

VAN DOREN WAXTER



ART GALLERIES—UPTOWN

By Jason Farago
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John McLaughlin

This serene show reintroduces New York to the California painter, who died in 1976 and whose spare abstractions predate minimalism by a decade. (The first major retrospective of his work is on view now at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.) In the nineteen-fifties, when the Cedar Tavern boys were making their all-over messes, McLaughlin turned to solid, orthogonal blocks of white, gray, canary yellow, and Tiffany blue, balanced so adroitly that distinctions between foreground and background become moot. Though McLaughlin's spare compositions point to the anti-formalism to come in American painting, they have roots in his study of Japanese art, and this show provides a handsome counterpoint in two Zen landscapes on hanging scrolls, centuries-old forebears of tranquility and self-denial.