



Vera Paints a Rainbow





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The exhibition of artworks by Vera Neumann (b.1907, Stamford, CT–d.1993, North Tarrytown, NY) created between the 1960s and 1980s, focuses on the artist's use of color, which in her words, "is a marvelous way of expressing emotion." The exhibition's title, *Vera Paints a Rainbow*, alludes to the Vera Company's promotional materials and showrooms, whose ads from the 1970s featured the tagline "Vera paints," as an ongoing campaign. Neumann's vivid watercolor paintings and collages were used on an array of fabrics to create wallpaper, home linens, apparel, and most famously, her silk scarves.

Neumann was known for her love of color. She often opted for warm tones, with a particular penchant for yellow and orange. As she used to say, "Color sings to me . . . [it] is the language I speak best." Her artwork is defined by single gestures that convey maximum expression by employing few, yet visually strong tones. Among Neumann's motifs are stylized florals, abstract color fields, and avant-garde geometrics rendered in singular combinations. When designing, she stated, "If you have too many colors, you could very easily get tied down to just one color scheme that can't be changed [ . . . ] I feel I have given people more joy with the designs I create."

A revolutionary icon of American mid-century design and brand development, dating from the 1950s onwards, Neumann became one of the most successful female entrepreneurs of her time. As writer Stephanie Mansfield wrote, "When they dig up the remains of this land, known as America, archaeologists of the future will undoubtedly come across cultural curiosities of the 20th century that might be mistaken for objects of religious worship: millions of rainbow-colored relics bearing the name *Vera*." Throughout her business career Neumann was first and foremost an artist, whose works translated graphically into everyday objects. She maintained close relationships with her contemporaries in art and design, sharing similar aesthetics. Among her closest friends were Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, and Marcel Breuer. Neumann was an avid traveler, gathering inspiration from her visits to countries around the world, including Mexico, Peru, China, Japan, India, and Iran, among others. Neumann's curiosity and experiences abroad impacted her vision, palette and understanding of the world. It emboldened her use of color as a way to communicate happiness. As she once expressed, "We have so many problems in this world, color brings just a little bit of joy into our lives."



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# Alexander Gray Associates

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Through exhibitions, research, and representation, Alexander Gray Associates spotlights artistic movements and artists who emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Influential in political, social and cultural spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Alexander Gray Associates is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America.

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