



GRACE HARTIGAN (1922-2008)**Renaissance Costumes**

Signed lower right, "Hartigan '03"

oil on linen

72 x 84 in. (72 3/4 x 84 3/4 x 2 in.)

2003

32063

PROVENANCE:

Estate of Grace Hartigan

Private Collection, Maryland

Grace Hartigan (1922 – 2008) was born in Newark, New Jersey. Made a single mother at an early age, Hartigan enrolled at the New College of Engineering in 1942 and worked as a mechanical draftsman at an airplane factory to support her family. After World War II, Hartigan moved to Manhattan and began to engage in the postwar downtown art scene, befriending artists such as Milton Avery and Mark Rothko. A breakthrough came for Hartigan in 1948, when she saw an exhibition of Jackson Pollock's work at the Betty Parsons Gallery. Around the same time, Hartigan was also exposed to the work of Willem de Kooning. Inspired by Pollock's expansive gestural style and de Kooning's semi representational forms and art historical allusions, Hartigan began to develop her own inimitable style of Abstract Expressionism. Although her early work were pure abstractions, in the early 1950s she began to include recognizable imagery with her abstract forms, fusing geometric abstraction with thoughtful art historical and personal references. At times in her career, Hartigan's use of representational forms conflicted with the stylistic philosophy of more traditional Abstract Expressionists and their powerful art critic Clement Greenberg. Nonetheless, Hartigan continued to chart her own stylistic path, rejecting the theoretical division between representation and abstraction.

Hartigan's paintings were included in the landmark midcentury exhibition, *12 Americans* at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (1956), and in *The New American Painting*, which was co-organized by MoMA and the United States Information Agency and traveled to eight European cities from 1958 to 1959. As one of few women painters to receive that level of exposure, Hartigan garnered significant press coverage and was featured in *Life* magazine in 1957 and *Newsweek* in 1959. Hartigan's work was included in the seminal *Ninth Street Show*, New York (1951), as well as other major group exhibitions at the Jewish Museum, New York (1957); *Documenta*, Kassel, West Germany (1959); Guggenheim Museum (1961); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1989, 1999); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1992, 1999). Aside from regular solo gallery shows at Tibor de Nagy (1951–59) and then Martha Jackson Gallery (1962–70), Hartigan's work was featured in solo exhibitions at Baltimore Museum of Art (1980); Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York (1993); and Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York (2001). Hartigan's works are represented in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the National

Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., among many others.

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