



Tiger's Eye

Date

1985 (published 1987)

Primary Maker

Helen Frankenthaler

Medium

Aquatint and sugar lift etching, lithograph and screenprint

Description

In the 1960s and 1970s, a generation of artists arose who internalized and reinterpreted the teachings of Abstract Expressionism, the dominant abstract art movement of the postwar era. One of these artists, who are often referred to as “second-generation” Abstract Expressionists, was Helen Frankenthaler, who was born and raised in New York City,

received early artistic training, and attended Bennington College to further her studies, graduating in 1949. She is best known for her color field paintings, in which she stained large canvases with washes of color. For much of her career, however, Frankenthaler was an avid printmaker, producing more than 105 editions and 230 monotypes from 1961 until the end of her life. Of her entrée into printmaking, the artist said, “I began making prints because artist friends of mine . . . wanted me to try my hand, but I was very suspicious and full of questions, and felt that printmaking did not hold for me as something that was part of my involvement in the avant-garde. It seemed sort of old-fashioned and not the sort of thing that I would be interested in.” That did not prove to be the case, and she embraced the new medium as a source of inspiration and opportunity for exploration, later comparing it to cooking: “It’s like spices and herbs.” Frankenthaler began collaborating with Kenneth Tyler at his print shop, Tyler Graphics, in 1976. During the 1980s, the work she produced there became increasingly complex, incorporating a number of processes and many overlapping colors in compositions that were larger in scale than those she had produced before. Tiger’s Eye is one of a group of ten prints on which Frankenthaler initially worked from 1980 to 1985, then spent the following two years refining. Produced in an edition of fifty-six, it incorporates nine colors that were applied by both intaglio (aquatint and etching) and planographic (lithograph and screenprint) techniques. The artist’s mastery of the art form is evident in her ability to deploy a variety of marks—both delicate and lively—within a harmonious composition. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Sheet: 19 x 22 1/4 in. (48.3 x 56.5 cm) Frame: 23 3/8 x 26 5/8 x 2 in. (59.4 x 67.6 x 5.1 cm)