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Henry Holmes Smith

The little-known American photographer worked closely with László Moholy-Nagy in Chicago, in the nineteen-thirties, and was similarly drawn to the medium's experimental fringes. This show of works made between the mid-forties and the mid-eighties (Smith died in 1986) is largely, often exuberantly, abstract, even when it involves recognizable subjects. Still-lives of shadows thrown by rods and gravity-defying arrangements of screens anticipate the work of Barbara Kasten and Sara VanDerBeek. Other images are more expressionist: liquid light-show eruptions and cascading patterns in acid colors. But the most radical pictures are the most restrained, a pair of black-and-white images whose silvery, distressed surfaces find contemporary echoes in Gerhard Richter and Rudolf Stingel.

— Vince Aletti