

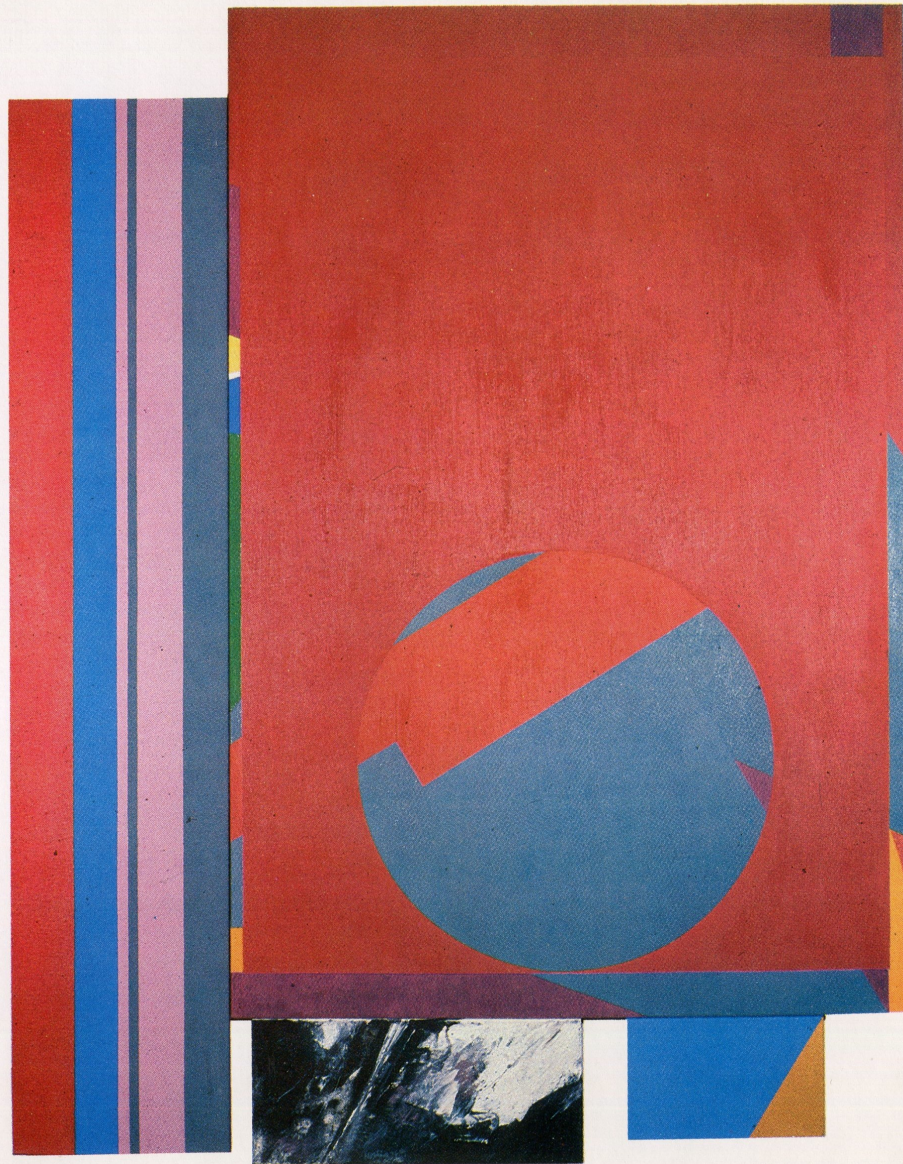
**BUDD HOPKINS**



**RED TRIAD 1974**

OIL ON CANVAS  
52 X 41 INCHES

COLLECTION OF  
MR. AND MRS. QUINTON DAVIS  
WICHITA, KANSAS





# **BUDD HOPKINS**

**PAINTINGS — COLLAGES**

SEPTEMBER 20 THROUGH OCTOBER 20, 1979

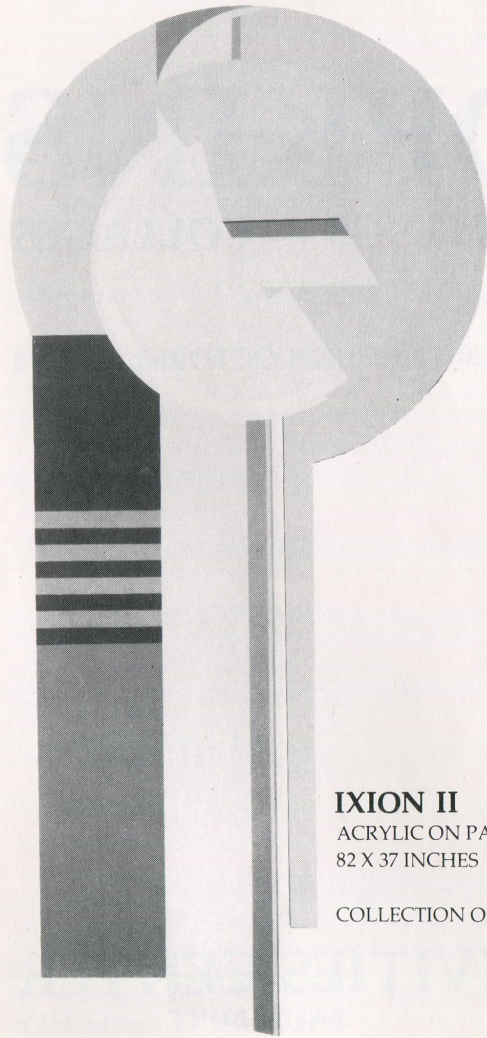
**CULTURAL ACTIVITIES CENTER**

**SAULSBURY GALLERY**

DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS AND EXHIBITIONS

POST OFFICE BOX 3292 - TEMPLE, TEXAS 76501





**IXION II 1978**

ACRYLIC ON PANEL  
82 X 37 INCHES

COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

I first knew Budd Hopkins without knowing him. In 1952, I gave an advanced seminar on half a dozen or so sessions at Oberlin College in Ohio, accompanied by an exhibit of my work. Budd Hopkins as a person is a fetching, articulate, enthusiastic, outgoing man, but also with a considerate sense of discretion, so that, though we have both spent summers at the tip of Cape Cod for years, it's only in the past several years that he ventured to tell me that he was one of the young students in that seminar at Oberlin. Obviously, there is a certain generation gap. . .

For an artist of my generation there is something in Hopkins' work that is hard to get a handle on. (I think this is generally true of older artists with very original younger ones.) What I originally sensed in his work was a kind of contradiction . . . But one must remember that some of the most original work arises out of sustained effort to resolve a seeming contradiction.

To over simplify a process which must be extremely complex, I think Hopkins must have begun with gut reactions to both the intense and classical art of Mondrian (the subject of one of my seminar lectures), and, on the other hand, to the intensity and seeming wildness of the painting gestures of American abstract expressionism, which had appeared like a bolt out of the blue on the American painting scene during the 1940's. . .

I think part of what attracted Budd unconsciously in Mondrian was the latter's hierarchal system of values. For Mondrian the only colors that counted were the three primaries, red, yellow and blue, because they include all the others; for him Reality was ultimately vertical and horizontal, but never diagonal; for him life was expressed through rhythm. Mondrian's search was for the Universal. Therefore, anything per-



sonal, particular, representational, or technically specific, any mixed colors, three dimensional spaces, imagery, places or persons were trivial and disruptive of an expression of, in his own words, "true reality".

It is against this background, that a certain impersonality in Hopkins' work made sense to me, and in his major work called "Hera's Wall" (1978) the influence of Mondrian's objectivity (which in my opinion was actually a high degree of subjectivity) clearly shows. But what shows equally clearly in "Hera's Wall" are things that have nothing to do with Mondrian, a ritualistic sense, a sense of a classical Greek temple, a sense of a sacred place where holy personages may be lurking, as in the opening passages of Sir James Frazer's "The Golden Bough". It's as though an anthropologist of primitive cultures, such as Claude Levi-Straus longed for the Parthenon; or conversely, as though the classical worshippers at the Parthenon were dimly aware that those marble columns were once wooden tree trunks, and the religious mysteries had begun in ancient, secretive groves. . .

In modern idiom, such contradictory perceptions are a hell of an artistic problem, and Hopkins' sustained struggle with such contradictions becomes more fascinating as one begins to glimpse his conflicting obsessions. . .

He has his own hierarchy. Abstract as the work is at first sight, in a way he thinks of his geometric forms as artists have traditionally thought of the human figure, as important as the head, the torso, the extended limbs, all curiously vulnerable, despite their tough geometrical shapes. In fact he sometimes speaks of "portraits of circles," images which appeared throughout his work in the 60's and 70's, as in "Montezuma No. 2,"

(1970), or "Gemini," (1968), in which the conflict between expressionism and Mondrian is very evident. Nowadays he talks about "the hollowed out square" of the temple in the same way that he used to think of "portraits of circles," and regards both as privileged areas," highest of the scale of importance. He has a very acute sense of what is of central value in the composition of his work and of what is marginal. He draws as well as J. M. W. Turner, and like him has made stunningly erotic, even pornographic drawings. So that when you look at Hopkins' hard, bright geometrical surfaces and their seemingly abstract arrangement, it is as you realize that behind them, as behind the Dionysian cult, that there is a wild eroticism — no, "behind them" is not the proper phrase . . . perhaps better put, standing in the wings of his imaginary ritualistic, bright-colored "temple" are erotic as well as ritualistic persons . . . It should be remembered that both eroticism and religiosity are forms of ecstasy. . .

I asked Hopkins once about the seeming arbitrariness of his color. Another of his interests is space technology, and I thought perhaps the color had some such reference. But he grinned and said modestly, "The color just comes along." But I think its very toughness prevents his almost surrealist longing for magic and ritual from becoming overly nostalgic, as it does sometimes in the Romanticism of Joseph Cornell. We have also talked about Leger, whom we both like, and his machine esthetic. Then Budd exclaims "plus Greece!" By that he means that he judges any work of art by imagining how it might stand up *in situ* against the Parthenon in Athens. And when one imagines his own work in front of the Parthenon, then I for one begin to appreciate his force. And all that we have been forced to relinquish. . .

— ROBERT MOTHERWELL  
Cape Cod August, 1979





THE ARTS COUNCIL OF  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
1000 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

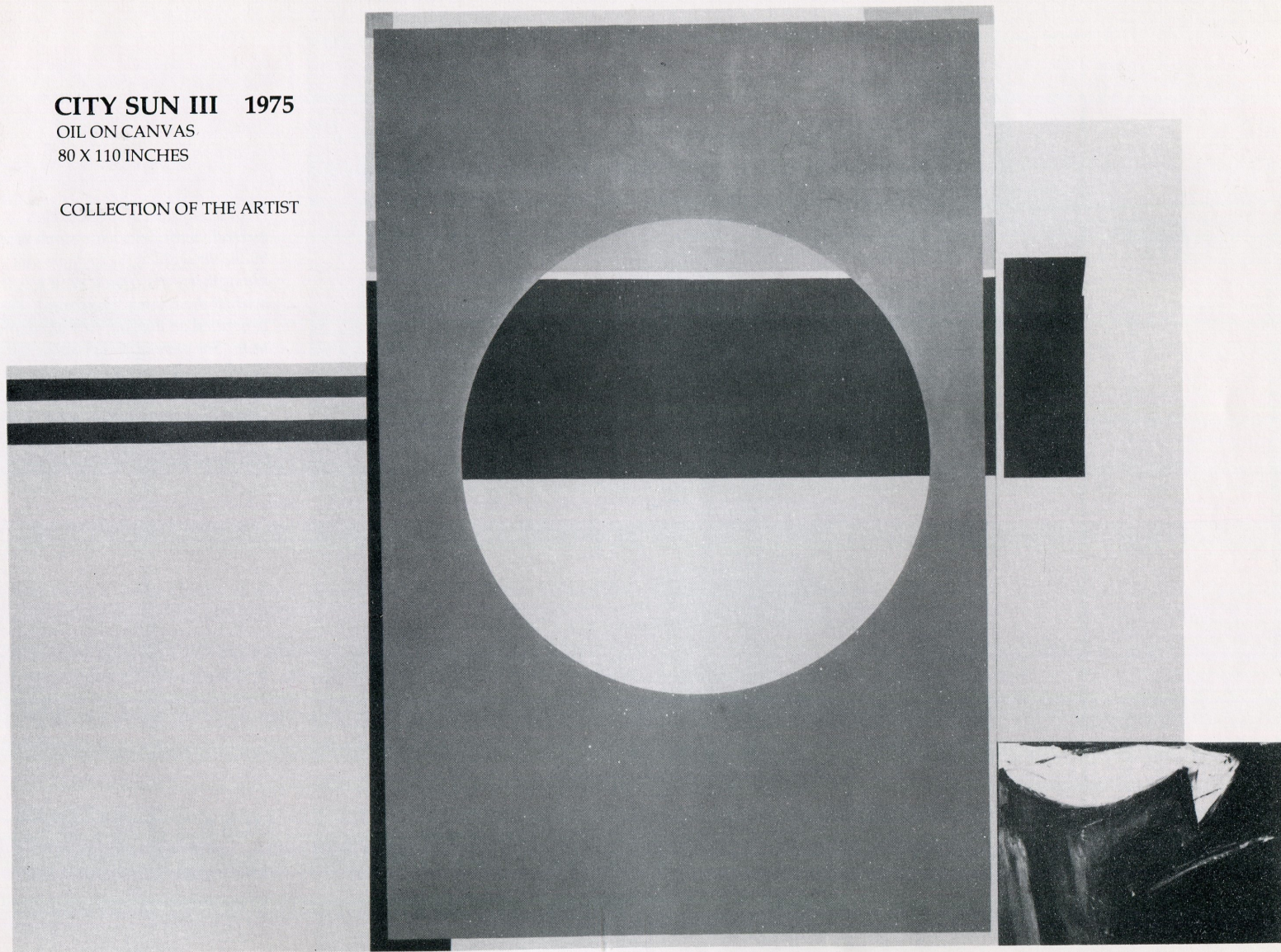
*Hera was queen of the sky. Her quarrels with Zeus were symbolized by the struggle of the meteors and atmospheric disturbances in revolt against the cosmos. She was venerated on the summits of mountains. She gave birth to four daughters. Her beauty inspired many suitors — Ixion was one whom Zeus punished by binding him to a fiery wheel which whirled him perpetually through the sky.*

**HERA'S WALL 1978**  
OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
AND PANEL  
MIXED MEDIA SCULPTURE  
35 FEET IN SITU



**CITY SUN III 1975**  
OIL ON CANVAS  
80 X 110 INCHES

COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST





# BUDD HOPKINS

Man-centered art was once easy to identify. If a painting had a human figure in it, that generally (but not always) meant it was man-centered. If it contained realistic symbols that served as metaphors for the human spirit, that also usually meant it was man-centered.

Abstract art is harder to read for its humanism. It requires, on the part of the artist, a more thoughtful understanding of what the human spirit is and, on the part of the viewer, a greater willingness to associate pure shape and color with the complexities of that spirit.

Budd Hopkins is an abstract painter who makes man-centered art. His work is solidly based on the historical tradition of abstraction. His colors and shapes have the look of contemporaneity. But Hopkins is not a mimic or a decorator. He uses these shapes and colors as tools in constructing his impressions of a human spirit as complex and rich as the constructions themselves. He is a builder actively striving for a new visual order. One suspects that Hopkins is as full of hope for the human spirit as he is confident that his new structures will express it at its proudest.

Two aspects of Hopkins' work illustrate this orientation in particular. First, stylistically, his paintings relate most directly to the work of Piet Mondrian, the Dutch painter who helped form the De Stijl School of the 1920s. This school, an offshoot of geometric Constructivism, espoused an idealistic aesthetic for the new industrial age. The geometric designs and hard-edge colors of these artists echoed the machine precision around them, established an order in a time of social chaos, and helped bridge

the cultural chasm between past and future. Indeed, Mondrian believed that his art could change the world.

Secondly, Hopkins believes in the supernatural powers found in, but not exclusive to, ancient cultures. He appears to have particular affinity to Greek civilization, with its hierarchy of beauty determined by god-connected relationships. For 25 years, his works have been given names from Greek mythology, from the Zodiac and most recently the names of Greek goddesses. Notably, the mythical figures used in his titles — Hera, Hebe, Ilithyia, Ares — come from the myths of origin, not destruction.

Both the urban-industrial aesthetic of Constructivism and the supernaturalism of Greek mythology were efforts of different ages to bring visual order to the cosmos. Hopkins is a part of that tradition as much as a part of the history of abstract painting styles.

As an artist, Hopkins has come around to these concepts gradually, calling himself a "late bloomer." He was born in 1931 in Wheeling, W. Va., son of an Army colonel. At age two, he contracted polio and, during years of treatment, occupied himself with drawings and watercolors. By the time he graduated from Oberlin College as an art major in 1953 and moved to New York, he was thoroughly immersed in the heady intellectualism of Abstract Expressionism.

Though caught up by the fervor of Abstract Expressionism, Hopkins found his artistic mentors early on. He had "discovered" Mondrian while still in college and, among the Abstract Expressionists, he felt the most rapport with Mark Rothko and Franz Kline. With Mondrian's emphasis on geometric order



and the Abstract Expressionists' interest in "action paintings," the two influences might seem at odds. Yet, Rothko himself had studied with Mondrian whose work remains one of the most important underlying influences of Abstract Expressionism. It is also worth noting that Rothko was heavily influenced early on by surrealism and the supernatural mysticism of Oceanic art. His characteristic luminous floating rectangles, so easily attributable to Mondrian influences, were first associated with the mystical zones, or bands of images, in Oceanic sculpture.

Hopkins' work is a synthesis of both orderly and metaphysical painting. Like Rothko with his rectangles and Mondrian with his squares, he has established the primacy of a single shape, in his case the circle, which has served as a formal focal point in his work since 1966. This shape, which also serves as an ancient symbol of wholeness, is the keystone of the authority in his monumental visual statements.

Through the mid-60s, Hopkins painted with a vigorous stroke both in his paintings and in churning, bold collages. Now, that explosive energy has been contained, but not diminished, in perhaps one single canvas included within a larger geometric configuration of assembled canvases. If that virile painting represents the abandon of nature, then it is conceptually a short leap to incorporating actual nature in his pieces. In fact, Hopkins plans to substitute a textured tree trunk for the passages of action painting in one of his upcoming assembled constructions.

Hopkins has tapped the sources of inspiration of these past artists and taken it into his own realm. Basic to his work is the idea of layers of perception — spatial, emotional, sensual. He ac-

complishes this by interlocking bands or triangles of color that seem mechanized to rotate or slide to reveal underlying design systems. Barely discernible behind a flat plane of color may be a wispy painterly surface or a patterned staccato design.

The framework for this interplay is cunning. While the painted planes seem hinged like fragile Japanese curtains, they have the indisputable weight of boulders disguised by brilliant yellows, magentas or turquoises. Since 1973, Hopkins has actually built constructions from separate canvas units into his assembled paintings. The shaped canvases look like giant building blocks that fit together to make walls and hallways of spectacular man-made spaces. Hopkins' architectural intensions are straight-forward. Many of his works in the mid-70s referred directly to urban architectural spaces with paintings like "City Sun," "Stuvesyant Square," and "Gallatin's Drive."

Much contemporary art has been preoccupied with architectural monumentality, as though overwhelming the viewer with sheer scale would accomplish the desired visual wonder. Hopkins' motives are different, I think. He is involved with the anthropological aspects of architecture as well as its formal ones. Architecture chisels out a place in nature for mankind. Its walls protect us and what is important to us. It defines our space and how we fit on this planet.

For Hopkins, the delicacy of exquisite architectural scale, not sheer size, is the source of the hoped-for wonder. It has something to do with natural instinct for scale, for the prescientific sense of architectural rightness practiced by the Greeks in their temples. It has something to do with the "why" of art



affecting the "how" of it.

The Roman historian Vitruvius, who set down the earliest rules of classical beauty in ancient architecture, spoke of the different orders of temples in relation to the specific gods and goddesses they honored. In his hierarchy of architectural beauty, he considered the pillar to be the archaic mythological image of what connected man's world with heaven.

In Hopkins' newest multi-panel wall piece "Hera's Wall," four geometric pillars flank the central abstract figure of the goddess's wall. Is this piece then a gesture by Hopkins to reach into the heavens, to invite the supernatural to participate in human reason and help shape its content?

In his depiction of architectural space, Hopkins is uncannily intimate despite his use of regularized shapes. He avoids the general by introducing jarring inconsistencies in his works. The perceptual layers represented by the contrasting passages behind this "sliding" and "rotating" walls disrupt stereotyped expectations. Painted lines are uncharacteristically jagged or inexpert. Colors scream with demanding eccentricity. His paintings refuse to be dismissed as this or that.

In the end, perhaps what Hopkins' painting are telling us is not about our place on earth or a visual perception of a city, but where we fit in the cosmos. Speaking through the tools of vision, he gives us a hopeful cosmogony for a new visual order in this once more chaotic age of change.

— CHARLOTTE MOSER  
Houston, Texas



# BIOGRAPHY

Budd Hopkins was born June 15, 1931, in Wheeling, W.Va. He studied at Oberlin College and graduated in 1953. He has lived in New York since that time, and maintains a summer studio in Wellfleet, Mass. He is married to art critic April Kingsley. His daughter Grace Francesca was born in 1973. Hopkins has exhibited widely since 1955.

## ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONS

Lerner-Heller Gallery, N.Y., 1977-78.  
Johnson Gallery, Middlebury College, Vt., 1978.  
Longpoint Gallery, Provincetown, 1978.  
Andre Zarre Gallery, N.Y., 1978.  
Pelham-von Stoffler Gallery, Houston, 1977.  
William Zierler Gallery, N.Y., yearly 1972-75.  
Landmark Gallery, N.Y., 1975.  
Tirca Karlis Gallery, Provincetown, 1958, 1960, yearly 1962-75.  
Galerie Liatowitsch, Basel, Switzerland, 1974.  
Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Univ. of North Carolina, 1974.  
Kresge Art Center, Michigan State Univ., 1974.  
Huntington Galleries, Huntington, W.Va., 1973.  
Hurlbutt Gallery, Greenwich, Conn., 1971.  
Poindexter Gallery, N.Y., 1956, 1962, 1963, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971.  
Philips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N.H., 1968.  
Reed College, Portland, Ore., 1967.  
Obelisk Gallery, Boston, 1964, 1966.  
Bradford Junior College, Bradford, Mass., 1965.  
Kasha Heman Gallery, Chicago, 1962, 1963.  
Zabriskie Gallery, N.Y., 1959.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council, Commission Prize, 1972.  
Guggenheim Fellowship for Painting, 1976.  
National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship for Painting, 1979.

## STATEMENTS BY THE ARTIST:

*Artforum*, Sept. 1975, "Remarks on Their Medium by Four Painters."  
*Art in America*, July-Aug. 1973, "Budd Hopkins on Budd Hopkins."  
*Art Gallery*, April 1972, Statement, "First Person Singular."  
*Art Now: New York*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Statement.  
*Arts Magazine*, April 1972, "Concept vs. Art Object."  
Baur, John I.H. and Lloyd Goodrich, *Young America 1960*, Praeger, N.Y., 1960, Statement.  
*Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, 1956, Statement.

## ARTICLES BY THE ARTIST:

*Artforum*, Summer 1979, "Franz Kline's Color Abstractions: Remembering and Looking Afresh."  
*Arts in America*, March-April 1978, Contribution to Cezanna Symposium.  
*Artforum*, March 1977, "Richard Diebenkorn Reconsidered."  
*Artforum*, Dec. 1976, "The New Works of Frank Stella: A Personal Note."  
*Artforum*, Summer 1976, "An Ad for Ad as Ad: The Collected Writings of Ad Reinhardt."  
*Communiculture*, Summer 1976, "Modernism and the Collage Esthetic."  
*Artforum*, April 1976, "A Note on Composite Imagery — The Photographs of Barbara Jo Revelle."  
*Artforum*, Jan. 1976, Five Reviews: Samaras, Ferrer, Lichtenstein, Ashbaugh, Grillo.  
*Artforum*, April 1975, "A Proposal for the Museum of Modern Art."  
*Artforum*, March 1975, Letter on Piet Mondrian.

## EXHIBITION CATALOGUES AND MONOGRAPHS:

*Budd Hopkins: Recent Paintings*, Obelisk Gallery, Boston, 1966, Text by Brian O'Doherty.  
*Budd Hopkins, Retrospective Exhibition 1957-1972*, Huntington Galleries, Huntington, W.Va. Text by April Kingsley.  
*Budd Hopkins Assembled Paintings*, Lerner-Heller Gallery, N.Y., 1977 and Pelham-von Stoffler Gallery, Houston, 1977. Text by Carter Ratcliff.



**SELECTED ARTICLES AND EXHIBITION REVIEWS:**

- Ashberry, John, *ART NEWS*, March 1958, Review.  
Athlander, Leslie Judd, *WASHINGTON POST*, June 2, 1963, Review.  
Baur, John I.H. and Lloyd Goodrich, *YOUNG AMERICA 1960*, Praeger, N.Y., 1960.  
Breckenridge, James, *CHICAGO AMERICAN*, Dec. 1, 1963, Review.  
Crossley, Mimi, *HOUSTON POST*, Sept. 23, 1977, Review.  
Derfner, Phyllis, *ART INTERNATIONAL*, Summer 1974, Review.  
Frank, Peter, *KRESGE ART CENTER BULLETIN*, April 1974, "Budd Hopkins — The Works on Paper."  
Genauer, Emily, *NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE*, June 2, 1963, "Acquisitions at the Whitney."  
Hirschhorn, Joseph, *WHITNEY REVIEW*, 1961-62, Statement on the artist.  
Innis, Michael, *TEXAS MONTHLY*, November 1977, Review.  
Kingsley, April, *ART INTERNATIONAL*, April 1973, "Energy and Order — the Paintings of Budd Hopkins."  
Kramer, Hilton, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, May 13, 1977, Review.  
Kramer, Hilton, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, March 24, 1978, Review.  
Mc Darrah, Fred, *THE ARTIST'S WORLD*, E.P. Dutton, N.Y., 1961.  
Moser, Charlotte, *HOUSTON CHRONICLE*, Sept. 25, 1977, Review.  
Nemser, Cindy, *ARTS*, March 1969, Review.  
O'Doherty, Brian, *OBJECT AND IDEA: AN ART CRITIC'S JOURNAL 1961-67*, Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1967, "Budd Hopkins: Master of a Movement Manque."  
Perreault, John, *SOHO WEEKLY NEWS*, April 17, 1975, Review.  
Ratcliff, Carter, *ART IN AMERICA*, Sept.-Oct. 1978, Review.  
Raynor, Vivian, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, May 26, 1978, Review.  
Robins, Corinne, *ARTS*, May, 1977, Interview and article.  
Rose, Barbara, *NEW YORK MAGAZINE*, May 1, 1972, Review.

**PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:**

- Ackland Art Museum  
Allen Memorial Art Museum  
Bradford Junior College  
Brooklyn Museum  
Corcoran Gallery  
Delaware Art Museum  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum  
Joseph Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden  
Huntington Galleries  
Kresge Art Center  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Montana Historical Society  
Norfolk Museum  
Oklahoma Art Center  
Provincetown Art Association and Museum  
Reading Museum  
Reed College  
San Francisco Museum of Art  
Simmons College  
University of Massachusetts  
Weatherspoon Art Gallery  
West Virginia Council of the Arts  
Whitney Museum of American Art  
Williams College Museum

**SELECTED CORPORATE COLLECTIONS:**

- Ashland Oil Company  
Block Drug Company  
Ciba-Geigy Collection  
Conesta International Hotels  
Hotel Corporation of America  
Lincoln Property Company  
Pepsicola Company  
Pet Milk Company  
Pioneer Aerodynamic Systems  
Martin E. Segal Company  
Shearson, Hayden, Stone Incorporated  
United Aircraft Corporation  
United Grain Company  
Westinghouse Electric