

Media Alert



Installation view, *Brooklyn Abstraction: Four Artists, Four Walls*, Brooklyn Museum, on view August 12, 2022–August 6, 2023. (Photo: Danny Perez, Brooklyn Museum)

Brooklyn Abstraction: Four Artists, Four Walls

On view in the Museum's Beaux-Arts Court

This exhibition of works by Maya Hayuk, José Parlá, Kennedy Yanko, and the late Leon Polk Smith—four artists with strong connections to Brooklyn—transforms the iconic architecture of the Museum's Beaux-Arts Court through four distinct, visually immersive installations. Each of these artists, three working in the borough today and the fourth with an important connection to the Brooklyn Museum as the site of his career retrospective, explore approaches to abstraction in distinctive and personal ways. *Brooklyn Abstraction* includes newly created, monumental works by Hayuk, Parlá, and Yanko, as well as a grouping of the Museum's considerable collection of paintings by Smith, which inspired the installation.

With a diverse practice as a muralist, painter, photographer, gallery founder, and member of several artist collectives, Ukrainian American artist **Maya Hayuk** (born 1969) has worked internationally to bring vibrancy and movement to urban and exhibition spaces. Drawing inspiration from her Ukrainian American heritage, immediate surroundings, popular culture, and the current geopolitical climate, Hayuk's paintings often confront the paradoxes of harmony and dissonance, optimism and hopelessness. Her new work, *Frontline Flashpoints Facing East, Ukraine*, 2022, expresses abstracted physical and psychological landscapes of the front line of the war in Ukraine, simulating the flash points of explosions intersecting with the hope of sunrise.

In his immersive, monumental compositions, **José Parlá** (born 1973) layers and scrapes paint to obscure, reveal, and abstract both text and narrative. The textured gestural skies, interwoven with a unique code of writing, reveal new horizons with a universal line. Parlá's abstracted texts visually recall underground mycelium formations, complex and mysterious fungi communication networks that connect everything on the earth through a web of life. The five newly created paintings on view draw upon his youth as a Cuban American in Miami

in the 1980s, his world travels, his almost fatal battle with COVID-19 in 2021, and his survival and recovery.

Based in Bushwick, Brooklyn, **Kennedy Yanko** (born 1988) uses scavenged metals from discarded vehicles and shipping containers to create vibrant, large-scale sculptural paintings. She incorporates “paint skins,” or thin sheets of poured paint, to produce works that question and obscure the boundaries of painting and sculpture. By deploying her materials in ways that explore the limitations of optic vision, she underlines opportunities we miss when looking with our eyes alone. Her methods reflect a dual Abstract Expressionist–Surrealist approach, centering the seen and unseen factors that impact, contribute to, and moderate the human experience.

The Museum held a major retrospective of **Leon Polk Smith** (1906–1996) in 1995 and became the beneficiary of eighteen significant works after the artist’s death, nine of which are on display in this presentation. Known for his spare geometric canvases, often featuring only two sharply delineated colors, Smith is considered a leader of the “hard-edge” Minimalist style of painting. Through a limited palette, simple forms, and flat painted surfaces, Smith produced tension, synergy, and refinement in his paintings.

Brooklyn Abstraction: Four Artists, Four Walls is organized by Catherine Futter, Director of Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator, Decorative Arts, and Erika Umali, Assistant Curator, Collections, Brooklyn Museum.

Presented by Dior