

Ad Reinhardt *Print—Painting—Maquette*

September 12–October 19, 2024
537 West 20th Street 2nd Floor, New York



Ad Reinhardt, *10 Screenprints* (portfolio cover), 1966. © Anna Reinhardt/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, 2024. Courtesy David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Ad Reinhardt (1913–1967) at the gallery's 537 West 20th Street location in New York. Curated by Jeffrey Weiss and organized in collaboration with the Ad Reinhardt Foundation, the exhibition will explore Reinhardt's screenprints—a group of works that the artist created toward the end of his life—and his interest in translating the subtleties of his painted work into the print medium.

By the time Reinhardt made his first screenprint in 1964—for *X + X (Ten Works by Ten Painters)*, a portfolio of prints produced by the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut—he had already spent more than two decades developing the matte surfaces and subtle chromatic compositions characteristic of his late paintings, including monochromes in red and blue as well as the so-called black paintings, in which black is mixed with red, blue, and green. The success of that first screenprint, based on the palette and square-format design of a classic black painting, encouraged Reinhardt to produce the monographic print portfolio *10 Screenprints*, published in 1966 by the Wadsworth Atheneum as well—a project that allowed the artist to continue to challenge and explore the possibilities and limits of the screenprint medium.

Featuring these prints along with preparatory studies and maquettes, this exhibition will reveal an underexamined facet of Reinhardt's practice. In addition to being the first solo exhibition to focus on the artist's screenprints, *Print—Painting—Maquette* will also include a number of small paintings,

demonstrating the similarities and differences between painting and printmaking during Reinhardt's all-important late period.

As curator Jeffrey Weiss writes in a new scholarly essay on the prints and other works featured in this exhibition:

Reinhardt's screenprints are, in and of themselves, hieratic icons of color and form, almost unique in printmaking of the era for being at once sumptuous and austere. Yet, as images, they are derived from his painted work.

Reinhardt's screenprints correspond to two types of painting. His first print, made for X + X (Ten Works by Ten Painters) ... took the form of a black square.... Conversely, most of the ten prints for the 1966 portfolio derive from paintings of the 1950s that are more complex in design and more explicit in color. There are eight vertical-format images; two are square, including the last print in the sequence of ten, which is another black square. Published as an edition of 250 and printed by Ives-Sillman in New Haven, Connecticut, the portfolio lies at the center of Reinhardt's printmaking activity....

In keeping with the state of his late practice, [10 Screenprints] was iterative, not genealogical or nostalgic—a group of variants rather than a developing “history of forms.” This makes the portfolio a brilliant constellation of images. The impression is heightened by the whiteness of the sheet, which functions much like a wall, allowing the printed images to be controlled—with respect to placement, isolation, and orientation—in a way that the paintings never could be.

Ad Reinhardt (1913–1967) is among the most significant American artists of the twentieth century. His paintings encourage the viewer's active engagement in the act of looking at and experiencing “art as art.” As he declared, “Art is art. Everything else is everything else.”

Born in Buffalo, New York, and raised in Queens, New York, Reinhardt was recognized for his skill as an artist from an early age. He attended Columbia University on a scholarship, where he studied art history and graduated in 1935. In 1936, Reinhardt was hired by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project to paint abstract paintings in the Easel Division. In 1937, he joined the American Abstract Artists, with whom he would exhibit through the early 1950s. These formative experiences demonstrated an early dedication to the cause of abstract painting, to which Reinhardt would devote himself for the rest of his life.

He had his first solo show in 1943 at The Artists' Gallery, New York, and was included in a number of important group exhibitions of abstract painting throughout the 1940s, alongside artists such as Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Hans Hofmann, and others. During this time, Reinhardt studied with Alfred Salmony at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and developed a keen interest in Asian art, which he would continue to explore in his writings, slide shows, and teaching.

Around 1950, Reinhardt began paring down his compositions. He ultimately arrived at a reduced color palette of blue, red, and black, which he explored in symmetrical and geometric monochrome canvases. At the time, he considered his blue, red, and black paintings equal parts of a general investigation into subtle chromatic variations and the perceptual properties of color, originally exhibiting these works together.

In 1965, Reinhardt staged concurrent exhibitions of his blue, red, and black paintings at three galleries in New York: blue at the Stable Gallery, red at Graham Gallery, and black at Betty Parsons Gallery. At the end of 1966, Sam Hunter, with the assistance of Lucy Lippard, mounted a major retrospective of Reinhardt's work at The Jewish Museum, New York.

Among the notable posthumous exhibitions of Reinhardt's work are retrospectives and major surveys at the Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, which traveled to four venues: Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, Kunsthaus Zürich, Centre national d'art contemporain, Grand Palais in Paris, and Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts in Vienna, in 1972 and 1973; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1980; The Museum of Modern Art, which traveled to The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, in 1991 and 1992; and Fundación Juan March, Madrid, in 2021 and 2022.

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