



SAM FRANCIS (1923 – 1994)

One of the twentieth century's most profound Abstract Expressionists, American artist Sam Francis is noted as one of the first post-World War II painters to develop an international reputation. Francis created thousands of paintings as well as works on paper, prints and monotypes, housed in major museum collections and institutions around the world. Regarded as one of the leading interpreters of color and light, his work holds references to New York abstract expressionism, color field painting, Chinese and Japanese art, French impressionism and his own Bay Area roots.

Native Californian painter and printmaker, Sam Francis is most noted for his use of dynamic forms saturated with intense color amidst spaces of white. He studied medicine and psychology at the University of California, Berkley, but joined the Air Force in 1943. Francis began painting during a prolonged hospitalization due to spinal tuberculosis. Upon his return to the United States, he pursued his art education at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco and again at U.C. Berkley. Abstract Expressionism and French Impressionism influenced his early paintings, and most likely compelled him to move to Paris in 1950 where he remained for ten years. In addition to his contemporary Western influences, the interplay of negative space and bursts of color can be attributed to his study of Japanese calligraphy art during his frequent visits to his vacation home in Japan.

His works are found today in major private and public collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the National Gallery of Art and the Hirshorn, Washington DC; the Tate, London; the Kunstmuseum, Basel; the Albertina, Vienna and the Musée National d'art Moderne, Paris.