

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON,
ANNOUNCES THE PUBLICATION OF THE
MARK ROTHKO CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Gallery of Art and Yale University Press have published the definitive catalogue raisonné of the paintings of Mark Rothko, one of the foremost abstract artists of the twentieth century. The book documents Rothko's entire known output of paintings on canvas and panel, reproducing all the works in color. Encompassing more than 800 works, many unknown both to specialists and the public, the catalogue has been written by David Anfam, a noted scholar in the field of modern American art. The publication has been supported in part by the Mark Rothko Foundation and The Dedalus Foundation, Inc.

"When the Mark Rothko Foundation made its extraordinary gift to the National Gallery of hundreds of paintings and drawings by Rothko, the Gallery became the largest public repository of his art. It therefore followed naturally that the Gallery should publish this handsome and useful catalogue raisonné of Rothko's work," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We would especially

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like to thank Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko for access to important information, as well as gracious advice and guidance. We are also grateful for the cooperation of numerous private collectors and museums whose help greatly facilitated the author's research."

The book includes more than 850 color illustrations, which range from the images for which Rothko is famous -- the large, hypnotic, and poignant fields of color -- to almost 400 lesser known works that reveal an affinity, at different times in his career to realism, expressionism, surrealism, and the avant-garde issues of his era. The author pays special attention to the physical makeup of the paintings, as well as to Rothko's innovative sense of space, color, surface, complex technical procedures, and symbolism. An account of Rothko's stylistic evolution traces his development from figuration to an abstract vision imbued with a profound grasp of the viewer's interactive role in perceiving works of art. The most extensive Rothko bibliography ever published is also included in the catalogue raisonné, a result of almost a decade of research.

The Gallery's holdings cover every phase of Rothko's career, which spanned five decades. In 1986 the National Gallery received the core collection of the former Mark Rothko Foundation, a gift that included 295 paintings and works on paper, and more than 650 sketches. Thirty-four other institutions throughout the world also received gifts from the Foundation. Since 1986, the National Gallery has made its Rothko holdings available internationally to museums for special exhibitions.

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A central figure in the development of postwar abstract painting in the United States, Rothko is famous primarily for the unique fields of color that characterized his paintings from the late 1940s onward. Although these are considered among the most original landmarks of abstract expressionism, the catalogue raisonné reveals that Rothko's output was even more prolific and wide-ranging than is often thought.

The exhibition, "Mark Rothko," was on view at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, May 3 - August 16, 1998, and is currently at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, September 17 - November 29, 1998. It will be at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, January 8 - April 18, 1999.

Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas: Catalogue Raisonné may be purchased for \$125.00 at the National Gallery of Art shops, which are open Monday - Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm, and Sunday, 11 am - 6 pm. To order from the National Gallery Shops by phone using a credit card, call (301) 322-5900 or (800) 697-9350, Monday - Friday, 8 am - 4 pm.

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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