

Ruth Vollmer

September 30, 2025 – December 13, 2025
Reception: Tuesday, September 30th, 6:00 – 8:00PM

*A concurrent installation of a group of abstract artists includes
Betty Parsons, Richard Tuttle, Rebecca Purdum, Tomashi Jackson, Abby Robinson, Zachary Armstrong*

Tilton Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of the sculpture and drawings of Ruth Vollmer, an influential force in abstract art of the sixties and seventies when she showed with Betty Parsons. Jack Tilton represented her estate since he opened in 1983, and we are honored to present the most comprehensive gallery show of her work since the eighties.

This will be the gallery's final formal exhibition. After eight meaningful years continuing the gallery without Jack, it is time to pursue my own projects in a more private setting and to reformulate my role in the art world whether through private sales or research projects. I hope to continue to offer support to artists and to focus more on my family. To this end, the gallery will close after the Ruth Vollmer exhibition and we will make plans to transition out of our space on 76th Street.

I am incredibly grateful for the support, friendship and enthusiasm of gallery artists, staff, collectors, museums and fellow dealers during these years and I hope to continue to maintain these relationships into the future.

A special thanks to our wonderful gallery team whose collaboration and dedication has contributed to our success and nurtured the gallery's rich history.

Unending gratitude to the artists, past and current, who have been the heart and soul of this gallery and whose work has provided joy and spiritual sustenance.



Ruth Vollmer, *Walking Ball*, 1959

Ruth Vollmer was as much of an individualist and free thinker as her dealer, Betty Parsons. Born in 1903 in Munich, Germany, she came from an intellectual Jewish family, surrounded by discussions about

music, literature, science and art. She and her husband, a physician, came to the United States in 1935 where she worked as a designer for many years and became a dedicated artist later in life. She was an influential figure in the circle around Betty Parsons Gallery and was given seven solo shows from 1960 to 1979. It seemed natural as she became part of the New York art world to hold her own version of the European salon, frequent dinners for fellow artists and art world people. Close to Parsons in age, like her, she surrounded herself by artists of a younger generation, many of whom would become called Post-Minimalists or Minimalists: Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Richard Tuttle, Mel Bochner, Robert Smithson and many others.

Vollmer's work holds its own unique place in art history. With European influences that she brought with her, from the Bauhaus to Surrealism, from Naum Gabo to Alberto Giacometti, her milieu upon arrival in the U.S. exposed her to the New York School and then the newer movements of the sixties and seventies when she began showing with Betty Parsons. While her work shares some of the concerns of her many inspirations, it became something uniquely her own and evades easy assimilation into any single art historical narrative. Both pragmatic and spiritual, her work was informed by her interest in science and mathematics as well art and nature. Both Vollmer's sculptures and drawings reveal the poetry of line and form.

Her early bronze sculpture explored the eternal, natural form of the sphere. The earliest more roughly hewn shapes were refined and became more defined and minimal over time. Later sculptures were made of cutting-edge newer materials such as acrylic and spun aluminum, making visible her own abstracted mathematical formulas. Her eccentric variations on geometric forms included the spiral, pseudosphere, heptahedron and parabola as well as the sphere. Graphite drawings also drew on mathematical sources as well as nature, but repetitive abstract lines and shapes retain an individuality and expressive quality in their sensitivity of line. Only a few works on paper relate directly to specific sculptures. Both simple and complex, her works have clarity, while retaining a sense of the mysteries of the world.

Vollmer's work is held in numerous museum collections including those of the Museum of Modern Art, New York to which she donated her personal collection of works by fellow artists; the Whitney Museum of Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden and the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, among many others. Solo museum exhibitions have included those at Drew University, New Jersey in 1971; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY (catalogue) in 1974; the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY in 1976; and Sullivant Gallery, Ohio State University in 1976. In 2003, a retrospective and accompanying monograph was organized by the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany and traveled to Germany, Austria and the U.S. Among group exhibitions, Vollmer was included in *Flyktpunkter / Vanishing Points: Mel Bochner, Tom Doyle, Dan Graham, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Robert Smithson, Ruth Vollmer* at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm in 1984.