

As an artist, Neltje was often known for making grandiose, large scale abstract paintings. However, the selection of artworks in *Broken Spaces* presents an array of smaller gestural works and collage compositions made by Neltje.

Prior to delving into painting in the style of abstract expressionism, Neltje worked primarily in sumi-e painting and collage. Gesture painting and collaging were two modes of creative expression that often informed Neltje's larger works on canvas.

In her early sumi-e works, Neltje experimented with gesturing using soft bamboo brushes and black India ink to create marks flowing across paper. Over time, this method lent itself to developing expressive, articulated movements and brushstrokes that she carried into her painting practice later on.

Her early collage works were built out of bits and pieces of found materials; she showcased fragments that she would collect throughout her daily life. Many small articles that would typically be deemed as 'junk' were interpreted as elements that could be joined together in an artistic visual composition. Neltje played with angles, shape, color, and texture, and would build upon a visual aesthetic from one collage to the next.

In 2019, Neltje returned her focus to smaller gestural works and works of collage. Her collages gravitated towards fresh, contemporary colors and textures, including bits of dried paint from her palette that were glued to the arrangements. Around the same time, she began experimenting with a new medium in her work by creating gestural drawings with colorful oil sticks over the top of pieces of canvas prepared with watercolors. These pieces were new explorations of color and texture, but also integrated gestural mark making techniques reminiscent of her sumi-e paintings that she carried throughout her art and life.

