

THE TURNER

American International: Abstract Expressionism Abstract and Expressive (wall 1)

This strictly American based movement emerged in New York in the mid-1940's through the mid-1950's. In the post WWII era, Abstract Expressionism shifted the focus of the art world from Europe to the United States more specifically New York. In turn, this movement impacted European artists. Asger Jorn (Danish) and Karel Appel (Dutch), who are featured in this exhibition, created work that was highly abstract, powerful and animated.

Abstract Expressionism emphasized energetic and dynamic mark making in contrast to the more reflective and spiritual Color Field abstraction. The Color Field movement stressed the overall consistency of form and process and less on gestural brushstrokes of its counterpart and can be seen in the prints of Latvian artists Ivars Hirss and Adja Yunkers.

Abstract Expressionism favored highly abstract imagery even when depicting elements from reality. The individuality of the application of the media gives the viewer evidence of the artist's hand. The sense of the almost calligraphic directness in brushstroke, unconscious artlessness, emotional frenzy and strong attraction to vibrant color characterize a large portion of this movement. The tradition of perspective was demolished and flatness was valued. Artists broke away from the conventional techniques of mark making. During this movement many artists began experimenting with size, creating monumental works. Automatism and spontaneity in movement is indicated, similar to a performance. The physical experience of making the art is individual, crucial and apparent.

Adria Crossen Davis

Janet Turner Print Museum Collection Manager/Graduate Exhibition Co-Curator, Spring 2013