

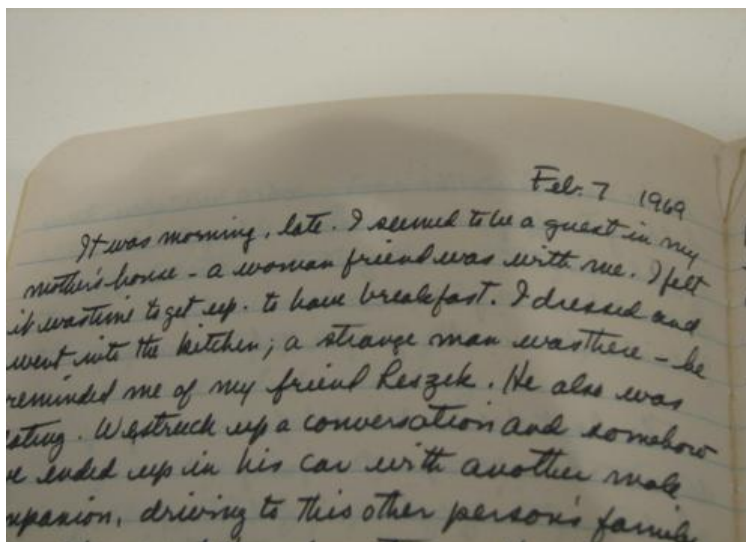
# Currently Hanging: A Life

by [Jen Graves](#) • Mar 16, 2010 at 10:37 am



**The lure** is a parade of large, *very* groovy, op-artish paintings in mint condition from the 1960s. Giant colored circles march down the wall, vibrating and oscillating like TV screens on the blink or cartoon eyeballs on drugs. These are from Mary Henry's *On/Off* series of 1968—a series that made it into *Artforum* the following year.

But that's just the front room at [Howard House](#) this month. It looks like a relatively typical gallery show. And it's not.



- **"It was morning, late. I seemed to be a guest in my mother's house..."**

It's an entire biography of artifacts. Step into the back room and you're met with Henry's earliest self-portraits; landscapes that show the obvious influence of Thomas Hart Benton-style regionalism; her high-school diploma; a signed report card of her "satisfactory" grade (that was the highest grade!) from **Laszlo Moholy-Nagy**; her **dream journal** from when she left her marriage at age 50 and began a new, liberated life as an artist, hippie chick (check out the Wilson Pickett posters she saved, and her pot drawings), and, eventually, die-hard abstractionist.

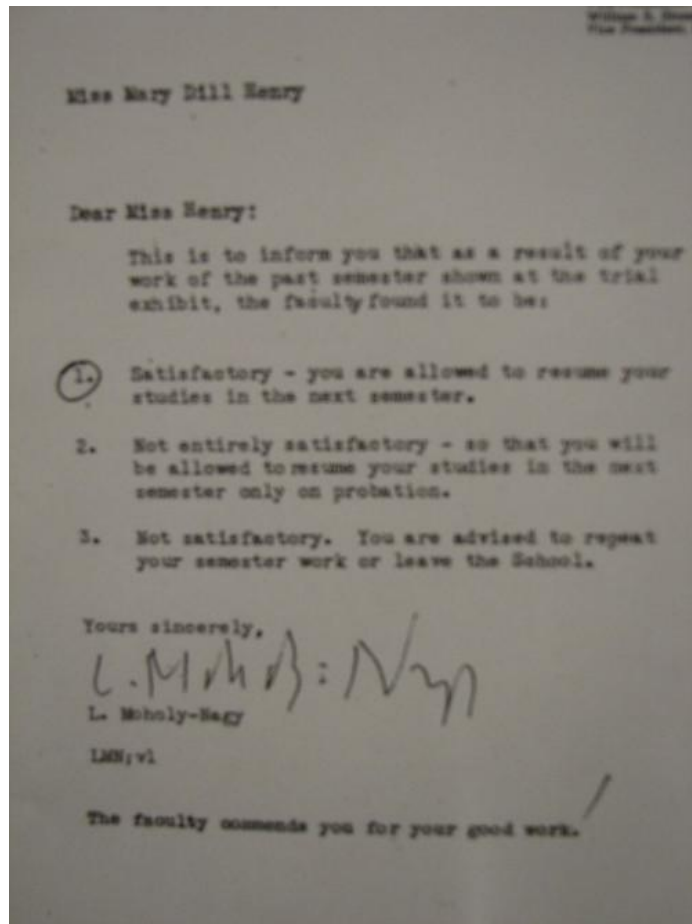
Henry's [\*\*art and life\*\*](#) are truly remarkable—and this show raises the question, **Where is her archive headed?**

Nowhere yet, says dealer Billy Howard.

Curators and historians of all kinds: Attention should be paid here.  
Everybody else: Henry would have been 97 this Friday (March 19). To celebrate her birthday, spend some time with this show; the gallery is open Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10:30-5 and you'll be glad you did. **Meeting Mary Henry is its own reward**, and this may be your last chance for a while. Lots more images (pot drawing! glamour photo! report card!) on the jump.







- The report card from Moholy-Nagy.

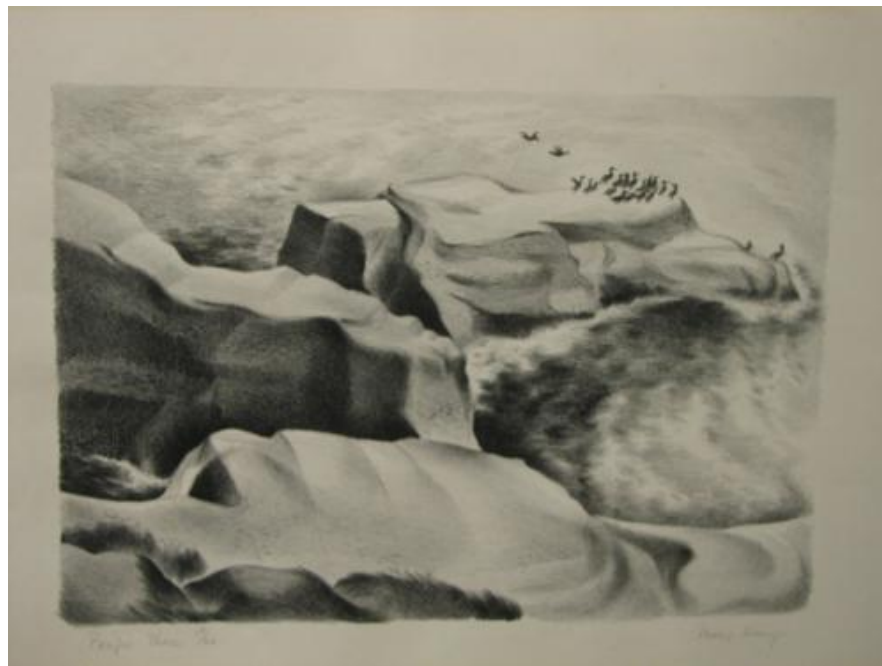


- Detail from an installation she did at Hewlett Packard.





- An installation at the Stockton Record newspaper.



- WPA-era landscape.