



HANS BURKHARDT (1904-1994)

Untitled

Signed and dated lower right, "H. Burkhardt 54"

oil on canvas

31 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (33 1/8 x 27 5/8 x 2 in.)

1954

29045

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Carlsbad, California

Hans Burkhardt (1904 –1994) was born in Basel, Switzerland and immigrated to the United States in 1924. In New York City, Burkhardt quickly matriculated at Cooper Union School of the Arts where he met Arshile Gorky, a pivotal player in bringing the painting techniques of European modernism to America. From 1928 to 1937, Burkhardt and Gorky shared a studio where they, and frequent visitors like Willem de Kooning, refined their painting techniques and developed the roots of American Abstract Expressionism.

However, unlike Gorky and de Kooning, Burkhardt abruptly moved to Los Angeles in 1937, leaving behind the New York art scene to pursue his work independently. In Los Angeles, Burkhardt developed his own semi-abstract style to create works of deep emotional resonance. Unlike most American postwar painters, Burkhardt was never afraid to directly confront controversial political topics and some of his best-known works dealt with the tragedy of war. Over the course of his career, Burkhardt responded to conflict zones all over the world, including the Spanish Civil War, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and conflicts in Central America and Iraq. Although his work prefigured many trends in American art, Burkhardt always remained doggedly independent, uninfluenced by the vicissitudes of the art world.

In recent years, Burkhardt has enjoyed increasing attention from critics, scholars, and museums nationally and internationally. His work is represented in the collections of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco; the British Museum, London; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Kunstmuseum, Basel; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles; and the Portland Museum of Art, Oregon.

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