



HANS HOFMANN (1880-1966)

Landscape No. 108

M-1255

Stamped by the foundation, verso, "Hans Hofmann, HH-Est# M-1255, The Estate of Hans Hofmann"

oil on panel

23 1/4 x 29 1/4 in. (31 1/8 x 37 1/8 x 2 5/8 in.)

59.06 x 74.3 cm (79.06 x 94.3 x 6.67 cm)

1941

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PROVENANCE:

Estate of the Artist

Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1971

Collection Maryann Youngren, 1971-1980

Christie's, New York, May 16, 1980, lot 7

Private Collection, 1980-1998

Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1998

Ameringer Fine Art, New York, 1998

Private Collection, 1998-2008

Ameringer Yohe Fine Art, New York, 2008

Private Collection, New Jersey

EXHIBITION:

Switzerland, Riehen and Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Action Painting – Jackson Pollock and Gesture in Painting*, January 27 – May 12, 2008

LITERATURE:

Fondation Beyeler, *Action Painting*, Ostfildern, 2008, no. 26, p. 68 (illustrated in color)

Suzi Villiger, *Hans Hofmann: catalogue raisonne of paintings, volume II*, Surrey, 2014, HH cat. no. 1253-1941, p. 202 (illustrated in color)

Any analysis of Hans Hofmann's oeuvre is incomplete without considering his small landscapes, which occupied him between 1940 and 1944. These works capture a pivotal moment in his artistic evolution, transitioning from Matisse-inspired figurative still lifes, portraits, and interiors to the pure abstraction that would later define his career. "Landscape #108" exemplifies this shift. Its compressed composition and severe clustering of intense colors prefigure the artist's mature works, channeling the same ferocious dynamism that is the hallmark of our appreciation for the artist. The Fauvist palette and electric strokes vibrate with energy, their interplay of light and dark creating a rhythmic tension that feels almost musical. While modest in scale, the painting's boldness and dynamism hint at the daring risks Hofmann would later embrace in his larger abstractions. Rooted in Fauvism and resonant with Kandinsky's early work, "Landscape # 108" remains a robust testament to Hofmann's evolving visual language during this transformative period.

Hans Hofmann is one of the most important figures of postwar American art. German born, he played a pivotal role in the development of Abstract Expressionism as an

influential teacher of generations of artists in both Germany and America.

Born in Bavaria and educated in Munich, Hofmann studied science and mathematics before studying art. Moving to Paris in 1904, he studied at both the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere and the Academie Colarossi and was influenced by Picasso, Braque, Delaunay, Leger and Matisse, many of whom he met and became friendly. Hofmann moved back to Munich after WWI and opened an innovative art school, transmitting what he learned from the avant-garde in Paris and attracting students from Europe and the United States.

In 1930 Hofmann went to teach at the University of Berkeley and in 1932 settled in New York where he taught art at the Art Students League and later again opened his own schools in Manhattan and Provincetown, Mass. For eager young American artists constrained by the aftermath of WWII and the Depression, contact with Hofmann served as an invaluable connection with European Modernism. Noted art historian Clement Greenberg called Hofmann "in all probability the most important art teacher of our time." His school remained a vital presence in the New York art world until 1958 when the then seventy-eight year old Hofmann decided to devote himself full-time to painting.

Combining Cubist structure and intense Fauvist color, Hofmann created a highly personal visual language, continuously exploring pictorial structures, spatial illusion and chromatic relationships and creating volume through contrasts of color, shape and surface. Also a prominent writer on modern art, his push/pull theory is a culmination of many of his ideas and describes the plasticity of three-dimensionality translated into two-dimensionality. Due to a dazzling burst of creative energy when he was close to 70 years old, his most highly recognizable canvases are from the late 1950's and 1960's, paintings of stacked, overlapping and floating rectangles and clear, saturated hues that assured his reputation and cemented him as a key member of the Abstract Expressionists.

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