

Basic Detail Report

Untitled #5 (gray, Indian red, ochre)

Date

1971

Primary Maker

Carl Robert Holty

Medium

Oil on canvas

Description

A significant figure in the development of abstract art in America, Carl Robert Holly was born in Freiburg, Germany, of American parents, and grew up in Milwaukee. He studied in Chicago at the Art Institute, in New York at the Parsons School of Design and at the National Academy of Design, and in Munich at Hans Hofmann's school. In the 1920s, he moved to Paris, where he took part in an active American expatriate art colony and developed friendships with Piet Mondrian, Joan Miro, and Robert Delaunay. He was one of the few American artists to belong to the avant-garde group Abstraction-Création, which included Jean Arp, Albert Gleizes, Jean Hélion, and Theo van Doesburg. After settling in New York in 1936, Holty quickly took on a leadership role in the country's abstract movement. He developed friendships with Stuart Davis and John Graham, was a founding member of the American Abstract Artists association, and began what would be a long and influential teaching career. His first modernist works were influenced by the art of Juan Gris, but by the mid-1930s, he developed a style in which he synthesized Joan Miro's biomorphism with Wassily Kandinsky's geometric abstract mode. About 1940 he began to create purely nonobjective works that were inspired by the art of Mondrian, but did not reflect the spiritual theories underlying the Dutchman's Neo-Plasticism. In the late 1940s Holty based his abstract works on figurative inspiration, and in the 1960s he was creating works with broad, delicate washes of color that were in the Abstract Expressionism vein. ~ ~ ~ "America Gone Modern: From the Twenties to the Sixties," Spanierman Gallery, March 11 - April 29, 2000.

Dimensions

66 x 54 inches (167.6 x 137.2 cm)