



## **GEORGE RICKEY (1907-2002)**

### **One Up One Down Oblique**

Signed on base, "Rickey 1974"

bronze

20 x 19 x 2 1/2 in.

1974

37963

### **PROVENANCE:**

Staempfli Gallery, New York

Private Collection, 1975

Sale, Christie's New York, Post-War and Contemporary Art, 28 September 2016, lot 89

Private Collection, California

"One Up One Down Oblique," 1974, was created during a fruitful period for the artist. In 1974, Rickey was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters (now the American Academy of Arts and Letters). Rickey was exhibited widely in the 1970s, which led to extensive travel to cities including Rotterdam, Bellingham (WA), San Francisco, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Amsterdam, London, and Glasgow. Critics, scholars, dealers, and collectors considered Rickey to be one of the most innovative sculptors of his time; his art was fresh and creative when many artists rejected classicism and tradition.

A collector of "Constructivist" artwork himself, Rickey was continually drawn to the structure and balance of forms in space. In the present sculpture, one can see how even when working on a limited scale, the artist creates a sense of immense presence for his sculpture- far more significant than its "tabletop" size.

Rickey is included in countless Museum Collections worldwide, including the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Snite Museum of Art, The Vero Beach Art Museum, the Tate Modern, The Smithsonian American Art Museum (among many others).

Born in South Bend, Indiana, in 1907, Rickey was raised near Glasgow, Scotland. Rickey read modern history at Balliol College, Oxford, took classes in drawing at the Ruskin School, then studied painting in Paris at André Lhote's academy and at the Académie Moderne with Fernand Léger and Amédée Ozenfant.

During the 1930s he painted first in a Cézannesque style, later in a Depression-era, social realist mode. He supported himself by teaching at Groton and at a series of colleges and universities. In World War II Rickey served in the Army Air Corps, testing computing instruments used by bomber gunners. The work required both mechanical skill and understanding the effects of wind and gravity on ballistics, laying the foundation of his move from painting to kinetic sculpture.

Under the G.I. Bill, Rickey studied at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University and from 1948-1949 attended the Institute of Design in Chicago, an outpost of Bauhaus teaching. Intrigued by both the history of constructivist art and by the mobiles

of Alexander Calder, he began creating kinetic sculptures. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Rickey developed systems of motion for his sculpture that responded to the slightest variation in air currents. Over the next three decades he developed sculpture with parts made of lines, planes, rotors, volumes, and churns, moving in paths that change from simple oscillation to conical gyrations, describing a variety of planes or volumes. Many works during this period have been large-scale public commissions for sites in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Rickey died at home in St. Paul, Minnesota, on 17 July 2002 at the age of 95.

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