

CLEVE GRAY

Cleve Gray was a painter admired for his large-scale, vividly colorful and lyrically gestural abstract compositions. He was born Cleve Ginsberg in New York on September 22, 1918. (The family changed its name to Gray in 1936.) He attended the Ethical Culture School in New York and completed his college preparatory studies at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, where he won the Samuel F. B. Morse Prize for most promising art student. In 1940 he graduated summa cum laude from Princeton with a degree in art and archaeology. He wrote his thesis on Chinese landscape painting, a genre which would later become an important influence on his own painting.

Gray joined the Army in 1942 and served in Britain, France and Germany, where he sketched wartime destruction. After the liberation of Paris he began informal studies with the French artists Andréé Lhote and Jacques Villon, and he continued those studies after the war.

He began to exhibit his work at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris and had his first solo exhibition at the Jacques Seligmann Gallery in New York in 1947, a year after returning to the United States.

He achieved his greatest critical recognition in the late 1960s and 70s after working for many years in a comparatively conservative late-Cubist style. Inspired in the '60s by artists like Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, Mark Rothko and Helen Frankenthaler, Gray began to produce large paintings using a variety of application methods—pouring, staining, sponging and other nontraditional techniques—to create compositions combining expanses of pure color and spontaneous calligraphic gestures.

In 1972 and '73 he produced "Threnody," a suite of 14 paintings, each measuring 20 feet by 20 feet, dedicated to the dead on both sides in the Vietnam War. The series was commissioned by the Neuberger Museum of Art at Purchase College, part of the State University of New York, and is considered one of the largest groups of abstract paintings created for a specific public space.

Gray also wrote frequently about art. He was a contributing editor for *Art in America* magazine and edited three volumes of other artists' writings: *David Smith by David Smith* (1968); *John Marin by John Marin* (1970) and *Hans Richter by Hans Richter* (1971), all published by Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

ROSENBAUM

contemporary

Selected Public Collections

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy; Andover, Massachusetts
Albright-Knox Art Gallery; Buffalo, New York
The Brooklyn Museum, New York
Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio
The Corcoran Gallery of Art; Washington, D.C.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Heckscher Museum; Huntington, New York
Honolulu Academy of the Arts, Hawaii
The Jewish Museum, New York
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Washington, D.C.
The Newark Museum, New Jersey
Norton Gallery of Art; West Palm Beach, Florida
The Phillips Collection; Washington, D.C.
Shearson Lehman Hutton Collection, New York
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Williams College Museum of Art; Williamstown, Massachusetts