

Raymond Hendler (1923-1998) was a Philadelphia born, action painter, whose mature work began in post-war Paris, independent of the New York scene.



Big Blue Cardboard, No.4 (1950) 24 x 32

suitcase paintings - paris/new york

In Paris, he was exposed to surrealism and its intended program - the liberation of the human spirit. Support from like minds at a pivotal moment, led to a career-defining breakthrough; an activity that involved the use of the *automatic* and the *unconscious* he would later refer to as "serious doodling" and "judicious scribbling."

Raymond Hendler's work has vitality and freshness, a joyful, even playful exuberance. In his early work (which was close to, but independent of Pollock); he spread the overall web of linear forms as so many borderlines, between that first place of human awareness and that which is outside it, between the discovered and the undiscovered world, between [l'être et le néant] being and nothingness.

Georgine Oeri, Quadrum 1964

Returning to America in 1951, he became an active participant of the emerging New York vanguard.

iconography

As early as 1950, dissatisfied with limitations he found in a purely automatic process, Hendler began to systematically expand his activity to more fully involve the use of the "whole person." He wanted to bring to bear on the canvas as much of himself as possible - the conscious as well as the unconscious. By 1960, emerging from a period *underground*, he had developed from the original imagery, his own distinct vocabulary of form.

Since first I saw Hendler's paintings in 1952 they have developed into a larger simpler form arriving at a personally abstract image controlled within a painted space. The direct austere design and color complexes paint the image without undue nuances - with clarity and mature independence.

Franz Kline, 1961



Drawing No.1 (1960) 24x19

For the period of the 1960's Hendler was represented by the Rose Fried Gallery.



The Right Color (1979) 60x50

raymond hendler : in black & white

In the early 1970's, Hendler became concerned that he was beginning to imitate himself. Work in this decade represents a response to this concern - a return to his original format. "All that was getting back to myself," he explained, "I had to retrace all my steps." Black "undulating" line and *scribble* produced imagery dominate the canvas. In this phase, while still firmly footed in gestural abstraction, he makes a crucial commitment to a hard edge.

Raymond Hendler: in black & white embodies a group of paintings from 1978-79 where he strips all enhancement from his essential image. Adding broad bars or thin stripes to many of his paintings he arrives at a series of stark, monumental, resonant, works that continue to exploit and expand on, his Paris beginnings.

To learn more about the artist - through an essay, a selected retrospective and his extensive resume visit:
raymondhendler.com