

Stanley William Hayter

By Pierre-Francois Albert



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The English painter and printmaker, S.W. Hayter, was born in London in 1901 and died in Paris in 1988. He is known worldwide as the founder of the experimental print workshop, Atelier 17, frequented by many of the great artists of the 20th century including Picasso, Miro, Dali, Arp, Calder, Chagall and Tanguy etc. Hayter's own prints are well known but until today there has been no publication devoted only to his paintings of which many are in private and public collections and many museums (Paris, London, New York, Washington and San Francisco).

This publication will be the first to follow the development of Hayter's paintings with over 100 reproductions and an emphasis on the 1930s surrealist period and 1940s abstract expressionism. The book will contain a preface by the French professor of art and specialist on surrealism, Michel Remy. There will also be previously published texts by Bryan Robertson, critic and director of the Whitechapel Gallery, London, in the 1950s and by the poet David Gascoyne and the artist, writer and collector Roland Penrose plus photos of Hayter and relevant documents.

Hayter was a member of the surrealist group from 1933 to 1938 and he regularly exhibited alongside Dali, Duchamp, Ernst, Chirico, Miro, Magritte, and Tanguy notably at Breton's Gravida Gallery. Breton possessed two paintings by Hayter. Hayter was close to Andre Masson and Paul Eluard with whom he collaborated on an album of prints that contained a poem of Eluard dedicated to Hayter.

Hayter spent the war years in New York. He established Atelier 17 there, whilst the younger American artists such as Rothko, Pollock, Motherwell, de Kooning, Gottlieb worked with the more established European exiles. Robert Coates, the influential art critic of The Yorker in the 1940s considered Hayter one of the main initiators of the Abstract Expressionist movement. He returned to Paris in 1950 and continued to paint as his style evolved constantly through tachisme, wave movement and to the strong, glowing colours of his latter period. The Oxford Dictionary of Art's citation on Hayter states "that no other British artist had such an international influence".



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