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The Essential

Cy Twombly

Cy Twombly (1928–2011) created art that was remarkable for its versatility, sensitivity and originality. Throughout his career, he followed his own artistic pathway, independent from contemporary trends, and for a long time his work went unnoticed by a wider audience. By the time of his death in Rome, at the age of 83, he was internationally recognized as one of the greatest and most idiosyncratic artists of the 20th and early 21st century.

Born in Lexington, Virginia, he studied in Boston, New York, and at Black Mountain College, South Carolina, before travelling the world and eventually settling in Europe; from 1957 onwards, he was based in Italy. At an early stage, he began to develop his own symbolic language of letters and words, which suggested a pictorial form of poetry. References from art, history and mythology soon expanded this poetic vocabulary, often combined with a sensual engagement with the painted surface.

This book provides an authoritative overview of Twombly's complex body of work, bringing together the most important of his paintings and painting cycles, as well as a selection of his drawings, sculptures and photographs. Each group of works is introduced and discussed by respected art historians, including Simon Schama, Laszlo Glozer, Kirk Varnedoe and Thierry Greub.

With 182 illustrations, 180 in colour