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## **Mark Rothko: A Painter's Progress The Year 1949**

*New York, January 12, 2004– Mark Rothko: A Painter's Progress, The Year 1949*, an exhibition of 20 paintings primarily from 1949 will be on view from January 23 through February 23, 2004 at PaceWildenstein, 32 East 57<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City. Many of the works are on loan from the artist's estate as well as public collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. A full color catalogue with an essay by Bernice Rose accompanies the exhibition.

From a few transitional paintings to the earliest versions of his classical paintings, *Mark Rothko: A Painter's Progress, The Year 1949* will examine the seminal moment when the artist first discovered his mature style. The exhibition includes *No. 13* from the Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois; *Untitled* from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; *No. 2 (Yellow and Orange)* from The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; *No. 3/No. 13 {Magenta, Black, Green on Orange}* from The Museum of Modern Art, New York; *No. 9/No. 24* from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; as well as *No. 17/No. 15 {Multiform}* and *Untitled* both from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Loans from private collectors and the Rothko Estate will also be on view.

Nineteen forty-nine is considered a watershed year for Mark Rothko. Ten years earlier, "The Ten", a group of artists -- including Rothko -- who worked and exhibited together from 1935 to 1939, had dissolved. Rothko then abandoned the figurative tradition for the mythological themes of the emerging American surrealists that characterize his work of the early 1940s. Over the course of the next few years Rothko, like many of his Abstract Expressionist contemporaries, would eventually give up all imagery in favor of a non-objective composition. By 1947 the artist's work was free from all surrealist and mythic imagery.

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In 1949 the same year Rothko famously published in the cultural magazine *The Tiger's Eye* the statement, "The progression of a painter's work, as it travels in time from point to point, will be toward clarity," the artist would introduce a compositional format with luminous, floating fields of color into his work. This discovery would be developed throughout the 1950s and would occupy Rothko for the remainder of his life.

Mark Rothko (1903-1970) was born in Dvinsk, Russia and immigrated to the United States in 1913. He studied painting at Yale University from 1921-23, and was later awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Yale in 1969.

Rothko has been the subject of six major surveys and retrospectives including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (1998) which traveled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; the Kawamura Memorial Art Museum, Japan which traveled to three museums in Japan (1995-96); the Tate Gallery, London which traveled to Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1987-88); the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1978-79); and two exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1970 and 1961 – the retrospective in 1961 traveled to London, Amsterdam, Basel, Rome, and Paris.

Rothko's work is in numerous permanent collections worldwide including: The Art Institute of Chicago; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain; The Menil Collection, Houston; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Tate Gallery, London; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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For further information on *Mark Rothko: A Painter's Progress, The Year 1949* please refer to [www.pacewildenstein.com](http://www.pacewildenstein.com) or contact Sarah Kurz at 212-421-3292, or [skurz@pacewildenstein.com](mailto:skurz@pacewildenstein.com).

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