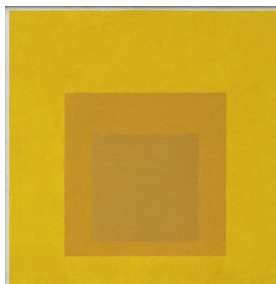


PRESS RELEASE**Josef ALBERS****WORKS ON PAPER AND PAINTINGS**

28th February - 24th March 2007

Monday – Friday 10am-6pm

Saturday 10am-1.30pm



Study for Homage to the Square 1966
Oil on Masonite
24 x 24 in/ 61 x 61 cm

Waddington Galleries are pleased to announce an exhibition of works by Josef Albers – in two sections; pre-Bauhaus drawings and paintings from his *Homage to the Square* series. The twelve figurative drawings date from 1917 to 1919. *Female Head Glancing Down*, 1918 shows a portrait observed with line and given solidity by flat areas of different tone. In *Seated Nude from Behind*, 1919, Albers has captured the female body with a minimal depiction of form, his assured lines of brushed ink achieving a result of economy, weight and balance within the white space of the paper. In the exhibition there are over forty works from 1951 to 1974 of the four different compositions that Albers used for his *Homage to the Square* paintings. Three compositions consist of three squares and the other of four squares. All are made from units of ten, and the placing of square inside square from bottom - to side - to top always has a ratio equal to 1-2-3. This means the middle square is lower than the painting's central axis adding an intrinsic aura of gravity and stillness to its structure.

Albers' mostly painted on hardboard. Marketed from the 1920s as Masonite in America, it is made from compressed wood pulp that has a homogeneous smooth side and a textured underside, its surface akin to heavy weave canvas. This textured side was primed between five to eight times and lightly sanded before Albers applied his colours, directly from the manufacturer's tube, using a palette knife in a single, thin even coat. Painting from the centre outwards to ensure he kept his cuffs clean (a tip passed down to him by his housepainter father), Albers worked flat on make-shift tables under both warm and cool artificial light to enable him to see in controlled conditions how colours would interact. He meticulously, listed in most cases, on the back of works details of the specific manufacturer's colours and varnishes used, as if the colours were catalogued components of an optical experiment. For example *Homage to the Square*, 1966 lists: *Naples Yellow* (Winsor & Newton) *Naples Yellow* (Permanent Pigment) *Cadmium Yellow* (Lefevre).

Many of the paintings have associative subtitles such as *High Autumn*, 1957 with its vivid orange and burnt red, evoking sensations of the New England Fall; or *Thicket*, 1961 with its central square of dense impassable green. Such words were always added after a painting was completed allowing the colour to form subsequent associations rather than the title hold prior influence. The paintings do not contain hard or masked edges; the colours are allowed to meet in a serene freehand boundary expressing a controlled and considered calmness. At a time when many of his contemporaries in America were producing large canvases, in scale Albers was more rooted to European easel-painting. Almost all of the paintings in the exhibition measure between 16 and 24 inches square.

Josef Albers entered the Bauhaus as a student in 1920, a year after it had opened in Weimar. He made glass grid-like constructions of pure colour and light and within two years was running the glass workshop, designing windows for Walter Gropius. He formulated the preliminary course in design and became assistant director to Mies van der Rohe in 1930. Albers taught the moral value of craft, the importance of structure and honesty of materials. When the Bauhaus was closed down by the Gestapo in 1933 he left Berlin for North Carolina to teach at the newly formed Black Mountain College, where colour was to become the most important element in his teaching. In 1950 he moved to Yale University organising a teaching course, which incorporated many of his ideas from the Bauhaus. In the same year he began his *Homage to the Square* paintings, a series he worked on continuously for the next twenty-six years until his death in 1976.

In 1963 Yale University Press published the seminal account of his colour theory *Interaction of Colour*. In 1971 he was the first living artist to be given a solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A fully illustrated catalogue with a foreword by Nicholas Fox Weber, executive director of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, accompanies the exhibition. For further information or images please contact Louise Kybert.