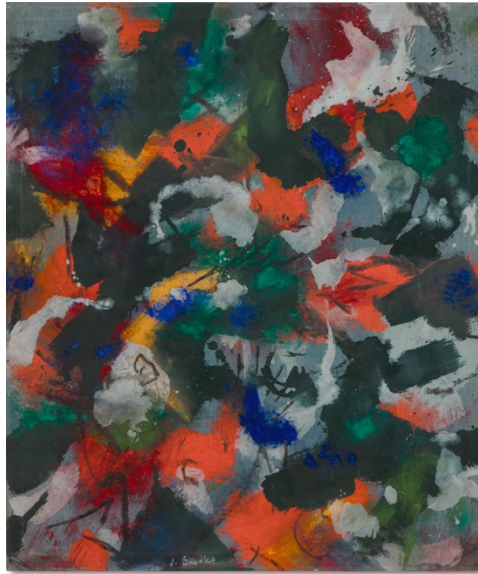


VAN DOREN
WAXTER

JAMES BROOKS

Painting I Prefer to Know, Works on Canvas from 1950-1958

March 13 – April 27, 2019
23 East 73rd Street



N, 1952, Oil, black crayon and powdered pigment on muslin, 38 1/2 x 32 3/4 inches (97.8 x 83.2 cm)

“The painting surface has always been the rendezvous of what the painter knows with the unknown, which appears on it for the first time.”

—JAMES BROOKS, 1955

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to present *James Brooks: Painting I Prefer to Know, Works on Canvas from 1950-1958*, an exhibition by the masterful and crucial Abstract Expressionist on view at 23 East 73rd Street from March 13 to April 27, 2019. A skilled colorist, Brooks is noted for his approach to creating rhythmic, dynamic works comprised of richly colored and textured visual planes. This suite of paintings was produced during a period of increasing critical acclaim for the artist, and today there is a renewed interest in his art practice. A survey curated by Chief Curator Alicia Longwell is scheduled for 2020 at The Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill, New York.

The 1950s were both a highly productive and highly visible decade for the artist who began his career during the Great Depression and moved to New York City in 1926. After serving in the United States Army as an Art Correspondent in the Middle East, Brooks returned to New York in 1945 following the rise of Abstract Expressionism as an established movement. By 1950, he would receive his first of many solo exhibitions at Peridot Gallery in New York; gain inclusion in the Whitney Annual and Carnegie International; and the following year participate in the historic and groundbreaking *9th Street Exhibition* (1951) that included Jackson Pollock, Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Jack Tworkov, and others.

Brooks was then included in surveys in New York City, such as *Younger American Painters: A Selection* (1954) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *The New Decade: 35 Painters and Sculptors* (1955) at

The Whitney Museum of American Art, and *12 Americans* (1956) at The Museum of Modern Art. Near the end of the decade, he would exhibit internationally in Sao Paulo, Brazil in the *Fourth Biennial* (1957) as well as exhibitions in Amsterdam and Osaka, Japan. In 1963, he received a mid-career retrospective at The Whitney Museum of American Art.

Brooks had previously utilized similar working methods to those of his contemporaries—such as the spontaneous drip paintings of Pollock—but in the 1950s Brooks expanded his drips into expressive, lush brushstrokes. *Falfurias* (1957) and *Garamond* (1958) are lyrical and elegant oil paintings of interlocking and overlapping abstractions that evince his interest in the relationship between color and form.

To date, the gallery has presented 10 exhibitions since 2003 devoted to Brooks' art practice. Of historical note, in 2012, the gallery presented *Unlikely Friends: James Brooks and Dan Flavin*, a two-person exhibition that considered the friendship of the two artists featuring works on paper and canvas by Brooks and fluorescent light sculptures by Flavin accompanied by an essay prepared by scholar Tiffany Bell.

About the artist:

James Brooks was born in St. Louis, MO in 1906. He studied art at the Southern Methodist University from 1923-25. In 1926, Brooks moved to New York City, where he studied at the Art Students League with Kimmon Nicolaidis and Boardman Robinson. Brooks married Mary MacDonald in (1938-42). He served in the United States Army in the Middle East as an Art Correspondent, with headquarters in Cairo and traveled in North Africa, Palestine, and Egypt (1942-45). He married the artist Charlotte Park in 1947. James Brooks died in East Hampton, NY in 1992. Museum exhibitions include *James Brooks at the Dallas Museum of Art: A Celebration*, Dallas, TX (2006); *Rediscovering James Brooks: WPA Murals & Other Figural Works*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (1997); *James Brooks: A Retrospective*, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME (1983); and *James Brooks Retrospective*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (1963), traveled to Rose Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Washington Gallery of Contemporary Art, Washington, D.C.; University of California Art Galleries, Los Angeles, CA. Selected museum collections include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C., Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

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