TRIPLE TAKE

“It was such a brilliant, mind-blowing exhibition,” says Lucy Mitchell-Innes of the Whitney Museum of American Art’s lauded 2013 Jay DeFeo retrospective, “that we were quite intimidated to follow on that.” So, for the first presentation since the blockbuster of the late Bay Area artist’s AbEx-tinged work at Mitchell-Innes & Nash in Chelsea, the dealer confides, “we had to develop another narrative that shows a different side of Jay.” For the show, running May 1 through June 7, she assembled nearly 50 collages, drawings, paintings, and photographs from the 1960s through the 1980s that reveal DeFeo’s dogged pursuit of specific formal elements across media—say, the sculptural qualities of wadded Kleenex, in one surprisingly affecting group of photographs, photocopies, and paintings. “The way she would play around with scale, fragments would take on a life of their own,” notes Mitchell-Innes. And the way the works speak to one another, she says, demonstrates “the integrity of the vision, the consistency of it—and the intensity. Emotionally, the work is just right out there.” —SPH