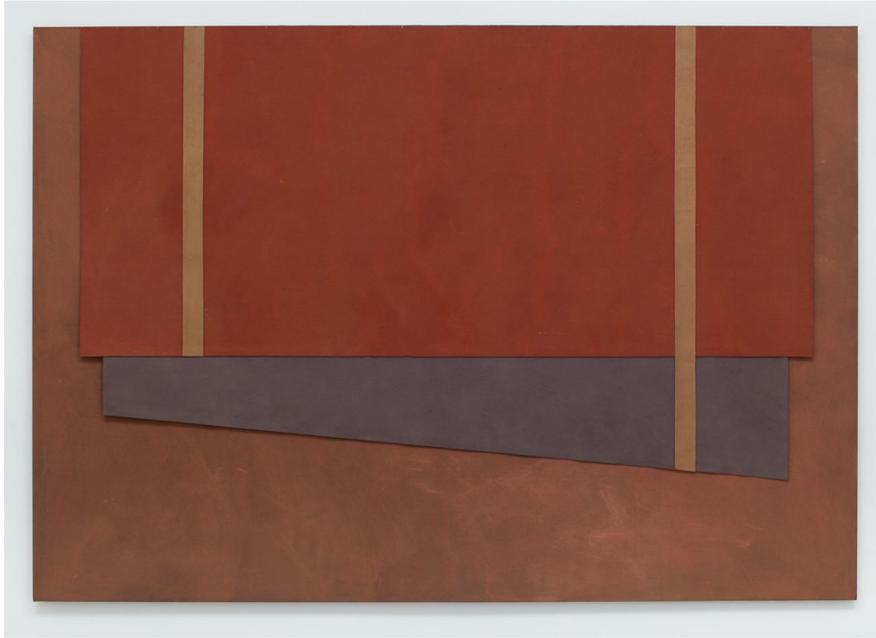# Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Wallpaper*

Mary Obering paintings exhibited in Los Angeles for the first time

Fleshscape, 1975, by Mary Obering, acrylic on canvas. *Courtesy of Kayne Griffin Corcoran*

In 1971, the artist Mary Obering moved from Colorado to Soho, at the height of the neighbourhood's transformation into an artist haven. Nearly 50 years later, the celebrated painter appears in her first solo show at Kayne Griffin Corcoran in Los Angeles, after the gallery began representing her earlier this year.

Rather than a debut, the show feels more like an announcement: Obering has always been there, and the exhibition, on view through 3 November, centres on a suite of abstract paintings from the 1970s. To follow, Obering has worked in the very same Soho studio she first arrived in up into the present day.

Born in Louisiana in 1937, Obering later traveled to Italy as a young artist, which stoked her interest in art-making – but it was in Soho, at the urging of figures like Carl Andre, that she began to work on large-scale paintings for which she became more widely known. Her work experimented with ideas culled from colour field paintings as well as abstraction, and went on to appear in the 1975 Whitney Biennial as well as in exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Artists Space, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art.

The rich jewel tones and distinctive textural quality of her geometric compositions, however, in fact take their cues from the old masters – an unlikely source for the quietly combative canvases for which Obering has been quietly celebrated since the mid-70s. Obering uses original paint-making techniques, relying on egg tempera and gold-leaf on gessoed panel, to create a sense of tactility and the deep hues of her paintings.

In works such as *Déjà Vu* (1975), thick ochres butt up against petal-thin pinks in layers of abstracted shapes; or in the case of *Fleshscape* (1975), a layering of bruise purple, blood-red, and scar orange hints at a drama unfolding on its layered surface.

—Ali Pechman