

RUBY CITY

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Joan Mitchell; *Flying Dutchman*, 1961-62; oil on canvas; 80 x 80 in.;
Linda Pace Foundation Collection, Ruby City, San Antonio, Texas;
2007.1.297; ©Estate of Joan Mitchell

Celebrating Abstraction: Ruby City's *Sensing Meaning, Abstract Painting*, Brings Together Eight Decades of Innovation

Exhibition Dates:

September 27, 2025 – August 30, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 27, 2025, 2-5PM

2-3PM Gallery Walkthrough w/ Ruby City Director, Elyse A. Gonzales

3-5PM Public Reception with light bites, drinks, & entertainment

San Antonio, TX (September 10, 2025) — Ruby City is proud to present *Sensing Meaning, Abstract Painting*, opening September 27, 2025. This expansive exhibition brings together a unique selection of works from the mid-20th century through today to explore the infinite language of abstraction. Featured artists include Willem de Kooning, Jean Dubuffet, Jacqueline Humphries, Yves Klein, Sarah Morris, Steve Roden, Patrick Quarm, and Joan Mitchell—whose *Flying Dutchman* (1961-62) is on view as part of the global centennial celebration of the artist's birth.

In *Sensing Meaning*, Mitchell's painting joins works by over 25 other artists who use abstraction to translate lived experience and emotion into visual form. The exhibition spans

eight decades of painting, drawn from the Linda Pace Foundation Collection. Nearly all works on view were acquired by Pace and, reflect the evolution of her collecting. Early purchases centered on well-known male artists like Picasso and de Kooning, but in 1993, after founding Artpace and the International Residency Program, a nonprofit independent of the Linda Pace Foundation, Ruby City, she shifted focus. “The kind of art I’m drawn to is progressive not conventional. It reflects our world in ways that are invigorating to some and threatening to others,” Pace said. This sentiment remained a touchstone for her collection which is tied together by the poetic sensibility she instinctively sought and found meaning in.

Sensing Meaning, Abstract Painting expands traditional notions of the medium to include unconventional materials, sculptural forms, and even digital processes. While some artists represented in the exhibition grapple with painting’s history and constraints, others push beyond the canvas entirely—introducing new materials, processes, or ideas of dimensionality. A work such as Yves Klein’s *Table* transforms a “painting” of pure color made from powdered pigment into a meditative and functional object, while David Jurist’s camouflaged *Decoy* installation turns the gallery itself into a subject of critique. By showcasing these diverse approaches, *Sensing Meaning, Abstract Painting* underscores abstraction’s enduring ability to capture fleeting emotions & moments, and to explore cultural identity, as well as pose questions about art’s role in society.

Visitors are encouraged to slow down, observe the works and discover the many ways abstraction can speak across time and place. The exhibition underscores abstraction’s power to invite personal interpretation while questioning the very nature of art itself. This is evident in a work by Steve Roden. A recent gift to the Collection by the late artist’s estate, *tacet permutations*, 2012, presents Roden’s interpretation of silence, or John Cage’s seminal *3’44”*, a composition in which the performer makes no deliberate noise. By translating different movements of Cage’s composition into colors and lengths, Roden creates a visual representation of silence.

“What makes abstraction so powerful is its ubiquity and fluidity,” notes Elyse A. Gonzales, Director of Ruby City. “Without relying on representational imagery, these artists specifically embrace abstraction to convey their personal experiences. But there is also an inherent generosity to these artists and their works, as they recognize (and celebrate) that viewers will bring their own feelings, meanings and interpretations. That generosity is what makes abstraction deeply personal and universally accepted and accessible. Showing Joan Mitchell’s work during her centennial underscores how enduring and alive abstraction remains.”

Throughout 2025, the Joan Mitchell Foundation is marking the 100th anniversary of the artist’s birth (February 12, 1925) with *Mitchell 100*, a yearlong initiative involving more than 70 museums around the world. Ruby City is honored to be among the participating institutions showcasing Mitchell’s work.

Mitchell’s luminous, gestural canvases made her one of the foremost painters of the postwar era. Born in Chicago and later a key figure in the New York School, she developed a practice that blended physical intensity with lyrical evocations of nature. “Abstract is not a style. I

simply want to make a surface work,” she once said—a reminder that abstraction is a field of possibility within a terrain this exhibition invites visitors to wander and interpret for themselves.

The public is invited to join Ruby City for the opening celebration of this exhibition on **Saturday September 27, from 2-5PM**. The event will begin with a gallery walkthrough led by Director of Ruby City Elyse A. Gonzales from 2-3PM followed by a public reception from 3-5PM. The reception will feature a selection of light bites and drinks available at no cost. Many thanks to beverage sponsor, LALO Tequila for providing refreshing drinks, Ming’s at Midtown and DJ Tones for providing delicious snacks and entertainment.

Admission to Ruby City and all programming is always free.

About Ruby City

[Ruby City](#) is a contemporary art center in San Antonio, TX, dedicated to providing a space for the city’s thriving creative community to experience works by both local and internationally acclaimed artists. Envisioned in 2007 by the late collector, philanthropist and artist [Linda Pace](#), Ruby City presents works from the Linda Pace Foundation Collection of more than 1400 paintings, sculptures, installations and video works. The building which opened in 2019 is designed by [Adjaye Associates](#) and is part of a campus, which also includes a sculpture garden [Chris Park](#), a one-acre public green space named in memory of Pace’s son, and [Studio](#), an auxiliary exhibition space which presents curated shows and [programming](#) throughout the year.

Ruby City is open Thursday through Sunday, 10am to 6pm. Admission is always free; reservations are recommended. Information and reservations are available at www.rubycity.org. **For further information please contact: Head of Public Engagement & Communications, Patricia Morales at pmorales@rubycity.org**

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