

VAN DOREN WAXTER

For Immediate Release – February 2014
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Van Doren Waxter is pleased to present a solo exhibition
James Brooks
Paintings and Works on Paper 1945 – 1949
March 5 – April 25, 2014



Green Bottle, c. 1948, Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches (61 x 76.2 cm)

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to present *James Brooks: Paintings and Works on Paper 1945 - 1949*, a solo exhibition featuring paintings and works on paper by James Brooks (1906 – 1992). The exhibition will be on view from March 5th to April 25th, 2014.

Revered as an abstract expressionist and a member of the Irascibles, Brooks' work from the mid-late 1940s showcased the evolution of his style from realism to abstraction. Before World War II, Brooks was hired as a WPA artist, his most involved project being the *Flight* mural at LaGuardia airport finished in 1942. Following the completion of this mural, Brooks was drafted into the Air Force where he was a civil pilot trainee and a member of the Army Art Project where he worked as a combat artist in the Middle East. He was discharged from the Air Force in 1945 and moved back to New York where he taught advanced painting at Columbia University and moved into Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock's old studio on Eighth Street.

Brooks' work following his time in the service showcases his introduction to abstraction. Looking at Picasso and Braque, Brooks played with synthetic cubism utilizing tight, compact forms in mostly muted and darker hues. Using improvisation as a starting point, one can see Brooks' exploration of materials and abandonment of spatial convention. *Green Bottle* (c. 1948), demonstrates this new style of painting highlighting form, shape and color with allusions to still life, no horizon line, and ambiguous focal points.

Working in Maine in the summer of 1948, Brooks' work evolved further. Developing gestural brushwork based on the permeation of paint through canvas, absorbent Osnaburg cloth or paper glued to canvas, and the ghostly impressions left on the base materials, he began experimenting with fragmentary shapes and the arbitrary. His seminal painting *Maine* (1948), exemplifies Brooks' sense of lyrical abstraction that came to fruition at this time. Linear sketches are interspersed between swaths of pink, gray, red, green and black. The layers of color create a dynamic and almost three-dimensional image.

James Brooks was born in St. Louis, MO (1906) and died in East Hampton, NY (1992). Recent solo museum exhibitions include *James Brooks at the Dallas Museum of Art: A Celebration*, Dallas, TX (2006); *James Brooks Revisited*, Hillwood Art Museum, Brookville, NY (2000); *Rediscovering James Brooks: WPA Murals and Other Figural Works*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (1997); *James Brooks: A Retrospective*, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME (1983). Selected museum collections include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Dallas Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Walker Art Center, Whitney Museum of American Art and Yale University Art Gallery.

Van Doren Waxter is located at 23 East 73rd Street, New York, NY 10021.
Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm.