



MORRIS LOUIS (1912-1962)

Untitled

Head Study with Green Background

oil on canvas

12 x 10 in. (14 3/8 x 12 1/2 x 2 1/2 in.)

c. 1938

23765

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the Artist

Private Collection, Florida, by descent

Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1912 to Russian immigrant parents, Morris Louis would emerge as a pre-eminent American Color Field artist of the 20th Century. His large, bold canvases from 1960-1961, called Unfurleds are ensconced in art history for their dramatic vision and revolutionary depictions of color and form in space.

Showing exceptional promise as an artist from an early age, Louis was awarded a 4-year scholarship to the Maryland Institute of Fine and Applied Arts- where he was awarded a Diploma from the Fine Arts Department in 1932. Early Morris work is inspired by his contemporaries at the time, including Arshile Gorky, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Jack Tworkov. These figurative works are heavily influenced by the new American styles of Social Realism and the W.P.A. mural program.

It was in 1952 with his relocation to Washington D.C., that Louis became acquainted with fellow painter and art teacher Kenneth Noland. This fruitful relationship led to an introduction to critic Clement Greenberg- and inclusion in a 1952 group show at the Kootz gallery, titled "Emerging Talent". The 1950's would see Louis exhibited extensively in New York, with successful shows and positive critical reception. Museum interest both nationally and Internationally led to the successful emergence of Louis, and the school which would be known as the "Washington Color School". Tragically, Morris died in 1962 from Lung Cancer, at his home in Washington D.C.

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