

## **Walter Plate (1925-1972)**

Walter Plate's ascent in the early Post War movement was remarkable. One of the youngest artists of the Abstract Expressionist movement to achieve major exhibition status along side Guston, Gottlieb, Rothko and other modernist masters, Walter Plate's works were eagerly purchased by the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, the National Gallery and other museums early in his career.

Born in Woodhaven New York in 1925, he studied at the Grand Central School of Art in New York before enlisting in the Marines in 1943. Following the war he attended L'Ecole des Beaux Arts, La Grande Chaumiere and the atelier of Fernand Leger. In 1950 he came to Woodstock, New York and attended classes of Yasuo Kuniyoshi at the Art Students league.

In each work, Plate's flat planes and gestural brushstrokes compete with one another creating various chaotic energies within a thoughtful, functional order. The opaque and lucid quality of his surface and palette, somewhat reminiscent of stained glass windows, highlight his superiority as a master colorist. In Plate's early 1960s compositions, he transitions from a linear to more concentrated and complex composition, perhaps a testament to his influential friendship with Philip Guston.

His early one-man shows are those of Ganso Gallery, New York City, 1954 and the Stable Gallery, 1958 and 1960, where Plate's works were presented at the annual "Salon" of the most advanced and vital members of the New York avant-garde.

His early group shows were global, including The Whitney Museum annuals, 1957-61, PAFA, 1955, 1960; the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27th Carnegie International biennial exhibitions, The Tate Gallery, London, 1959; The International Exhibition of Abstract Artists, Tokyo, Japan, 1959; the Corcoran Gallery Biennials, Washington D.C.

He was not a prolific artist, but when he painted, he received great reviews from the likes of Stuart Preston and Dore Ashton of the New York Times, and Lawrence Campbell of Art News. Yet, longer term, Plate's conviction to stay out of the New York City mainstream and avoid publicity would take its toll. He never wavered in his commitment to abstraction, a position that rendered him a "figure from the past" during the last 12 years of his life from 1960-72.

His painting career abruptly ended with his death at age 46 in 1972. Rarely, do Plate's works come to market, being even scarcer than other short lived modern masters like David Park.

Fact Sheet:  
Walter Plate

Born:  
1925, Woodhaven, Long Island, NY  
Died:  
1972

Studied Art:  
1942 Grand Central School Art, NYC  
1947-1950 Paris France, Ecole des Beaux Arts, La Grande Chaumiere, Leger

1943-1946 Served in the US Marine Corps  
1945 Mural in Yokohama, Japan

Illustrated for Reporter Magazine 1946

Awards Include:

Woodstock Foundation – 1953  
1<sup>st</sup> Prize Corcoran Biennial – 1959 - \$2000 and Gold Medal  
1<sup>st</sup> Prize in Oil, Albany Art Institute – 1960  
Klienert Award – 1960

Exhibited at:  
Pittsburgh International – 1955  
Whitney Annuals (5 successive years)  
“Young America” – 1957 – Whitney  
63<sup>rd</sup> Annual – The Denver Art Museum – 1957 – Contemporary American Painting & Sculpture  
Nature in Abstraction – 1958 – Whitney  
University of Illinois – 1959  
The 1959 Purchase Exhibition, Keesge Art Center, Michigan State University  
Chicago Art Institute – The 26<sup>th</sup> Biennial Exhibition 1959  
American Painting Show, Tate Gallery, London 1959  
International Art Exhibition, Tokyo, Japan 1959  
The Detroit Institute of Art 1960 – 2 Biennials of American Painting and Sculpture  
The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 155<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition – 1959-1960  
Abstract Expressionist Painting of the Fifties – 1960 – Walker Art Center, Minn., Minnesota  
Chicago Art Institute – The 27<sup>th</sup> Biennial Exhibition 1961  
Whitney Museum “Artists Under Forty” Show – 1962 – NYC  
Traveling Johnson & Johnson’s Wax Show – 1962

One Man Shows at:  
Ganso Gallery, NYC – 1954  
2 shows – Stable Gallery, NYC 1958, 1960  
2 shows – Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy NY 1966, 1968  
State University of Albany, NY 1967  
University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Albany 1973

School of Architecture, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute 1973  
Memorial Exhibition, Woodstock Artist's Association 1984

Represented in Collections of:

Corcoran Gallery, Washington, DC  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, NY  
Whitney Museum, NY, NY  
Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, Albany, NY  
Wallace K. Harrison  
Johnson Foundation 1962  
Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC  
Many other museums and private collectors

Taught at:

Art Students League, Woodstock, NY, Summers of 1959-1966  
University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale, Illinois, Distinguished Visiting Critic of Art,  
Spring 1962  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY Associate Professor of Art, School of  
Architecture 1964-1972

Publications:

Art News 1960  
Gorgon, RPI publication, Troy, NY - featured artist 1965  
Who's Who in America 1965, 1966, 1967  
Ulster Arts Summer 1978 Bud Plate: A Memoir by Ron DeNitto  
Others