

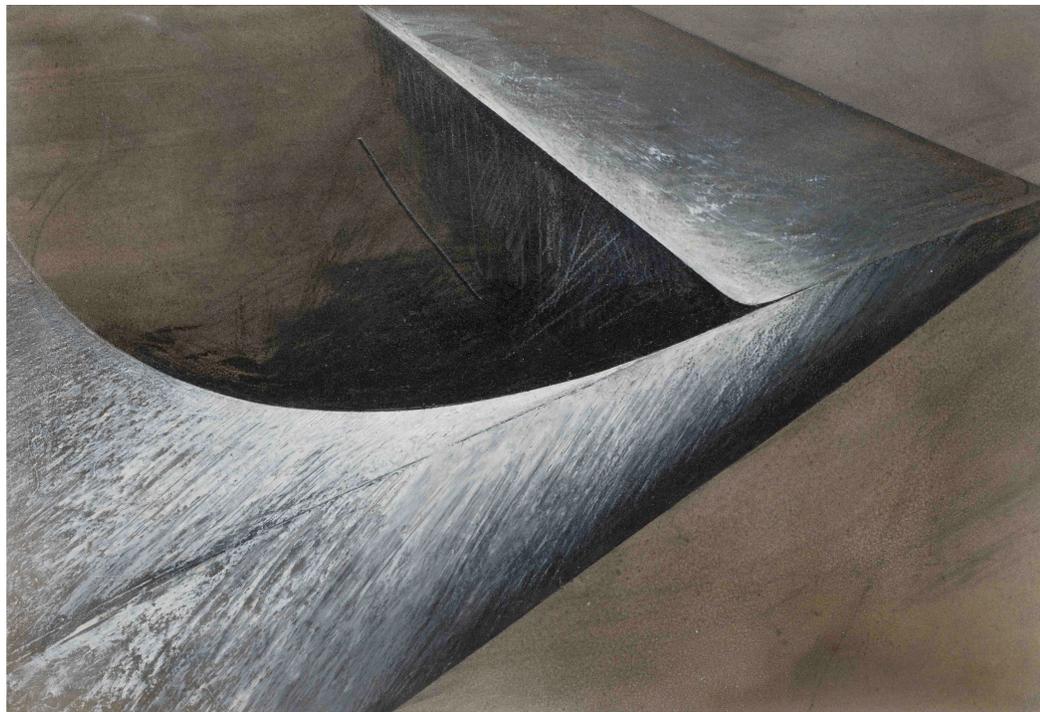
MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

The New York Times

Art & Design

ART IN REVIEW

Jay DeFeo



"Reflections of Africa No. 7," from 1987, by Jay DeFeo, in charcoal, acrylic and grease pencil on rag board. JAY DEFEO TRUST / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK, MITCHELL-INNES & NASH, NY.

By **KAREN ROSENBERG**

June 5, 2014

Mitchell-Innes & Nash

534 West 26th Street, Chelsea

Through Saturday

A riveting follow-up to last year's [Jay DeFeo](#) retrospective at the Whitney Museum, this exhibition of drawings, photographs and photocopies finds this artist moving past her ponderous masterpiece, "The Rose," in fits and starts. It spans the years 1965 to 1989, and its mood is restless, experimental and dark; the somber black-and-white palette and ambiguous, shadowy shapes reflect periods of depression and, in later works, terminal illness.

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Many of the works evolve from small personal items, little relics and remnants: a cup given to DeFeo by an artist friend, a kneaded eraser, even some of the artist's teeth (dislodged by disease). She carried these objects from one medium to another, inking over photographs and using charcoal and acrylic to echo some of her gelatin silver prints.

She also made mysterious, corporeal abstractions simply by pressing a tissue box against a photocopier, crushing the soft sheets like petals and leaving us with the yawning portal of an emptied container.

This is the kind of show that artists (and maybe novelists) need to see; it's about the struggle to move on from a work that defines you. As the photographer Walead Beshty observes in his excellent catalog essay, "If her life and career momentarily disappeared into the granite surface of 'The Rose,' they reappeared in the fragments and debris it left in its wake."