave at any moment. Adding to the action in her compositions, many paintings feature graphic allusions to stairs, pathways, zigzags, sharpened triangles, and crenelated motifs, inviting the viewer to move through her spaces.

Two paintings in this exhibition, *Wait*, 2021 and *Help*, 2021, feature Dworkin's handprint, a motif she uses repeatedly to say, "Stop, the viewer and artist are here."

In a November 1986 review for *Art in America*, Holland Cotter described the colors in Dworkin's paintings as, "often brilliant, always odd." Continuing in that vein, Dworkin weaves unusual color combinations throughout her canvases. Rich rust reds contrast with muted grays and off-whites, pinks wash with striking yellows and moss greens, and triangles of lilac anchor multiple canvases. In these paintings, she employs her hallmark black, used confidently as outline and fill, never swallowing the compositions even in the heaviest uses.

For years Dworkin has maintained a residence in the Northern Catskills where she draws inspiration from her views of the untouched landscape. Some of the rigid structures are softened by the evidence of nature. This is evident in her most recent painting, *Pond*, 2023; thinned paints are softened and wrapped around each other with no use of her signature black framings, the way a pond and the surrounding foliage bleed into each other.

Viewers frequently try to ascribe meaning to shapes in Dworkin's paintings. A firm believer in the power of abstraction, she does not confirm what the viewer sees in her compositions. Instead, she views her abstractions as opportunities to feel, to remember, and to wonder.

## ELIZABETH DWORKIN

Lives and works in New York City. She received her BFA from Cornell University in 1965.

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023	Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY	1980	Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
2019	Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY		Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY
1994	Amherst College, Amherst, MA		
1991	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY	1978	Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
1988	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY		Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC
1987	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY	1976	Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
1986	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY	1974	Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA
1984	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY		
1983	Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA	1970	Loeb Drama Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
1982	55 Mercer St. Gallery, New York, NY		

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018	"Paintings and Works on Paper," Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY
1997	"Three Artists," The Painting Center, New York, NY
	"X-Section," Marymount Manhattan College, New York, NY
1994	"Color Shaped," E. S. Vandam Gallery, New York, NY
	"Painters Painting," The Painting Center, New York, NY
1993	"Still Images/Moving Pictures," David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, RI
	"Structure," Lillian Heidenberg Gallery, New York, NY
	Invitational, David Beitzel Gallery, New York, NY
	"Insight/ Incite/ Insite," Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA
	"Drawings," Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY
1991	"Urban Icons," Klarfeld-Perry Gallery, New York, NY
	"Art on Paper," Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, NC
1990	"The Legacy of the Abstract Expressionists," Gallery at Hastings-on-Hudson, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY
1989	"Art of the Eighties-From the Collection of Chemical Bank," Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ
	"Life Forces: Nature in Abstraction," Lintas Worldwide, New York, NY
1988	"Columnar," Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY
	"Collector's Choice," Center for the Arts, Vero Beach, FL



1986	"A Contemporary View of Nature," Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT
	"Black and White Prevails," South Campus, Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, FL
	"Expressionism in Boston: 1945-1985," DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA
	"50 Works: Selections from the EF Hutton Collection, Metropolitan Museum and Art Center, Coral Gables, FL
1985	"Messages from 1985," Light Gallery, New York, NY
1984	"Form, Color, Surface," Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston, MA
1982	Painting Invitational, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
	Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH
	"The Graham Gund Collection," Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
1981	Invitational, Touchstone Gallery, New York, NY
	Invitational, Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, MA
1980	University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH
	Invitational, Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, MA

- 1979 Invitational, Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, MA  
 1978 Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA  
 Invitational, Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, MA  
 1977 Invitational, Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, MA  
 1976 Invitational, Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, MA  
 1975 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA  
 1973 Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA  
 1972 Boston Visual Artists Union, Boston, MA, Founding Member  
 1970 "Drawing Reconsidered," Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA  
 "The Boston Band," Parker 470 Gallery, Boston, MA  
 1969 "Boston Now," Inaugural Exhibition, Boston City Hall, Boston, MA

#### SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA  
 Borden, Inc., New York, NY  
 Chemical Bank, New York, NY  
 DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA  
 E.F. Hutton Co., New York, NY  
 Graham Gund Collection, Boston, MA  
 Hospital Corporation of America, Nashville, TN  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA  
 Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, MA  
 Perkins Coie Inc., Seattle, WA  
 Prudential Insurance Co., Nashville, TN  
 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA  
 Stephen Paine Collection, Boston, MA  
 Sunrise Museum, Charleston, WV  
 Wellington Management Co., Boston, MA

#### SELECTED GRANTS, AWARDS, COMMISSIONS

- 1980 Massachusetts Council on the Arts  
 1975 Massachusetts Council on the Arts

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allara, Pamela. "Boston: Shedding Its Inferiority Complex," *ARTnews* November 1979.  
 Baker, Kenneth. "Is There Painting With a Capital P?," *Boston Phoenix* June 1978.  
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 Baker, Kenneth. "Trust the Picture, Not the Painter," *Boston Phoenix* December 1974.  
 Brenson, Michael. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *The New York Times* May 1986.  
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 Carrier, David. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *Arts* September 1984.  
 Chandler, John. "Drawing Reconsidered," *Artscanada* October 1970.  
 Chandler, John. "Collaboration: A Boston Issue," *The Art Gallery Magazine* June 1969.  
 Cohen, Ronny. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *Artforum* January 1989.  
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 Cotter, Holland. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *Art in America* November 1986.  
 Denton, Monroe. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *Tema Celeste* May-June 1991.  
 Joselit, David. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *Art New England*, May 1980.  
 Larson, Kay. "The Flowering of Boston Art," *ARTnews* February 1975.  
 Matlock, David. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *ARTnews* January 1989.  
 Neely, Anne. "Art of Planes and Spaces," *Patriot Ledger* April 1975.  
 Neely, Anne. "Liz Dworkin: Intimations of Place," *Patriot Ledger* December 1974.  
 Stapen, Nancy. "Elusive Moments Captured in Paint," *Boston Globe* April 22, 1993.  
 Taylor, Robert. "Dworkin Not Boxed by Square," *Boston Globe* May 1978.  
 Taylor, Robert. "Contrasting Statements in Visual Language," *Boston Globe* April 1975.  
 Tuttmann, Kathe. "Elizabeth Dworkin," *New Boston Review* Spring 1976.  
 Zimmer, William. "Abstract Expressionism: Carrying the Torch," *The New York Times* October 7, 1990.

Photography: Jenny Gorman  
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