

ROTHKO

Jacob Baal-Teshuva



TASCHEN

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ROTHKO (I) #BASICART

Jacob Baal-Teshuva

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Mark Rothko fa parte della generazione di artisti americani che ha completamente rivoluzionato l'essenza della pittura astratta. La sua evoluzione stilistica, nel passaggio da un repertorio visivo figurativo a uno stile astratto radicato nel rapporto attivo tra l'osservatore e il dipinto, incarna la visione radicale di un rinascimento in pittura. Rothko ha descritto questa relazione come "una consumata esperienza tra la pittura e l'osservatore". Le sue forme cromatiche attirano letteralmente l'osservatore in uno spazio riempito di una luce interiore. Rothko ha sempre respinto qualunque tentativo di interpretare i suoi dipinti. A interessargli erano soprattutto l'esperienza dell'osservatore, la fusione tra opera e supporto al di là della comprensione verbale. Rothko era un intellettuale, un pensatore, un uomo molto istruito. Amava la musica e la letteratura ed era appassionato di filosofia, specie delle opere di Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche e dell'antica filosofia e mitologia greche. Rothko fu protagonista del movimento dei pittori americani che divennero noti come espressionisti astratti. Formatosi originariamente a New York City nel periodo tra le due guerre, questo gruppo era anche definito la New York School. In tutta la storia dell'arte, furono i primi artisti americani a ricevere un riconoscimento internazionale come movimento significativo. Molti di loro, incluso Rothko, sono ormai figure leggendarie.

La collana:

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

Jacob Baal-Teshuva, nato nel 1929, è autore, critico e curatore indipendente di esposizioni museali. Ha studiato all'università ebraica a Gerusalemme e all'Università di New York. Le sue numerose pubblicazioni includono opere su Marc Chagall, [Alexander Calder](#), Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol e [Christo e Jeanne-Claude](#). Jacob Baal-Teshuva vive e lavora a New York e Parigi.

#BasicArt



Red and Blue, 1948
on paper mounted on canvas,
13 cm (5 1/8 x 5 1/8 in.)
collection

Yellow, 1949
on paper mounted on canvas,
8 cm (3 1/8 x 3 1/8 in.)
on Christopher Rothko

Yellow, 1949
on paper mounted on canvas,
10.9 cm (4 3/8 x 4 3/8 in.)
collection

Yellow, 1948
on paper mounted on canvas,
12 cm (4 3/8 x 4 3/8 in.)
collection

visible on the walls of every museum of contemporary art. Others could and still do produce paintings that resemble his, but Mark's transcendental quality, his effect of a pulsing spiritual life, of an imminent epiphany, was a secret he did not share with others, and maybe only partly understood himself ... So much of Rothko remains – in a multiplicity of glowing presences, in a glory of transformations. Not all the world's corruption washes high colours away."

The sculptor Herbert Ferber spoke about their many years of friendship. At the end of the ceremony, Rothko's brother recited from the Kaddish, the Jewish Prayer of the Dead. Many people who attended the funeral remained afterwards on the Madison Avenue sidewalk to talk about Rothko's exceptional career and to express their regrets.

A mere half-year later, on 18 August 1970, Mell Rothko died at the age of 48. Her death was a shock for both her children and her friends. Christopher, Rothko's youngest son, was adopted by Dr Levine, one of the managers of his estate. Kate soon became unhappy about the strict treatment the young boy was receiving in Levine's care, and collected him in short time to bring him to her aunt, Mell's sister Barbara Northrup, who lived in Columbus, Ohio.

In his testament, Rothko had named the anthropologist Dr Morton Levine, the artist Theodoros Stamos and Bernard I. Reis as managers of his estate. At the insistence of Reis, the three came together a few months after the burial in order to examine and comb through the nearly 800 works in their charge. Reis, who portrayed himself as a "friend" of Rothko's, in fact proved two-faced and deceitful. While advising Rothko during his increasingly difficult final years, Reis had remained entirely silent to the fact that he was acting for the Marlborough Gallery as a tax adviser, accountant and agent. Reis and the other executors then sold a large body of his works to Marlborough for a fraction of their actual worth. These were purchased through mere down payments, with the remainder to be paid over a period of 14 years, interest-free.

Catching wind of the swindle, Rothko's daughter Kate decided in November 1970 to take both the estate managers and Marlborough to court. The case took several years to resolve, becoming one of the greatest scandals of the art world. Until that time, there had never been a trial of such huge proportions involving fraudulent dealings with art. On 18 December 1975, Judge M. Middonick finally read his decision. The three executors of Rothko's estate were ordered to forfeit their posts, the contract with Marlborough was ruled invalid. The judge enjoined the return of 658 unsold paintings to Rothko's estate. Compensatory damages were set at more than nine million dollars.

The court named Kate Rothko-Prizel as the sole administrator of Rothko's estate. She decided on the Pace Gallery in New York, directed by Arne Glimcher, as the exclusive representative of her father's work. The first Rothko exhibition at the Pace Gallery coincided with a Retrospective of over 100 works at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1978. In May 1976, seven directors were chosen for a new Rothko foundation. These included Dorothy C. Miller, a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, and Thomas Messer, the director of the Guggenheim Museum. In the meantime, the Rothko Foundation had donated more than 600 paintings to 25 museums in the United States, as well as to four in Europe and two in Israel. The foundation also supported impecunious artists, following Rothko's original wishes.

Mark Rothko today has his place as one of the most important painters of post-World War II modernism. His radical refusal to copy nature reduced

