



LARRY RIVERS (1923-2002)

The Drummer

Signed lower right, "Rivers '58"

oil on canvas

68 x 58 in. (68 1/2 x 58 3/4 x 1 1/4 in.)

172.72 x 147.32 cm (173.99 x 149.23 x 3.18 cm)

1958

44239

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, New York, acquired from the artist, c. 1958

Private Collection, by descent from above

EXHIBITION:

Katonah Museum of Art, New York, *Jazz and Visual Improvisation*, January 21–April 15, 2001

LITERATURE:

Hunter, Sam, *Larry Rivers* (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1970), illustrated, pl. 69

Bernard, Catherine and Stanley Crouch, *Jazz and Visual Improvisation* (Katonah, New York: Katonah Museum of Art, 2000), in checklist

Staudter, Thomas, "Bridging Jazz and Fine Arts," *The New York Times*, January 14, 2001, illustrated, p. 11

The Pop Art Movement is notable for its rewriting of Art History and the idea of what could be considered a work of art. Larry Rivers' association with Pop-Art and the New York School set him aside as one of the great American painters of the Post-War period.

In addition to being a visual artist, Larry Rivers was a jazz saxophonist who studied at the Juilliard School of Music from 1945-1946. This painting's subject echoes the artists' interest in Jazz and the musical scene in New York City, particularly Greenwich Village and the Lower East Side.

"Untitled" (1958) is notable because the same owner has held it since the work was acquired directly from the artist several decades ago. This work is from the apex of the artists' career in New York and could comfortably hang in a museum's permanent collection.

Larry Rivers (1923-2002) was an American artist, musician, filmmaker and occasional actor. Rivers resided and maintained studios in New York City, Southampton, Long Island, and Zihuatanejo, Mexico. Rivers is considered by many scholars to be the "Godfather" and "Grandfather" of Pop art, because he was one of the first artists to really merge non-objective, non-narrative art with narrative and objective abstraction.

Rivers took up painting in 1945 and studied at the Hans Hofmann School from 1947–48. He earned a BA in art education from New York University in 1951. He was

a pop artist of the New York School, reproducing everyday objects of American popular culture as art. He was one of eleven New York artists featured in the opening exhibition at the Terrain Gallery in 1955. During the early 1960s Rivers lived in the Hotel Chelsea, notable for its artistic residents such as Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Leonard Cohen, Arthur C. Clarke, Dylan Thomas, Sid Vicious and multiple people associated with Andy Warhol's Factory. In 1965 Rivers had his first comprehensive retrospective in five important American museums. In 2002 a major retrospective of Rivers' work was held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. New York University bought correspondences and other documents from the Larry Rivers Foundation to house in their archive.

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