

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF WORKS BY MARK ROTHKO

PRESENTS WIDE RANGE OF STYLES OVER FOUR DECADES;

ON VIEW AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, MAY 3 - AUGUST 16, 1998

Washington, D.C. -- The first comprehensive American retrospective in twenty years of paintings and works on paper by Mark Rothko (1903-1970), long recognized as one of America's foremost artists, will be on view at the National Gallery of Art, East Building, May 3 through August 16, 1998. This exhibition will take full advantage of the National Gallery's unique Rothko holdings, a gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, which constitute the largest public repository of the artist's works. One hundred fifteen paintings and works on paper will be included, dating from the 1930s to 1970, with an emphasis on his surrealist and classic periods. Arranged chronologically, the exhibition will reveal the extent of Rothko's prolific and wide-ranging output throughout a career that spanned five decades.

The exhibition is sponsored by Mobil. It is organized by the National Gallery of Art. After Washington, it will travel to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

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(September 10 - November 29, 1998) and the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (winter 1998/1999).

"As the most important repository and study center of this great artist's work, the National Gallery has a special interest in bringing this retrospective to the public. A decade ago, the National Gallery received the core collection of The Mark Rothko Foundation, a gift that included 295 paintings and works on paper, and more than 650 sketches," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are grateful to the artist's daughter and son, Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko, who are lending numerous works for this important exhibition, and to New York's Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art and others for their generous loans," he added. The exhibition will draw on loans from other public and private collections in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

"It is with great enthusiasm that Mobil presents the Mark Rothko retrospective," said Mobil Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Lucio A. Noto. "He is one of America's most gifted artists, whose paintings inspire a great sense of emotion in those who view his works. As individuals tour this exhibition, I believe they will long remember the feelings these paintings bring forth. If that is true, then Mobil will have achieved its purpose in supporting the arts around the world."

MARK ROTHKO

Rothko's achievement has had a decisive impact on the course of twentieth-century art and has given rise to a wealth of critical interpretation. A central figure in

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the development of postwar abstract painting in the United States, Rothko is best known for the unique use of color in his paintings from around 1950 onward. These are considered among the most original landmarks of the New York School.

Rothko, who committed suicide at age sixty-six, was born in Dvinsk, Russia, and immigrated to the United States at age ten. After two years of liberal arts study at Yale University, he moved to New York, where he took classes briefly at the Art Students League and began to paint. In many respects he considered himself a self-taught artist, although his early style was influenced by other painters such as Milton Avery, whom he knew well.

WORKS IN EXHIBITION

The exhibition includes figurative works ranging from the expressionist manner of Rothko's early period in New York City, to his experimentation with mythological themes during the early to middle 1940s, and his completely abstract "multiforms" of the late 1940s.

Also highlighted are Rothko's classic paintings of the 1950s, which are distinguished by an emphasis on pure pictorial elements such as color, surface, and structure. His canvases from that period, characterized by expanding dimensions and an increasingly simplified use of form, brilliant luminosity, and broad, thin washes of color, are represented in the exhibition by No. 10, 1950 (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Philip Johnson); Untitled [Blue, Green and Brown], 1952 (Collection of Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia); and No. 1 (Royal Red and Blue) [Untitled],

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1954 (Private Collection), among others.

While the large scale of Rothko's classic paintings suggests that they are monumental, the artist believed that the large dimensions made the pictures intimate: they allow the viewer to relate to the canvas as if it were another living presence. In this way, Rothko also felt that the works could express emotions associated with major themes such as tragedy, ecstasy, and the sublime, but without the use of symbolic imagery. The impact of these commanding works is often described in spiritual as well as emotional terms.

In the late 1950s Rothko began to explore the effects of a darker palette, which lent a dramatic new presence to paintings such as No. 10, 1958 (Private Collection); No. 207 (Red over Dark Blue on Dark Gray), 1961 (University of California, Berkeley Art Museum); and No. 3 (Bright Blue, Brown, Dark Blue on Wine), 1962 (Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Maryland).

In 1964, Rothko was commissioned by John and Dominique de Menil to paint murals for a nondenominational chapel in Houston, Texas. The exhibition includes works related to this project in which darkness has become the dominant pictorial and thematic element as can be seen in Untitled [White, Blacks, Grays on Maroon], 1963 (Kunsthaus Zürich).

There are also paintings and works on paper in the exhibition from the last three years of Rothko's life, when he produced large paintings using a newly distilled compositional format and a reduced palette of black, gray, brown, muted ochres and

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blues. These include Untitled, 1969 (John and Mary Pappajohn, Des Moines, Iowa).

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

The curator for the National Gallery exhibition is Jeffrey Weiss, associate curator, twentieth-century art, National Gallery of Art. The consultants for the exhibition are Mark Rosenthal, curator of twentieth-century art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, and David Anfam, author of the forthcoming Rothko catalogue raisonné.

CATALOGUE

Accompanying the exhibition will be a fully illustrated catalogue, with color images of every work in the show. It will include contributions by John Gage, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Barbara Novak, Brian O'Doherty, Mark Rosenthal, Jessica Stewart, and Jeffrey Weiss. There will also be interviews with contemporary painters Ellsworth Kelly, Brice Marden, Gerhart Richter, Robert Ryman, and sculptor George Segal about Rothko's artistic legacy. The catalogue will be published by the National Gallery of Art and distributed in hard cover by Yale University Press.

The catalogue raisonné of Rothko's works on canvas is in preparation by the National Gallery of Art.

BROCHURE AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

A free brochure will accompany the exhibition. A list of related lectures, which include a symposium with several art world figures who knew Rothko, will be announced at a later date.

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SUPPORT FROM MOBIL

Mobil has sponsored three other exhibitions at the National Gallery: Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images (1978-1979), The Sculpture of Indonesia (1990), The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century (1995), and two film premieres: "The Search for Alexander" and "Suleyman the Magnificent."

The National Gallery of Art, located on Constitution Avenue, between Third and Seventh Streets, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free of charge. For general information, call (202) 737-4215; or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176; or visit the National Gallery of Art's Web site at <http://www.nga.gov>

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Mark Rothko

National Gallery of Art
May 3 – August 16, 1998

Checklist

- Black & White Photographs available
- Slides available
- Color Transparencies available

Works Included in the Exhibition

1. ***Self-Portrait***, 1936
 - oil on canvas
 - 81.9 x 65.4 cm (32 1/4 x 25 3/4)
 - Collection of Christopher Rothko
2. ***Rural Scene***, c. 1936
 - oil on canvas
 - 68.5 x 96.8 cm (27 x 38 1/8)
 - National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
3. ***Interior***, 1936
 - oil on hardboard
 - 60.6 x 46.4 cm (23 7/8 x 18 1/4)
 - National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
4. ***Street Scene***, c. 1937
 - oil on canvas
 - 73.5 x 101.4 cm (29 x 40)
 - National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

All works ©1998 Christopher Rothko and Kate Rothko Prizel

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5. **Untitled**, 1937–1938
oil on canvas
60.7 x 46.1 cm (23 7/8 x 18 1/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
6. **Untitled**, c. 1937
oil on canvas
101.6 x 76.2 cm (40 x 30)
Ira Smolin
7. **Untitled**, 1938
oil on canvas
127 x 94 cm (50 x 37)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
8. **Untitled (Portrait)**, 1939
oil on canvas
101.6 x 76.5 cm (40 x 30 1/8)
Collection of Christopher Rothko
9. **Entrance to Subway [Subway Scene]**, 1938
 oil on canvas
● 86.4 x 117.5 cm (34 x 46 1/4)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
10. **Underground Fantasy [Subway]**, c. 1940
oil on canvas
87.3 x 118.2 cm (34 3/8 x 46 1/2)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
11. **Untitled**, 1941–1942
oil and graphite on linen
61 x 81 cm (24 x 31 7/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
12. **Untitled**, 1941–1942
oil on canvas
76 x 91.3 cm (29 7/8 x 36)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

13. **Untitled**, 1941–1942
 - oil on canvas
 - 90.9 x 60.6 cm (35 3/4 x 23 7/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

14. **Untitled**, 1942 (alternatively dated to 1940–1941)
 - oil on canvas
 - 71.3 x 92.1 cm (28 1/8 x 36 1/4)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

15. **Sacrifice of Iphigenia**, 1942
 - oil and graphite on canvas
 - 127 x 93.7 cm (50 x 36 7/8)
Collection of Christopher Rothko

16. **Hierarchical Birds**, 1944
 - oil on canvas
 - 100.7 x 80.5 cm (39 5/8 x 31 5/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

18. **Gethsemane**, 1944
 - oil and charcoal on canvas
 - 138.1 x 90.2 cm (54 3/8 x 35 1/2)
Collection of Kate Rotho Prizel

19. **Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea**, 1944
 - oil on canvas
 - 191.1 x 215.9 cm (75 1/4 x 85)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Bequest of Mrs. Mark Rothko through The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1981

20. **Untitled**, 1940
 - watercolor on paper
 - 75.9 x 55.3 cm (29 7/8 x 21 3/4)
Collection of Christopher Rothko

21. **Untitled**, 1944–1945
 - watercolor, tempera, graphite, and ink on paper
 - 53.3 x 66.8 cm (21 x 26 1/4)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

22. **Archaic Idol** (recto), 1945
wash, pen and ink, and gouache on paper
55.6 x 76.2 cm (21 7/8 x 30)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection,
157.78.a-b
23. **Untitled**, c. 1944–45
watercolor on paper
76.2 x 55.9 cm (30 x 22)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of The Mark Rothko
Foundation, Inc., 1986
24. **Fantasy [Untitled]**, 1945
oil on canvas
134.9 x 98.7 cm (53 1/8 x 38 7/8)
Private Collection, New York
25. **Untitled**, 1944
 chalk, watercolor, pen and ink on paper
66 x 99.1 cm (26 x 39)
Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Fuld Jr.
26. **Tentacles of Memory**, c. 1945–46
watercolor and ink on paper
55.3 x 76.2 cm (21 3/4 x 30)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Albert M. Bender Collection, Albert M. Bender
Bequest Fund Purchase
27. **Rites of Lilith**, 1945
 oil and charcoal on canvas
● 208.3 x 270.8 cm (82 x 106 5/8)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
28. **Untitled**, 1945–1946
watercolor and ink on paper
103.5 x 69.9 cm (40 3/4 x 27 1/2)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
29. **Omen** (recto), c. 1946
watercolor and gouache with brush and black ink on paper
99.4 x 63.8 cm (39 1/8 x 25 1/8)
The Ulla and Heiner Pietzsch Collection, Berlin

30. **Untitled**, 1946
 watercolor on paper
● 98.4 x 64.8 cm (38 3/4 x 25 1/2)
Collection of Ambassador and Mrs. Donald Blinken, New York City
32. **Untitled**, 1947
oil on canvas
96.2 x 53 cm (37 7/8 x 20 7/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
33. **No. 21 [Untitled]**, 1947
oil on canvas
99.7 x 97.8 cm (39 1/4 x 38 1/2)
Collection of Christopher Rothko
34. **Untitled**, 1948
 oil on canvas
● 127.6 x 109.9 cm (50 1/4 x 43 1/4)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
35. **Untitled**, 1948
oil on canvas
114 x 85.4 cm (44 7/8 x 33 5/8)
Private Collection
36. **No. 1 (No. 18, 1948)**, 1948–1949
oil on canvas
171.8 x 142.6 cm (67 5/8 x 56 1/8)
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd (Blanchette Hooker, Class of 1931)
37. **Untitled [Multiform]**, 1948
oil on canvas
226.1 x 165.1 cm (89 x 65)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
38. **No. 9 [Multiform]**, 1948
 mixed media on canvas
● 134.6 x 118.4 cm (53 x 46 5/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986

39. **No. 19**, 1949
oil on canvas
172.7 x 101.9 cm (68 x 40 1/8)
The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Heyward Cutting
40. **No. 8 [Multiform]**, 1949
mixed media on canvas
228.3 x 167.3 cm (89 7/8 x 65 7/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
41. **No. 5 [Untitled]**, 1949
 oil on canvas
● 215.9 x 160 cm (85 x 63)
■ The Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, Bequest of Walter P. Chrysler Jr.
42. **Untitled**, 1949
watercolor and tempera on paper
107.6 x 72.1 cm (42 3/8 x 28 3/8)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
43. **No. 3 (No. 13) [Magenta, Black, Green on Orange]**, 1949
 oil on canvas
● 216.5 x 163.8 cm (85 1/4 x 64 1/2)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Bequest of Mrs. Mark Rothko through The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1981
44. **Untitled**, 1949
oil on canvas
204.2 x 168.3 cm (80 3/8 x 66 1/4)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
45. **Untitled [Violet, Black, Orange, Yellow on White and Red]**, 1949
oil on canvas
207 x 167.6 cm (81 1/2 x 66)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift of Elaine and Werner Dannheisser and The Dannheisser Foundation, 1978
46. **No. 5 (No. 22)**, 1950 (alternatively dated to 1949)
● oil on canvas
297.2 x 272.1 cm (117 x 107 1/8)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the artist, 1969

47. **White Center**, 1950
oil on canvas
205.7 x 141 cm (81 x 55 1/2)
Private Collection
48. **No. 10**, 1950
● oil on canvas
■ 229.2 x 146.4 cm (90 1/4 x 57 5/8)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Philip Johnson, 1952
49. **Untitled**, c. 1951
oil on canvas
188.6 x 101 cm (74 1/4 x 39 3/4)
Tate Gallery, London, Presented by The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
50. **No. 7**, 1951
oil on canvas
240.7 x 138.8 cm (94 3/4 x 54 5/8)
Collection of Linda and Harry Macklowe, New York
51. **No. 2 (No. 7 and No. 20)**, 1951 (alternatively dated to 1950)
oil on canvas
295.3 x 256.9 cm (116 1/4 x 101 1/8)
Collection of Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia
52. **No. 25 (Red, Gray, White on Yellow)**, 1951
□ oil on canvas
● 295 x 232.4 cm (116 1/8 x 91 1/2)
Private Collection, Seattle, Washington, Courtesy of Jeffrey Hoffeld and Company, Inc.
53. **No. 18**, 1951
● oil on canvas
■ 207 x 170.5 cm (81 1/2 x 67 1/8)
Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute Museum of Art, Utica, New York
54. **Untitled (Blue, Green and Brown)**, 1952 (alternatively dated to 1951)
● oil on canvas
■ 261.6 x 211.5 cm (103 x 83 1/4)
Collection of Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia

55. **No. 10**, 1952
oil on canvas
208.3 x 108.3 cm (82 x 42 5/8)
Bagley and Virginia Wright
56. **Untitled [Red, Black, Orange, Yellow on Yellow]**, 1953
● oil on canvas
238.4 x 121.6 cm (93 7/8 x 47 7/8)
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
57. **Untitled**, 1953
● oil on canvas
■ 195.1 x 172.3 cm (76 3/4 x 67 3/4)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
58. **Untitled**, 1953
● tempera on paper mounted on board
100.3 x 67.3 cm (39 1/2 x 26 1/2)
Private Collection
59. **White, Orange and Yellow**, 1953
tempera on paper mounted on panel
100.7 x 67.3 cm (39 5/8 x 26 1/2)
Private Collection, Atherton, California
60. **Untitled**, 1953
oil on canvas
166.1 x 143.8 cm (65 3/8 x 56 5/8)
Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney
61. **No. 61 (Rust and Blue) [Brown, Blue, Brown on Blue]**, 1953
oil on canvas
294 x 232.4 cm (115 3/4 x 91 1/2)
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Panza Collection
62. **Untitled [Purple, White and Red]**, 1953
oil on canvas
197.2 x 208.3 cm (77 5/8 x 82)
The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Sigmund E. Edelstone
63. **No. 27 (Light Band) [White Band]**, 1954
● oil on canvas
205.7 x 220 cm (81 x 86 5/8)
Private Collection

64. **No. 1 (Royal Red and Blue) [Untitled]**, 1954
● oil on canvas
■ 288.9 x 171.5 cm (113 3/4 x 67 1/2)
Private Collection
65. **Untitled [Red, Black, Orange and Pink on Yellow]**, 1954
oil on canvas
230 x 139.7 cm (90 1/2 x 55)
Private Collection
66. **Untitled [Blue, Yellow, Green on Red]**, 1954
● oil on canvas
■ 197.5 x 166.4 cm (77 3/4 x 65 1/2)
Collection of Gisela and Dennis Alter
67. **Untitled**, 1954
● oil on canvas
235.5 x 142.9 cm (93 x 56 1/4)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, The Katharine Ordway Collection
68. **The Ochre [Ochre and Red on Red]**, 1954
oil on canvas
235.3 x 161.9 cm (92 5/8 x 63 3/4)
The Phillips Collection, Washington
69. **Yellow and Blue [Yellow, Blue on Orange]**, 1955
● oil on canvas
■ 259.4 x 169.6 cm (102 1/8 x 66 3/4)
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Fellows Fund, Women's Committee Acquisition Fund, and Patrons Art Fund, 1974
70. **Green, Red, Blue**, 1955
oil on canvas
207 x 197.5 cm (81 1/2 x 77 3/4)
Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Harry Lynde Bradley
71. **No. 15 [Black Greens on Blue with Green Bar]**, 1957
oil on canvas
261.6 x 295.9 cm (103 x 116 1/2)
Collection of Christopher Rothko

72. **No. 16 (Two Whites, Two Reds)**, 1957
oil on canvas
265.4 x 292.4 cm (104 1/2 x 115 1/8)
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
73. **No. 46 [Black, Ochre, Red over Red]**, 1957
oil on canvas
252.1 x 207 cm (99 1/4 x 81 1/2)
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Panza Collection
74. **Black over Reds [Black on Red]**, 1957
oil on canvas
241.3 x 207 cm (95 x 81 1/2)
The Baltimore Museum of Art, Gift of Phoebe Rhea Berman, Lutherville, Maryland, in
Memory of Her Husband, Dr. Edgar F. Berman
75. **No. 13 [White, Red on Yellow]**, 1958
● oil on canvas
■ 242.3 x 206.7 cm (95 3/8 x 81 3/8)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.,
1985, Photograph ©1986, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
76. **No. 10**, 1958
● oil on canvas
■ 239.4 x 175.9 cm (94 1/4 x 69 1/4)
Private Collection
77. **No. 24 (Brown, Black and Blue)**, 1958
oil on canvas
176.5 x 152.4 cm (69 1/2 x 60)
Private Collection
78. **Untitled [Seagram Mural]**, 1958
oil on canvas
266.1 x 252.4 cm (104 3/4 x 99 3/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
79. **Untitled [Seagram Mural]**, 1959
mixed media on canvas
265.4 x 288.3 cm (104 1/2 x 113 1/2)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1985

80. ***Lavender and Mulberry***, 1959
oil on paper mounted on wood fiberboard panel
95.9 x 62.9 cm (37 3/4 x 24 3/4)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington,
Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966
81. ***Untitled***, 1959
● oil on paper mounted on wood fiberboard panel
60.6 x 47.9 cm (23 7/8 x 18 7/8)
Ealan Wingate, New York
82. ***Untitled***, 1960
oil on canvas
235.9 x 205.7 cm (92 7/8 x 81)
Adriana and Robert Mnuchin
83. ***No. 7***, 1960
oil on canvas
266.7 x 236.2 cm (105 x 93)
Sezon Museum of Modern Art, Karuizawa
84. ***Untitled***, 1960
oil on canvas
236.2 x 206.4 cm (93 x 81 1/4)
The Toledo Museum of Art, Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift
of Edward Drummond Libbey
85. ***No. 14***, 1960
oil on canvas
289.6 x 266.7 cm (114 x 105)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Helen Crocker Russell Fund Purchase
86. ***No. 207 (Red over Dark Blue on Dark Gray)***, 1961
● oil on canvas
235.6 x 206.1 cm (92 3/4 x 81 1/8)
University of California, Berkeley Art Museum
87. ***No. 2 (No. 101)***, 1961
oil on canvas
200.7 x 206.1 cm (79 x 81 1/8)
Private Collection

88. **No. 1 (White and Red)**, 1962
● oil on canvas
■ 258.8 x 228.6 cm (101 7/8 x 90)
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift from the Women's Committee Fund, 1962
89. **Untitled**, 1961
pen and ink on paper
28.1 x 21.8 cm (11 x 8 1/2)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
90. **Untitled**, 1961
pen and ink on paper
28.1 x 21.8 cm (11 x 8 1/2)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
91. **Untitled**, 1961
□ pen and ink on paper
● 28.1 x 21.8 cm (11 x 8 1/2)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
92. **Blue and Gray**, 1962
oil on canvas
201.3 x 175.3 cm (79 1/4 x 69)
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel
93. **No. 3 (Bright Blue, Brown, Dark Blue on Wine)**, 1962
● mixed media on canvas
205.7 x 193.7 cm (81 x 76 1/4)
Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Maryland
94. **No. 2 [Untitled]**, 1963
mixed media on canvas
203.8 x 175.6 cm (80 1/4 x 69 1/8)
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1985
95. **Untitled**, 1963
oil on canvas
175.3 x 228.6 cm (69 x 90)
Jane Lang Davis and Richard Lang Collection, Medina, Washington
96. **Untitled [White, Blacks, Grays on Maroon]**, 1963
● oil on canvas
228.6 x 175.3 cm (90 x 69)
Kunsthau Zurich

97. **Untitled**, 1964 (alternatively dated to 1961)
mixed media on canvas
236.2 x 203.2 cm (93 x 80)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the American Art Foundation, 1995
98. **No. 2 [Black on Deep Purple]**, 1964
mixed media on canvas
266.7 x 203.2 cm (105 x 80)
Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Maryland
99. **No. 5**, 1964
mixed media on canvas
206.1 x 193.7 cm (81 1/8 x 76 1/4)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
100. **No. 8**, 1964
oil on canvas
267.3 x 203.8 cm (105 x 80)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
101. **Untitled**, 1968
oil on canvas
233.7 x 175.3 cm (92 x 69)
Private Collection
102. **Untitled**, 1968
acrylic on paper mounted on wood fiberboard panel
99.1 x 64.8 cm (39 x 25 1/2)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
103. **Untitled**, 1968
acrylic on paper mounted on wood fiberboard panel
103.2 x 67 cm (40 5/8 x 26 3/8)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986
104. **Red, Orange on Pink**, c. 1968
oil on paper mounted on canvas
85.4 x 65.1 cm (33 5/8 x 25 5/8)
Ivan Reitman / Genevieve Robert

105. **Untitled**, 1968
acrylic on paper mounted on canvas
76.2 x 57.2 cm (30 x 22 1/2)
Barbaralee Diamonstein and Carl Spielvogel
106. **Untitled**, 1968
● oil on paper mounted on canvas
■ 61 x 45.7 cm (24 x 18)
Aaron I. Fleischman
107. **Untitled**, 1969
oil on paper on board
123.2 x 102.9 cm (48 1/2 x 40 1/2)
Courtesy Peter Blum, New York
108. **Untitled**, 1969
acrylic on paper mounted on canvas
136.5 x 108 cm (53 3/4 x 42 1/2)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
109. **Untitled**, 1969
● acrylic on paper mounted on canvas
■ 137.2 x 107.5 cm (54 x 42 3/8)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
110. **Untitled**, 1969
acrylic on paper mounted on canvas
137.2 x 107.3 cm (54 x 42 1/4)
Collection of Christopher Rothko
111. **Untitled**, 1969
● acrylic on paper mounted on canvas
183.4 x 98 cm (72 1/4 x 38 5/8)
Collection of Christopher Rothko
112. **Untitled**, 1969
acrylic on paper mounted on canvas
183 x 107 cm (72 x 42 1/8)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
113. **Untitled**, 1969
● acrylic on canvas
172.7 x 152.4 cm (68 x 60)
John and Mary Pappajohn, Des Moines, Iowa

114. **Untitled [Black on Gray]**, 1969–1970
acrylic on canvas
203.8 x 175.6 cm (80 1/4 x 69 1/8)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation,
Inc., 1986
115. **Untitled**, 1969
acrylic on paper
157.5 x 122.2 cm (62 x 48 1/8)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel
116. **Untitled [Black on Gray]**, 1969
acrylic on canvas
206.4 x 236.2 cm (81 1/4 x 93)
Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel

Photographs of Mark Rothko
(Not in Exhibition)

- A. **Mark Rothko, c. 1952**
 Photograph by Kay Bell Reynal

- B. **Mark Rothko, c. 1953**
 Photograph by Henry Elkan

- C. **Mark Rothko, c. 1953**
 Photograph by Henry Elkan, Rudi Blesh papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington

- D. **Mark Rothko, c. 1961**
 Photographer unknown

SELECTED STATEMENTS BY MARK ROTHKO

Primitivism

Often child art transforms itself into primitivism which is only the child producing a mimicry of himself.

Excerpt from the "Scribble Book," c. 1930s, Mark Rothko Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

The scale conception involves the relationship of objects to their surroundings and the emphasis of things or space. It definitely involves a space emotion. A child may limit space arbitrarily and thus heroify his objects. Or he may infinitize space, dwarfing the importance of objects, causing them to merge and become a part of the space world. There may be a perfectly balanced relationship.

Excerpt from the "Scribble Book," c. 1930s, Mark Rothko Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

The theme here is derived from the Agamemnon Trilogy of Aeschylus. The picture deals not with the particular anecdote, but rather with the Spirit of Myth, which is generic to all myths at all times. It involves a pantheism in which man, bird, beast and tree — the known as well as the knowable — merge into a single tragic idea.

Statement regarding The Omen of the Eagle, 1942, published in Sidney Janis, Abstract and Surrealist Art in America (New York, 1944)

The most interesting painting is one that expresses more of what one thinks than of what one sees. Philosophic or esoteric thought, for example.

"Interview" with Rothko recorded by Clay Edgar Spohn, summer 1947, Spohn Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

A picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token. It is therefore a risky and unfeeling act to send it out into the world. How often it must be permanently impaired by the eyes of the vulgar and the cruelty of the impotent who would extend their affliction universally!

In "The Ides of Art," The Tiger's Eye 2, December 1947

The Romantics Were Prompted

to seek exotic subjects and to travel to far off places. They failed to realise that, though the transcendental must involve the strange and unfamiliar, not everything strange or unfamiliar is transcendental.

The unfriendliness of society to his activity is difficult for the artist to accept. Yet this very hostility can act as a lever for true liberation. Freed from a false sense of security and community, the artist can abandon his plastic bank-book, just as he has abandoned other forms of security. Both the sense of community and of security depend on the familiar. Free of them,

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transcendental experiences become possible.

I think of my pictures as dramas; the shapes in the pictures are the performers. They have been created from the need for a group of actors who are able to move dramatically without embarrassment and execute gestures without shame.

Neither the action nor the actors can be anticipated, or described in advance. They begin as an unknown adventure in an unknown space. It is at the moment of completion that in a flash of recognition, they are seen to have the quantity and function which was intended. Ideas and plans that existed in the mind at the start were simply the doorway through which one left the world in which they occur.

The great cubist pictures thus transcend and belie the implications of the cubist program.

The most important tool the artist fashions through constant practice is faith in his ability to produce miracles when they are needed. Pictures must be miraculous: the instant one is completed, the intimacy between the creation and the creator is ended. He is an outsider. The picture must be for him, as for anyone experiencing it later, a revelation, an unexpected and unprecedented resolution of an eternally familiar need.

On shapes:

They are unique elements in a unique situation.

They are organisms with volition and a passion for self-assertion.

They move with internal freedom, and without need to conform with or to violate what is probable in the familiar world.

They have no direct association with any particular visible experience, but in them one recognizes the principle and passion of organisms.

The presentation of this drama in the familiar world was never possible, unless everyday acts belonged to a ritual accepted as referring to a transcendent realm.

Even the archaic artist, who had an uncanny virtuosity found it necessary to create a group of intermediaries, monsters, hybrids, gods and demi-gods. The difference is that, since the archaic artist was living in a more practical society than ours, the urgency for transcendent experience was understood, and given an official status. As a consequence, the human figure and other elements from the familiar world could be combined with, or participate as a whole in the enactment of the excesses which characterize this improbable hierarchy. With us the disguise must be complete. The familiar identity of things has to be pulverized in order to destroy the finite associations with which our society increasingly enshrouds every aspect of our environment.

Without monsters and gods, art cannot enact our drama: art's most profound moments express this frustration. When they were abandoned as untenable superstitions, art sank into melancholy. It became fond of the dark, and enveloped its objects in the nostalgic intimations of a half-lit world. For me the great achievements of the centuries in which the artist accepted the probable and familiar as his subjects were the pictures of the single human figure — alone in a moment of utter immobility.

But the solitary figure could not raise its limbs in a single gesture that might indicate its

Rothko's statements...page 3

concern with the fact of mortality and an insatiable appetite for ubiquitous experience in face of this fact. Nor could the solitude be overcome. It could gather on beaches and streets and in parks only through coincidence, and, with its companions, form a *tableau vivant* of human incommunicability.

I do not believe that there was ever a question of being abstract or representational. It is really a matter of ending this silence and solitude, of breathing and stretching one's arms again. *"The Romantics Were Prompted," Possibilities 1, winter 1947-1948*

The progression of a painter's work, as it travels in time from point to point, will be toward clarity: toward the elimination of all obstacles between the painter and the idea, and between the idea and the observer. As examples of such obstacles, I give (among others) memory, history or geometry, which are swamps of generalization from which one might pull out parodies of ideas (which are ghosts) but never an idea in itself. To achieve this clarity is, inevitably, to be understood.

"Statement on His Attitude in Painting," The Tiger's Eye 9, October 1949

I paint very large pictures. I realize that historically the function of painting large pictures is painting something very grandiose and pompous. The reason I paint them, however — I think it applies to other painters I know — is precisely because I want to be very intimate and human. To paint a small picture is to place yourself outside your experience, to look upon an experience as a stereopticon view or with a reducing glass. However you paint the larger picture, you are in it. It isn't something you command.

Excerpt from a Museum of Modern Art symposium on "How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture," published in Interiors, v. 110, May 1951

Maybe you have noticed two characteristics exist in my paintings; either their surfaces are expansive and push outward in all directions, or their surfaces contract and rush inward in all directions. Between these two poles you can find everything I want to say.

1953 statement recorded by Alfred Jensen; published in James E.B. Breslin, Mark Rothko: A Biography (Chicago, 1993)

Since my pictures are large, colorful and unframed, and since museum walls are usually immense and formidable, there is the danger that the pictures relate themselves as decorative areas to the walls. This would be a distortion of their meaning, since the pictures are intimate and intense, and are the opposite of what is decorative; and have been painted in a scale of normal living rather than an institutional scale. I have on occasion successfully dealt with this problem by tending to crowd the show rather than making it spare. By saturating the room with the feeling of the work, the walls are defeated and the poignancy of each single work...become[s] more visible.

I also hang the largest pictures so that they must be first encountered at close quarters, so

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Rothko's statements...page 4

that the first experience is to be within the picture. This may well give the key to the observer of the ideal relationship between himself and the rest of the pictures. I also hang the pictures low rather than high, and particularly in the case of the largest ones, often as close to the floor as is feasible [sic], for that is the way they are painted. And last, it may be worth while trying to hang something beyond the partial wall because some of the pictures do very well in a confined space.

Excerpt from 25 September 1954 letter to Katharine Kuh, Courtesy The Art Institute of Chicago

The recipe of a work of art — its ingredients — how to make it — the formula.

1. There must be a clear preoccupation with death — intimations of mortality....Tragic art, romantic art, etc. deals with the knowledge of death.
2. Sensuality. Our basis of being concrete about the world. It is a lustful relationship to things that exist.
3. Tension. Either conflict or curbed desire.
4. Irony. This is a modern ingredient — the self effacement and examination by which a man for an instant can go on to something else.
5. Wit and Play...for the human element.
6. The ephemeral and chance...for the human element.
7. Hope. 10% to make the tragic concept more endurable.

I measure these ingredients very carefully when I paint a picture. It is always the form that follows these elements and the picture results from the proportions of these elements....

I belong to a generation that was preoccupied with the human figure and I studied it. It was with utmost reluctance that I found that it did not meet my needs. Whoever used it mutilated it. No one could paint the figure as it was and feel that he could produce something that could express the world. I refuse to mutilate and had to find another way of expression. I used mythology for a while substituting various creatures who were able to make intense gestures without embarrassment. I began to use morphological forms in order to paint gestures that I could not make people do. But this was unsatisfactory.

My current pictures are involved with the scale of human feeling, the human drama, as much of it as I can express.

Excerpted from notes from the artist's Pratt Institute lecture, 27 October 1958

All texts by Mark Rothko © 1998 Christopher Rothko and Kate Rothko Prizel

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CHRONOLOGY OF MARK ROTHKO'S LIFE

1903–1913

Mark Rothko is born Marcus Rothkowitz in Dvinsk, Russia, on 26 September 1903, the fourth child of Jacob Rothkowitz, a pharmacist (b. 1859), and Anna Goldin Rothkowitz (b. 1870). His siblings are Sonia, age fourteen; Moise, age eleven; and Albert, age eight. Jacob Rothkowitz immigrates to the United States in 1910 with the financial assistance of his brother, settling in Portland, Oregon. Moise and Albert depart Russia in December 1912 and Anna, Sonia, and Marcus Rothkowitz join them in Portland in August 1913. Marcus begins first grade at Failing School in September.

1914–1918

Jacob Rothkowitz dies of colon cancer on 27 March. Marcus attends Shattuck Elementary School, entering as a third grader, advancing to fifth grade at the end of that year, and finishing ninth grade in 1918.

1919–1923

Receives a scholarship to Yale University, and after graduating from Lincoln High in June 1921, begins study at Yale in the fall. At the end of his freshman year his scholarship is eliminated. In February 1923 he founds an underground, progressive newspaper, The Yale Saturday Evening Pest with two classmates. Leaves Yale in the fall and moves to New York.

1924–1926

Enrolls in George Bridgman's life drawing class at the Art Students League in January, then returns to Portland, studying acting in a theater company run by Josephine Dillon. Back in New York in early 1925, he enrolls at the New School of Design, where Arshile Gorky is a "monitor." He returns to the Art Students League in October, enrolling in Max Weber's still-life class. Studies with Weber until May 1926, working in the manner of Cézanne.

1927–1928

After some advertising experience, commissioned to draw maps and illustrations for The Graphic Bible by Lewis Browne. He is introduced to Sally and Milton Avery by violinist Louis Kaufman. Bernard Karfiol includes him in a group exhibition held 15 November–12 December 1928 at the Opportunity Gallery; it is Rothkowitz' first, and he shows landscapes.

1929–1932

Begins to teach art at the Center Academy of the Brooklyn Jewish Center and holds a part-time position there until 1952. He meets artist Adolph Gottlieb, and they begin to spend significant time together and with Milton Avery. He vacations with Esther and Adolph Gottlieb and the Averys in the area of Gloucester, Massachusetts; these group holidays, spent sketching and painting, continue intermittently through the 1930s. Travels to Lake George,

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New York, where he meets Edith Sachar on 2 July. They marry on 12 November and soon move to West 72nd Street, near the Averys' home; then to Brooklyn the following year.

1933

Rothkowitz and Sachar hitchhike across the country in summer to visit his family in Portland where the Portland Art Museum holds an exhibition of his works and those of his Center Academy students. From 21 November to 9 December An Exhibition of Paintings by Marcus Rothkowitz is held at the Contemporary Arts Gallery, New York. By this time Sachar has likely begun to sculpt and to teach crafts at the Center Academy.

1934

Rothkowitz contributes to the Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by Brooklyn and Long Island Artists 29 January–26 February at the Brooklyn Museum, and organizes a show there of c. 150 works by his students, 8–21 February, that travels to four local venues. His "New Training for Future Artists and Art Lovers" is published in the February–March issue of the Brooklyn Jewish Center Review, and in February he is a founding member of the Artists Union, New York. Between May and October he participates in five group shows at Robert Godsoe's Uptown Gallery. Godsoe forms Gallery Secession on 15 December, showing Rothkowitz in a Group Exhibition that runs through 15 January 1935.

1935

The second Group Exhibition at Gallery Secession takes place 15 January–5 February. He and Sachar move to Greenwich Village in the fall. During the mid-1930s Sachar studies metalwork and jewelry-making, soon establishing a successful business designing silver jewelry. Gallery Secession artists Ben-Zion, Gottlieb, Louis Harris, Yankel Kufeld, Rothkowitz, Louis Schanker, Joseph Solman and Nahum Tschacbasov, as well as Ilya Bolotowsky, form the avant-garde group "The Ten." They meet monthly in members' studios; Rothkowitz acts as secretary. The Ten: An Independent Group is held at the Montross Gallery, New York, 16 December 1935–4 January 1936. Member artists number only nine, and they come to be known as "The Ten Who Are Nine."

1936

Rothkowitz joins the American Artists' Congress in January. The Municipal Art Galleries hold the exhibition The Ten, 7 to 18 January. Sachar secures a Works Progress Administration (WPA) position by June and Rothkowitz is enrolled in the WPA's Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) in September, then relocated to the WPA easel division in May 1937. He meets Barnett and Annalee Newman in the fall. The Ten mount an exhibition at Galerie Bonaparte, Paris, 10–24 November. The Ten: 2nd Annual Exhibition is at Montross from 14 December to 2 January 1937. Influenced by Franz Cizek, Wilhelm Viola, and Oskar Pfister, he begins to write on the development of creativity and the relationship between children's art and modern art. Friends recall his writing a book, but the only related

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Rothko chronology...page 3

document remains the "Scribble Book," containing drafts for a 1938 lecture.

1937–1938

Sachar's WPA position is terminated in January; she and Rothkowitz separate for the summer, reconciling in the fall. The Ten's fourth exhibition is held at Georgette Passedoit Gallery 26 April–8 May, and the group organizes an auction 3–5 December to benefit Spanish Civil War children. Becomes a naturalized citizen of the U.S. on 21 February 1938, and moves to a brownstone at 313 East 6th Street in fall. Another exhibition of the Ten is held at Passedoit 9–21 May, and the group's The Ten: Whitney Dissenters at Mercury Galleries, New York, 5–26 November garners much publicity; Bernard Braddon and Rothkowitz write the catalogue text. The owners of Mercury Galleries offer to devote the gallery to the Ten for a year, but the group refuses, citing "problems of reorganization."

1939–1940

Rothkowitz and Sachar summer at Trout Lake, New York, and he is dismissed from the WPA on 17 August. Gottlieb and Harris do not participate in The Ten at the Bonestell Gallery, 23 October–4 November, and after this show the group dissolves. The artist shortens his name to Mark Rothko in January 1940, making the change legal in 1959. Neumann-Willard Gallery exhibits the work of Solman, Rothko, and Marcel Gromaire, 8–27 January. Rothko, Avery, Bolotowsky, Gottlieb, Harris, and others secede from the American Artists' Congress in April for political reasons and in June form the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors. Working closely with Gottlieb, Rothko begins a new body of work, which addresses mythological subject matter in an attempt at universality. Earlier fascinated by Plato, he now focuses on the tragic in Aeschylus and Nietzsche.

1941–1942

Included in The First Annual Exhibition of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors at the Riverside Museum, 9–23 March 1941, Rothko will also participate in their annuals held at Wildenstein and Company through 1946. In a group exhibition at R. H. Macy Department Store, 5–26 January 1942, he first shows the mythological works Antigone, 1939–1940, and Oedipus, 1940.

1943

Participates in American Modern Artists at the Riverside Museum, 17 January–27 February, and New York Artists Painters at 444 Madison Avenue, 13–27 February. In the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors third annual, Rothko's Syrian Bull, 1943, and Gottlieb's The Rape of Persephone, 1943, are singled out for criticism by Edward Alden Jewell, art editor of The New York Times. The artists' response (written with unsigned collaborator Newman) is published in the newspaper on 13 June. Rothko and Sachar separate permanently in June, and their divorce is granted 1 February 1944. He visits his family in Portland and travels to Berkeley where he meets artists Clyfford Still — who would later exert a profound influence

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Rothko chronology...page 4

on him — and Buffie Johnson. Returning to New York in the fall, Johnson introduces Rothko to Peggy Guggenheim's advisor, Howard Putzel, who persuades Guggenheim to take him into the Art of This Century gallery, which she had opened in 1942. On 13 October Gottlieb and Rothko discuss "The Portrait and the Modern Artist" on radio station WNYC, New York.

1944–1945

In December photographer Aaron Siskind introduces him to Mary Alice (Mell) Beistle, an illustrator at McFadden Publications. Mark Rothko Paintings is held at Art of This Century, 9 January–4 February 1945. The David Porter Gallery in Washington, DC, includes Rothko in A Painting Prophecy—1950, 3–28 February. He marries Mell in Linden, New Jersey, on 31 March. His Primeval Landscape, 1944, is chosen for the Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting at the Whitney Museum of American Art; he will participate in eight other Whitney Annuals, the last in 1950.

1946

After introducing Clyfford Still's work to Peggy Guggenheim, Rothko writes the catalogue foreword for Still's one-man Art of This Century show, 12 February–7 March. Rothko is described as a "mythomorphic abstractionist" in an April Artnews review of Mark Rothko: Watercolors, at the Mortimer Brandt Gallery, 22 April–4 May. While hanging the show, Rothko meets Robert Motherwell. In April, Still suggests to Rothko and Douglas MacAgy the idea of forming a school for young artists at which they and other contemporary painters would teach. During the summer Rothko rents a cottage in East Hampton, and spends time with Baziotes, Motherwell, Pollock, and Harold Rosenberg, who are all enthusiastic about his new work. Later in the year, in a phase of work he refers to as "transitional," Rothko begins to produce canvases now called "multiforms." Oils and Watercolors by Mark Rothko is exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 13 August–8 September, and then travels to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. In September Rothko takes Mell to Portland to visit his family.

1947

Newman includes Rothko in The Ideographic Picture, held 20 January–8 February at the recently opened Betty Parsons Gallery. His first one-man show there, Mark Rothko: Recent Paintings, is held 3–22 March. He serves as guest faculty member from 23 June–1 August at the California School of Fine Arts (CSFA) in San Francisco, where MacAgy is director and Still has taught since 1946. Other faculty at the school include Elmer Bischoff, Edward Corbett, David Park, Hassel Smith, and Clay Spohn; Richard Diebenkorn teaches in the evenings. En route to the CSFA, the Rothkos stop in Chicago, then visit his family; they return to New York in late August.

Rothko chronology...page 5

1948

In his second one-man show at Parsons, Mark Rothko: Recent Paintings (8–27 March), he first exhibits works with number titles. In the spring Still resigns from the CSFA to plan for the school he proposed to Rothko and MacAgy in 1946. Rothko, Still, Motherwell, and Baziotés meet in June to discuss the school, but by summer's end Still is dissatisfied and abandons his role, returning to the CSFA. Nevertheless, "The Subjects of the Artist" school opens that fall, its first session taking place at 35 East 8th Street. Baziotés, Hare, Motherwell, and Rothko each teach one day and on Friday evenings other artists lecture. Rothko's mother dies on 10 October and he becomes depressed, significantly lessening his output.

1949

His third annual exhibition at Parsons Gallery, Mark Rothko: Recent Paintings, takes place 28 March–16 April. Newman begins teaching at the Subjects of the Artist School, and Friday lectures are opened to the public. Rothko withdraws from the school in midwinter, and by spring it closes for fiscal reasons. En route to another summer session at the CSFA, Rothko visits Portland with Mell. At CSFA, 5 July–12 August, he offers courses in painting and the philosophy of art and gives weekly lectures on contemporary artists. On 18 November he delivers a lecture at Studio 35, New York.

1950

Mark Rothko is held at the Parsons Gallery, 3–21 January. On 29 March the Rothkos sail to Europe and travel for five months, seeing Cagnes-sur-Mer, Venice, Florence, Arezzo, Siena, Rome, Paris, and London. Mell becomes pregnant early in the tour, and their daughter, Kathy Lynn (called Kate) is born on 30 December. Rothko's name is included in a letter of 20 May from eighteen painters and ten sculptors to the president of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, protesting the planned exhibition American Painting Today 1950.

1951

Appears in the notorious "Irascibles" photograph in Life magazine's 15 January issue, which highlights the artists' refusal to participate in The Metropolitan's contemporary art competition. Appointed assistant professor of design at Brooklyn College, he begins teaching on 1 February; Ad Reinhardt and Jimmy Ernst are also on the faculty, and Still joins the staff in 1952. Rothko speaks at a 19 March symposium at the Museum of Modern Art on "How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture." Parsons holds Mark Rothko from 2 to 21 April; the exhibition presents the first of his resolved "classic" paintings.

1952

Rothko moves to a studio at 106 West 53rd by March and declines a summer position at Black Mountain College, North Carolina. He is included in The Museum of Modern Art's Fifteen Americans, 9 April–27 May. Rothko and Motherwell attend a conference on "Aesthetics and the Artist" in Woodstock, New York, 22–23 August; by this time Rothko is

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Rothko chronology...page 6

estranged from Newman and Still. Rothko declines a role in the Whitney Annual in a 20 December letter to Lloyd Goodrich, in which he also refuses to have works reviewed by their purchasing committee.

1953–1954

Rothko leaves Parsons to sign with Sidney Janis, where he joins Newman, Pollock, Still, and de Kooning. Loses his position at Brooklyn College on 16 March, and Mell takes a part-time job. In April they move to a walk-up at 102 West 54th Street. After he selects works in conjunction with Art Institute of Chicago curator Katharine Kuh — and advises her on their installation — Recent Paintings by Mark Rothko opens 8 October and closes December 31, then travels in part to the Rhode Island School of Design. In December he refuses a role in the Whitney Museum's New Decade: 35 American Painters and Sculptors.

1955

Mark Rothko, his first one-man exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, is held 11 April–14 May. Newman and Still both write to Janis condemning Rothko and his work. He teaches for eight weeks in the summer as guest lecturer at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

1956–1957

Takes a studio at West 61st Street in 1956. From February to March 1957 he teaches at Newcomb Art School, Tulane University, and produces the breakthrough works, No. 14 (White and Greens in Blue) and No. 16 (Red, White and Brown); the year marks his move to a darker palette. The Rothkos spend time in Provincetown, Massachusetts, over the summer as they have occasionally since the mid-1940s. The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, presents Mark Rothko from 5 September to 6 October; Elaine de Kooning writes the catalogue. Artnews (December issue) publishes Rothko's letter dismissing de Kooning's association of him with action painting in her "Two Americans in Action" (Artnews Annual 27, November).

1958

New Paintings by Mark Rothko is held 27 January–22 February at the Janis Gallery. Negotiations take place for a series of murals for the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building being designed by Philip Johnson, and on 25 June a purchase order is sent to Rothko's cottage in Provincetown. He begins work on the murals in July at his new studio at 222 Bowery. Rothko and three other artists represent the United States at the XXIX Venice Biennale, held 14 June–19 October. Janis submits No. 14 (White and Greens in Blue), 1957, to the Guggenheim Museum's International Award competition without the artist's knowledge and it wins the U.S. national section award and \$1,000, but Rothko refuses both. He delivers a lecture on his work at the Pratt Institute, New York, on 27 October.

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1959

Sails to Naples with Mell and Kate on 15 June; in obtaining passports he legally changes his name to Mark Rothko. They travel to Pompeii, Paestum, Rome, Tarquinia, Florence, and Venice, and his viewings of Roman wall paintings, Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, and Fra Angelico's San Marco frescoes have a strong impact on him in relation to his own work. From Italy they travel to Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, and Amsterdam, sailing for the United States from London on 20 August. After their return, Rothko has dinner with Mell at the Four Seasons where he is horrified by the ostentatious setting. He immediately abandons the mural project, returning the money he has received.

1960–1961

The Rothkos purchase a brownstone at 118 East 95th Street. The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, holds Paintings by Mark Rothko, 4–31 May. In November the Phillips becomes the first public institution to install a "Rothko room," which Rothko visits while in Washington to attend John F. Kennedy's inauguration. On 18 January 1961, after his extensive involvement with selection, hanging, and lighting, Mark Rothko opens at the Museum of Modern Art. Following the New York venue, the show travels to London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Basel, and Rome, finally closing in Paris on 13 January 1963. At the suggestion of the president of the Society of Fellows at Harvard University, Rothko begins a series of murals for their new building.

1962

Begins working in a studio at 1485 First Avenue in early spring. In May he and Mell attend a state dinner for the arts held at the White House. Rothko meets with the president of Harvard on 24 October regarding the murals project now destined for a dining room at Holyoke Center; Harvard's board of trustees accepts the works in November. Rothko, Gottlieb, Guston, and Motherwell resign from Janis Gallery in protest over the exhibition The New Realism (31 October–1 December), as it focuses on pop art.

1963–1964

The Harvard murals are shown at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum from 9 April–2 June; the artist supervises their installation at Harvard the following January. Rothko signs an agreement with Marlborough Gallery, giving them a year contract for European and American sales. The Rothkos' second child, Christopher Hall, is born on 31 August. John and Dominique de Menil commission Rothko to create a series of paintings for a chapel for the University of St. Thomas, Houston, in late spring 1964. During the summer the family rents a cottage in Amagansett, Long Island. Rothko moves to a new studio space at 157 East 69th Street, a carriage house with a central skylight cupola. He rigs the space with a system of pulleys and a parachute-like device to adjust light, installs temporary walls that correspond to the planned chapel's dimensions, and spends the fall working on the project.

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1965–1967

Works exclusively on the chapel paintings, which he feels will constitute his most important artistic statement. Rothko objects to the preliminary chapel architect, Philip Johnson, who is replaced by Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry. He shows Ochre and Red on Red, 1954, at the White House Festival of the Arts from 14–20 June. Sir Norman Reid, director of the Tate Gallery, London, visits Rothko in October to propose that the Tate dedicate a room to his work. From June to August 1966 the Rothkos travel in Europe, spending time in Lisbon, Majorca, Rome, Spoleto, and Assisi, then France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and London, where Rothko visits the Tate Gallery. In April 1967 he completes fourteen paintings and four alternates for the Houston chapel; after minor revisions the works are placed in storage until the chapel is completed. Accepts a one-month summer position at the University of California at Berkeley; after the session, the Rothkos visit his family in Portland.

1968

Suffers an aortic aneurysm on 20 April and is hospitalized until 8 May, then confined to bed for three weeks. On 28 May he is inducted into the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In July the Rothkos rent a cottage and studio space in Provincetown where he paints many small works on paper. Returning to New York, he draws up a will dividing his estate between his family and the Mark Rothko Foundation. In late November, he begins a studio inventory; the nearly 800 works are inscribed on their versos with their dimensions, dates, and inventory numbers, then photographed for documentation.

1969

Leaves Mell and moves into the 69th Street studio on 1 January, but continues to have lengthy phone conversations with her. In February he makes Marlborough his exclusive agent for eight years. By March, Rothko has begun a relationship with Rita Reinhardt. In spring he embarks on a series of large, somber works in blacks, grays, and browns. In June he receives an honorary doctorate from Yale, and incorporates The Mark Rothko Foundation, with Rothko, Morton Feldman, Robert Goldwater, Morton Levine, Bernard Reis, Theodoros Stamos, and Clinton Wilder acting as directors. The foundation is described as "exclusively for charitable, scientific, and/or educational purposes," but there are no specifications of intended purposes, which underlies a complicated legal struggle after Rothko's death. Continues to have health problems including signs of cirrhosis of the liver and is diagnosed with bilateral emphysema in September. In December the artist holds a studio party to elicit opinions on his new dark paintings, and donates nine Seagram murals for his room at the Tate Gallery.

1970

Rothko commits suicide in the early morning of 25 February. One year after his 28 February burial, the Rothko Chapel is dedicated in Houston as an interdenominational chapel.

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MOBIL STATEMENT ON SUPPORT OF THE ARTS

Supporting artistic and cultural programs is Mobil's way of encouraging and celebrating human creativity. As a great, global company, Mobil has been a long-time supporter of the arts wherever we do business. It is an opportunity to return something to those communities in which we do business. And it's an opportunity to return something to those communities that have welcomed Mobil into their midst. Over the years Mobil has brought dozens of exhibitions to global audiences, including works drawn from many of the world's greatest collections.

The Mark Rothko retrospective has given us the opportunity to share with visitors to the National Gallery of Art the genius of one of America's gifted artists. His evocative paintings are both a mirror to his soul and a door to open our own hearts to the emotions he poured into his canvases. Yet, for all his genius, Mark Rothko never presumed to tell people what emotions they should feel when experiencing one of his paintings. He simply hoped we would feel something.