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What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now



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Helène Aylon's "Mirror Covering" (1987), wood, paint, gauze and mirrored plexiglass. Estate of Helène Aylon; Kerry Schuss Gallery and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects

DOWNTOWN

Helène Aylon

Through Dec. 22. Kerry Schuss Gallery, 73 Leonard Street, Manhattan; 212-219-9918; kerryschussgallery.com.

In Judaism, when a person dies, their family covers the mirrors in their home as a sign of mourning. This custom inspired [Helène Aylon](#)'s poignant "Mirror Covering" (1987), which anchors her exhibition "[Reflections](#)," organized by Kerry Schuss Gallery and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects.

Aylon was born into Borough Park's Orthodox Jewish community and married a rabbi when she was 18. In her late 20s, she began studying art at Brooklyn College, where she took classes with Ad Reinhardt, and was widowed at 30. She decided to become a secular artist, and started experimenting formally to make muted, somewhat mysterious abstract paintings (three are included in "Reflections"). In the 1980s, she turned to public eco-feminist art, and in the '90s embarked on a major project about Judaism. Aylon [died](#) last year, at 89, of Covid-19.

"Mirror Covering" represents a nexus of the different phases of her career. The work features 11 roughly human-size mirrored panels partly swathed in gauze and connected to stretch about 21 feet long. They represent the 11 million people who died in the Holocaust, speaking to Aylon's social and Jewish concerns. Yet the gauze also evokes the reclaimed fabric of feminist art, and the work's simple wooden structure, leaning against the wall, calls to mind postminimalism. These associations enrich "Mirror Covering" — it's not a singular memorial but an open-ended work of art and mourning. When you stand before it and see yourself hazily reflected amid the discolored gauze, you may have the sense, however fleeting, of hovering between worlds. *JILLIAN STEINHAUER*