

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 14, 2018

## ***Emily Mason: Inner Resources***

**Exhibition Dates:** April 27 – June 3, 2018  
**Opening Reception:** Fri, April 27, 5 – 7 pm  
**Gallery Hours:** Mon – Fri, 10-6  
Sat, 10-5

**LewAllen Galleries**  
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*Reminder*, 2017,  
oil on canvas, 40 x 32 in



*Flood Gate*, 2017-18,  
oil on canvas, 40 x 36 in

Santa Fe, NM — Emily Mason is a living icon of American lyrical abstraction, and now in her 86<sup>th</sup> year, she is creating some of the most vital, poetic art of her career. LewAllen Galleries is proud to present a solo exhibition of her recent paintings entitled *Inner Resources*, highlighting the artist's rich internal reservoir of inspiration that remains vibrant, dazzling and surprising. The show goes on view Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, with an opening reception from 5 – 7 pm, and extends through June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Mason has enjoyed a long and well-known career at the heart of the evolution of American abstract painting. Her oil on canvas paintings are distinguished by their open-hearted attitude of intimacy combined with an uncompromising, though gentle intensity. They demonstrate a careful sense of structure, juxtaposing sweeping, luminous space with robust brushwork, drips and layers of color. Her art has

often been described as musical; nonverbal in their orchestration, their colors and textures are composed with a singular impulse for hue, surface and transparency.

Although there is an inviting allure of mystery in Mason's work that comes from her inner nature, there is also a sense of universal connection, both to the rhythms of nature and, from them, to the imagination of viewers. When discussing Emily Mason's process, one can't help but be reminded of the words of Agnes Martin: "Our inspirations come as a surprise to us. Following them our lives are

fresh and unpredictable. The unfolding of potential, in obedience to inspiration, is happiness in life." Her work evinces a vision that sees art not as a vehicle by which to imitate the observed but rather as a means to express its poetic resonances. For Mason, color is the carrier of expression, and her work becomes a kind of poetry of color. In making her art, she plumbs a rich internal reservoir of memory and feeling in order to draw spirit out from life. As Mason says, "I want a painting to take me to another place; that's the painting experience itself. It always calls up new things, a continuous process of discovery."

It is for all of these reasons that Mason is regarded as one of America's foremost non-representational painters, notwithstanding the numerous obstacles that inevitably confronted artists who were women in the art world. Robert Berling said of her in *Art in America*:

"Mason works within the improvisational model of Abstract Expressionism, though notably without angst or bravado." Mason's status as an icon of American art has only grown in the past year, with a documentary produced on her process, *Emily Mason: A Painting Experience* (2017) by Rava Films, and essays written by John Dorfman of *Art and Antiques* (March 2018) and Rosemary Carstens of *Western Art & Architecture* (April 2018).



*Happy Ending, 2017,*  
oil on canvas, 40 x 36 in

Born and raised in New York City, Mason graduated from New York City's High School of Music and



*Keepsake, 2017,*  
oil on canvas, 41.875 x 31.875 in

Art and then studied at Bennington College before attending and graduating from Cooper Union. She spent 1956-58 in Italy on a Fulbright Grant for painting and for part of that time studied at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Venice. During Mason's two-year stay in Italy she married the painter Wolf Kahn, whom she had met earlier in New York. Mason and Kahn's daughter, Cecily Kahn, is also an abstract painter, as was Emily Mason's mother, Alice Trumbull Mason, a founding member of the American Abstract Artists group in New York.

Mason has had numerous exhibitions of her work since her first one-person exhibition at the Area Gallery in New York City in 1960. In 1979 she was awarded the Ranger Fund Purchase Prize by the National Academy. She has taught painting at Hunter College for more than 25 years, and her work is included in numerous public and private collections, including the Cleveland Museum of Art, the National Academy Museum in New York City, and the New Mexico Museum of Art.