

KUNKEL FINE ART

Zeichnungen, Gemälde und Skulpturen
des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts

SAM FRANCIS

(1923 San Mateo, California - 1994 Santa Monica, California)

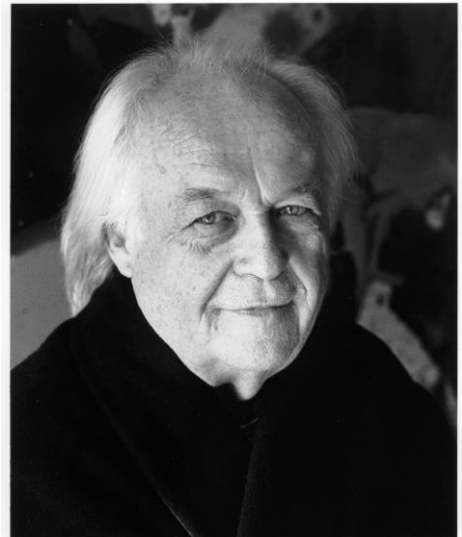
Following a serious accident towards the end of the Second World War, Sam Francis was hospitalised for years. During this time, he found solace and distraction in painting, which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Art professor David Park played a major role in this. When he visited Francis in 1945, he immediately recognised his talent and provided the necessary tuition. Francis was particularly impressed by the works of Paul Klee, Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso.

Francis, a former student of botany, medicine and psychology, pursued his new path with great determination and studied fine art and art history at the University of California in Berkeley from 1948 to 1950. Painters Arshile Gorky, Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still were his most important role models during those years.

After successfully completing his studies, Francis travelled to Paris, where he soon established contacts with representatives of the artistic avant-garde. His friendship with Jean-Paul Riopelle proved to have a formative influence on his style. Riopelle played a decisive role in Francis becoming one of the most important representatives of Tachisme.

Francis' trademark is a peculiar painting technique in which he lets rivulets of colour flow into one another until they form unmistakable splashes of colour. Characteristic of his work are the strong, bright contrasts and the accents of colour applied both spontaneously and deliberately dripping. Representing a lyrically oriented form of abstract expressionism, Francis' main interest lies in the poetry of the colour composition. As he himself once stated: *"Colour is a pattern that emerges on the membrane of the mind"*. The resulting compositions of colour patches overlap, sometimes glazed, sometimes opaque, and are sometimes close together, sometimes further apart. The aesthetic quality is decisive. The viewer is offered both meditative and revitalising visual experiences.

In 1957, Francis travelled the world, including Japan, where he created his first large mural. Restless years followed, during which he maintained studios in Paris, Bern, Tokyo and New York. Following his participation in the Venice Biennale and documenta II and III in Kassel, Francis rose to become one of the most prominent



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representatives of Action Painting in the 1970s. To this day, his works continue to attract great attention in the USA, Europe, and Japan.