

## ADOLPH GOTTLIEB

(New York, 1903 – New York, 1974)

*I use color in terms of emotional quality, as a vehicle for feeling... feeling is everything I have experienced or thought.*

Adolph Gottlieb was a prominent American painter and member of the first generation of Abstract Expressionists. Characterized by an idiosyncratic use of abstraction that utilized pictographs, tribal and mythological symbols and with a Surrealism influence.

He was born in New York in 1903. He studied at public schools but at the age of 17 he left high school to travel around Europe and decided to be an artist. Gottlieb lived in Paris for six months where he visited The Louvre Museum daily and went to drawing classes at the *Academie de la Grande Chaumiere*. He also spent another year visiting museums and galleries in Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Prague and Dresden, among other major European cities. He returned to New York in 1924.



Adolph Gottlieb, 1953 © Arnold Newman

Gottlieb studied at The Art Students League, Parson School of Design, Educational Alliance and other local schools where he met his friends Barnett Newman, both shared a studio, Mark Rothko, John Graham, Milton Avery and Chaim Gross. He began producing works influenced by the stylized figuration of Milton Avery. Interested in Surrealism, Gottlieb's art became more abstract with the incorporation of ideas as the automatic drawing. He was a founding member of some artists' groups: "The Ten" (1935), the Federation of American Painters and Sculptors (1939) and New York Artist-Painters (1943). In 1951 Gottlieb is one of the main organizers of the protest that, would give him and his colleagues, the name of "The Irascibles". By the 1960s he began producing some of his most famous works, collectively known as the *Burst Paintings*. These paintings show us the opposition between two forms, the upper circle as opposed to the disorderly explosion in the lower, in which he speaks of the tension between meditation and action, the premeditated and the accident, the contained as opposed to the gestural. All of these works achieved an emotional intensity through color and line.

Gottlieb had his first solo exhibition in 1930 at Dudensing Gallery. In the mid 1940s he became the first artist of his generation to exhibit his work at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. From this moment he

# GALERÍA ELVIRA GONZÁLEZ

Hermanos Álvarez Quintero, 1  
28004 Madrid

T +34 91 319 59 00

[galeriaelvira.com](http://galeriaelvira.com)

obtains public recognition that is maintained throughout his life. He has held numerous individual exhibitions and more than two hundred collectives, including a major retrospective organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York showing his work simultaneously in both institutions in 1968. Gottlieb was awarded with numerous prizes; he was the first American to win the Gran Premio at the Bienal do São Paulo in 1963. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1972.

His work is included in many public and private collections as Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Ángeles; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; MoMA, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Nationalgalerie, Berlín; Tate Gallery, London and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; among many others.

Adolph Gottlieb died in New York City in 1974. He left a legacy of art, active involvement in the art and progressive movements of his time, and Adolph and Esther Gottlieb foundation that extends his legacy of giving and promoting artists.