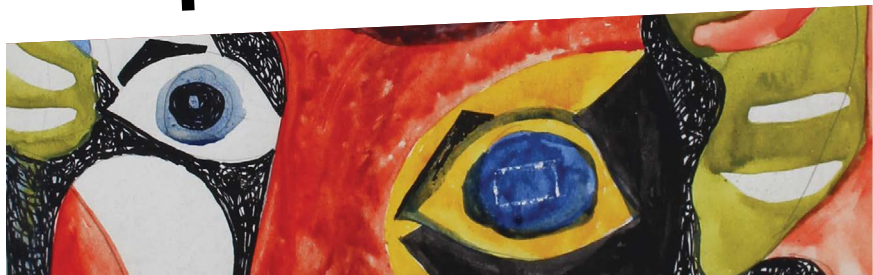




**Abstract**

**Expressionists**



BYRON BROWNE / LEONARD EDMONDSON / JOHN FERREN / FRANK LOBDELL  
GORDON ONSLOW FORD / FRITZ RAUH / ROBERT RICHENBURG / JACK WRIGHT

# ABSTRACT

FINDLAY GALLERIES

## Abstract Expressionists

GALLERY SELECT COLLECTION

Findlay Galleries presents *Abstract Expressionists*, an exhibition of works by artists active during one of the most groundbreaking periods in art history. Developed in America following the Second World War, Abstract Expressionism defied convention, ushering in a new era of art making in which the artist's gestures resulted from a deep exploration of their inner world. Through their bold experimentation and innovative techniques, the artists featured in this exhibition — Byron Browne, Leonard Edmondson, John Ferren, Frank Lobdell, Gordon Onslow-Ford, Fritz Rauh, Robert Richenburg, and Jack Wright — emerged as influential figures at the forefront of this movement.

From Browne's dynamic compositions to Edmondson's exploration of texture and form, from Ferren's energetic brushwork to Lobdell's introspective abstraction, the works in this exhibition are testaments to the liberation of art that occurred during Abstract Expressionism. On view at Findlay Galleries in Palm Beach, we invite you to experience the artwork that helped pave a new path for generations of artists to follow.

# Byron Browne

(1907-1961)

Byron Browne's artistic training was conventional, and little about his career at the National Academy of Design from 1924-1928 suggested that he would soon depart from the traditional methods in which he was being schooled. Several experiences are identified as being formative for Browne's career as an abstract artist. In 1927 he and his friend Arshile Gorky visited Albert E. Gallatin's Gallery of Living Art, where they saw works of Picasso, Braque and Miró. Stimulated by what he saw there, Browne began to study Cahiers d'Art, the French magazine devoted to progressive European art. As he experimented with Cubism, Browne's conviction that abstraction represented the future of art grew. His complete break from traditional art is perhaps best expressed in his decision to destroy his early representational work.

By 1930 the direction of Browne's work was clearly established. By the mid 1930s he found work and support within the Works Progress Administration Mural Division, as Burgoyne Diller, the Division's head, began to advocate and organize in behalf of abstract artists. Browne became a founding member of the American Abstract Artists, as well as having involvement in a variety of other political and artistic groups at this time. Like his wife, the artist, Rosalind Bengelsdorf, Browne wrote and spoke frequently in defense of abstraction.

According to Byron Browne, the roots of abstraction could be found in the natural world, and as such, abstraction could not be separated from life itself. He saw abstraction as an extension of the physical world, rather than generated by spiritualism. The distinction was an important one to Browne, who had little tolerance for the mysticism that Hilla Rebay and others believed to be at the foundation of abstraction.

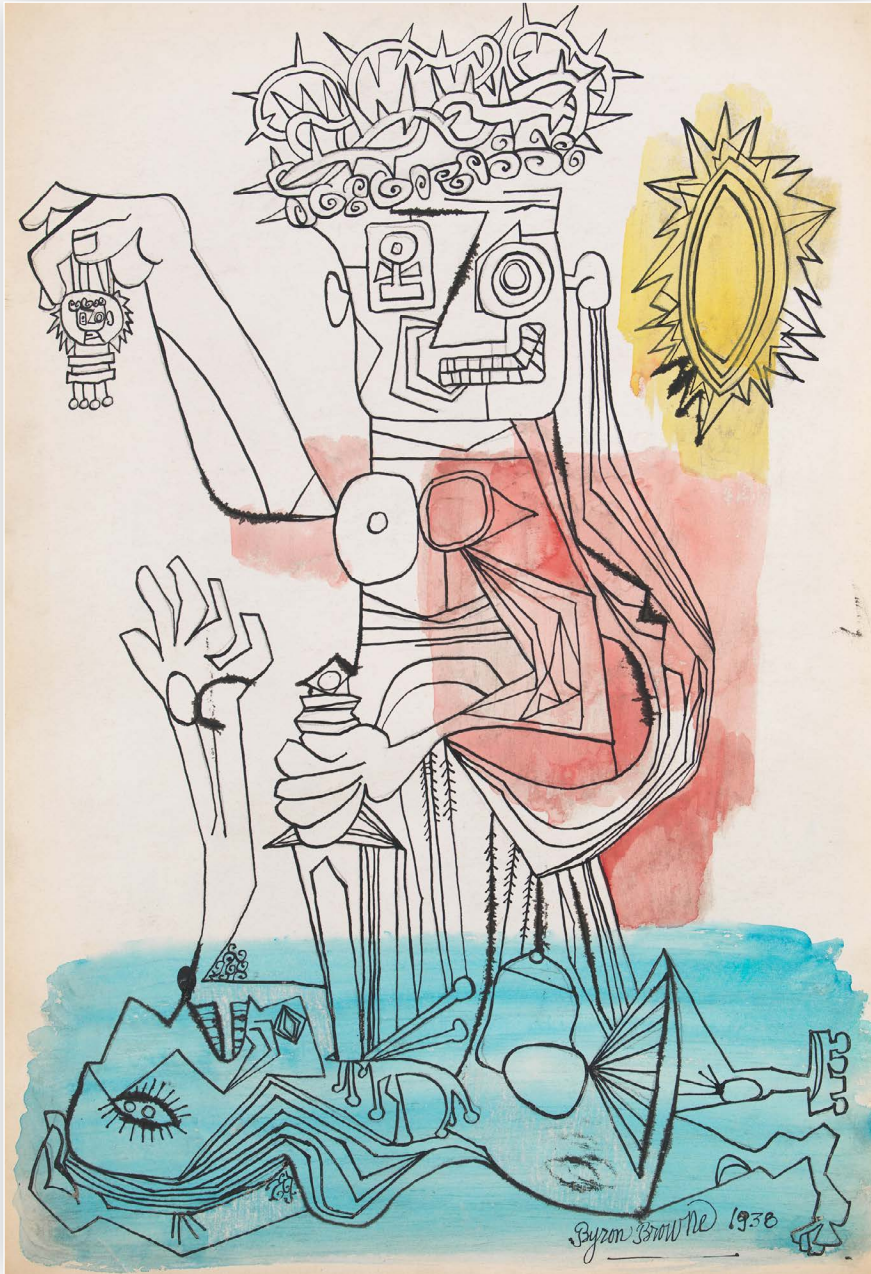
In the 1930s Cubism can be seen as the dominant influence in his work, while by the 1940s his paintings had relaxed into softer, biomorphic forms reminiscent of Arp and Miró. In the 1950s, in response to the emergence of Abstract Expressionism, his work became more gestural and painterly. However, these styles were never mutually exclusive; Browne felt free to combine any or all of these elements, depending on his expressive intent.

In addition to his career as a painter, Browne was also a teacher. He taught at the Art Students League beginning in 1948, and in 1949 he became a professor of advanced painting at New York University. Byron Browne died in New York in 1961.

*Excerpt taken from American Abstract Art of the 1930s and 1940s,  
The J. Donald Nichols Collection, Margaret Gregory. Harry N. Abrams,  
Inc. Publishers, New York. 1998.*



**Aztec Woman**, 1936 | india ink, pencil, & watercolor on paper | 14 x 11 in. | FG© 139686



*Aztec Sacrifice*, 1938 | india ink and watercolor wash | 19 x 13 in. | FG© 205916



*Untitled (Warrior Woman I)*, 1936 | watercolor, ink & pencil | 21 1/4 x 14 in. | FG© 204078

# Leonard Edmondson

(1916-2002)

Leonard Edmondson, painter, printmaker, educator, and author, was born in Sacramento, California on June 21, 1916. He studied at Los Angeles City College, and in 1937, entered the University of California at Berkeley, receiving his B.A. in 1940 and his M.A. in 1942. Between 1942 and 1946, Edmondson served in the U.S. Army in Military Intelligence. During these years, he traveled through Europe where he saw a body of work by Paul Klee. Immediately after the war, he explored the collections of the Louvre.

Returning to California in 1947, he accepted the first teaching position of his distinguished career at the Pasadena City College. Edmondson also taught at the Otis Art Institute, University of California at Berkeley (summers of 1960 and 1964), Pratt Institute in 1961, and in 1964, he was appointed chairman of the printmaking department at California State University in Los Angeles and he remained there until his retirement in 1986.

Edmondson took a class in etching from Ernest Freed in 1951 and the following year his print, *Heralds of Inquiry*, won an award at an annual exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. His first solo museum exhibition at the De Young Memorial Museum in 1952 was followed by solo exhibitions at the Pasadena Art Museum and the Santa Barbara Museum. He won his first Tiffany Fellowship in 1953 and the second in 1955. Edmondson was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1960, which allowed him to focus on his printmaking. In 1967 a retrospective of his work was held at the San Francisco Museum of Art and he published his technical treatise, *Etching*, in 1970. He was a member of the California Watercolor Society and the California Printmakers Society.

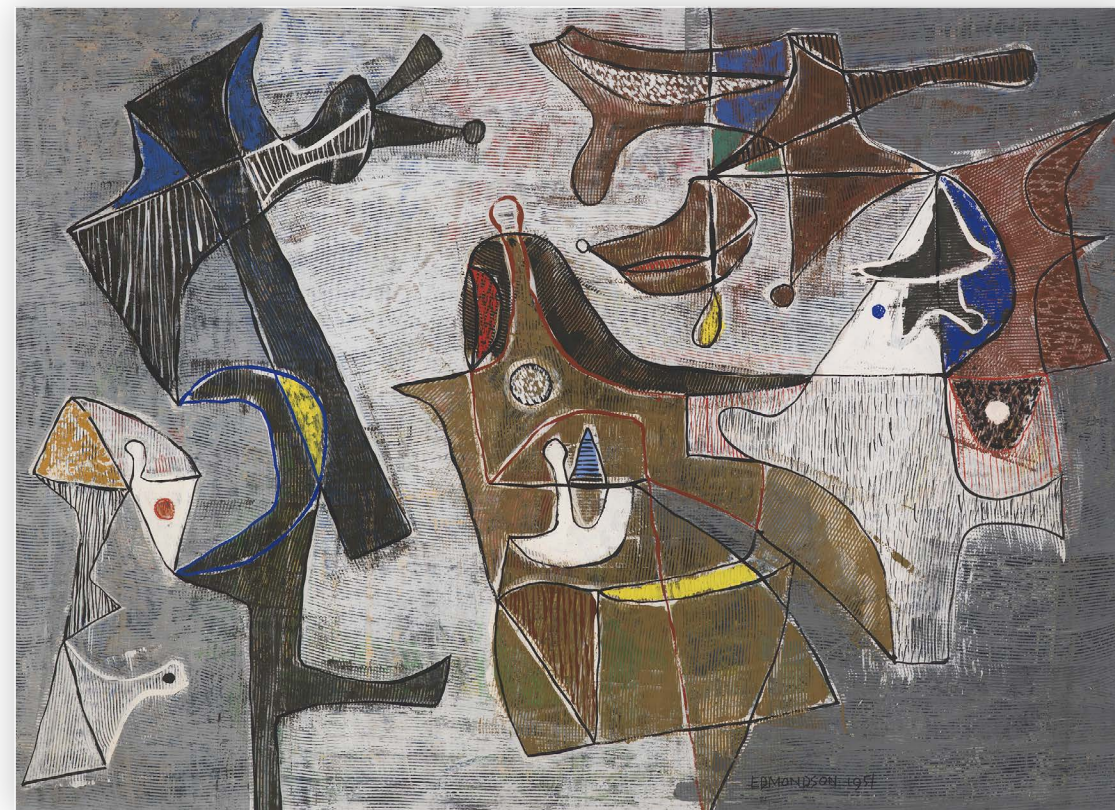
Edmondson's work is represented in the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Brooklyn Museum, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, Dallas Museum of Fine Art, Detroit Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery, New York Public Library, Oakland Museum of California Art, Pasadena Art Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Seattle Art Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Worcester Art Museum. Leonard Edmondson died in Pasadena, California on July 22, 2002.



*Untitled XVIII*, 1969 | Tempera on paper | 17 7/8 x 22 7/8 in. | FG© 206714



*The Parade*, 1952 | collage | 16 3/4 x 21 3/4 in. | FG© 205860



*Untitled V*, 1951 | tempera on paper | 20 1/2 x 28 in. | FG© 205591

# John Ferren

(1905–1970)

John Ferren was born in Pendleton, Oregon, 1905. At the age of twenty, he apprenticed with an Italian stonecutter in San Francisco. Ferren's early experiences with stonecutting influenced his style, particularly evident in the sculptural quality of his paintings, achieved through flat backgrounds and curving planes. Though Ferren was known later in his career as an intellectual among his peers, he avoided academe and formal art institutions, preferring to develop his own artistic style and theories that were nourished by his adventurous lifestyle and curious mind. Going to Europe in 1929, he attended the Sorbonne in Paris and also studied briefly at the Università degli Studi in Florence and the Universidad de Salamanca. His travels in Europe exposed him to the modern art movements of the early 20th century, such as cubism, surrealism, and expressionism. In 1930 Ferren returned to San Francisco for his debut solo exhibition at the Art Center; however, the lack of energy and artistic stimulation on the west coast at that time led Ferren to return to Paris in 1931.

In Paris Ferren was introduced to William Stanley Hayter's Parisian Atelier 17, where some of the greatest artists of the 20th century, such as Joan Miró, Max Ernst, and Marcel Duchamp participated in experimental workshops. Like them, Ferren explored Hayter's revolutionary theories on "the nature of space in a linear world," inquiries that transformed Ferren's style. He rediscovered sculpture and developed a new technique for creating relief sculptures, through pouring plaster into lines etched in a metal etching plate. The graceful lines he had etched were revealed on the plaster surface, creating a rhythmic composition. These reliefs were among Ferren's most successful works.

Ferren returned to the United States in 1938, settling in New York. He established himself in New York's art community by becoming a member (and later president) of The Club, an informal group of artists who represented the social and intellectual center of abstract expressionism in New York. Always exploring new forms of art, in the late 1950s Ferren collaborated with film director Alfred Hitchcock, for whom he served as artistic consultant for the films *The Trouble with Harry* (1955) and *Vertigo* (1958). Ferren remained active in the art world until his death in 1970.

Findlay Galleries has been the exclusive representative of the Ferren estate since 2011.



**Figured (JF11)**, 1964 | oil on canvas | 32 1/4 x 39 1/4 in. | FG© 140583



**Battam Bang**, 1962 | oil on canvas | 54 x 54 in. | FG© 207479



**Jericho**, 1962 | oil on canvas | 64 x 64 in. | FG© 140149

# Frank Lobdell

(1921–2013)

Born on August 23, 1921 in Kansas City, Missouri and raised in Minnesota, Frank Lobdell attended the St. Paul School of Fine Arts in Saint Paul Minnesota from 1939 – 1940. He painted independently in Minneapolis and from 1940 to 1942 and on the brink of war he enlisted in the US Army and served in Europe during World War II from 1942 – 1946. In April of 1945, years after enlisting in the Army, Lieutenant Frank Lobdell confronted the harsh realities of war. The horrific scenes he endured were indelibly seared into Lobdell's visual memory.

Following the war, he moved to Sausalito, California and experienced a rebirth of his passion for painting. When Frank Lobdell arrived in the San Francisco he soon found himself in the company of a small group of artists fervent in their pursuit of the New American Abstraction. Their center of gravity was the California School of Fine Art now the San Francisco Art Institute. He attended the California School of Fine Arts (1946 – 1949) and in 1950 he left the U.S. for Paris, where he painted and studied at L'Academie de la Grande Chaumière until 1951. After returning to the Bay Area, he taught at CSFA from 1957 to 1964. He was a Visiting Artist at Stanford University and taught as a Professor of Art from 1966 until his retirement in 1991.

But his career rightly begins in the late 1940s with his embrace of Abstract Expressionism, in which he recognized that painting might provide a lifelong arena of individualized inquiry, a place where he could, indeed, be entirely himself. Later phases of his career, particularly the complex body of works that began during the mid 1970s, may be more far-reaching in their significance, but Lobdell was occupied from the start with the ideas that have engaged him throughout his career.

Lobdell's work has been included in exhibitions at the Petit Palais, the Third Biennial of São Paulo, the Osaka International Festival, Japan, as well as venues in London, Turin, and Eindhoven, including early solo exhibitions in Paris and Geneva. He showed regularly in solo and group exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including at the Walker Art Center, The Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Pasadena Art Museum and Stanford University Art Museum, and others.



*Pier 70, Winter, 2002* | oil-based pigments on canvas | 60 x 48 in. | FG© 138729



Bleeker, 5.23.94, 1994 | oil-based pigments on canvas | 78 x 96 in. | FG© 138718



Left: Pier 70 4.11.01, 2001  
ink, crayon & colored pencil on paper  
11 x 8 1/2 in. | FG© 141150



Right: Pier 70 5.20.01, 2001  
ink, crayon & colored pencil on paper  
11 x 8 1/2 in. | FG© 141151

# Gordon Onslow-Ford

(1912–2003)

Gordon Onslow Ford was born on December 26, 1912, in Wendover, England. While the artist did not receive formal training, his grandfather Edward Onslow Ford was a well-known sculptor and his uncle Rudolph Onslow Ford served as his first painting teacher. Onslow Ford's oeuvre spans more than sixty years, during which he explored an interest in automatism in both Surrealist and completely abstract compositions, often using elements of the cosmos and natural world as metaphors for the life of the mind.

As a young man, Onslow Ford attended the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth (1922). He served in the navy in the early 1930s, leaving in 1937 to pursue a career as an artist. He traveled first to Paris, where he briefly studied with Fernand Léger and met the Surrealist artist Matta. In the summer of 1938, Onslow Ford and Matta developed an artistic partnership in Brittany, painting together and refining their automatic processes. As part of his ongoing search for methods of making spontaneous imagery, in 1939 Onslow Ford invented coulage (the term based on couler, meaning "to flow" in French), a technique that anticipated the work of Hans Hofmann and Jackson Pollock. In works such as *Without Bounds*, (1939), Onslow Ford poured enamel directly onto the canvas, moving it around so that dried deposits made forms on a grid superimposed onto the canvas support. He also joined the Parisian Surrealist group in 1939, and through his influence and that of Matta, the Surrealist circle became increasingly interested in an abstract visual lexicon linked to metaphysics and mystical philosophy.

In 1947 Onslow Ford moved to San Francisco; he formed the Dynaton artists' group with Matta, Sybil Moholy-Nagy, and Paalen, and they exhibited together at the San Francisco Museum of Art. The Dynaton artists described their artworks as objects for meditation. In Onslow Ford's paintings of this period, he eradicated the landscape but retained elements of the natural world and dynamism suggestive of flora, fecundity, and weather. Onslow Ford's interest in spontaneous painting processes increased, and by 1958 he was using a quick-drying paint to develop a form of action painting: he dotted the canvas with a brush and made loose, calligraphic circles, replacing his earlier grids with fluid composition. He continued to paint through 2002, often making outer space-themed pictures that demonstrate his interest in abstract forms and lines.

Onslow Ford's work was featured world renowned art institutions such as the San Francisco Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Grand Palais, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Guggenheim Museum, New York and many more



Cultivate, 1988 | acrylic on canvas | 63 7/8 x 40 1/4 in. | FG© 140187



*Flying In*, 1980 | acrylic on paper | 21 5/8 x 30 1/4 in. | FG© 140189



*Water World*, 1956 | casein on mulberry mounted on linen | 40 1/8 x 41 in. | FG© 140203

# Fritz Rauh

(1920–2011)

Fritz Rauh was born in Wuppertal, Germany, in 1920. He enrolled in the Braunschweig Art School in 1938, although his studies were interrupted by WWII. Following the war, he completed his formal training in Braunschweig and met his future wife, Alix; they emigrated to the United States in 1954 and settled in Marin County, California.

Rauh had his first solo exhibition in 1956 at the De Young Museum in San Francisco. The exhibition was well received by critics applauding Rauh's unique approach to canvas as a surface to be "opened" with color and shapes. Small amoeba-like shapes filled his canvases, closely packed on a contrasting and sometimes harmonizing ground in a way that foreground and background become interchangeable. The vibrating surface that resulted, heightened by areas of flat color defining the limits of the canvas, evokes the beauty of micro-organic worlds.

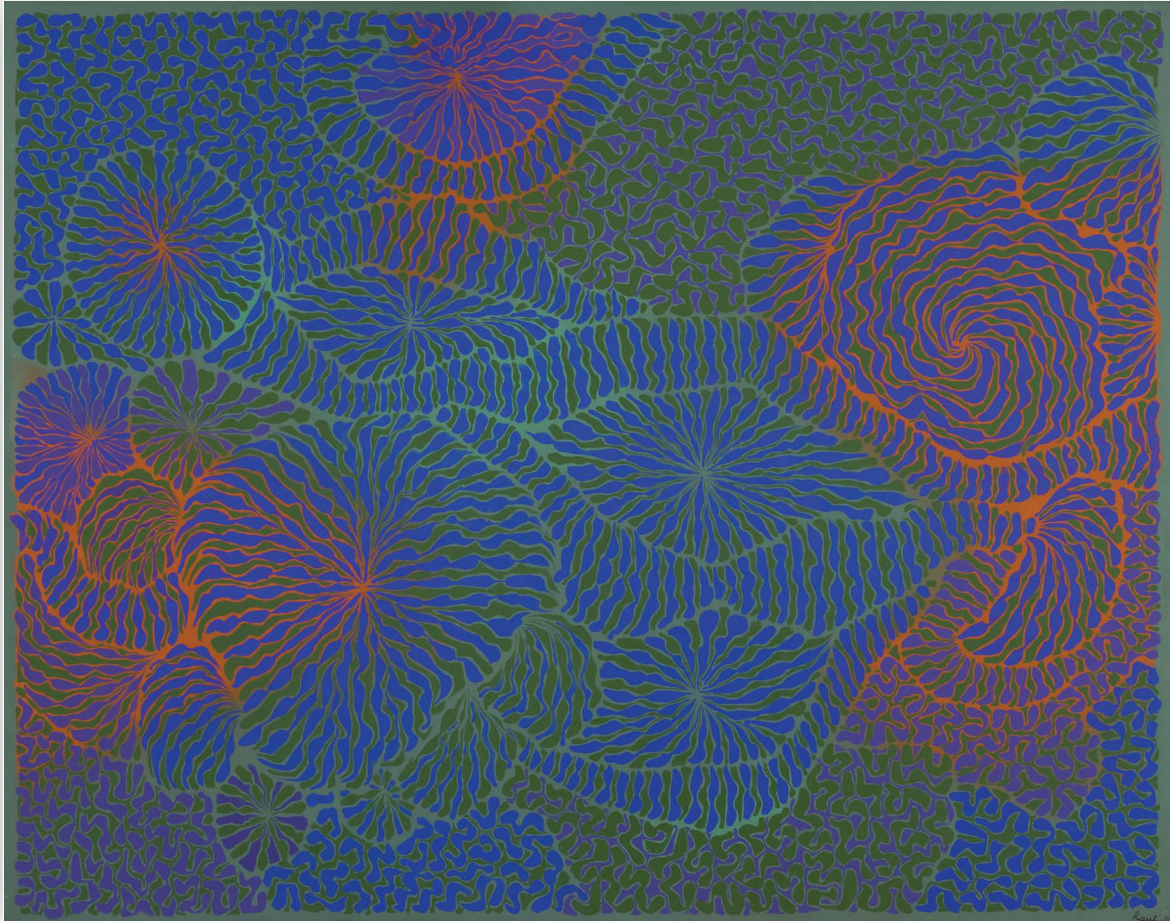
Rauh's critical and commercial success in the following decades led to his works being exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide, including SF MOMA, Oakland Art Museum, International Art Expo in Osaka, Japan and Gallerie Schreiner in Basel, Switzerland. Today, Findlay Galleries is proud to represent the artist's estate exclusively.

"Among paintings, the most worthwhile show is by Fritz Rauh... whose canvases are a wonderfully personal synthesis of... calligraphy and op-color. Rauh's raggedy scribbles, twists and turns add up to pointillistic abstract mazes, but mazes through which the eye is always made to follow [through] carefully controlled paths."

– Thomas Albright, San Francisco Chronicle



WC-0014 | watercolor on paper | 19 1/2 x 27 in. | FG© 138103



**Untitled**, 1971 | acrylic on canvas | 59 x 75 in. | FG© 138081



**Untitled**, 1976 | acrylic on canvas | 55 1/4 x 55 1/2 in. | FG© 138089

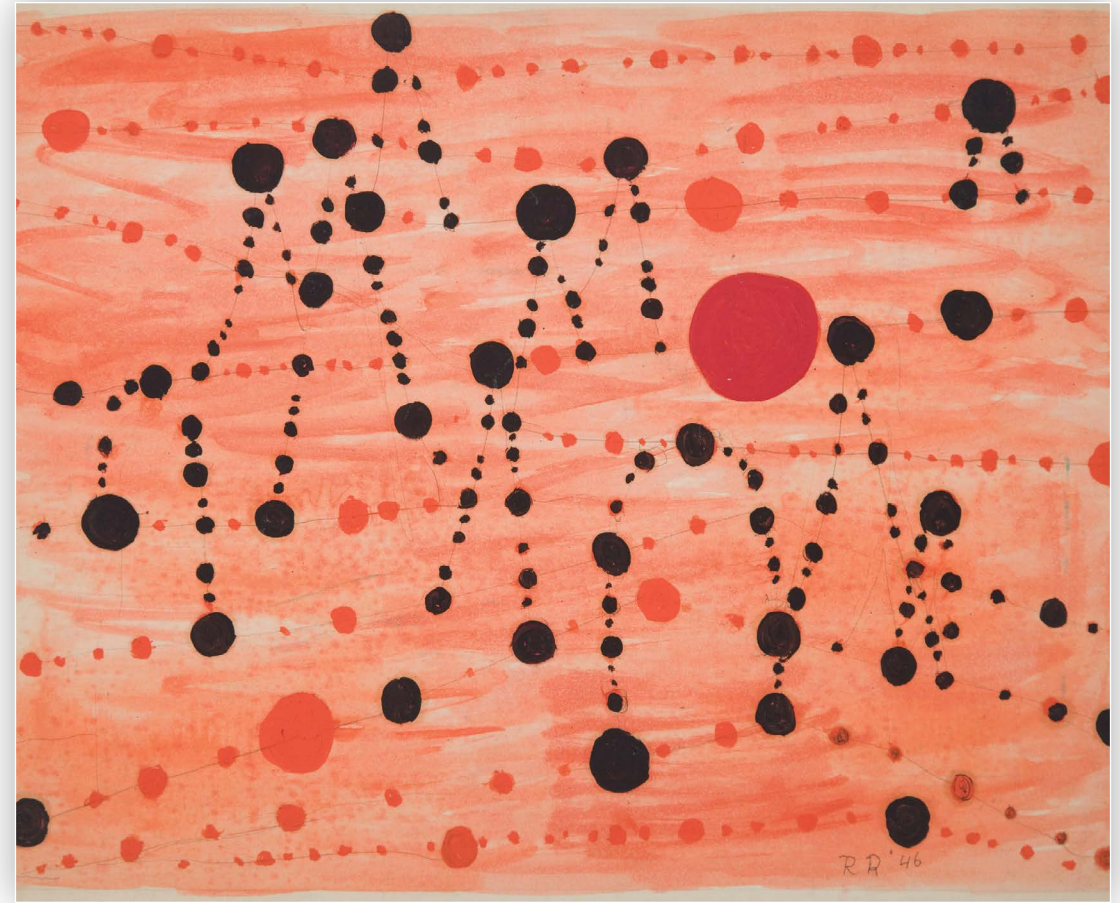
# Robert Richenburg

(1917–2006)

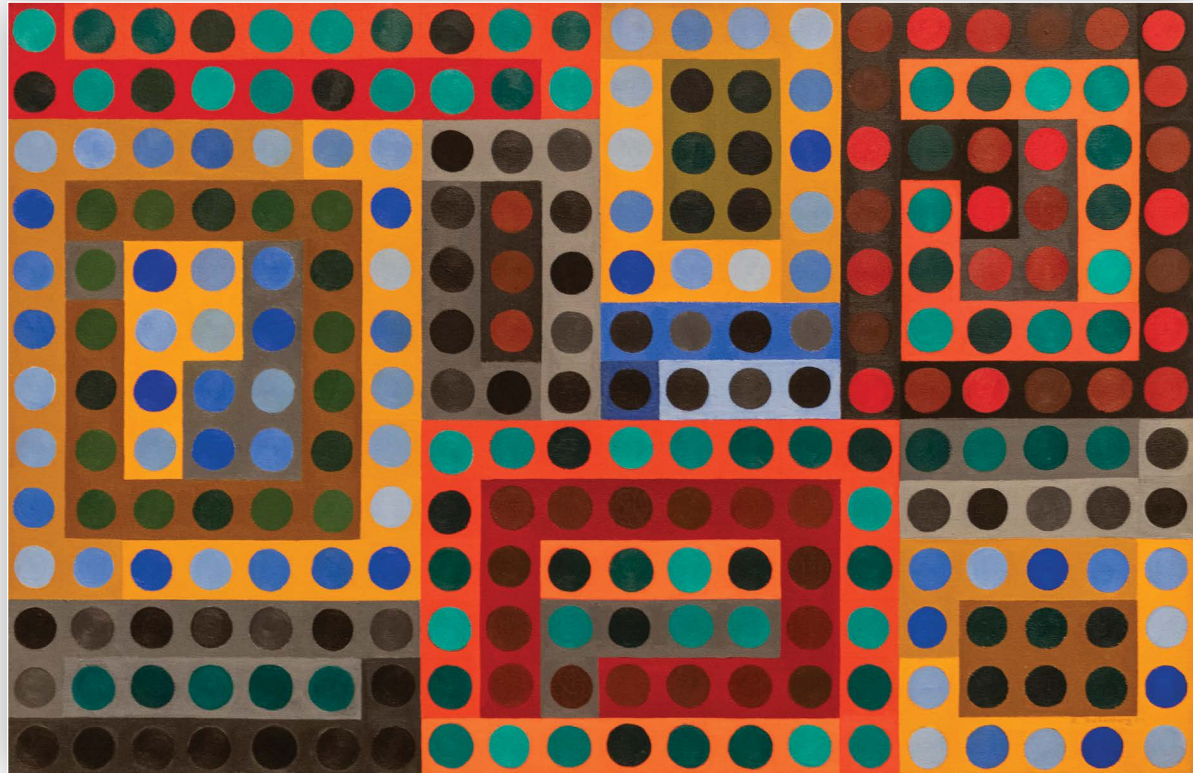
Robert Richenburg (July 14, 1917 – October 10, 2006 in East Hampton, New York) was an abstract expressionist artist based in New York City, whose paintings were widely acclaimed in the 1950s and 1960s. While a student of Hans Hofmann, Richenburg exhibited at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (later the Guggenheim) in 1950. The following year, he participated in the historic Ninth Street Art Exhibition, and subsequently taught at Pratt Institute along with Franz Kline, Adolph Gottlieb, Jack Tworkov, Philip Guston, Milton Resnick and Tony Smith. By 1961, critic Irving Sandler declared that “Richenburg emerges as one of the most forceful painters on the New York Art Scene.” The Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among others, purchased his work.

Richenburg’s work as a painter followed training in his teens at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, art history studies at George Washington University (without graduating), courses at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. and at the Art Students’ League in New York, and service in World War II as a combat engineer dealing with explosives, mines and booby traps. Within five years of his return to the States, Richenburg had studied with Amédée Ozenfant and Hans Hofmann, lived for a year in Provincetown, Massachusetts—where he then began spending summers—joined the Artists’ Club in New York, and exhibited at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting and the Provincetown Art Association. In 1951 he began a long-term teaching position at the Pratt Institute, and Leo Castelli selected one of his works for the historic Ninth Street Show. Thus began a career in which Richenburg’s paintings were widely exhibited and reviewed, and purchased by major collectors (Walter Chrysler, Joseph Hirshhorn) and museums (the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art)

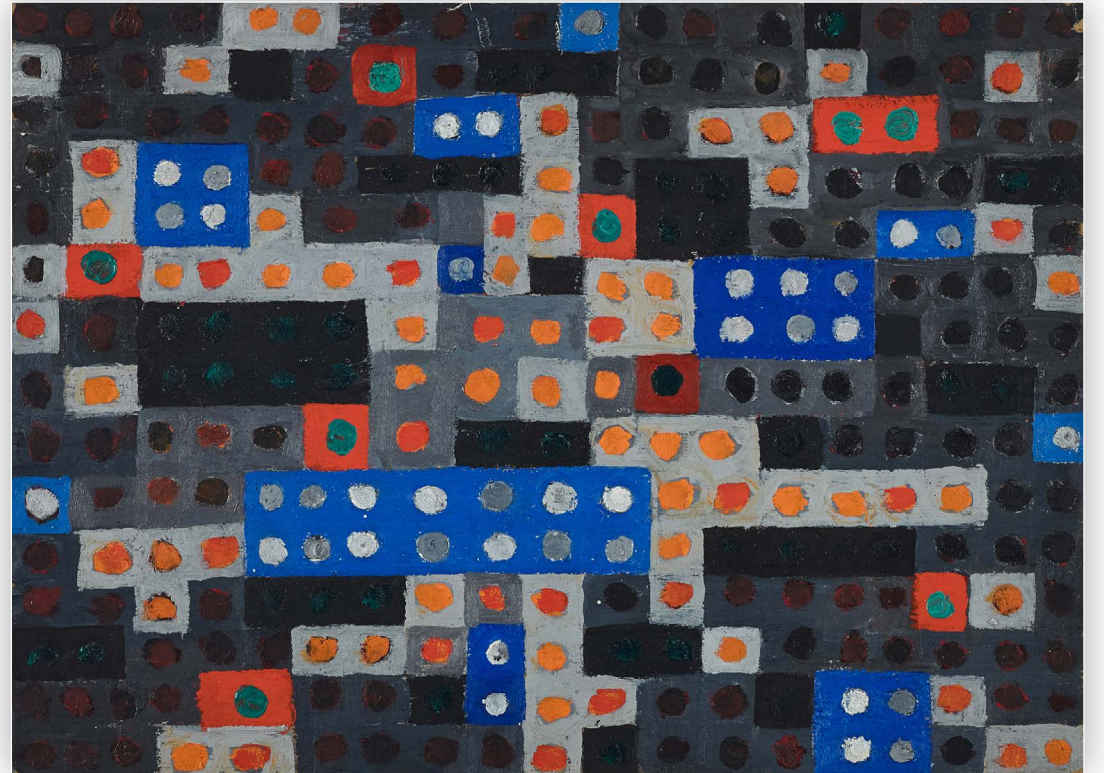
Findlay Galleries has been the exclusive representative of the Richenburg estate since 2001.



**Spotted**, 1946 | Gouache on cardboard | 12 x 16 in. | FG© 204317



*Circles No. 4*, 1950 | oil on canvas | 26 x 40 in. | FG© 140171



*Study for the Circles Series*, c.1940's | oil on cardboard | 9 x 12 3/4 in. | FG© 204439

# Jack Wright

(1919-2003)

John "Jack" Cushing Wright's career as an artist mirrors the growth of American culture that came to prominence after World War II. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1919, he showed the inclination to be a painter at an early age. This was galvanized when he studied with the painter Cameron Booth at the St. Paul School of Art in the late 1930s.

Booth introduced him to modernism and the work of Giorgio de Chirico, Eugene Berman, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, and Henri Matisse. Booth's combination of art historical instruction and personal guidance helped pave the way to Wright's artistic devotion and open-minded ideas based on personal liberty and individual expression.

Wright joined the Army in 1942, and in 1945 he married the painter and ceramicist Patty Ordway, a partnership that would endure the rest of their lives. The Wrights moved their young family to Northern California in 1950 seeking the open-minded ideals that epitomized the Bay Area and which better mirrored their own. They settled in Marin County and Jack worked as an architectural color consultant, while still actively painting. In this period he was also making inroads into the art world, having regular shows and exhibitions at such venues as The Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Institute of Art. Then in 1948 his work was shown at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York, one of the leading avant-garde galleries of its day.

A pivotal moment in Wright's growth came in the mid-1950s when he met the English painter Gordon Onslow Ford. Onslow Ford had been one of the original members of the Parisian Surrealists. Through Onslow Ford, Wright was also introduced to a group of painters and sculptors who formed a the veritable "lost school" of California artists. The shared vision and collaborative efforts of these artists led to a group that painted without boundaries and limitations. As a result they accomplished some of the most thorough visual research on consciousness from the perspective of visual artists done in the last century.

Jack's dot-filled canvasses emphasize subtle shifting colors and evoke thoughts of ethereal grandeur that although mysterious, are also familiar and beckon us to inhabit them. The artist controls the wandering of our eye with patterned brushstrokes that keep our attention drifting along the surface of the canvas. His paintings often have a geometric base that creates a visual platform for us to stand upon as we engage his shifting luminescent world.



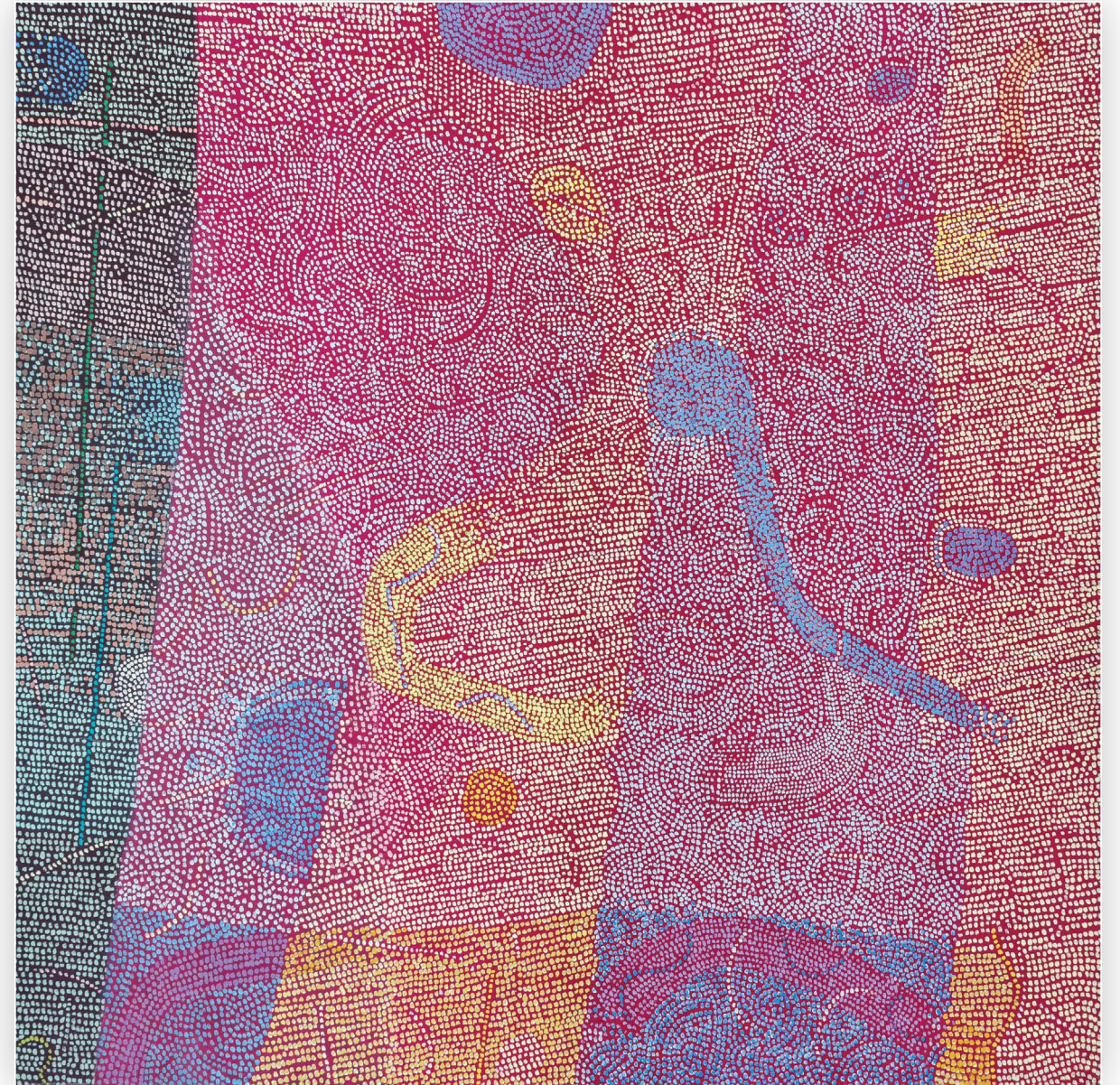
**Untitled (7192)**, 1971 | oil on canvas | 39 x 37 in. | FG© 138055



Left: **Untitled (6962)**, 1969  
colored pencil on paper  
11 7/8 x 9 1/8 in.  
FG© 207409



Right: **Untitled (6943)**, 1969  
colored pencil on paper  
11 7/8 x 9 1/8 in.  
FG© 207407



**Untitled (7435)**, 1974 | acrylic on canvas | 60 x 60 in. | FG© 138057

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