

Cy Twombly

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Cy Twombly studied art in Boston, New York and at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he met John Cage, Robert Motherwell and Robert Rauschenberg.

In the middle of the 1950's, following travels in North Africa and Europe, Twombly emerged in New York with paintings that combined elements of gestural abstraction, drawing and writing. He was the first American artist to use graffiti-like marks or scribbles. This kind of graffiti is not derived from urban centers, but rather from the French New Realists, especially the work of Jean Dubuffet and the work of Paul Klee as well as the automatic writing of the Surrealists.

Twombly moved to Rome, Italy in the late 1950's. There his compositions became more elaborate and the paint surface denser and more textured. His paintings took on the look of ancient Roman walls mixed with references to the antique in color and markings that often refer to Homer and the Iliad. At once epic and intimate, Twombly's work is infused with references to literature and landscape, especially that of the Mediterranean.

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