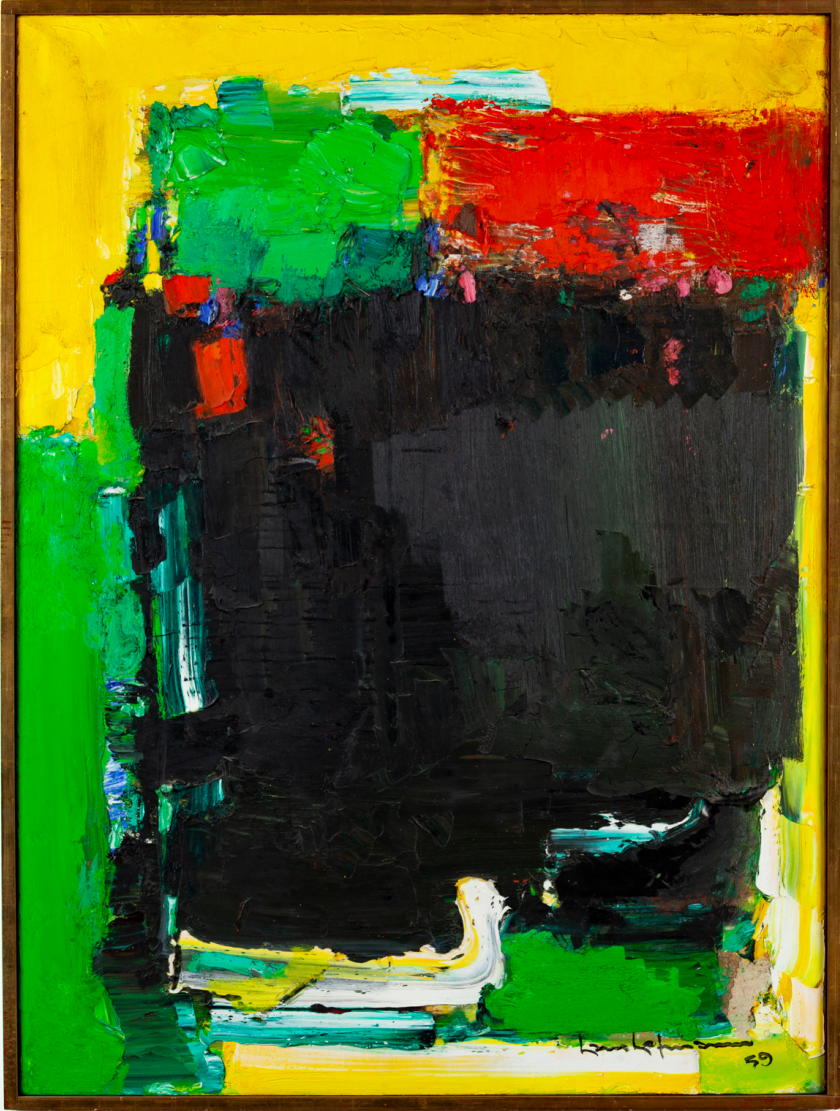
An abstract painting by Hans Hofmann, featuring a large, dark, textured central area. The top is divided into bright green and red sections, while the bottom has yellow and white elements. The painting is characterized by thick, expressive brushstrokes and a vibrant color palette.

Hans Hofmann

Kavi Gupta | 835 West Washington Boulevard, Chicago, USA | +1 312 432 0708 | info@kavigupta.com

Kavi Gupta



Hofmann, Hans (1880-1966)

Blissful Darkness

1959

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in. (canvas) : 49.25 x 37.25 in.
(frame)

Signed, dated, title and inv. Recto

Exhibitions:

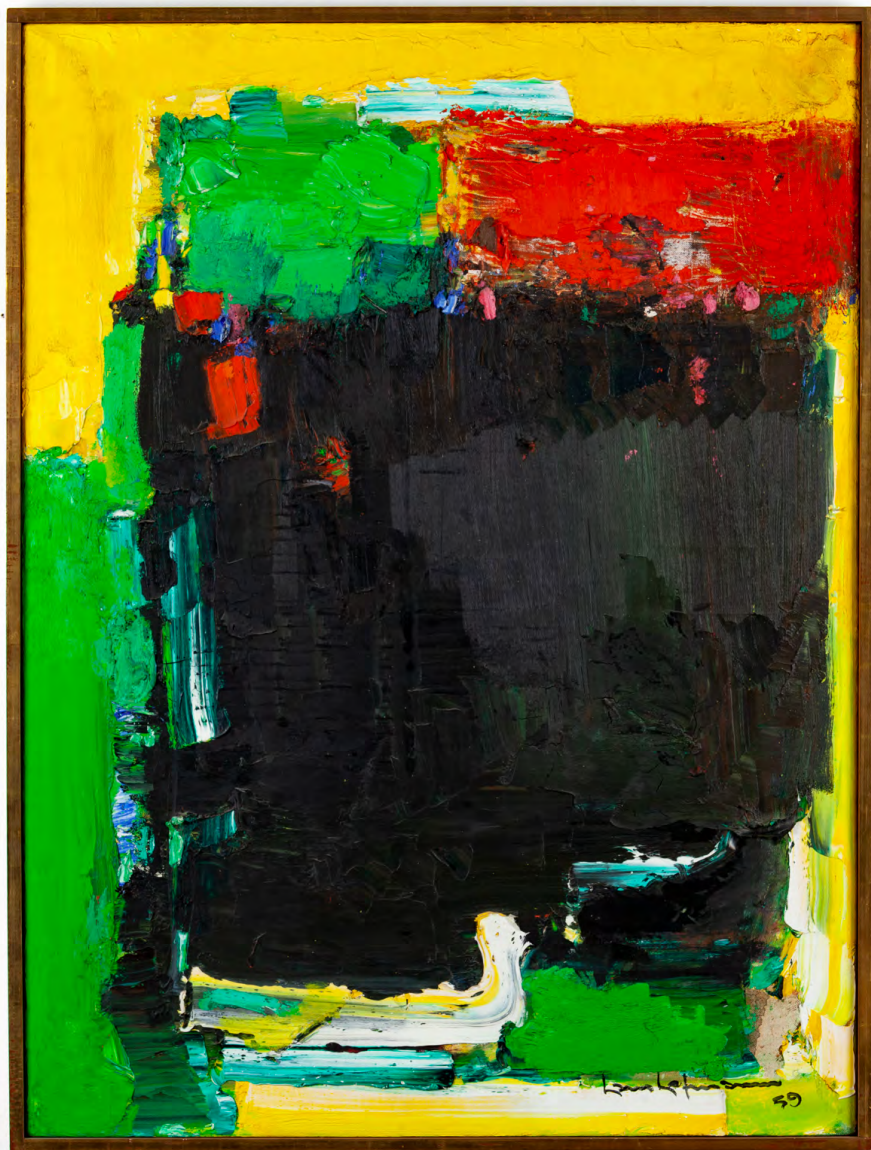
- 1960 Kootz Gallery, New York (solo)
- 1961 Feingarten Galleries, Beverly Hills, CA (solo, traveled)
- 1968 Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago (solo)
- 1979 Abstract Expressionism:
A Tribute to Harold Rosenberg,
Painting and Drawings from the
Collection, Smart Museum,
Chicago, IL (group)

Provenance:

Estate of the artist, 1966-1968
André Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1968
Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago, IL, 1968
Acquired by Private Collection from Richard
Gray Gallery, Chicago, IL, 1968:

*In confidence: Lifton Collection, Chicago
(note: In-laws of dealer Kavi Gupta & Wife,
Jessica Moss, Curator of Contemporary Art,
Univ. of Chicago, Smart Museum of Art*

Kavi Gupta



Hofmann, Hans (1880-1966)

Blissful Darkness

1959

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in. (canvas) : 49.25 x 37.25 in.

(original frame, bel.)

Signed, dated, title and inv. Recto

Exhibitions:

1960 Kootz Gallery, New York (solo)

1961 Feingarten Galleries, Beverly Hills, CA
(solo, traveled)

1968 Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago (solo)

1979 *Abstract Expressionism:
A Tribute to Harold Rosenberg,*
Painting and Drawings from the
Collections, Smart Museum, Chicago

Provenance:

Kootz Gallery, NY 1960 (Exhibited)

Estate of the artist, 1966-1968

André Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1968

Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago, IL, 1968

Acquired by Private Chicago Collection from
Richard Gray directly, 1968:

Piece has only been out in public for two
months in 1979 for exhibition. Otherwise
never to market or public.

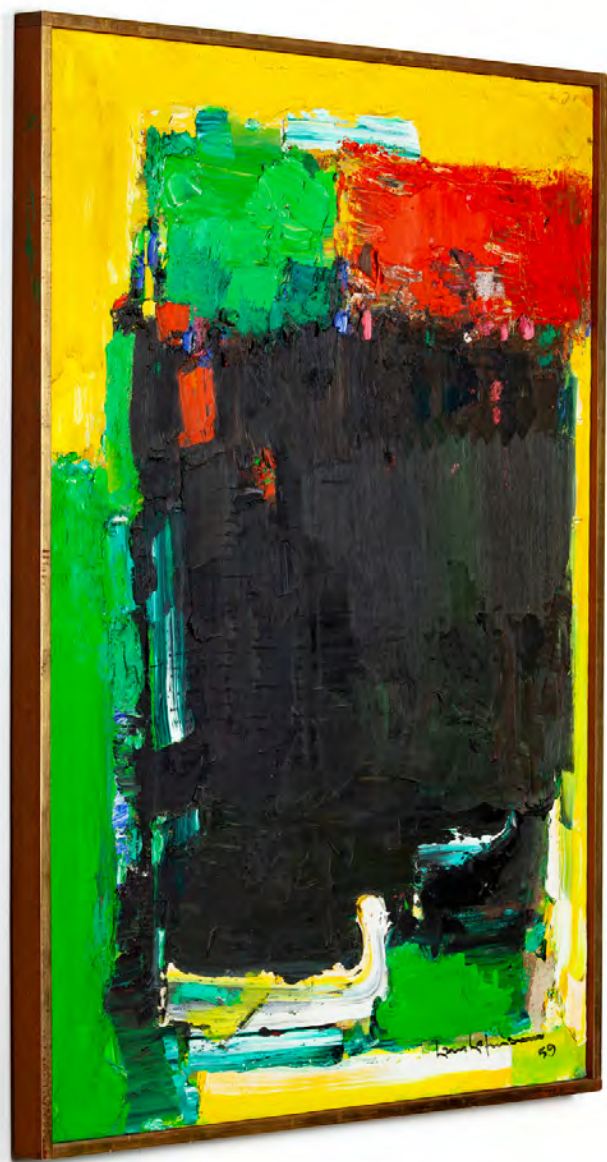
All Notes in catalogue Raisonné with multiple
viewings by Hoffman and Abstract
Expressionist Scholar, David Moos (former
*Chief Curator Birmingham Museum, Art
Gallery of Ontario amongst others*)

In confidence: Private Chicago Collection from
the family estate of dealer Kavi Gupta & Wife,
Jessica Moss, Curator of Contemporary Art,
University of Chicago, Smart Museum of Art.

Lifton/Moss family renowned philanthropic & civic
leaders in Chicago for over multiple generations

The Gupta/Moss Collection:

[https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/
step-inside-this-art-insiders-chicago-family-
home](https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/step-inside-this-art-insiders-chicago-family-home)



Artist and Work Background

Hans Hofmann was an abstract expressionist who taught many other notable, generational artists. He produced many of his best paintings when he retired from teaching to focus on his own art-work. He is best known for paintings done in the late fifties/early sixties that combine rectangular block forms with bright colors, pushing the limits of form and color.

The Subject Property is among the most desirable from the artist, as it dates from 1959. The two very important Kootz Gallery exhibitions presented the most desired works from Hofmann, with most in museum collections. This piece has additional value because of ownership by esteemed collector/dealer, André Emmerich and that it has not been seen by the public in over 45 years.

It is smaller than the paintings that have achieved the top few prices for the artists, but nevertheless is a very rare and highly desirable painting.

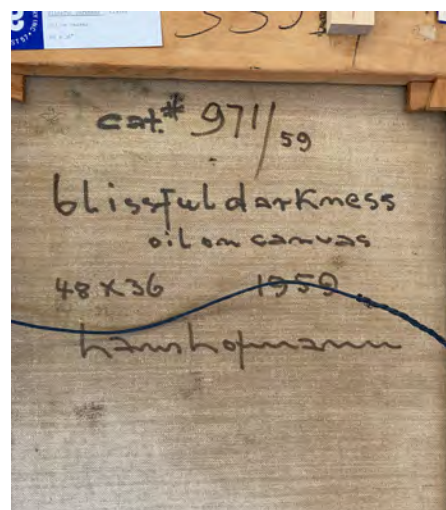
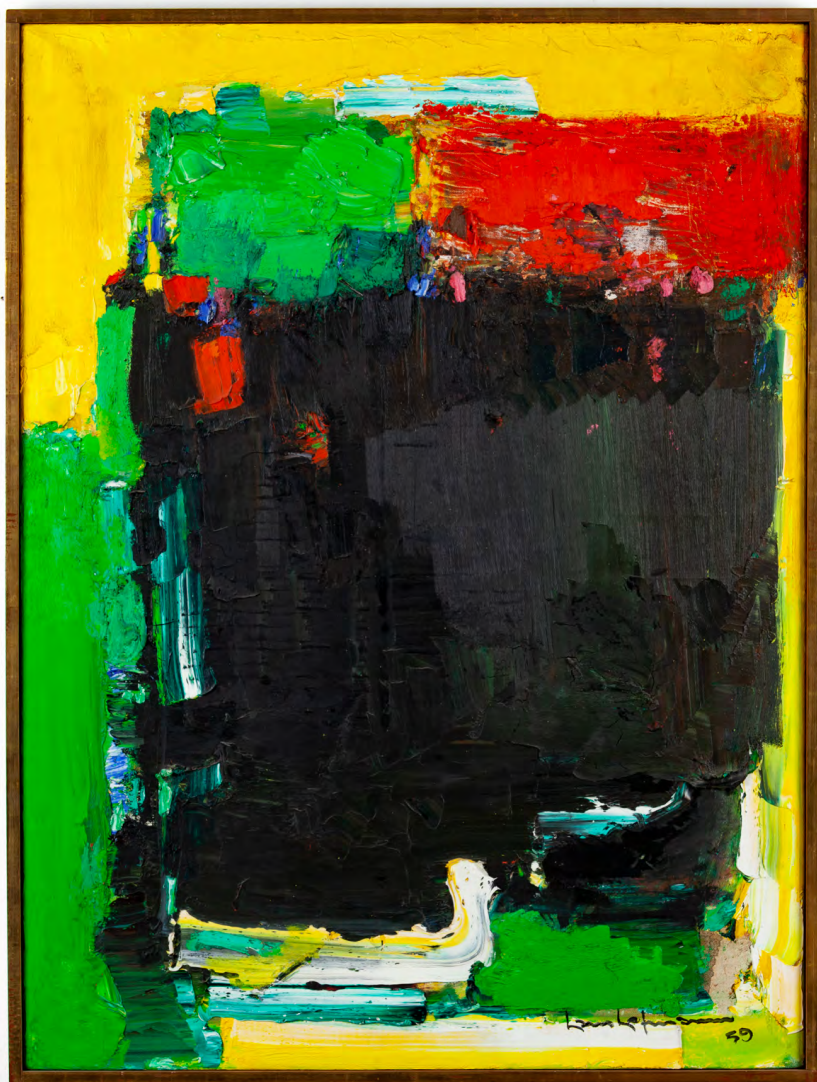
The market for these works has been relatively consistent. The auction record was achieved in 2015, with The top ten prices for the artist all from within the last ten years.

Description

Vertical framed oil on canvas painting. Thickly applied paint in wide strokes make up abstract fields of color. At the center is a large field of black with hints of green and a few short strokes of red. A rectangle of red sits above and to the right of the black. To the left of the red field is a smaller green rectangle. The top and 1/3 of the left edge is painted yellow. This is mirrored as a thinner edge of yellow along the right and bottom. Bottom 2/3 of the left edge is painted green. Under the black field is a green field to the right and two thick strokes of blend-ed white and teal to the left.

Good and Stable Condition
Signed and dated on lower right recto

Hans Hofmann began painting in Paris, where he worked alongside such titans of European Modernism as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Fernand Leger, and Henri Matisse. His best-known early paintings combine Cubist structure with Fauvist color, as in *Untitled* (1943). Although he would eventually be considered one of the preeminent Abstract Expressionists, having relocated to New York in 1932, Hofmann's primary interest was in pictorial phenomena: the illusion of three-dimensional space, composition, and the optical effects of color. "It is not the form that dictates color, but the color that brings out the form," he once said. In the 1950s, Hofmann made his most famous series of paintings, in which he explored the relativity of color, developing his "push-pull" theory and technique by which warm and cool colors interact to produce effects of movement, space, and depth. Major traveling retrospectives have been organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1957, 1990), and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (1976) amongst many others.

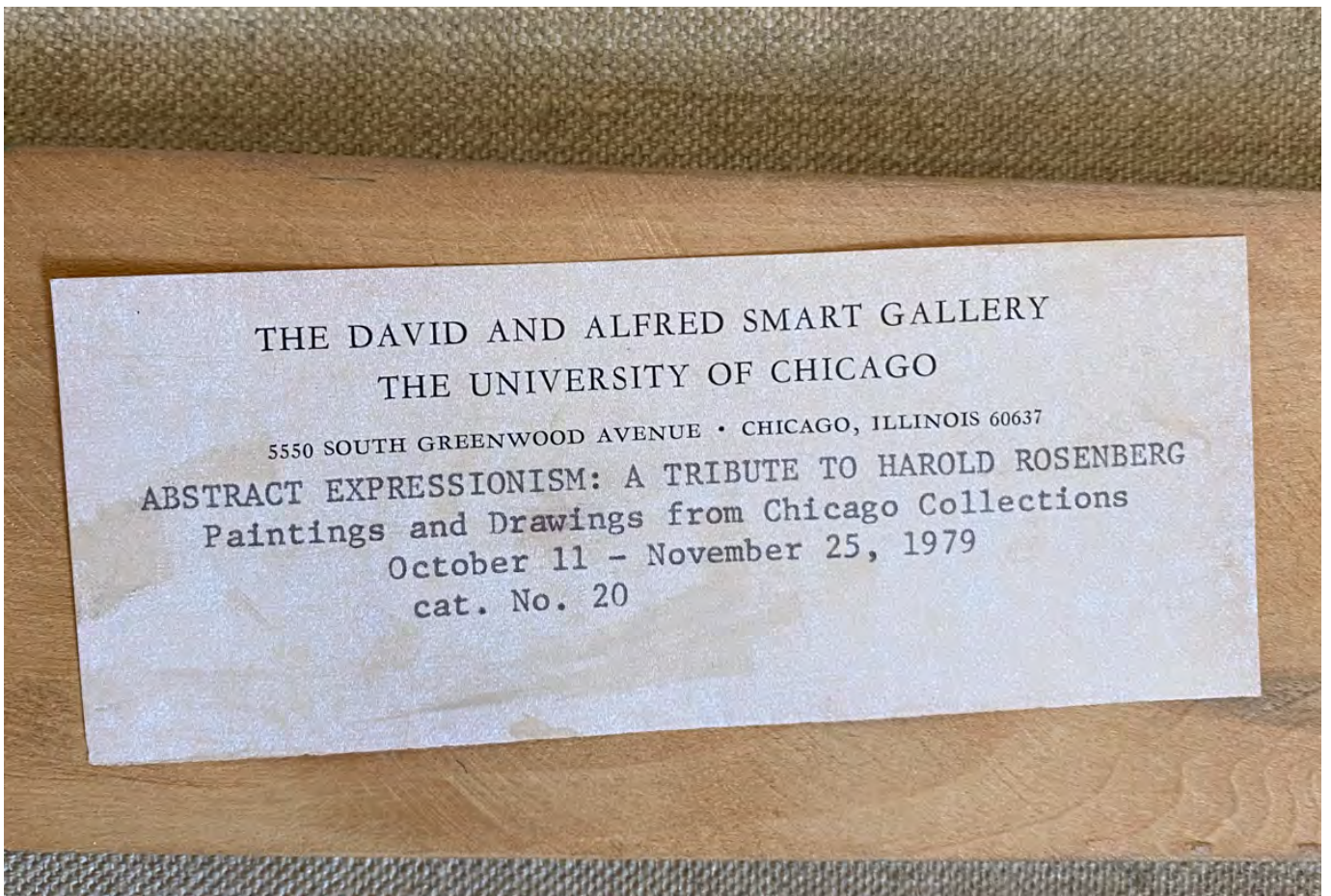


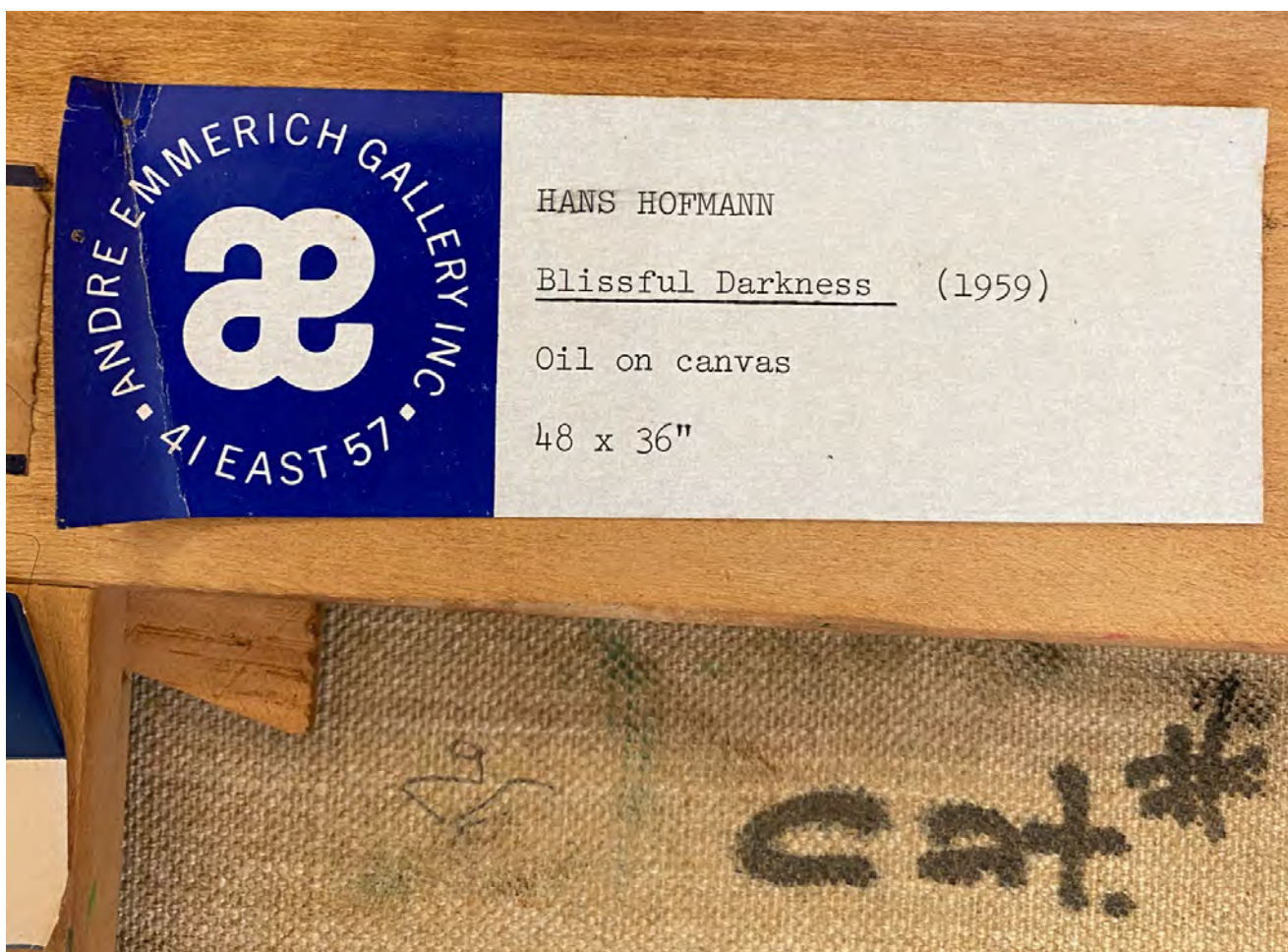
Value Basis

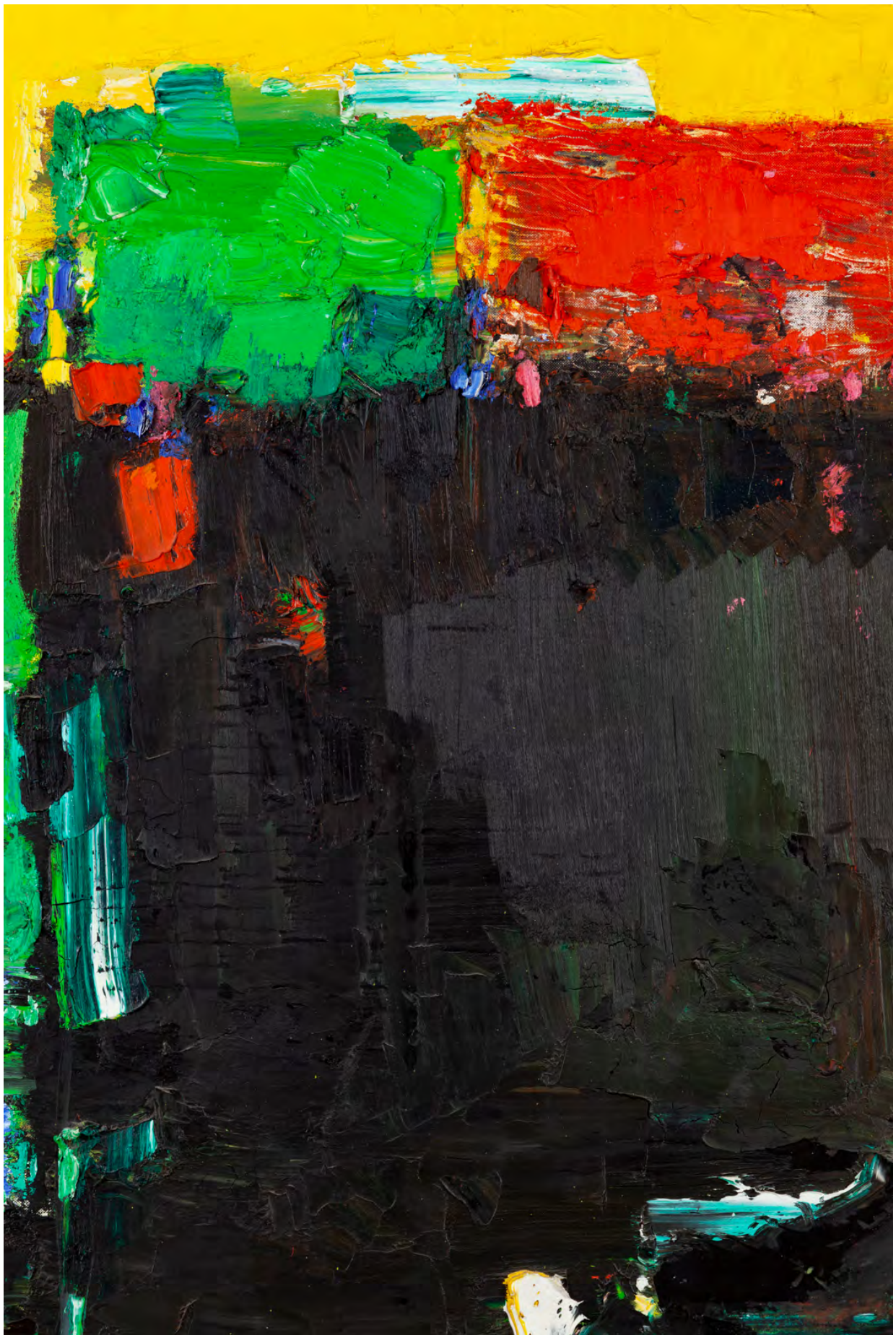
On 7.9.2016, in a report prepared by Joel Straus Consulting, Chicago; the Appraiser researched auction records for works by the Artist on the major on line auction databases and found a number of recent sales for similar works. Comparable 1 is the same size as the Subject Property, however it is a later work, done in 1965, which is less appealing to most collectors. It is also compositionally not as strong of a work. It sold in May 2015 for \$1,061,000. Comparable 2 was painted only one year after the Subject Property, though it is twice as large as the Subject Property and therefore higher in value. It also sold in 2015 for \$6,325,000 - the auction record for the artist. Though larger, this example demonstrates the continuous, upward and

growing strength in the market for the artists work, especially from this period. Comparable 3 is again the same size as the Subject Property and slightly later with a date of 1963. It sold in May of 2013 for \$2,139,750. It is a dynamic work with more of the looser style the artist gravitated to later, but not as iconic in composition as the Subject Property. Comparable 4 is also slightly later, painted in 1962. it is larger, but similar compositionally with its combination of both rectangular forms and abstract loose brushwork. **Given the sales noted above, the relative size of the Subject Property as well as its date, the Appraiser arrived at a Fair Market Value of \$2,500,000. (note this valuation was done in 2016)**

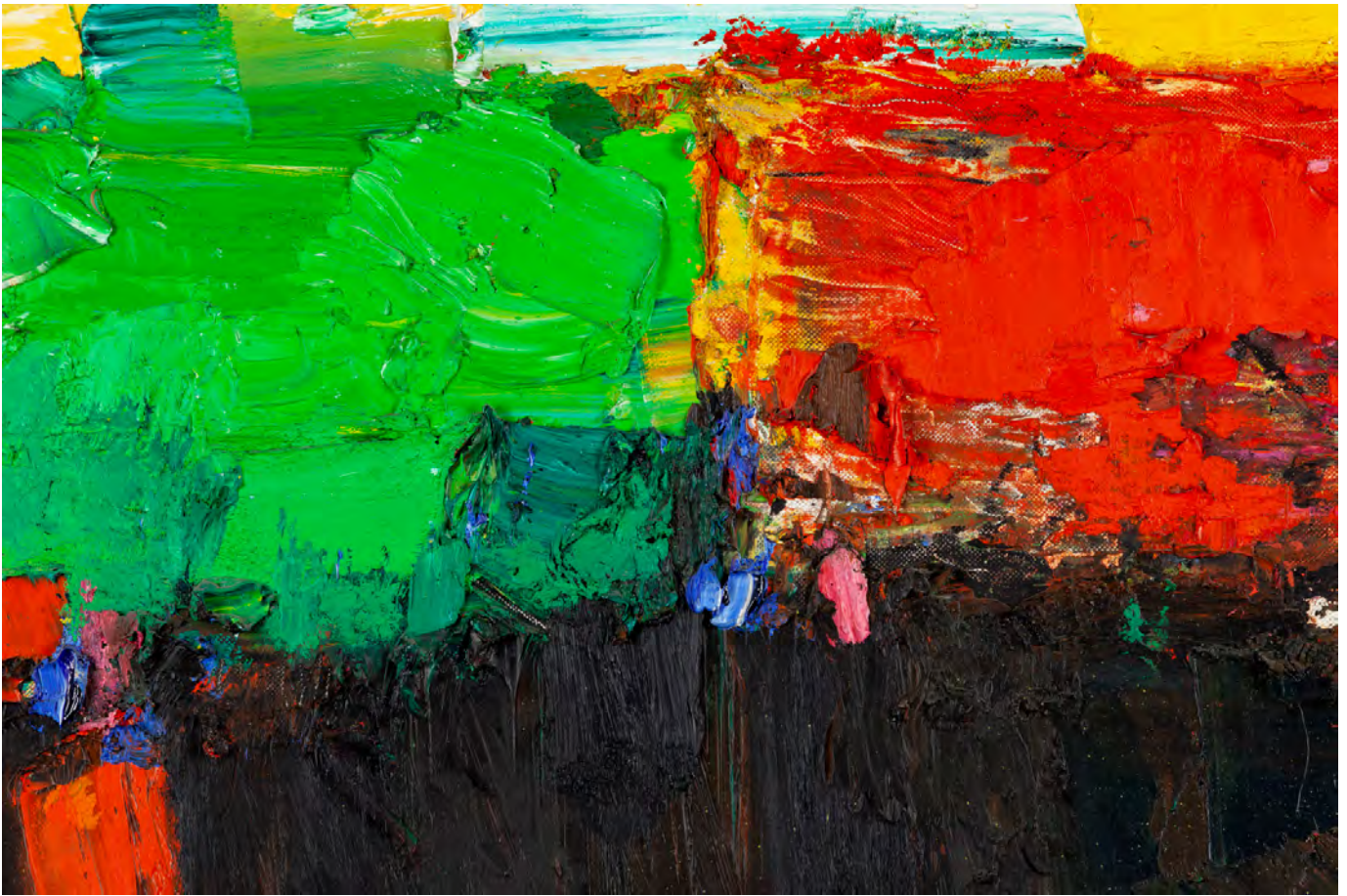
The Auction Results Below will show that the Value for this rare, remaining "Slab" style Painting to be much higher than the 2016



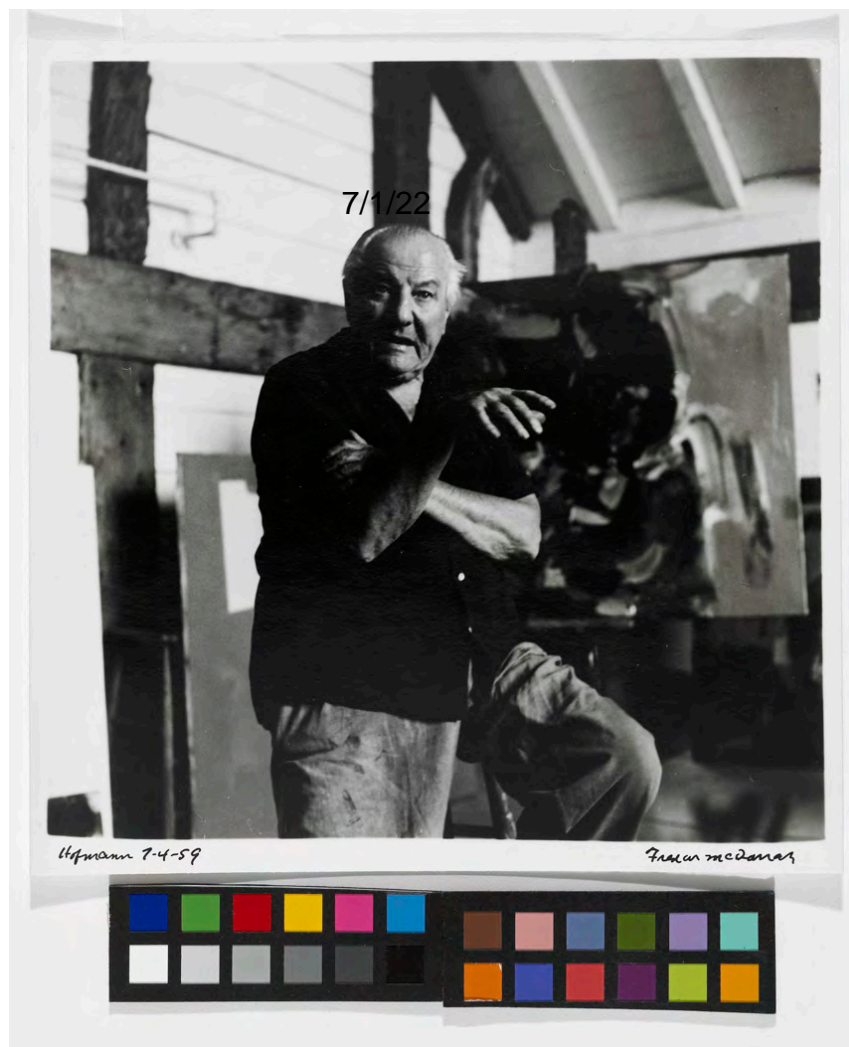








Recent Auction Comparables to the Work, *Blissful Darkness, 1959*



Fred W. McDarrah (American, 1926-2007)

Hans Hofmann, Provincetown 7/4, 1959, 1959 gelatin silver print

8 x 8 inches (20.32 x 20.32 cm) Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

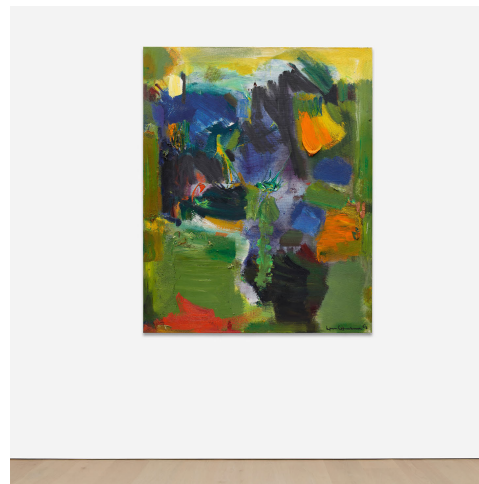
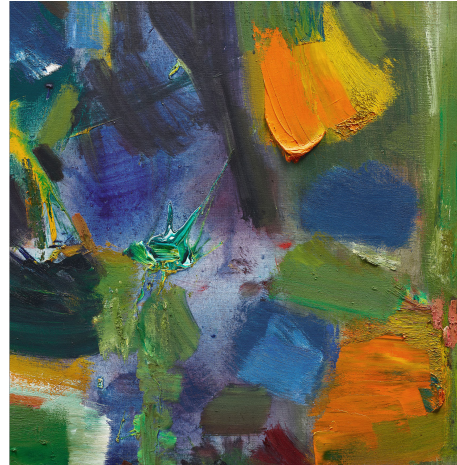
Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1976 K1976:4.25

Auction Record Report

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2022 auction record(s).

Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee



Artist: Hans Hofmann

Title: *In Upper Regions*

Sales Price: \$2,571,000 **

Low Estimate: \$1,500,000

High Estimate: \$2,000,000

% Difference: 28.55% over estimate

Signature: Signed and Dated

Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas

Size Inches: 60" x 48"

Size CM: 152.40 cm x 121.92 cm

Year Created: 1963

Auction Date(s): 05/18/2022

Auction: 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale, Phillips New York lot 28

Provenance: Kootz Gallery, New York (acquired by 1964) David N. Marks and Adele Marks, New York (acquired from Sotheby's, New York, November 12, 2003, lot 16 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibitions: New York, Kootz Gallery, Hans Hofmann: Paintings, 1963, February 18–March 7, 1964, n.p. (illustrate

Lot Notes: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, Hans Hofmann: A Retrospective, October 14, 1976–April 3, 1977, no. 64, p. 96 (illustrated)

Signed and dated "hans hofmann 63" lower right; signed, titled, inscribed and dated "Cat #1507 in upper regions 1963 hans hofmann" on the reverse. "My aim in painting is to create pulsating, luminous and open surfaces that emanate a mystic light, determined exclusively through painterly development, and in accordance with my deepest insight into the experience of life and nature." —Hans Hofmann, 1962 Painted in 1963, *In Upper Regions* is a striking example of Hans Hofmann's late "Slab" paintings that are deemed the greatest achievements of his career. In this large-scale composition, a jewel-toned ground emerges between layers of rich dark pigment. From thick impasto to diaphanous brushwork, sweeping gestures to measured strokes, *In Upper Regions* showcases the spectacular painterly prowess he unleashed after retiring from his career as a gifted art teacher in 1958. The present work featured in Hofmann's solo exhibition at the Kootz Gallery, New York in 1964, and was later shown at the artist's major retrospective at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from 1976 to 1977. Not seen for nearly two decades, *In Upper Regions* set Hofmann's world auction record at the time of its sale in New York in 2003. "Space was never a static thing, but alive, and its life can be felt in the rhythm in which everything in a visual ensemble exists." —Hans Hofmann The diverse body of "Slab" compositions Hofmann produced between the late 1950s until his death in 1966 comprise the artist's most recognized and highly coveted works. *In Upper Regions* is among a discrete number of "Slab" paintings created in this period that forgo the sharp rectangular forms more common to his mature oeuvre. As Paul Moorhouse discussed in the artist's catalogue raisonné, these "Slabs" without strict geometries maintain a more organic character in their freedom of handling and sensuous engagement with color.ⁱ The present work eloquently manifests Hofmann's celebrated "push-and-pull" theory—the illusion of depth and movement created by the tension between colored forms. Without relying on austere form, here Hofmann utilizes color to function as spatial planes in themselves purely through his dynamic application, perfectly capturing his statement:

Literature: "Only very great painting becomes so plastically sensitive, for the expression of the deepest in man calls for unexpected and surprising associations."ⁱⁱ Museum Collections: *Non-Geometric Abstractions*, 1963. In the last years of his life when *In Upper Regions* was conceived, Hofmann's abstractions became distinguished for their lyricism and explosive compositions. As Hofmann espoused, "When the impulses which stir us to profound emotion are integrated with the medium of expression, every interview of the soul may become art. This is contingent upon mastery of the medium."ⁱⁱⁱ Indeed Moorhouse noted of this late period that Hofmann's "elevated level of engagement with painting led inevitably to works in which Hofmann touched on even more immaterial themes connected with the passage of time, death, memory, passion, and the sublime."^{iv} As suggested by its title, *In Upper Regions* may regard the passing of his wife, Miz, in the same year of the present work's creation. "When I name a picture," the artist shared, "the title comes from the feeling the painting suggests. I work constantly toward poetic suggestion and I choose the names for my paintings accordingly."^v "That the artist can use formal and expressive means to communicate his 'inner world' is central to an appreciation of Hofmann's late work...Through painting, ideas and feelings are given form and substance." —Paul Moorhouse Recalling the chromatic scheme of Henri Matisse's *The Riverbank*, 1907 and Wassily Kandinsky's *Murnau* landscapes, *In Upper Regions* demonstrates the great influence of these artists on Hofmann's practice. It manifests his lifelong admiration for Matisse's Fauvist palette and rendering of space through unmodulated color, as well as his affinity with Kandinsky's notions on the spiritual possibilities of abstraction. Karen Wilkin has observed, "Many of Hofmann's most uninhibited, 'loose' abstractions, with their soft-edged patches of intense color and whiplash drawing, appear informed by Kandinsky's dynamic paintings from 1910-1914."^{vi} Conjuring the expressive handling and subjective evocations of his predecessor's *Improvisations*, the present work ultimately materializes Hofmann's paramount doctrine: "Creation is dominated by three absolutely different factors: First, nature, which works upon us by its laws; second, the artist, who creates a spiritual contact with nature and his materials; third, the medium of expression through which the artist translates his inner world."^{vii} ⁱ Paul Moorhouse, "The Structure of Imagination: Hofmann's Late Paintings," in Suzi Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I*, Surrey, 2014, pp. 54-61. ⁱⁱ Hans Hofmann, "The Search for the Real in the Visual Arts," in Sam Hunter, ed., *Hans Hofmann*, New York, 1964, p. 41. ⁱⁱⁱ Hans Hofmann, "Painting and Culture," in Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., eds., *Search for the Real: And Other Essays*, Andover, MA, 1967, p. 46. ^{iv} Paul Moorhouse, "The Structure of Imagination: Hofmann's Late Paintings," in Suzi Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I*, Surrey, 2014, p. 61. ^v Hans Hofmann, quoted in Katherine Kuh, "Hans Hofmann," in *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Modern Artists*, New York, 1962, p. 119. ^{vi} Karen Wilkin, "Becoming Hans Hofmann," *Art & Antiques Magazine*, May 2013, online. ^{vii} Hans Hofmann, "Painting and Culture," in Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., eds., *Search for the Real: And Other Essays*, Andover, MA, 1967, p. 55.

Source: Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I*, Surrey, 2014, pp. 54-61. ⁱⁱ Hans Hofmann, "The Search for the Real in the Visual Arts," in Sam Hunter, ed., *Hans Hofmann*, New York, 1964, p. 41. ⁱⁱⁱ Hans Hofmann, "Painting and Culture," in Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., eds., *Search for the Real: And Other Essays*, Andover, MA, 1967, p. 46. ^{iv} Paul Moorhouse, "The Structure of Imagination: Hofmann's Late Paintings," in Suzi Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I*, Surrey, 2014, p. 61. ^v Hans Hofmann, quoted in Katherine Kuh, "Hans Hofmann," in *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Modern Artists*, New York, 1962, p. 119. ^{vi} Karen Wilkin, "Becoming Hans Hofmann," *Art & Antiques Magazine*, May 2013, online. ^{vii} Hans Hofmann, "Painting and Culture," in Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., eds., *Search for the Real: And Other Essays*, Andover, MA, 1967, p. 55.



Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Artist: Hans Hofmann
Title: *Flowers of the Mind*
Sales Price: \$810,000 *
Price/Square Inch: \$496.32
Low Estimate: \$300,000
High Estimate: \$500,000
% Difference: 62.00% over estimate
Signature: Signed and Dated
Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas
Size Inches: 48" x 34"
Size CM: 121.92 cm x 86.36 cm
Year Created: 1965
Auction Date(s): 11/12/2021
Auction: Post-War & Contemporary Art Day Sale
By: Christie's New York, Rockefeller Center
Lot: 238

Provenance: Dr. Paul Lambert Schmitz, Germany, gift of the artist, 1965 Estate of the artist, 1973 André Emmerich Donald M. Feuerstein, New York, 1982 André Emmerich Gallery, New York Marc Sanders, Princeton, Christie's, New York, 18 November 1992, lot 3 André Emmerich Gallery, New York Riva Yares Gallery the above by the present owner, 1998

Exhibitions: André Emmerich Gallery, New York, *Hans Hofmann: Selected Works*, January-February 1993. André Emmerich Gallery, New York, *Hans Hofmann: Paintings Large and Small*, November 1994-January 1995. Galerie Haas & Fuchs, Bielefeld, *Das Spätwerk*, October-November 1997, p. 20 (illustrated). Riva Yares Gallery, Santa Fe, *A Theater of A* 1998, n.p. (illustrated).

Lot Notes: "Hofmann, now working at the peak of production few younger artists could sustain, is one of our major symbol of both the international origins of American painting and its subsequent world influence. It is the career of an artist, when his personal development cannot be separated from that of his epoch; see Hofmann" (W. Seitz, *Hans Hofmann*, exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1963, p. 7).

Literature: *Art & Auction*, vol. XVI, no. 6, New York, January 1994 (illustrated on the back cover). J. Yohe, ed., *Hans Hofmann*, 2002, p. 262 (illustrated). S. Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III* (1952 p. 471, no. P1584 (illustrated)).

Source: www.askART.com



Hofmann, Hans (1880-1966)

The Conjuror

1959

Oil on canvas

150 x 114 cm

Location: Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany

Auction Record Report

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1 auction record(s).



Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Artist:	Hans Hofmann
Title:	Untitled
Sales Price:	\$107,100 *(Fees to buyer included)
Price/Square Inch:	\$139.45
Low Estimate:	\$90,000
High Estimate:	\$120,000
Signature:	Unavailable
Medium/Ground:	Oil on board mounted to canvas
Size Inches:	32" x 24"
Size CM:	81.28 cm x 60.96 cm
Year Created:	1962
Auction Date(s):	11/19/2021
Auction:	Contemporary Art Day Auction
By:	Sotheby's New York
Lot:	337
Provenance:	Estate of the artistAndré Emmerich Gallery, New YorkMarianne Friedland Gallery, TorontoSotheby's New York, 11 November 1988, lot 118Richard Gray Gallery, ChicagoAcquired from the above by the present owner in December 1988
Exhibitions:	Toronto, David Mirvish Gallery, Hans Hofmann, 1977-78, illustrated in color on the announcement card
Condition:	This work is in good condition overall. There is evidence of light wear and handling along the edges and corners, with an associated loss to the board approximately 4 inches above the lower right corner. The edges are fabric-taped. There is evidence of minor hairline cracking, which has been consolidated, with associated pinpoint losses scattered in the thickly impastoed areas. Upon close inspection, there is evidence of minor paint separation in the black and orange passage in the bottom left quadrant. Under Ultraviolet light inspection, scattered areas in the thick impasto fluoresce darkly and appear to have benefited from consolidation and retouching. Framed. Framed dimensions: 40 ? by 32 ? in. (102.5 by 82.2 cm.)
Source:	
Literature:	Suzi Villiger, ed., <i>Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III: 1952-1965</i> , London 2014, cat. no. PW61, p. 518, illustrated in color

www.askART.com



Bonhams

LOT 8

HANS HOFMANN
(1880-1966)

A Certain Mood, 1959

Sold for US\$ 1,387,500 inc. premium

[FOLLOW](#)

Post-War & Contemporary Art

16 May 2017, 16:00 EDT
New York

Hofmann, Hans (1880-1966)
A Certain Mood
1959
Oil on canvas
40 x 29 3/8 in.

*Sold in 2017 at Bonhams Post War &
Contemporary Art Sale of 16 May in New York,*

\$1,387,500 inc. premium, after an estimate of
\$600,000 - 800,000.

Hans Hofmann: German painter



Left: Hans Hofmann, photograph by Arnold Newman, 1960. Right: Smaragd Red and Germinating Yellow, oil on canvas by Hans Hofmann, 1959; in the Cleveland Museum of Art.

BY THE EDITORS OF ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

Hans Hofmann, (born March 21, 1880, Weissenberg, Ger.—died Feb. 17, 1966, New York, N.Y., U.S.), German painter who was one of the most influential art teachers of the 20th century. He was a pioneer in experimenting in the use of improvisatory techniques; his work opened the way for the first generation of post-World War II American painters to develop Abstract Expressionism.

Hofmann died on February 17, 1966, in New York City. Hofmann began to study art in Munich in 1898, but in 1904 he moved to Paris, where he was deeply affected by the expressive use of colour that distinguished the paintings of Henri Matisse and Robert Delaunay. He opened his first school of painting in Munich in 1915.

In 1930 Hofmann moved to the United States, where he taught at the Art Students League in New York City

and later opened his own Hans Hofmann School of Fine Art, which soon became one of the most prestigious art schools in the country. By 1939 he was able to break away from the Expressionistic landscapes and still lifes he had painted in the early 1930s, and he developed a totally abstract manner notable for its wealth of invention, vigorous brushwork, and saturated colours. He used both geometric and irregular forms in his paintings. His painting *Spring* (1940) was among the earliest works to employ the paint-dripping technique associated with the American painter Jackson Pollock. In 1958 Hofmann disbanded his school and devoted the rest of his life to his own art. Before his death, Hofmann endowed a special gallery for the exhibition of his works in Berkeley, California.

Hans Hofmann retrospective at the Peabody Essex Museum



Hans Hofmann, *The Vanquished*, 1959. Oil on canvas

BY KEITH POWERS

In a exhibition with startling juxtapositions, the Peabody Essex Museum opens an important retrospective, “Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction,” including many major works by the 20th century abstract expressionist.

Hofmann (1880–1966), German-born but a longtime resident of the United States, influenced so many artists during the last century that it reads like an artworld gossip column. Frankenthaler, Blaine, Krasner, Mitchell, Feinberg—a long list of painters Hofmann taught in his studios.

And even before he left the growing turmoil in Europe, coming to America in 1930, Hofmann knew and worked with another set of artistic dynamos—Braque, Picasso,

Rouault, Matisse, the Delaunays. Through his teaching and painting, Hofmann intersected with nearly all the most influential artistic figures of the first-half of the century.

But this exhibition—almost four dozen large works, most originating from the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, where Hofmann bequeathed most of his paintings—focuses on Hofmann, not on his boldface connections. The exhibition shows work that was created in Germany and France, before he came to America, but also subsequently on the west coast, where he taught, and well as from his studios in Greenwich Village and also in Provincetown, where he lived

and painted for decades.

At first the exhibition layout feels incomplete, almost haphazard. No works by Hofmann are visible upon first entering the rooms. But as viewers snake their way through the galleries—it's like a winding pathway, with not that much visibility up ahead—the importance of seeing these works discretely, one at a time, becomes apparent.

They deserve individual attention. Viewers need the time to soak up these abstracts, and not be overwhelmed with multiple viewings of Hofmann's bright palette and depth-of-field experimentations.

Landscapes and still lifes—all veering toward the eventual complete abstractions—ease visitors into the work. Hofmann painted in oils, gouache and watercolors, creating different textures from his media, all in his own

recognizable style. *odist, quiam, ut inte di repelecta vitatiiste vendem coreris tiberfe rovitis eum is accatium fugias simus invelis esenis essus aut paribus delent.*

Other artists' signatures are visible—automatic paintings that we recognize as Pollock or Krasner, touches of Hofmann's European colleagues like Matisse, Braque or Miró—but Hofmann painted like nobody else. Especially in the late work, voluminously on display here, which engages the viewer most completely.

Hofmann closed his teaching studios in the late 1950s, and the resulting decade of intense work before his death resulted in multiple densely worked, strongly conceived abstracts. Taken as a group, these large, late works are painted with utmost artistic confidence, using color, shape and movement intentionally, and to great effect.

"The Vanquished," "The Lark," and "Orange Mood" could be studied for hours. Expansive canvases like "The Castle," "Ora Pro Nobis," and "Goliath"—each with recognizable geometric shapes that move out and away from the underlying abstraction, creating an alluring depth-of-field—show an artist with bold confidence in his vision, and methods.

This final period of Hofmann's life—there are more than a dozen works from that period—offers a glorious epiphany of 20th century abstraction. The great abstract expressionists did some of these things; Hofmann did it all.

"Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction" runs through Jan. 5, 2020 at the Peabody Essex Museum. Exhibition is free with museum admission. Visit pem.org or call 978-745-9500.



Hans Hofmann, Goliath, 1960. Oil on canvas

Hans Hofmann: Fall Euphony, 1959



BY ABHI SINGH

Hans Hoffman was born in Weißenburg, Bavaria, Germany, on March 21, 1880.

He was something of a child prodigy, excelling in mathematics, sciences and music, as well as drawing, from a young age. At the age of sixteen, Hoffman was made Director of the Public Works of the State of Bavaria, and his mathematical skills led to several scientific inventions.

In 1904, Hoffman moved to Paris and studied art, attending night classes at the École de la Grande Chaumière and taking courses at the Académie Colarossi. Hoffman later returned to Germany and began to focus on teaching art. He opened the School of Fine Arts in Munich in 1915, and after moving to New York City in the 1930's, he established the Hans Hoffman School of Fine Arts in New York in 1933 and also created a summer school in Provincetown, Massachusetts in 1935. Many notable artists, including Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler, Charles and Ray Eames,

"The whole world, as we experience it visually, comes to us through the mystic realm of color." -Hans Hofmann

Red Grooms, Joan Mitchell and Larry Rivers were his students. Hoffman stated his philosophy of art in the prospectus of his Munich school: "Art does not consist in the objectivized imitation of reality. Without the creative impulse of the artist, even the most perfect imitation of reality is a lifeless form..."

In 1958, Hoffman gave up his forty-year teaching career to devote himself to painting. In his late works, such as Fall Euphony, he dedicated himself to the explorations of color, space and form. In Fall Euphony, one can observe his style of quieter, heavily paint-laden, constructed rectangles. During this period, he also created highly energized and gestured drip paintings.

Hans Hoffman was one of the twentieth century's most influential art teachers and became a beacon for aspiring young artists in America. His methods influenced several generations of painters.

Hoffman died on February 17, 1966, in New York City.

CALIFORNIA

Strokes of Genius: Hans Hofmann's Gift to Berkeley



Hans Hofmann: Morning Mist, 1958; oil on canvas // Detail of image courtesy of BAMPFA; Gift of the artist // Photography by Ben Blackwell

BY STEVEN WINN

Abstract painter Hans Hofmann left his mark on art education at Cal.

Hans Hofmann, the great abstract expressionist painter and teacher, might never have made his indelible imprint on 20th-century American art, first on the West Coast and ultimately across the U.S., had it not been for two summers teaching at UC Berkeley. The invitation came from Worth Ryder, an art department faculty member and former Hofmann student, and without it, it's possible there wouldn't even be much of a Berkeley Art Museum.

More than half a century after his death, visitors to the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) come from all over the world to seek out Hofmann paintings. His audaciously colorful, compositionally vital canvases, some four dozen of them, rank as one of the great magnetic strengths of the collection. Comparably powerful, for the many students who studied with him, was the artist's influential force as teacher.

"What Hofmann brought was a spirit of experimentation," said BAMPFA director and chief curator Lawrence Rinder, "and with it the sense that it was the artist's responsibility to put themselves into uncomfortable and challenging positions. We take that for granted now. But

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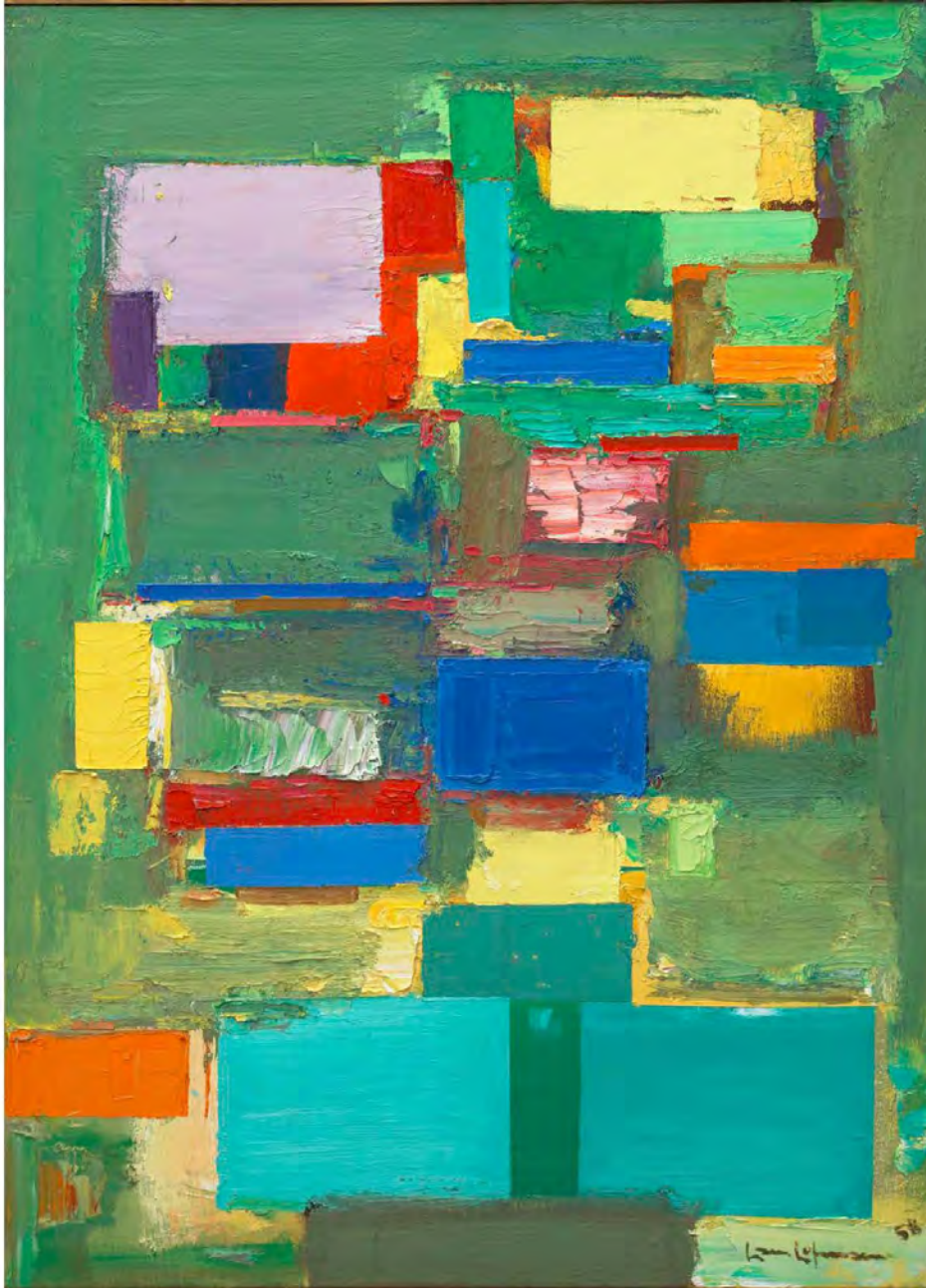
Pertinant Background

to people in his classes [at the time], here and elsewhere, ... that was revolutionary and exciting.” It made Hofmann “... a shaping force in the Berkeley art department” for decades, that still has resonance today.

Hofmann (1880–1966) was a celebrated 50-year-old artist and teacher when Ryder reconnected with his German mentor. Like many American artists, Ryder had traveled to Europe in the 1920s to study at Hofmann’s

famed Schule für moderne Kunst in the Schwabing district of Munich and had never forgotten the experience.

Ryder regarded Hofmann’s school as “the most notable academy of modern art in Central Europe” and he was eager to build the Berkeley art department’s profile—he later became its chairman, and he remained a lifelong Hofmann advocate. And so Ryder asked if Hofmann would be interested in teaching in the 1930 Berkeley summer session.



Hans Hofmann: Morning Mist, 1958; oil on canvas // Detail of image courtesy of BAMPFA; Gift of the artist // Photography by Ben Blackwell

For Hofmann, who was already sensing the shifting political winds in Germany, the opportunity was timely and irresistible. Nine years later, with the Third Reich in ascendance, his wife, Maria (known as Miz), who had urged her husband to leave Germany, joined him in the U.S. for good. “Thus Berkeley, because of Worth Ryder, became [Hofmann’s] rescuer,” wrote Erle Loran, another of the artist’s former student acolytes. For Loran, Hofmann was nothing less than “the greatest teacher of painting and composition since the Renaissance.”

Accounts of Hofmann’s instructional methods, along with his own theoretical writings, capture a teacher of formidable assets and a singular approach. First there was his deep immersion in European modernism. He had lived and painted in Paris, where he was, by his own account, “in constant touch with Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Delaunay, Derain, Gertrude Stein, and others.” The breakthroughs of cubism, fauvism, color-based abstraction, and surrealism

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were deeply embedded but never used as proscriptive doctrine in his classes.

Hofmann wanted his students to look closely at other work—from Giotto to Cézanne to their contemporaries—but insisted they learn to create in an unfettered, independent way. Process was more important than a well-schooled finished product. He was known to tear student drawings into pieces on the spot and reassemble them into new compositions.

With his leonine head, Bavarian affability, and a manner of speaking in an accented English “that has not ceased to be German,” as Frederick S. Wright put it, Hofmann was a dramatic presence. He taught “by exploration, by diagrams and sketches, by furious demonstrations, and, like a Zen guru, by shock,” wrote William Seitz in the catalog of a 1963 Hofmann exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art.

“He taught principles rather than technique,” said Lucinda Barnes, curator of the Hofmann “Nature of Abstraction” show now at BAMPFA. “He inspired young artists ... to look at another work to find their own voice, their own expressive potential.”

Hofmann repeatedly declined to name favorite or stand-out students. Painting mattered; personality didn’t. “What I love really in the function of a teacher,” he said, “is the steady contact with new possibilities in the future—with new generations.”

Hofmann’s prose, some of which was translated by Glenn Wessels, yet another Berkeley teacher and artist who had studied with him in Munich, had an incisive clarity. “Simplicity should mean pureness, not poorness,” Hofmann said. “Form only exists through color, and color only exists through form.” An artist must make a “spiritual” connection with both nature and his materials, he maintained, to “translate his inner world.” These and other thoughts, including his oft-referenced ideas about the “push and pull” of picture planes and an activated space within, appear in Hofmann’s invaluable book *Search for the Real*.

Hofmann, who taught steadily in Europe and America from 1915 to 1958, sacrificed some of his own time for painting to his students. But he never stopped sketching. Among his subjects, in the two summers he spent in Berkeley (1930 and ’31), were the oil derricks in nearby Richmond. The fluid, flowing lines of ink invoke the black substance being extracted from the soil.

Another of his Berkeley students, John Haley, recalled Hofmann driving around in a Packard and abruptly stopping in the middle of the street when something caught

his eye. A number of his California sketches feature the Packard’s steering wheel in the foreground: Hofmann was inviting the viewer to see exactly what he saw and how he saw it. And so they did, in exhibitions of Hofmann drawings on the Berkeley campus and at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.

Years after first gaining entry to this country via Berkeley, Hofmann created his own strongest work in America, in an astonishing late-career blossoming. Numerous fine examples are included in “Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction,” a major exhibition curated by BAMPFA curator emerita Barnes and on view through July 21, 2019.

After his two seasons of teaching in Berkeley, the artist decamped to the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles before establishing the Hofmann School of Art in New York, with summer classes held in the burgeoning Provincetown arts community on Cape Cod. In the process he influenced a generation of such important artists as Helen Frankenthaler, Larry Rivers, Lee Krasner, Allan Kaprow, and Joan Mitchell. His wide and



Hans Hofmann at work in his studio

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enduring impact, in Berkeley and far beyond, can hardly be overstated.

If Hofmann had left California behind, he never forgot the welcome Berkeley had shown him. In 1960, the artist donated his ebullient painting *Summer Bliss* to the University in honor of his old patron, Worth Ryder, who had recently died. Lawrence Rinder is not alone in speculating that the subject and title may have been a gesture of gratitude for that first happy summer Hofmann had spent in Berkeley 30 years before.

A more substantial gift came three years later, in 1963, when Hofmann arranged to donate dozens more paintings to Berkeley—47 in all—over a five-year period. The initial selections were made by the artist in consort with Erle Loran. Through sales of other work, Hofmann raised \$250,000, an enormous sum at the time, to support a new Berkeley Art Museum that was in the works, as well as scholarships for art students. Clark Kerr, UC president at the time, was an enthusiastic participant in the negotiations.

Hofmann died in 1966, two years before the five-year gift was complete. But it went forward as planned, creating a core asset for the striking new building on Bancroft Way, with its muscular Brutalist profile and cantilevered gallery spaces. The Mario Ciampi-designed museum opened in 1970 and (having been found seismically unsound) closed in 2014, in advance of BAMPFA's move to its current home on Center Street.

Under terms of the bequest, the majority of this gift of

Hofmann paintings remained on view at the museum on Bancroft for 25 years. Many were shown in various ways after that, as they still are in the new building. Thanks to the open, connected designs of both the old and current structures, it has always seemed that a Hofmann is in sight.

Under the leadership of Peter Selz, founding director of the Berkeley Art Museum, the Hofmanns catalyzed the growth and importance of the collection. Acquisitions of abstract works by Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko, Sam Francis, Clyfford Still, and Jackson Pollock were at once logical and dramatic moves. "So much of the collection from mid-[20th] century is built around Hofmann," said Barnes, who first joined the staff in 2000. He is an essential part of the museum, both as a "location and a place from which to teach and welcome the public."

The bond was mutual. "If I had not been rescued by America," Hofmann said in 1944, of his life here that began in Berkeley, "I would have lost my chance as a painter."

Hofmann didn't lose that chance, either as an artist or as one of the great art teachers of his generation. Because of it, the BAMPFA and its patrons, not to mention art lovers across the country and the world, can go on counting their own enduring good fortune.

Steven Winn is a San Francisco freelance writer and critic whose work appears in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, and elsewhere. He conducts interviews for City Arts & Lectures.



Hans Hofmann: *Indian Summer*, 1959; oil on canvas; 60 1/8 x 72 1/4 in.; BAMPFA, gift of the artist. Photo: Jonathan Bloom. © The Regents of the University of California.



Hans Hofmann



Hans Hofmann Painting in his studio

Name	Hans Hofmann
Also Known as	Johann Georg Albert Hofmann
Born	Weissenberg, Germany
Died	New York, <u>New York</u> born Weissenberg, Germany 1880-died New York City 1966
Active in	Paris, France Provincetown, <u>Massachusetts</u> Munich, Germany
Nationalities	American

BY SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

Painter. A German American, Hofmann was a leading Abstract Expressionist painter and was considered to be one of the greatest twentieth century teachers. He directed his own school in Munich and taught at both the University of California at Berkeley and his own school in New York. Hofmann's talent was recognized in retrospectives at the Baltimore Museum of Art (1954), the Whitney Museum of Art (1957), and the Museum of Modern Art (1963).

Joan Stahl American Artists in Photographic Portraits from the Peter A. Juley & Son Collection (Washington, D.C. and Mineola, New York: National Museum of American Art and Dover Publications, Inc., 1995)

In 1966, a month before his death, Hans Hofmann

described his process of painting in these words: "When I paint, I paint under the dictate of feeling or sensing, and the outcome all the time is supposed to say something. And that is most often my sense of nature... it might suggest landscape and might only suggest certain moods, and so on but this must be expressed in pictorial means, according to the inner laws of these means. Only this is acceptable as art."(1)

Hofmann was both an intuitive painter and a man with a profound understanding of modernism. He insisted on the importance of an analytical understanding of the means of painting. His ideas on art developed initially during his years in Paris. From 1904 to 1914, he knew Matisse, Picasso, Braque, and Delaunay. He frequented



the Café du Dôme, where artists congregated to discuss not only ideas about art, but new theories of the universe, from Einstein's theory of relativity to Bergson's notion that movement and constant change are basic characteristics of reality.(2)

Hofmann grew up in Munich. As a gymnasium student, he excelled in music, science, and mathematics. At sixteen, as an assistant to the director of public works in Bavaria, his engineering skills became apparent. He invented a radar device for ships, a sensitized light bulb, and a portable freezer unit for use by military forces.(3) With a thousand marks as a gift from his proud father, Hofmann enrolled in art school. Soon he had encountered Impressionism, and discovered the Secession Gallery in Munich. The support of a patron allowed him to go to Paris. He attended evening classes at the Colarossi Academy and at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Hofmann became close friends with Jules Pascin and Robert Delaunay, whose theories on color seeded Hofmann's own ideas about color and form. At this time, Hofmann was painting Cubist still lifes, landscapes, and figurative pieces, and his work was included in group exhibitions at the New Secession Gallery in

1908 and 1909.

Hofmann went home for a visit in 1914. When World War I prevented his return to Paris, he opened his school for modern art in a Munich suburb. During the war years, Hofmann became closely acquainted with Kandinsky's work.(4) Following the war, young Americans began to flock to Hofmann's school. Carl Holty, Worth Ryder, Glenn Wessels, Vaclav Vytlacil, and others studied in Munich or attended his summer classes in Bavaria, France, and Italy.(5) In the summer of 1930, at the invitation of Worth Ryder, Hofmann taught at the University of California, Berkeley. He spent the next winter in Germany, and the following spring returned to teach in Los Angeles (at the Chouinard School of Art) and at Berkeley, where he wrote the first version of *Creation in Form and Color: A Textbook for Instruction in Art*. In 1932, he moved to New York. He taught for a year at the Art Students League, where his students included Burgoyne Diller, Harry Holtzman, and George McNeil. The following year he opened his New York school, and in the summer of 1935 began annual summer sessions in Provincetown, Massachusetts. In 1958, at age seventy eight, Hofmann finally gave up teaching to concentrate full time on painting.

It would be virtually impossible to overestimate Hofmann's importance as a teacher. Over half the original members of the American Abstract Artists were Hofmann students. Many second generation Abstract Expressionists worked with him as well. He provided scholarships to those unable to pay full tuition, and frequently allowed students to work for him in exchange for instruction. Whether or not they attended his classes, many artists knew of Hofmann's ideas. An essay entitled "Plastic Creation" was published in the *Art Students League* magazine during the winter of 1932-33, and a series of six lectures given during the winter of 1938-39 was attended by Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, Clement Greenberg, and Harold Rosenberg.(6)

In his teaching, as in his art, Hofmann advocated nature as a starting point. He had students draw from life and from carefully arranged still life set ups to learn the importance of formal and spatial relationships. Although he promoted no style (many of his students were for years vague about Hofmann's own art), many understood not only modernism, but Renaissance and Baroque art for the first time through Hofmann's explanations.(7) He considered drawing a critical precursor to painting, yet his emphasis on color, rather than perspective, as a determiner of space within a picture plane, lay at the heart of his ideas about art. For Hofmann, the artist worked to express the tension between three



Photograph of Hans Hofmann



dimensional form and the two dimensional surface of the canvas. Yet in his own painting, he himself denied theory and method, and relied only on empathy.⁽⁸⁾ Hofmann defined empathy as “the imaginative projection of one’s own consciousness into another being or thing. In visual experience, it is the intuitive faculty to sense qualities of formal and spatial relations or tensions, and to discover the plastic and psychological quality of form and color.”⁽⁹⁾

Hofmann’s career as a teacher for many years disrupted his own work as an artist. From 1927 until 1935, he concentrated primarily on drawings, landscapes and figure sketches that reflected his early familiarity with Cubism. He began painting seriously again in 1935, and during the following decade landscapes, portraits, still lifes, and interior scenes were translated into highly expressionistic, energetic canvases. During the summers, especially, when Hofmann held sessions in Provincetown, he returned to landscapes such as *Afterglow* (1938). Subsequently, Hofmann began to pour and splatter paint, and increasingly exploited the accidental in his search for spontaneous expression.

Despite his renown as a teacher, it wasn’t until 1944, at Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century Gallery, that Hofmann had his first solo exhibition in the United States. There he became part of the emerging New York School, and was friendly with Pollock, Robert Motherwell, William Bazotes, Clyfford Still, and Mark Rothko. From that time on, Hofmann exhibited widely. The Addison Gallery of American Art organized a large retrospective of his work in 1948. In 1957 another was mounted at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Although Hans Hofmann never joined the American Abstract Artists, he encouraged its membership and sent a letter of support when the organization was formally established. Yet, through his students, who represented not only a significant number of the membership, but an important counterbalance to the geometric formalists, Hofmann’s influence within the group was remarkable.

1. Irma B. Jaffe, “A Conversation with Hans Hofmann,” *Artforum* 9, no. 5 (January 1971): 35.
2. For an in depth discussion of Hofmann’s Paris years, see Ellen G. Landau, “The French Sources for Hans Hofmann’s Ideas on the Dynamics of Color Created Space,” *Arts Magazine* 51, no. 2 (October 1976): 76–81.
3. An excellent chronology of Hofmann’s life can be found in Cynthia Goodman, *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), pp.117–19.
4. According to Carl Holty, when Kandinsky went to

Russia in 1914 and due to the war was unable to return to Munich, Hofmann had charge of the paintings Kandinsky had left behind; interview with Nina Wayne, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., roll 670.

5. Cynthia Goodman, in “Hans Hofmann As a Teacher,” *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 8 (April 1979): 120, writes “Among earliest memories of the Munich school are those of Vaclav Vytlacil. When he and Ernest Thurn enrolled, either late autumn 1921 or early spring 1922, the classes were held in a small dingy and poverty ridden single studio ? [in a] rather dismal building. ? Glenn Wes-sels... ? tutored Hofmann in English every day before class in exchange for tuition.”

6. Typescripts of these lectures can be found in the Karl Knaths Papers, Archives of American Art, roll 433: 1317–1465.

7. Hofmann often illustrated his lectures with diagrams of the compositional structure and movement in paintings by Piero della Francesca, Giotto, and Rembrandt, as well as Cézanne, Picasso, Braque, and other moderns.

8. Cynthia Goodman, in “Hans Hofmann As a Teacher,” *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 8 (April 1979): p. 113.

9. Quoted in Dorothy Seckler, “Can Painting Be Taught?,” *Art News* 50, no. 1 (March 1951): 63. The writings of Wilhelm Worringer, a German philosopher and psychologist, became meaningful for artists during the early years of the twentieth century.

Virginia M. Mecklenburg *The Patricia and Phillip Frost Collection: American Abstraction 1930–1945* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Museum of American Art, 1989)

Considered a master and forefather of abstract expressionism, Hans Hofmann grew up in Germany and as a young man worked for the Bavarian state. He decided to study art, however, and spent ten years in Paris, befriending such European modernists as Pablo Picasso and Robert Delaunay. When World War I broke out, he was unable to enlist because of a weak lung and decided to teach instead, opening the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts in Munich. In the early 1930s he moved the school to New York and taught summer classes in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where his teaching would influence a generation of American artists. Hofmann continued to paint while he taught, creating vibrant, abstract images that explored “color, light and form in the rhythm of life.” One of his students, Frank Stella, believed that Hofmann was “the greatest art teacher of the century.” (Stella, “Art of the Century,” quoted in Yohe, ed., *Hans Hofmann*, 2002)

Auction Record Report - Additional Comps

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6 auction record(s).



Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Artist: Hans Hofmann

Title: Moonlit

Hammer Price: -not sold-

Low Estimate: \$500,000

High Estimate: \$700,000

Signature: Signed and Dated

Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas

Size Inches: 48.25" x 36"

Size CM: 122.56 cm x 91.44 cm

Year Created: 1958

Auction Date(s): 05/14/2021

Auction: Post-War & Contemporary Art Day Sale, 14 May

By: Christie's New York, Rockefeller Center

Lot: 151

Provenance: André Emmerich Gallery, New York Acquired from the above by the present owner, 1970

Exhibitions: New York, Kootz Gallery, Hans Hofmann: Paintings of 1959, January 1960.

Lot Notes: Signed and dated 'Hans Hofmann 58' (lower right); signed again, titled and dated again 'Moonlit 1958 Hans Hofmann' (on the reverse) From the prestigious collection of Phyllis and C. Douglas Dillon, the superior quality of Moonlit was recognized immediately when acquired in 1970 from André Emmerich Gallery in New York City. Mr. Douglas Dillon was the former secretary of Treasury and Ambassador to France. Mrs. Phyllis Dillon dedicated her life to philanthropic affairs, having served on the board of trustees of the Museum of Modern Art and the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Mrs. Dillon was also the first wife of an American ambassador to be presented with the Legion of Honor in 1957. Painted in 1958, Hans Hofmann's Moonlit is a powerful culmination of the artist's growth and maturation, created during an era of mounting critical acclaim for the artist. 1958 also marked the year that Hofmann would devote himself to painting full-time and stopped teaching at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts. Moonlit offers an array of vibrant, opposing colors that alternately advance and recede according to Hofmann's "push and pull" technique. The result—an intense, painterly creation—exhibits the passion of an artist who dedicated his life to the pursuit of his craft. Stylistically, many of the elements of Moonlit are reflected in his later paintings throughout the early 1960s leading up to his death in 1966, known as 'Slab' paintings. As Karen Wilkin has written in the artist's catalogue raisonné, "Hofmann's 'slab' pictures, with their saturated hues and urgent paint application, are his most sought-after and readily recognized works. Intensely colored, pulsing rectangles have become emblematic of the artist" (K. Wilkin "Hans Hofmann: Tradition and Innovation," in

S. Villiger, ed., Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I, Farnham, 2014, p. 46). The rectangular forms in the 'slab' style are present in Hofmann's paintings in the late 1950s as well, and Moonlit shows the early workings of what would become the artist's most iconic series of work. The symphony of colors that flow throughout the painting in some regard run counter to the painting's title Moonlit, perhaps a nod to "nocturne painting," describing the depiction of scenes evocative of the nighttime or how subjects appear in a veil of light, the absence of direct light or twilight. That said, Hofmann's unwavering exploration and mastery of color reminds the viewer that the emotive power of color is limitless, and that even in twilight, colors can dance. Ever since Gauguin espoused that "... color, which is vibration, just as music is, is able to attain what is most universal yet at the same time most elusive in nature: its inner force" (P. Gauguin, quoted by S. Hunter, J. Jacobus, D. Wheeler, eds., Modern Art, New York, 2004, p. 118), artists have been fascinated by the spiritual nature of chromatic pigments. Thus, Hofmann is following in a noble tradition of colorists from Wassily Kandinsky to Mark Rothko, who approached color with an emotive sensibility. Vibrantly colored and creatively balanced, Moonlit exemplifies Hofmann's keen eye and mastery for color and form, where bright slabs play against each other as certain colors recede and others advance. Hofmann believed this was the root of all painting, saying "only from the varied counter play of push and pull, and from its variation in intensities, will plastic creation result" (H. Hofmann, quoted in W. C. Seitz, Hans Hofmann, exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1963, p. 27). The tug of war between geometric form and abstraction is at the heart of Moonlit. The painting's background is rendered in deep, yellow pigment on the top of the canvas, and a slightly darker orange on the lower half. There is distinct separation between the two halves through a soft uneven horizontal line across the canvas, and the line is the central abstract portion of the painting. Hofmann builds up the geometric elements, mimicking the yellow and orange in respective rectangles at the top and bottom of the canvas. These rectangles have slightly uneven edges and they fade into the background. The red and green rectangles, with sharp thickly painted edges, sit on top of the canvas, drawing attention from the top of the canvas down. Like Rothko's radiating orbs, Moonlit's layered composition jumps off the painted surface—breathing life into each color and form. Moonlit is a gradual escalation from abstraction to geometric form, in which Hofmann is experimenting with opposing approaches, yet all the forms on the canvas rely on one another to build compositional harmony. Moonlit is a powerful example of the artist's lifelong devotion to and exploration of the fundamental principles of painting. The powerful sense of energy, neatly expressed into rectangular forms that advance and recede from the canvas, makes the present work one of the artist's most accomplished paintings of this era.

Literature:

S. Villiger, ed., Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III: Catalogue Entries P847-PW89 (1952-1965), Surrey, 2014, p. 187, no. P1132 (illustrated in color).

Source: www.askART.com

Artist: Hans Hofmann

Title: The Eye



Hammer Price: -not sold-

Low Estimate: \$350,000

High Estimate: \$450,000

Signature: Signed and Dated

Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas

Size Inches: 60.50" x 36.50"

Size CM: 153.67 cm x 92.71 cm

Year Created: 1952

Auction Date(s): 05/13/2021

Auction: Contemporary Art Day Auction

By: Sotheby's New York

Lot: 287

Provenance: Estate of the artist Renate, Hans and Maria Hofmann Trust (acquired from the above in 1996) Ameringer Yohe Fine Art, New York Kivisto Niemira Gallery, Chicago Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibitions: New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1952 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting, November 1952 - January 1953 The Baltimore Museum of Art; Washington, D.C., American University, Watkins Gallery, Paintings By Hans Hofmann, October 1954 - December 1954 Naples Museum of Art, Hans Hofmann: A Retrospective, November 2003 - March 2004 Kivisto Niemira Gallery, Chicago, Hans Hofmann: Exuberant Eye, May - June 2007 Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction, February - July 2019, pl. 37, illustrated in color

Condition: This work is in very good condition overall. The colors are bright, fresh, and clean. There is evidence of minor wear and handling along the edges, including associated abrasions and very minor pinpoint losses to the corners. Only visible upon close inspection, there is evidence of very minor hairline cracking at the pull margins. In the more thickly painted white passages there are areas of stable craquelure. There is a 1.5 inch stable hairline crack running horizontally below the black element located 6 inches from the bottom and 7 inches from the right. Under Ultraviolet light inspection, there is no evidence of restoration. Framed.

Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Lot Notes: Signed and dated 52 oil on canvas 60 ½ by 36 ½ in. 153.7 by 92.7 cm. framed: 62 ½ by 38 ½ in. 158.8 by 97.8 cm; "[Hofmann's] paint surfaces breathe as no others do, opening up to animate the air around them." CLEMENT GREENBERG QT. IN EXH. CAT., NEW YORK, WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, HANS HOFMANN, 1990, P. 129 HANS HOFMANN AT WORK IN HIS NEW YORK CITY STUDIO, 1952. © 2021 ESTATE OF HANS HOFMANN / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK The Eye from 1952 is an excellent example of Hans Hofmann's sensational ability to adopt different forms of abstraction throughout his practice. A series of geometric shapes that together create angled forms highlighted through varied hues, the present work recalls both Cubism and Surrealism. A fundamentally intellectual artist, Hofmann was a professor of Fine Art for the majority of his career, teaching the next generation of American avant-garde artists like Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, and Louise Nevelson, among many others. The present work is an early example of Hofmann's characteristic push and pull technique of abstraction, where colors interact creating tension and movement on the canvas. Hofmann, who communicated his philosophy with tremendous spirit and emotion, combined a fastidious study of color and composition with a primal desire to capture the creative caprices of the soul. Nearing the end of his prolific life, with The Eye he delivered the summation of his vision, drawing together his extraordinary talent into a canvas of alluring vitality.

Literature: Suzi Villiger, Ed., Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III: Catalogue Entries P847-PW89 (1952-1965), London 2014, cat. no. P877, p. 25, illustrated in color

Source: www.askART.com

Additional Comps



Artist: Hans Hofmann
Title: Untitled
Sales Price: \$842,800 ** (Fees to buyer included)
Price/Square Inch: \$1,103.41
Low Estimate: \$300,000
High Estimate: \$500,000
% Difference: 68.56% over estimate
Signature: Signed
Medium/Ground: Oil / Linen
Size Inches: 25.25" x 30.25"
Size CM: 64.14 cm x 76.84 cm
Year Created: 1958
Auction Date(s): 05/13/2021
Auction: Contemporary Art Day Auction
By: Sotheby's New York
Lot: 289
Provenance: Collection of Dr. Joy Osofsky André Emmerich Gallery, New York Private Collection (acquired from the above in 1976) Patricia Hamilton Gallery, New York Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1988
Exhibitions: Kansas City, Douglas Drake Gallery, Hans Hofmann: Paintings and Watercolors, October - December 1976

Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Condition:

This work is in good condition overall. The colors are bright, fresh and clean. There is evidence of handling and wear to the edges and corners, including abrasions and a few minor losses. Upon close inspection, there is scattered evidence of minor hairline cracking in the yellow and orange passages as well as paint separation in the blue passage along the top center of the composition. There are areas of heavy impasto throughout and the impasto peaks appear to be secure and intact. There is a slight buckle to the canvas, most noticeable along the right side. Under Ultraviolet light inspection, there are a few scattered areas along the top and bottom edge that fluoresce darkly and appear to have benefited from restoration. Also under Ultraviolet light inspection, the most heavily impastoed red passages fluoresce irregularly but do not appear to be the result of restoration. Please note, this work is shown unframed but is accompanied by a frame.

Lot Notes:

Signed oil on linen 25 ¼ by 30 ¼ in. 64.1 by 76.8 cm. framed: 36 ¾ by 41 ½ in. 92.4 by 105.4 cm. Executed in 1958.; "My aim in painting as in art in general is to create pulsating, luminous and open surfaces that emanate a mystic light, determined exclusively through painterly development, and in accordance with my deepest insight into the experience of light and nature." HANS HOFFMAN; Arich and vibrant example of Hans Hofmann's painterly excellence, Untitled presents a glimpse into the artist's greatness, not only as one of the most influential teachers of art history, but also as one of the most important American artists of the post-war period. Executed in 1958, when the artist was 78 years old, the present work's thick impasto of blood red, ultramarine blue, and forest green vivaciously lures one into the depths of the canvas. An example of Hofmann's premier technique and innovation, the work was completed at the end of the artist's teaching career. Hofmann was a teacher Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, Helen Frankenthaler, Louise Nevelson, Larry Rivers, among many others, but simultaneously a critically important artist in his own right. HELEN FRANKENTHALER, FLOOD, 1967, PRIVATE COLLECTION © 2021 HELEN FRANKENTHALER / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK Hofmann's acute sense of harmony and proportion allows the pure, bold colors to co-exist within the picture plane without overwhelming the viewer, a delicate balancing act of breaking apart the color blocks, creating bridges which tie the forms together. In his last years, Hofmann shifted between geometric forms in more regimented conformation and, as in the present work, free-form areas of saturated color. Yet, Untitled also exemplifies Hoffman's characteristic "push-pull" stylistic concept within Abstract Expressionism. A way of creating space without impinging upon the flatness of the canvas' surface, the concept was promoted by Hofmann in his classroom and in his work. As the artist explained, "push and pull is a colloquial expression applied for movement experienced in nature or created on the picture surface to detect the counterplay of movement in and out of depth. Depth perception in nature and depth creation, on the picture-surface is the crucial problem in pictorial creation." (The artist quoted in Exh. Cat., New York, Whitney Museum of American Art (and traveling), Hans Hofmann, 1990, p. 177). An elegant and refined pictorial summation of the economies of color and form that typified Hofmann's practice, Untitled offers a demonstration of his artistic legacy as a critical link between tradition and the avant-garde.

Literature:

Suzi Villiger, Ed., Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III: Catalogue Entries P847-PW89 (1952-1965), Surrey 2014, cat. no. P1134, p. 188, illustrated in color



Artist: Hans Hofmann

Title: Iris

Sales Price: -not sold-

Low Estimate: \$4,000,000

High Estimate: \$6,000,000

Signature: Signed and Dated

Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas

Size Inches: 72" x 84"

Size CM: 182.88 cm x 213.36 cm

Year Created: 1964

Auction Date(s): 05/12/2021

Auction: American Visionary: The Collection of Mrs. John L. Marion

By: Sotheby's New York

Lot: 16

Provenance: Estate of the artist André Emmerich Gallery, New York Acquired by the present owner from the above in December 1984

Exhibitions: New York, Kootz Gallery, Hans Hofmann, 85th Anniversary: Paintings of 1964, February - March 1965 (incorrectly titled Tries)

Copyright: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Lot Notes: reverse A stunning encapsulation of Hans Hofmann's exemplary treatment of color and masterful balancing of form, *Iris* is a work by an artist at the zenith of his creative prowess. Executed in 1962, *Iris* is meticulously composed of brilliantly pigmented overlapping rectangles that form a transfixing and resounding testament to Hofmann's virtuosic contribution to the trajectory of twentieth century art. Considered a forefather of the Abstract Expressionist movement, Hofmann incorporated elements of Cubism and Fauvism in his work but retained a singular commitment to innovation throughout his life that characterizes the entirety of his oeuvre. After his retirement, the beloved teacher who counted Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell, Lee Krasner and Louise Nevelson among his students was able to devote the entirety of his energy to painting. Executed during this critical period, *Iris* exemplifies the artist's signature "push-pull" synthesis, a theory he initially developed in the 1950's. The rich azure, dazzling red and verdurous greens compel the eye over and across the canvas, drawing the viewer in with the entrancing interplay of form and color, creating an effect both ethereal and profound. Explaining the nature of this phenomenon in 1963 Hofmann explained: "push and pull is a colloquial expression applied for movement experienced in nature or created on the picture surface to detect the counterplay of movement in and out of the depth. Depth perception in nature and depth creation on the picture-surface is the crucial problem in pictorial creation." (Hans Hofmann quoted in: Exh. Cat., New York, Whitney Museum of American Art (and traveling), Hans Hofmann, 1990, p. 177) Drawing on his skills as an expert colorist, Hofmann's compositions utilize varying hues to incite movement and create immense visual depth. "My ideal is to form and to paint as Schubert sings his songs and Beethoven creates a world in sounds." HANS HOFFMAN "HANS HOFMANN: THE DIALECTICAL MASTER" BY IRVING SANDLER IN: EXH. CAT., NEW YORK, WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART (AND TRAVELING), HANS HOFMANN, 1990, PP. 68-72) The vitality and harmoniousness of Hofmann's composition is melodious and beautiful. As Irving Sandler observed, "For Hofmann, who claimed that 'My ideal is to form and to paint as Schubert sings his songs and Beethoven creates a world in sounds,' the worlds of art and music were also interrelated...He went so far in his analogy as to liken a picture with 'its sequence of planes' to an 'instrument' that he could play, and the realization of a work of art to the swelling of an orchestra." (Irving Sandler, "Hans Hofmann: The Dialectical Master" in: Exh. Cat., New York, Whitney Museum of American Art (and traveling), Hans Hofmann, 1990, pp. 68-72) This exuberance is characteristic. Although much of Hofmann's work evokes the colorful squares and rectangles of Piet Mondrian, Hofmann amplified these geometric forms to dazzling heights, creating utterly modern compositions entirely his own. His canvases saturated with color were paramount to the development of Abstract Expressionism and his influence as a teacher and forefather of the movement is indelible.

Additional Comps



ht: Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Literature:

Exh. Cat., Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (and traveling), Hans Hofmann: A Retrospective Exhibition, 1976, p. 98, illustrated Viola Herms Drath, "Jeder Pinselstrich eine Herausforderung," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 8 December 1976, n.p. (text) Exh. Cat., New York, André Emmerich Gallery, Hans Hofmann: Major Paintings, 1954-1965, 1985, n.p., pl. 11, illustrated in color Cynthia Goodman, Hans Hofmann: Modern Masters Series 10, New York 1986, p. 93 (text) John Taylor, "Modern Disciplines: An Art Collection Sets the Tone for an I.M. Pei House in Texas," Architectural Digest 48, No. 4, April 1991, p. 143, illustrated in color (installed in Anne Marion's home) Suzi Villiger, Ed., Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III: 1952-1965, London 2014, p. 458, no. P1563, illustrated in color

Source: www.askART.com

Artist: Hans Hofmann

Title: Planar Rhythm

Hammer Price: -not sold-

Low Estimate: \$220,000

High Estimate: \$280,000

Signature: Signed and Dated

Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas

Size Inches: 48" x 36"

Size CM: 121.92 cm x 91.44 cm

Year Created: 1950

Auction Date(s): 12/03/2020

Auction: Post-War & Contemporary Art Day Sale, Featuring the Collection of Morton and Barbara Mandel, 3 December

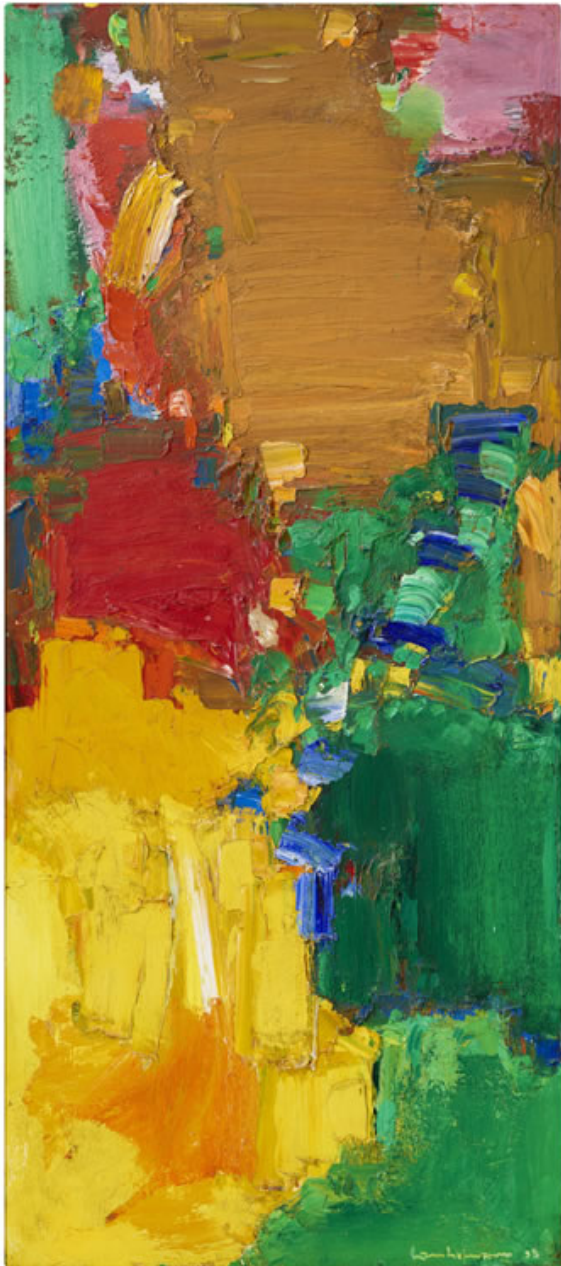
By: Christie's New York, Rockefeller Center

Lot: 114

Provenance: Estate of the artist André Emmerich Gallery, New York Acquired from the above by the present owner, 1987

Exhibitions: New York, André Emmerich Gallery, *Hans Hofmann*, December 1987-January 1988, pl. 3 (illustrated).

Additional Comps



Lot Notes:

signed and dated 'hans hofmann 50' (lower right). A German-born, American painter and a famous arts teacher and theorist, Hofmann taught many of the second and third generations of Abstract Expressionists, including Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler and Frank Stella. Deeply influenced by Neo-Impressionism, particularly Cezanne, as well as the art of Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky, Hofmann developed the so-called "push and pull theory," where he believed that abstract forms could create similar illusions of space, depth and movement similar to more naturalistic and illusionistic works. Hans Hofmann's oeuvre is incredibly significant in the formation and progression of many Post-War art. As he stylistically and conceptually stands on the cusp between pre-war European modernism and post-war American abstract expressionism, Hofmann has become an essential figure and a precursor to the late 20th-century and 21st-century painting. *Planar Rhythm* belongs to Hofmann's mature oeuvre, where he superimposes geometric shapes and contrasts vivid colors. The composition is filled with planes of green, red, yellow and blue that intersect and cross one another, creating diagonal lines and adding dynamism to the composition. In *Planar Rhythm*, Hofmann pays homage to Cubism, Symbolism and Neo-Plasticism, as well as imbuing the painting with his own theories about color and convictions about the nature of non-representational painting.

Literature: W. Seitz, *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*, Cambridge, 1983, no. 136 (illustrated). S. Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings Vol. II, 1901-1951*, Farnham, 2014, no. P748 (illustrated).

Source: www.askART.com

Artist: Hans Hofmann

Title: Rhapsody

Sales Price: \$2,895,000 ** (Fees to buyer included)

Price/Square Inch: \$1,256.51

Low Estimate: \$3,000,000

High Estimate: \$5,000,000

% Difference: -3.50% under estimate

Signature: Signed and Dated

Medium/Ground: Oil / Panel

Size Inches: 72" x 32"

Size CM: 182.88 cm x 81.28 cm

Year Created: 1958

Auction Date(s): 07/10/2020

Auction: ONE: A Global Sale of the 20th Century, Hong Kong, Paris, London, New York - July 10, 2020

By: Christie's Online

Lot: 79

Provenance: Estate of the artist, 1966 André Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1989 Brett Mitchell Collection, Inc., Cleveland, 1989 Private collection, 1989 Danese, New York, 2006 Galerie Thomas, Munich, 2006 Acquired from the above by the present owner, 2006

- Exhibitions:** Chrysler Art Museum of Provincetown, *Provincetown Past and Present*, September-December 1958. Venice, XXX *Venice Biennale*, *Four American Artists: Guston, Hofmann, Kline, Roszak*, June-October 1960. Nuremberg, Fränkische Galerie am Marienort; Cologne, Kölnischer Kunstverein; Berlin, Kongresshalle; Munich, Städtische Galerie München Lenbachhaus, *Hans Hofmann*, April 1962-January 1963, p. 23, no. 62 (illustrated). New York, Museum of Modern Art; Waltham, The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University; New Orleans, Isaac Delgado Museum of Art; Buffalo, Albright Knox Art Gallery; Berkeley, University Art Gallery, University of California; Washington, D.C., Washington Gallery of Modern Art; Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires; Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas; Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum; Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna; Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein; Kunstverein in Hamburg; Bielefeld, Städtisches Kunsthhaus, *Hans Hofmann*, September 1963-October 1965, p. 17, no. 11 (New York; illustrated), n.p., no. 11 (Amsterdam, illustrated), n.p., no. 11 (Turin, illustrated), n.p., no. 11 (Bonn, illustrated). New York, André Emmerich Gallery, *Hans Hofmann: Centennial Celebration, Part I, Major Paintings*, December 1980-January 1981. New York, Lever/Meyerson Galleries, *Hans Hofmann and his Legacy*, October-December 1986 (illustrated in color on the cover and on the exhibition announcement). London, Tate Gallery, *Hans Hofmann: Late Paintings*, March-May 1988, p. 33, pl. 8 (illustrated in color).
- Lot Notes:** signed and dated 'hans hofmann 58' (lower right); signed again, titled and dated again twice 'Rhapsody 1958 hans hofmann 58' (on the reverse)
- Literature:** L. Alloway, "Venice—Europe 1960," *Art International*, vol. 4, no. 7, 25 September 1960, p. 36 (illustrated). C. Greenberg, *Hofmann*, Paris, 1961, p. 54 (illustrated). F. Bayl, "Hans Hofmann in Deutschland," *Art International*, vol. 6, no. 7, 25 September 1962, p. 39 (illustrated). S. Hunter, *Hans Hofmann*, New York, 1963, p. 29, pl. 94 (illustrated in color). B. Wolf, "Hans Hofmann Story," *Jewish Exponent*, 18 October 1963, p. 23 (illustrated). R. Cork, "Shock of Old," *The Listener*, 17 March 1988, p. 30. J. Yohe, ed., *Hans Hofmann*, New York, 2002, pp. 33 and 183 (illustrated in color). S. Feinstein, *A Portrait of Hans Hofmann as Painter, Teacher, and Friend*, New York, 2008, p. 95 (illustrated in color). S. Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III (1952-1965)*, Farnham, 2014, p. 167, no. P1106 (illustrated in color).

Source: www.askART.com