



Untitled

Date

1962

Primary Maker

Hans Hofmann

Medium

Oil on board

Description

Hans Hofmann was raised outside Munich and studied art in Germany before moving to Paris in 1904 for further training. In 1915, back in Munich, he founded his own art school, which became internationally renowned. After spending the summer of 1930 teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, he decided

to immigrate the following year in response to the rise of Nazism in his homeland and the accompanying hostility toward intellectuals. He subsequently taught at the Art Students League in New York City before again opening his own school, where a number of artists who later gained prominence, such as Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler, Red Grooms, Allan Kaprow, and Larry Rivers, all studied. In contrast to the realism being imparted at most American art schools of the time, Hofmann taught European modernism. In the early 1940s, Hofmann began to incorporate dribbles and splashes of paint and evidence of gestures—such as hand prints and blurring—into his work; through Krasner, who was married to Jackson Pollock, he may even have influenced the latter's famous drip technique, which emerged in 1947. In his teaching and writing, Hofmann stressed the “push and pull” that provides the balance and tension necessary to create volume within a painted, two-dimensional composition. His distinctive use of color was related to that principle; he explained, “Color is a plastic means of creating intervals. Intervals are color harmonics produced by special relationships, or tensions. We differentiate now between formal tensions and color tensions, just as we differentiate in music between counterpoint and harmony.” In 1958, Hofmann stopped teaching to devote himself to his own art. This untitled painting of 1962 does not have the iconic rectangular forms often seen in the artist's work of the period, but the vivid, juxtaposed colors are in keeping with his practice and demonstrative of his philosophy. This work was given to the College in 2010 by Peter B. Fischer, Class of 1963, a collector of American art. In 1987, the Emerson Gallery mounted an exhibition of geometric abstraction from Fischer's collection. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Overall: 14 × 17 in. (35.6 × 43.2 cm) Frame: 16 1/8 × 19 1/4 × 1 3/4 in. (41 × 48.9 × 4.4 cm)