

BUDD HOPKINS

OPENING SATURDAY APRIL 8 THROUGH APRIL 29, 1972

WILLIAM ZIERLER inc, 956 Madison Avenue, New York 10021 • (212) 879-6212

Budd Hopkins' recent paintings have instantaneous and dynamic, holistic power. Huge planes of bright, unmodulated color coalesce optically to reiterate the shape of the canvas as a unified floating field. The linear elements which interrupt this seemingly united field function to connect the edges of the canvas to a large, dominating circle like arrows pointing to a center of emotional energy which is analogous to a head or a sun. They establish a very misleading relationship between the circle and the field, however, because they imply that the center of the circle is the center of the field, whereas the circle has actually been located eccentrically on the field. These important initial ambiguities do nothing to diminish the single-image impact of the paintings which seem as emblematic as flags. They do, nevertheless, force an immediate realization that everything grasped on first glance is going to need the re-evaluation and reconsideration of a second, more thorough, look.

Concrete Expressionism was a term coined in 1965 by Irving Sandler to denote the existence of a style of art which he discerned at that time as representing a constructive solution to the dilemma posed by the demise of Abstract Expressionism. It is still the most accurate terminology for the kind of painting Budd Hopkins does. Like a few other sixties contemporaries, Hopkins formulated a style of meaningful constructive abstraction that is a hard-edged answer to the free-wheeling painterliness of Abstract Expressionism while retaining its assertive physicality and energy.

Budd Hopkins came to New York at the high-time of Abstract Expressionism. He was friendly with Kline and Rothko and they had the strongest effect on his work. Their impact on him was only mitigated by an unwavering admiration for geometric abstraction, epitomized by Mondrian. He was polarized between classical order and expressionist emotion throughout the sixties, while he sought a personal vocabulary of forms which would enable him to fuse both extremes into one expressive whole.

By 1962 many of Hopkins' forms had become literally hard-edged, and during the years that followed they continued to increase in size and solidity. He was able to retain Abstract Expressionist scale (refusing to opt for size without scale referents) and energy (rejecting the decorative implications of all-over painting). His color became more and more intense and effective as he slowly replaced the grays and somber tonalities of the earlier paintings with stronger hues. He never utilized the neutralizing, "cooling," effects of linear separations between his colors (so much in favor in the sixties) and this had the bonus effect of energizing the edges of his planes optically. Between 1965 and 1968 he adopted the collage technique for his compositional studies and this lightened his forms enabling them to move in space with explosive force. His personal image—a centralizing circle—emerged at about the same time and is the focal point of his development. It provides his work with single-image hypnotic force, and a place where energy can be concentrated, or from which it can be dispersed. The circle brings everything together. It is the hierarchical equivalent of Mondrian's squares, and it supplies the focus for the kind of clearly constructed ordering of values he had to establish in order to connect with the art of the past.

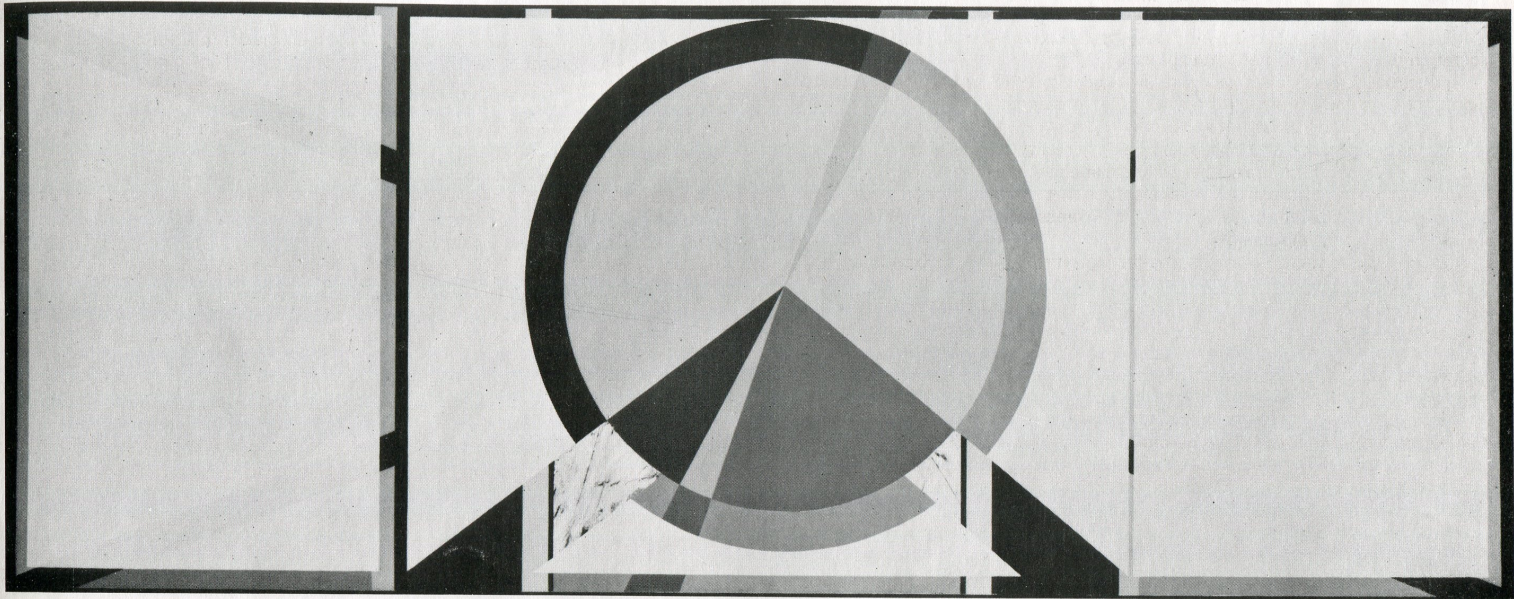
All the essential qualities of Hopkins' work—energy and vigor, hierarchial construction, scale and emotionally powerful color—separated him completely from the "cool artists" of the sixties. Writing about Hopkins' work in 1966 in his book **Object and Ideas**, Brian O'Doherty stated that, "It had its own mixed sound, which at that time seemed to me to fall into an area that was puzzling empty; abstraction growing out of Abstract Expressionist ideas and practices, retaining some of both, while connecting with the past to make possible one kind of future, a future that conventional Abstract Expressionism didn't have."

The "mixed sound" O'Doherty senses in Hopkins' work is precisely what one begins to become aware of when the first glance has lengthened into a serious exploration of the visual complexities embodied in each painting. The huge planes of pure color start to separate and shift their places in the shallow space of the canvas as if juggling for time and attention. Some of them seem to bound forward into the space of the room, as if to share real-time with the viewer; while others seem to exist behind the space of the canvas like forgotten memories of the past—palimpsests to remind us of the various other forms any one of these particular paintings might have taken. Narrow bands of color zip in and out of the field across and behind the larger elements binding the space and the time of the painting together and pointing to some mysterious possibility for an extension into the future. Small, bounded areas of minutely nuanced painterliness are in clearly organic and calligraphic contrast to the geometrical rigidity all around them. They function as a key to the scale of each painting, while paralleling the colors, directions and velocities of the larger formal elements in a loose, open way. They deliver a symbolic message about the existence of the unexpected, irrational, and infinite within life's most clearly ordered and controlled systems.

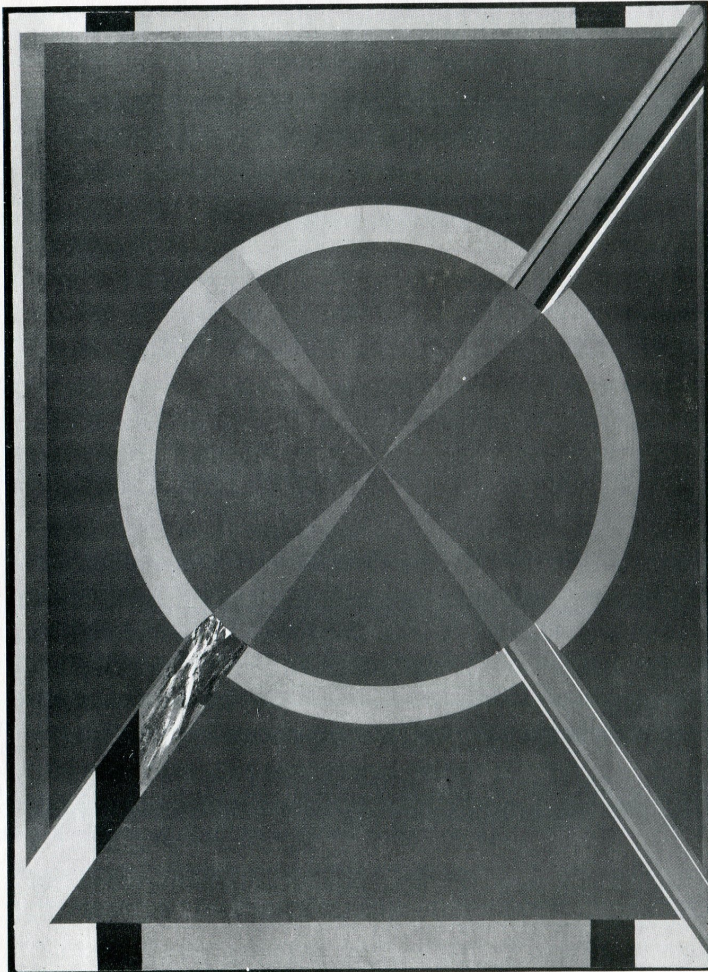
Hopkins' attitude is inherently dualistic. His paintings include color and black and white, order and chaos; they are warm and cool, open and closed, solid and transparent, complete and open-ended—all at once. Each painting is a contained world unto itself, while, at the same time, implying infinite extensibility, and expressing in a very human way, contradictory, ambiguous, and deeply complex emotions.

As Hopkins' paintings unfold, they spread, deepen and reach out in all directions. Relationships between their various forms seem to become organic instead of geometric and man-made. All the parts seem, suddenly, to be in a state of flux, changing and taking on a life of their own. This, in essence, is the key to his unique fusion of those classical and expressionist polarities mentioned previously. By eliminating the Abstract Expressionist method of painterly "passage" to bind forms together, and substituting the juxtaposition of clear-edged muscular forms subsumed beneath and explicit hierarchical super-structure, he found it possible to stabilize Abstract Expressionist flux without cooling its fires or diminishing its energy.

April Kingsley
Associate Curator
Pasadena Art Museum



9. LIBRA II



6. VIRGO II

BIOGRAPHY

Born

Wheeling, West Virginia 1931

Education

Graduated Oberlin College 1953

One-Man Exhibitions

William Zierler Gallery, New York 1972
 Poindexter Gallery, New York 1956, 1962, 1963, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971
 Tirca Karlis Gallery, Provincetown 1958, 1960, 1962-1971
 Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N. H. 1968
 Reed College, Portland, Oregon 1967
 Obelisk Gallery, Boston 1964, 1966
 Bradford Junior College, Bradford, Mass. 1965
 Athena Gallery, New Haven, Conn. 1964
 Kasha Heman Gallery, Chicago 1962, 1963
 Art Gallery of Georgetown, Washington, D.C. 1963
 Zabriskie Gallery, New York 1959

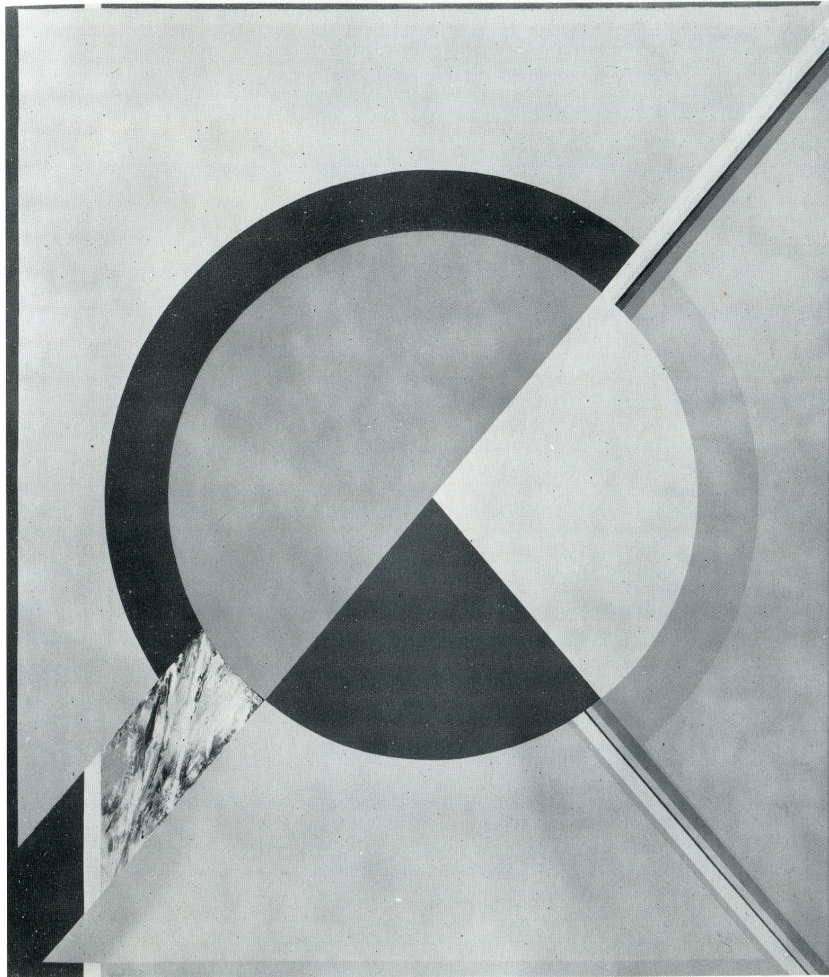
Group Exhibitions

Whitney Museum of American Art, "Annual Exhibition" 1958, 1963, 1965, 1967, 1972
 Ringling Museum of Art, Portland Museum of Art, Currier Gallery of Art, "Young New England Painters" 1969
 Provincetown Art Association, Boston Center for the Arts, "New England Art" 1971
 Cincinnati Art Museum 1968
 Yale University Art Gallery, "Benjamin Collection" 1967
 Pennsylvania Academy Annual 1964
 Whitney Museum of American Art, Baltimore Museum of Art, City Art Museum of St. Louis, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, and the Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati: "Young America, 1960"
 Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio, "Three Young Americans" 1957
 Selected by "Art News" as one of "Twelve Americans, Thirty and Under" for exhibition in Spoleto, Italy, in the Festival of Two Worlds 1958
 Selected by CBS as one of fifteen painters in the network's first television broadcast on American Art, in 1963, entitled "Exhibition"

Public Collections

Whitney Museum of American Art
 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
 San Francisco Museum of Art
 Washington Gallery of Modern Art
 Reading Museum
 Chrysler Art Museum
 Norfolk Museum
 Joseph Hirshhorn Collection

Williams College Museum
 University of Massachusetts
 Michigan State University
 Reed College
 Simmons College
 Bradford Junior College
 Montana Historical Society



3. AQUARIUS III

CATALOGUE

1. SCORPIO II, 1971, Oil on canvas, 80" x 120"
2. AQUARIUS I, 1971, Oil on canvas, 52" x 40"
3. AQUARIUS III, 1971, Oil on canvas, 80" x 68"
4. AQUARIUS IV, 1971, Oil on canvas, 80" x 68"
5. VIRGO I, 1972, Acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"
6. VIRGO II, 1972, Acrylic on canvas, 50" x 36"
7. LIBRA I, 1972, Acrylic on canvas, 38" x 48"
8. SCORPIO III, 1972, Oil on canvas, 52" x 70"
9. LIBRA II, 1972, Oil on canvas 38" x 100"

Back cover: 4. AQUARIUS IV

