



The extraordinary life of artist Helen Rae

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Two works by [Helen Rae](#), the singular, groundbreaking Claremont artist who died February 12 at age 83, have entered the permanent collection at the prestigious [Museum of Modern Art](#) in New York City.

“This is a well-deserved honor for the more than extraordinary artist Helen Rae,” said Ms. Rae’s friend and longtime teacher Rebecca Hamm, director of arts at the [Tierra del Sol Foundation](#).



Figure 1 Helen Rae, *Untitled (February 21, 2017)*, Color pencil and graphite on paper, 18 x 24", 2017



Figure 2 Helen Rae, *Untitled (June 16, 2017)*, Color pencil and graphite on paper, 18 x 24", 2017

The two works, “Untitled (February 21, 2017),” and “Untitled (June 16, 2017),” were donated by collectors, curators and activists Rebecca and Marty Eisenberg, who purchased them at Ms. Rae’s 2017 solo show at White Columns in New York City.

Deaf and nonverbal, Ms. Rae was born in 1938 and grew up in Claremont, where her father was a professor at one of the Claremont Colleges. She learned sign language and other methods of communication, most importantly, visual art.

Her mother enrolled Ms. Rae in her first art class at what would become Tierra Del Sol Studio Art Program in 1990, when she was 50. She soon discovered her own expressive language. Inspired by couture photography, she creating ceramic masks, sculpture, watercolor and colored pencil drawings, all from the distinctly vivid stylistic perspective that would come to be known around the world.

“Tierra del Sol thanks everyone who's supported Helen's career along the way and continues to do so,” read a Tierra del Sol Gallery press release. “Congratulations to Helen and her groundbreaking legacy, which now includes her drawings being recognized and entering MoMA's collection.”

The announcement was especially meaningful for Ms. Hamm, who was witness to the blossoming of Ms. Rae's talents and late-in-life renown.

“I am deeply grateful to have known Helen all these years and to know how she is appreciated at this level, even at this time,” Ms. Hamm said.

Ms. Rae had her first solo exhibition at The Good Luck Gallery in Los Angeles in 2015. The solo show at New York's White Columns followed. She then continued to show to acclaim both in America and internationally, and was profiled in *Art Forum*, *Vogue*, and *The Los Angeles Times*, among other publications.

Alongside her recent entry into MoMA's collection, her work is also part of private collections, including JPM Chase, Beth Rudin DeWoody and Brian Donnelly, and others.

Asked what Ms. Rae would think about this latest accolade, Ms. Hamm said, “She'd just be like, ‘Let's make more work.’”



Figure 3 Helen Rae getting her photo taken in 2019 at Tierra del Sol Studios in Upland, CA for Galarie Magazine

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