

VULTURE

Jerry Saltz's Best New York Art Shows of 2022

Paulina Peavy, Andrew Edlin



Paulina Peavy, *Untitled*, ca. 1930–60.

The same magnificent art-historical rediscovery machine that helped place Hilma af Klint at the center of modernism turned over another stone these last few years to find the early-20th-century paintings of the underappreciated West Coast artist Paulina Peavy, who died in 1999. As with af Klint — who claimed she'd had a close encounter with a supernatural being — Peavy told people that, after a séance, she'd met a UFO named Lacamo. This inspired her to commence a kind of florid, lunar-colored, automatic painting that resulted in psychedelic fracturing compositions, interweaving biomorphic abstractions, and, most amazingly, masks, which she sometimes wore while painting. Her work shows us a tremendous undiscovered country. In an excellent three-person show alongside work by Ann McCoy and Olga Spiegel, Peavy threw down a gauntlet that museums better pick up before she gets too sought-after.