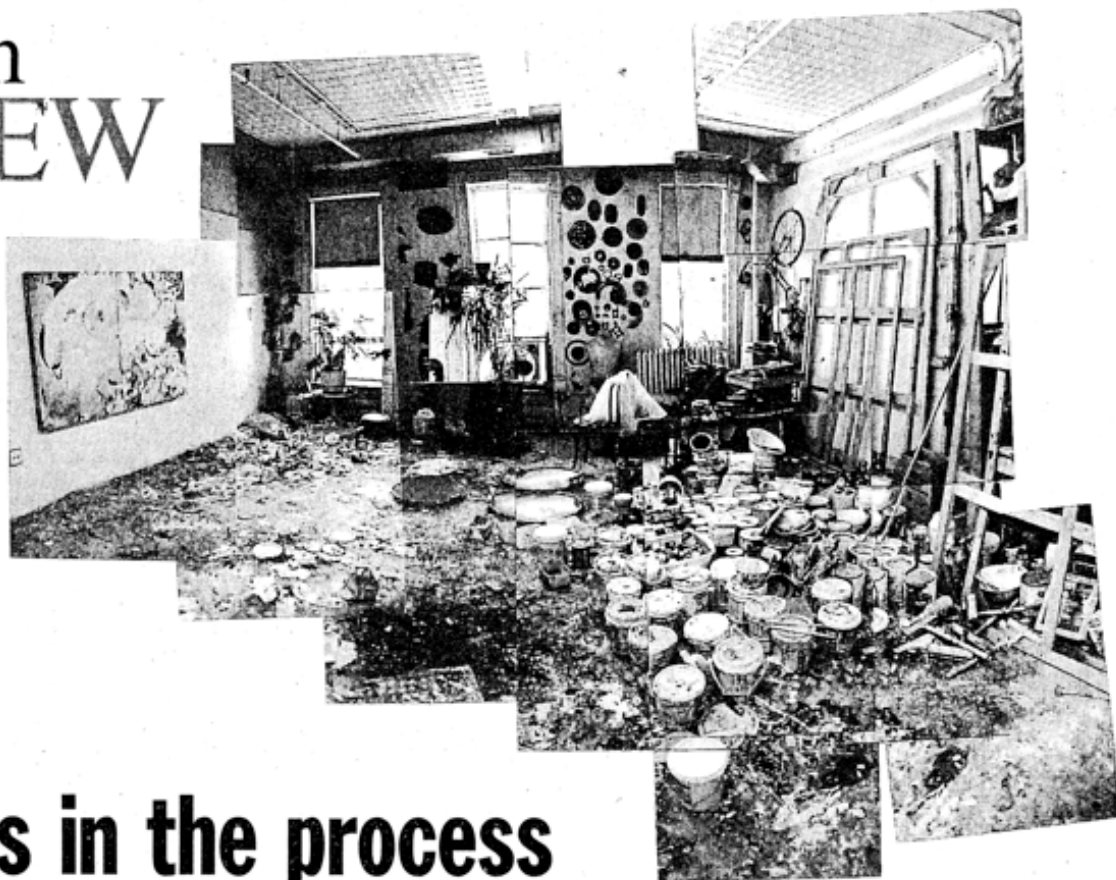


**on
VIEW****Art is in the process**

BY MARGARET HAWKINS

Iwant people to walk on it; it's not precious at all," Judith Geichman says of her installation "Playing the Field: Wall, Ground, Surface," now on view at Fassbender Gallery.

The work features two enormous tarpaulins that normally cover her studio floor, but which now are displayed on the floor and one wall of the gallery. The tarps are positioned across from her painting "Peekaboo," so the works appear to be in dialogue with each other, perhaps about the nature and process of painting.

"It's a conversation between the formally made painting and the more random, unconstructed and unguided tarps," she says. They disagree, "but they share a language."

Geichman began noticing the relationship of her abstract paintings to the

random stains and marks on her floor coverings a few years ago when she and her husband, painter Frank Piatek, mounted a show that recreated a fiction of their shared studio space. She began to think about painting with more flexible boundaries, using the overflow and residue of her process as part of the work.

"The tarps are intimate, they're covered with cat hair," Geichman says, explaining why she chose to exhibit them bottom-side-up so that we see stained canvas rather than layers of spilled paint embedded with years worth of studio residue. This distances them a little from their immediate function

and recent history and increases their sense of randomness without losing any connection to the painting process from which they derive.

Geichman, who has taught painting at the School of the Art Institute for 15

years, makes her organic abstractions by pouring paint and manipulating the canvas to move the paint into place. She describes her process as "shepherding the accident" and sees the tarpaulins as "an expanded field for painting that can be seen from multiple views."

The installation is a meditation on the aesthetic of randomness. It asks whether anything made by an artist, even residue, is really random. Also, though, and maybe mainly, the installation is a work about work. It is a tribute to the studio as workplace, to the practice and discipline of painting.

"It's about the studio as a sacred place," says Geichman. "It's about how important work is, especially now. These are the remnants of a place where contemplation takes place, where freedom reigns. All of us, artists, are trying to find freedom in our work. The studio is where we find strength and grounding."

*"Playing the Field:
Wall, Ground, Surface"*
Judith Geichman
Fassbender Gallery
835 W. Washington
(312) 666-4302



Judith Geichman