



**DAVID SMITH (1906-1965)****Untitled**

oil on canvas

12 x 15 3/4 in. (13 1/2 x 17 1/4 x 1 3/4 in.)

30.48 x 40.01 cm (34.29 x 43.82 x 4.45 cm)

1930

40996

**PROVENANCE:**

Estate of David Smith  
Hauser & Wirth  
Private Collection

**EXHIBITION:**

Hauser & Wirth New York, "David Smith: Origins & Innovations", New York NY,  
November 13 – December 23, 2017

David Smith was born in Decatur, Indiana, in 1906. His mother was a school teacher and a devout Methodist; his father was a telephone engineer and part-time inventor, who fostered in his son a reverence for machinery. After his family moved to Paulding, Ohio, in 1921, Smith developed an interest in art, taking a correspondence course in drawing under the auspices of the Cleveland Art School. Although he spent one year at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, Smith felt that the studio art curriculum there did not offer the stimulation he sought, and he subsequently dropped out in the spring of 1925. During that summer, he worked as a welder and riveter at a Studebaker automobile factory, where his understanding and love for industrial materials and techniques took root. Much of this rudimentary training proved essential to Smith's career as an artist. Smith moved to New York in 1926 and enrolled in classes at the Art Students League, where he met Jan Matulka, a Czech abstractionist. Through Matulka, Smith became familiar with the work of Piet Mondrian, Wassily Kandinsky, and the cubists. By the early 1930s, Smith had begun to incorporate found objects such as shells, bones, wood, and wire into his paintings, adding depth and transforming them into sculptural reliefs. Soon thereafter he began constructing welded steel sculptures, and it is for these works that Smith is best known. Smith developed friendships with other avant-garde artists, including Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, and John Graham. Graham, a painter and critic, introduced Smith to the welded sculptures of Julio Gonzáles and Pablo Picasso, which made a tremendous impression on the artist. By 1934 he had settled into a "studio" at Terminal Iron Works, a foundry in Brooklyn, where he constructed innovative and remarkably diverse sculpture from used machine parts, scrap metal, and found objects.

Throughout his career Smith's largely abstract work evoked the figure. Often executed in series, his sculptures fully explored particular ideas about materials and composition. In 1965 David Smith's career was cut short when he died in a tragic automobile accident at the age of fifty-nine.

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