

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Miyoko Ito**

February 24 to April 15, 2023

Opening: Thursday, February 23, 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Miyoko Ito**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 522 West 22nd Street. The exhibition includes sixteen paintings and three rarely seen lithographs from 1948 to 1983, spanning the entirety of the artist's nearly four-decade career.

Miyoko Ito (1918 – 1983) was born in Berkeley, CA to parents of Japanese descent. In 1942, a month before graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, she and her husband were sent to Tanforan, an incarceration camp south of San Francisco under an Executive Order signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The following year, Ito was allowed to leave the camp to attend a graduate program at Smith College in Northampton, MA. She moved to Chicago to attend the School of the Art Institute in 1944 where she lived until her death in 1983.

Ito's paintings feature rich surfaces and evocative colors characterized by many layers of paint meticulously built-up with individual brushstrokes. Working on one canvas at a time, her technical precision was reflected in her slow working process. Painting in her studio from sunrise to sunset, often seven days a week, Ito said: "Painting is very much a part of my life, like breathing. It is a necessity. It is do or die."

Although Ito's paintings remain distinctly abstract, the imagery often evokes landscapes, interiors, and the human body. The artist acknowledged her early indebtedness to synthetic cubism, but importantly also the prevailing ideas of her local peers. "Chicago gave me a sense of surrealism," she once said, "although it is not that obvious."

Miyoko Ito began exhibiting her work in the early 1940s. During her lifetime, her work was included in important group exhibitions like the 1955 Carnegie International, "Chicago Imagist Art" at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago in 1972, and the 1975 Whitney Biennial. She had one-person exhibitions at the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago in 1971 and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago in 1980. More recently the Berkeley Art Museum had an exhibition of her work in 2017, a version of which traveled to Artists Space in New York the following year.

**Miyoko Ito** is on view at Matthew Marks Gallery at 522 West 22nd Street from February 24 to April 15, 2023, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please call 212-243-0200 or email [inquiries@matthewmarks.com](mailto:inquiries@matthewmarks.com).