

# Amaranth Ehrenhalt

A Hidden Treasure



Anita Shapolsky Gallery  
AS Art Foundation

# AMARANTH EHRENHALT

“A Hidden Treasure”

October 22, 2011 - January 31, 2012

Cover: Jump In and Move Around, 1962, oil on canvas, 59 x 77 in  
Back cover: Carmona, 1957, oil on canvas, 40 x 40 in

Curated by Anita Shapolsky. Photo and catalog Petra Valentova, Shania Naderipour and artist's archive.

ANITA SHAPOLSKY GALLERY  
152 East 65th Street, New York, NY, 10065  
[www.anitashapolskygallery.com](http://www.anitashapolskygallery.com)



Anita's Dance, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 52 x 18 in

### **Amaranth Roslyn Ehrenhalt**

Amaranth Ehrenhalt was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1928 and was raised in Philadelphia, PA. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts on scholarship and also studied at the Barnes Foundation. She moved to New York City in the early 50's and was friends with Al Held, Ronald Bladen and Willem de Kooning, among others. On the eve of her departure to Paris she had a drink with de Kooning at the legendary Cedar Tavern. He asked to have dinner with her when she returned—but it never happened because she remained in Paris. She is a member of the second generation of abstract artists that burst on the scene in the 1950's, but she was working in Paris, with the strength of color and energy of the New York School abstractionists.

Many of the New York School artists were living in Paris during the late '40s and early '50s (on the G.I bill). Amaranth met, socialized and exhibited with many of these artists such as Seymour Boardman, Sam Francis, Shirley Jaffe, and Joan Mitchell. She also knew many European artists such as Alberto Giacometti, Yves Klein, and Sonia Delaunay. Delaunay became Amaranth's patron, and helped support her during her early years by allowing her to purchase art supplies on Delaunay's account because she thought she was very talented and had a bright future.

Amaranth Ehrenhalt walked into the Anita Shapolsky Gallery in 1989 and exclaimed, "I know these artists!" (who were formally with the Martha Jackson Gallery and with her in Paris after World War II). I began showing her that same year in group exhibitions where her work stood out among other abstract masters. Her work was shown internationally since the '50s, but her home base was Paris. She moved back to New York in 2008 and I was able to see her entire *oeuvre*. She is the most multi-talented woman artist that I have ever encountered, producing paintings, sculpture, mosaics, ceramics, watercolors, tapestries, scarves, prints, poetry and writing. Her counter-part would be Picasso, in terms of the amount of creative output and variety.

She is still working, relying on color, line and gesture to produce expressive works filled with dynamic, interactive, bold strokes. Each painting is a complete inseparable creation. Her passion and originality are evident in these powerful works which we are displaying. Words play an important part: the painting's titles often refer to memories. Ehrenhalt immerses herself in the process of creating on the canvas, using color to express both force and fragility.

I believe that Amaranth Ehrenhalt, who has been under-estimated and under-known, will take her rightful place among the great Abstract Expressionists when her work is exposed to the art community in her first solo exhibition in New York at the Anita Shapolsky Art Gallery.

The focus of my gallery, since its inception in SoHo in 1982, has been to expose these fine artists, even when they may not have been in fashion.

*Anita Shapolsky, New York, September 2011*



Aderet, 1990, oil on canvas, 35 x 46 in

"A key figure among these 31 artists from 14 different countries might be the American Ehrenhalt, who shows a large canvas with the inviting title 'Jump in and Move Around'. It is both an example of New York School abstraction (lush colors, fluent brushwork, bustling composition) and an attempt at a new possibly eerie form of figuration. The large flat areas juxtaposed with smaller, detailed ones seem always on the point of resolving themselves into a landscape or a portrait."

*John Ashbery, International Herald Tribune. Paris: October 3rd, 1962.*

"One has some small shocks, for example, in front of the ardent and animated abstraction of Amaranth Ehrenhalt."

*Marc Hérissé, La Gazette de l'Hôtel Drouot. Paris: October 24, 1997.*

"Amaranth Ehrenhalt has created a rich body of work with aesthetic value and emotional charge. To bring the artist close to the American abstract expressionists who worked in Paris does not render justice to the richness of invention of a painter both original and free, where one immediately recognizes the style and palette, though it is through internal contradictions that she arrives at a fiery harmony.

"From paintings to monotypes, from diptychs to tondo, from watercolors to mosaics, the artist succeeds with a disconcerting ease to re-enchant and energize the world: one feels joyful after encountering the work. Her art seizes the gaze, providing a waterfall of surprises. The eye allows itself an invasion by rejoicing in spurts of intense colors: luminous vermillion surrounded by emerald, cadmium sulfur, that excites the neighboring violet and indigo, and enlightens the cobalt blue by a contrasting orange, but is soon soothed by a contemplation of the delicate tones. The gaze follows with astonished nervous meandering over pure white as well as opaque black.

"Amaranth is a virtuoso colorist, ready and alert to balance an acid rose by subdued ochre, and to juxtapose all kinds of reds without collision: her audacious flamboyance is perfectly controlled. She cultivates dissonance, which through a perilous play of counterpoint becomes assonance.

"Numerous forms overlap but most of the time they jump over each other, they mix, tangle, oscillate, wave, flutter, and unfurl, offering the inescapable illusion of perpetual movement. The mere essence of energy is captured in a net by the artist with her brushes. Amaranth Ehrenhalt is a creator accustomed to putting herself in danger to endlessly enrich her work and exceed her own limits."

*Béatrice Comte, "Weaving Time" in As The Seasons Evolve. Exhibition catalog. Bagneux: Maison des arts de Bagneux, 2007.*

"Talent, the gift, is granted by the gods, but it must have a complement, professional know how, the fruit of practical experience of preceding generations. This evolution can sometimes take a revolutionary form, but when it is true, it is never destructive. I have the hopeful expectation that Amaranth, who has the essential, will realize this complete synthesis."

*Sonia Delaunay, Paris, July 23, 1968.*

"Amaranth Ehrenhalt is extremely talented. What makes an artist important is the fact that she develops her own language, which is what Amaranth is doing."

*Joseph H. Hirshhorn, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C: May 1974.*



Alouette 2, 1954, oil on canvas, 34 1/2 x 22 in

Since early childhood, I have always painted and drawn. I have spent a lot of time in museums and studied a great deal of art history. My influences are many: Giotto and Cimabue, da Vinci, El Greco, Cézanne, Renoir, Matisse, Picasso, Kandinsky, Gorky, de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock. I am indebted to all of them.

I have lived many years in Italy and France and was privileged to know, and sometimes exhibit with, some writers and artists who have greatly contributed to modern art, i.e. Giacometti, Sonia Delaunay (who invited me to choose my paint supplies and put the bill on her tab); Hundertwasser, who painted three portraits of me, Yves Klein, Alberto Burri (who asked me to translate between him and Martha Jackson for his first show in New York), Joan Mitchell, Sam Francis, and Carlo Levi, an Italian writer who painted and made a portrait of me, and others. I have written some "vignettes" about many of them.

I am comfortable painting in all sizes and in all mediums, creating sculptures in wood and marble, print making, or designing tapestries, mosaics, or glazing tiles for gigantic murals. My career spans decades of steady production. People who collect my work often say that they still love it after years of living with it. This is a most appreciated compliment.

*Amaranth Ehrenhalt, September 2011*



Splash 4, 1960's, oil on canvas, 30 x 38 in



Lamier, 1958, oil on canvas, 33 1/2 x 22 in



Octameter, 1959, oil on canvas, 39 x 32 in



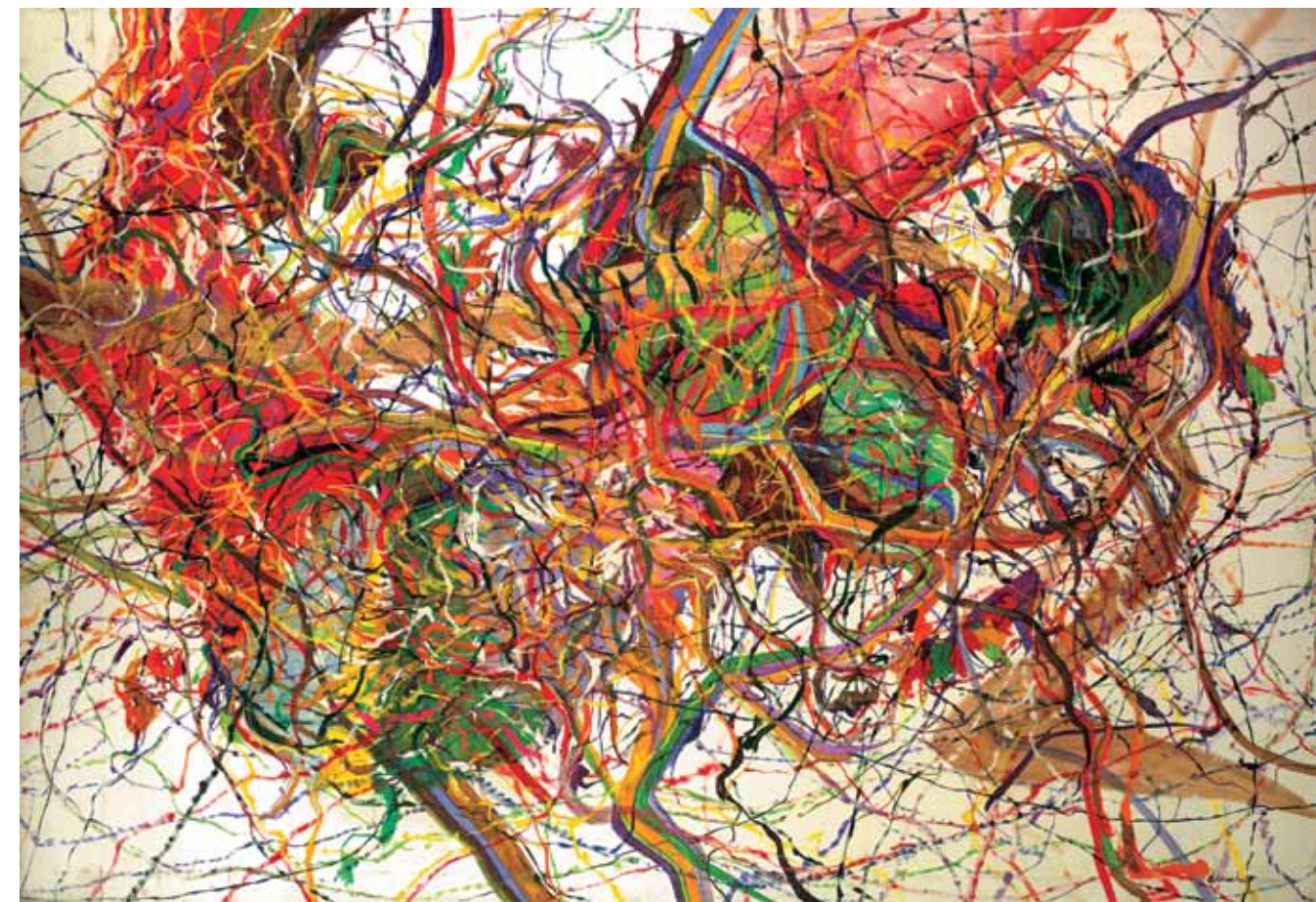
Midnight, 1959, oil on canvas, 59 x 77 in

"Amaranth's paintings are those with which we can form an intimate ongoing relationship. Whenever we look at them they reveal new and unexpected facets."

*Béatrice Comte, Le Figaro. Paris: October 17, 1998.*

"Amaranth Ehrenhalt is a living treasure of American abstract art, whose sense of color, form and depth reveals a rare profound excitement."

*Richmond Shepard, Arts Editor. Diplomatic World Bulletin: New York, March 1998.*



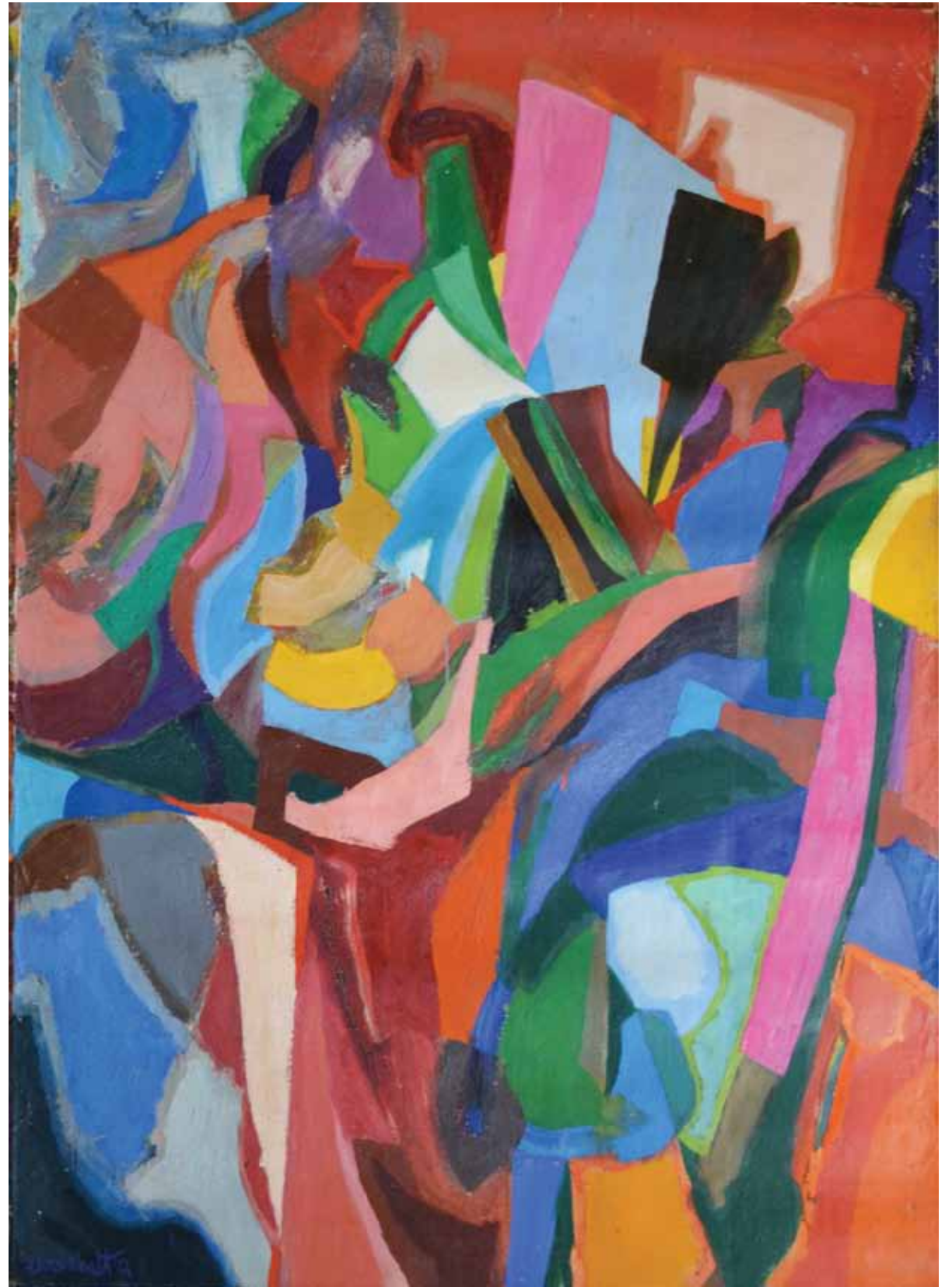
Umatilla, 1959, oil on canvas, 59 x 87 in

"Amaranth Ehrenhalt's large, abstract paintings reflect the visceral, gestural approach of New York School artists and the sensual colorist traditions of European modernists. She is associated with the Paris-based group of expatriate American Abstract Expressionists that included Joan Mitchell and Sam Francis."

*Sandra Kraskin, Encore. Exhibition catalog. New York: Sidney Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College, 2006.*



Most Precious Dot, 1994, oil on canvas, 77 x 51 in

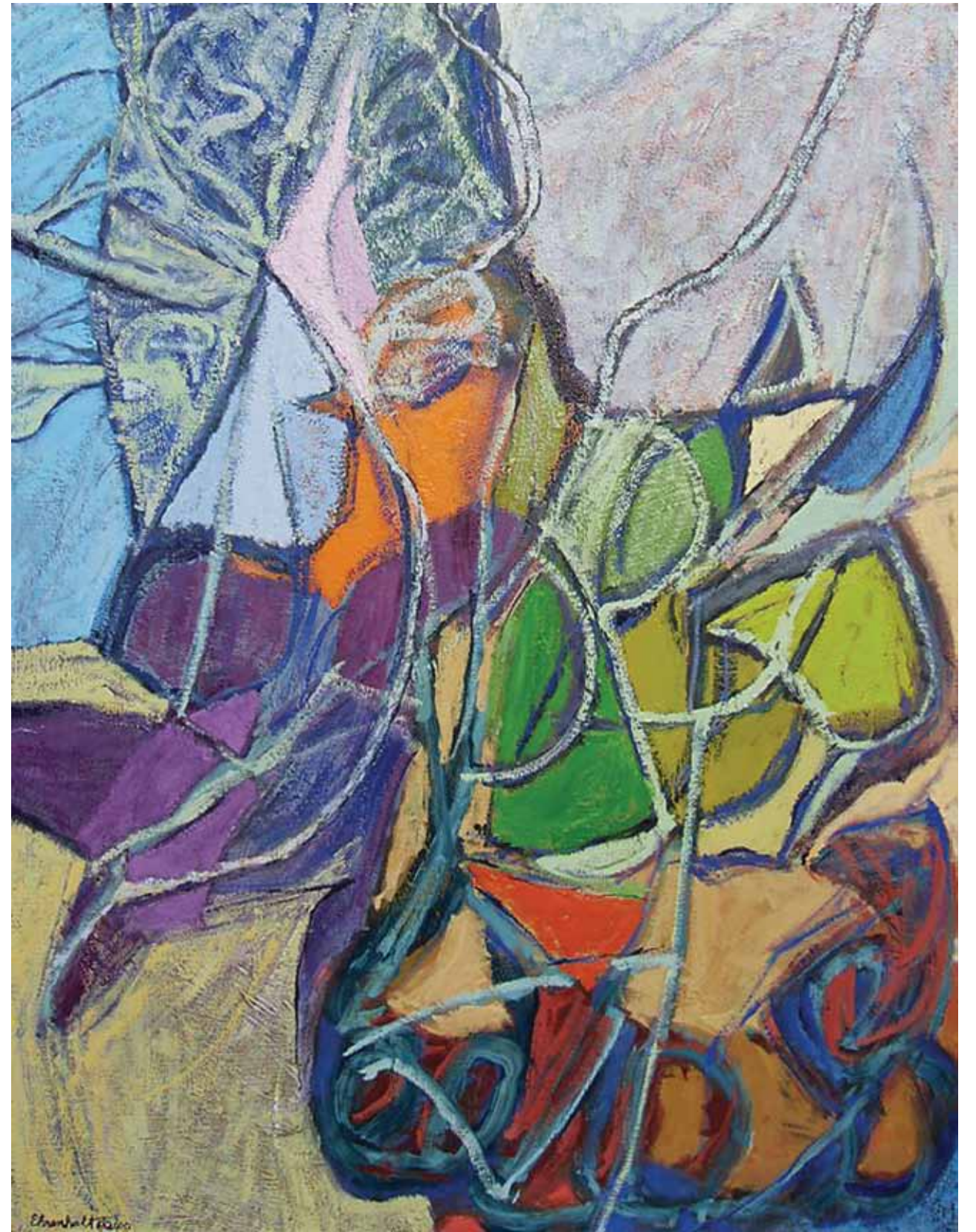


Zamora, 1961, oil on canvas, 51 x 63 in





I Sette Giorni Della Settemane, 2002, mosaic, 72 in (diameter)



Ultimo, 2000, oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 35 in



Aubrietta, 2008, tapestry, 38 x 32 in



Black Bear 2, 2000, marble and painted wood,  
28 x 28 x 4 in, 4 in base pivots by hand



Luray 1, 2002, painted wood  
23 1/2 x 8 x 8 in

## AMARANTH EHRENHALT

### Education

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Honors Scholarship, Philadelphia, PA.  
University of Pennsylvania, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA.  
The Barnes Foundation, Merion, PA.  
Atelier Saint-Cyr, Château de Montvillargennes (Tapestry study), Saint-Cyr, France.

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

Prior to 1970

American Cultural Center, Paris, France.  
Downey Museum of Art, Downey, CA.  
Albany Art Gallery, State University of New York, NY.  
Institute for Advanced Studies in Rational Psychotherapy, New York, NY.

1971 School of Architecture, City College of New York, NY.  
1971 Andersen Gallery, University Commonwealth of Virginia, VA.  
1972 Westbury Public Library, Westbury, NY.  
1973 First National City Bank of New York, Paris, France.  
1975 Esther Robles Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.  
1976 Banque du Crédit Lyonnais, Paris, France.  
1977 Pacific Design Center (in Palmer-Garland), Los Angeles, CA.  
1991 Ceramic mural (150 square meters), for the city of Bagneux, France.  
1995 Schiller International University, Paris, France.  
2005 The Carolina Ballet Theatre world premieres "Four Seasons" inspired by series of paintings of the same name. Greenville, South Carolina.  
2007 "Au Rythme des Saisons"(As the Seasons Evolve). Bagneux, France. (Catalog)  
2010 Maximillian Gallery, West Hollywood, CA.

### Selected Group Exhibitions

Prior to 1983

Multiple exhibitions in the museums of France: Amiens, Avignon, Bourges, Montpellier, Nancy, etc. for the U.S embassy.  
"American Artists in France", Mona Bismark Foundation, Paris, France.  
Tapestry Associates, New York, NY.  
La Jolla Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA.  
Fresno Art Center, Fresno, CA.  
Salon d'Automne, Musée du Grand Palais, Paris, France.  
Galerie Espace d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France.

1983 Albright Knox Museum, Buffalo, NY.  
1983 Sarah Rentschler Gallery, East Hampton, NY.  
1985 Los Angeles Municipal Gallery, "Artists for Ethiopia", Los Angeles, CA.

1985 Reece Gallery, New York, NY.  
1986 "Magie de la Tapisserie", UNESCO, Paris, France.  
1987-2008 Salon Realités Nouvelles, Musée du Grand Palais, Paris, France. (annual event)  
1988 Museum of Kirovakan, Kirovakan, Armenia.  
1992 "Ten Years of Acquisitions from Bonnard to Baselitz" Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, France.  
1993 Exposition de Tapisserie, (Arelis), Cité Des Arts, Paris, France.  
1994 "Grands et Jeunes d'Aujourd'hui", Quai Branley, Paris, France.  
1994 Biennale of Contemporary Tapestry, UNESCO, Beauvais, France.  
1997 4th International Triennial of Small Format Etchings, Charmalieres, France.  
1997 "American Artists in France", Mona Bismarck Foundation, Paris, France.  
2001 "Abstract Expressionism: Then and Now", Hofstra University Museum, New York, NY.  
2002 June Tapestry Biennale, Beauvais, France.  
2002 Sept "Artists of the 50's", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, NY.  
2003 Oct Maison des Arts, Bagneux, France.  
2004 May "Artists of the 50s & 60s", Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, France.  
2005 May The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA.  
2005 June "Contemporary Tapestry Exhibition", Aubusson, France.  
2006 May "Encore: 5 ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTS", Sidney Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College, New York, NY.  
2006 Sept "4 ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTS", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York.  
2008 May "Masters of Abstraction", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York.  
2008 July "American Artists in Paris", Johnson & Johnson, Issy-les Moulineaux, France.  
2008 May "Masters of Abstraction", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, NY.  
2009 May "Paper Proposes Pleasure", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, NY.  
2010 Nov P.A.F.A Alumni Exhibition, Philadelphia, PA.  
2011 "50's and 60's Artists", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, NY.  
2011 July "Pennsylvania Masters", AS Art Foundation, Jim Thorpe, PA.  
2011 Sept Winchester Gallery, Victoria, BC, Canada.  
2011 Sept Galeria Meridiana, Pietrasanta (Lucca) Italy.  
2011 Oct "Little Gems", Anita Shapolsky Gallery, New York, NY.

### Selected Collections

Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Paris, France.  
National Foundation of Contemporary Art, Paris, France.  
Mobilier National des Gobelins, Paris, France.  
Downey Museum of Art, Downey, CA., U.S.A.  
Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.  
Ville de Paris, Ville de Bagneux, France.  
Colas Foundation, Paris, France.  
Sovac Group Inc., Paris, France.  
Mrs. Sonia Delaunay, Paris, France. (Private)  
Baronne Alix de Rothschild, Paris, France. (Private)

## Selected Catalogs

*Amaranth Ehrenhalt: American artist from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania U.S.A to Paris, France and Pietrasanta (Lucca) Italy, Tipografia Dini, Pietrasanta, Italy, 2000.*

*Amaranth Ehrenhalt: Au Rythme des Saisons, Maison des arts de Bagnaux, France, 2007.*

*Encore: Five Abstract Expressionists, Sidney Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College, New York, NY, 2006.*

*American Abstract and Figurative Expressionism: Style is Timely Art is Timeless. Edited by Marika Herskovic, New York School Press: New York, New Jersey, 2009.*



Amaranth Ehrenhalt

Examine my head,  
My hands, my name,  
And my heart

You will see  
Everywhere, always  
Art, Art, **Art**.

**amaranth**

Amaranth Ehrenhalt,  
September 2011

