

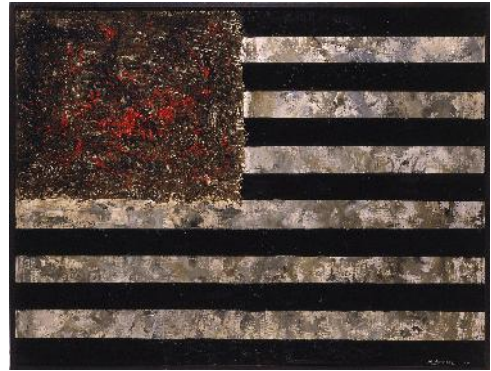
# JACK RUTBERG FINE ARTS

357 N. La Brea Avenue · Los Angeles, CA 90036 · Tel (323) 938-5222 · [www.jackrutbergfinearts.com](http://www.jackrutbergfinearts.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EXTENDED THROUGH OCT. 25, 2003**

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## **“REQUIEM FOR WAR: PAINTINGS BY HANS BURKHARDT” A TIMELY REFLECTION**

Los Angeles, CA. - A poignant survey of an artist's life-long reflection on the subject, "**Requiem for War: Paintings by Hans Burkhardt**" is currently on exhibition through October 25, 2003 at Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, 357 North La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles.

“Requiem for War” is a landmark survey of Hans Burkhardt’s war paintings. The exhibition features an extraordinary range of work from 1938 to 1993, in which Burkhardt employed his abstract expressionist symbolism to explore the furthest emotional ranges of his responses to and perceptions of war, from the Spanish Civil War and World War II through the Vietnam War, Desert Storm, and the conflicts of Latin America and the Middle East.

This exhibition is presented at a time when attention is increasingly being afforded art that deals with humanist issues, although relatively few artists directly confront war. While some major artists have addressed this subject, most notably Picasso in his “Guernica,” their efforts stand as rare statements in their bodies of work. In this respect, Burkhardt may be unique. Well-known for his celebratory expressionist paintings of the figure and landscape throughout the length of his long artistic career, Burkhardt also created in parallel an unique body of work reacting to man’s violence against his fellow man. According to some historians, this body of more than two hundred paintings is unprecedented in its impact and scale.

Art historian and critic Donald Kuspit has called Burkhardt’s paintings “*among the greatest war paintings - especially modern war paintings, made.*” In a landmark and courageous show of Burkhardt’s war paintings held in 1968 during the height of the Vietnam War at the San Diego Museum of Art, the late historian Dr. Eugene Anderson called Burkhardt “*Goya’s spiritual heir*” who “*metamorphoses the experience of war and violence into works of beauty*” that “*unites an exquisite appreciation of this world and a profound awareness of the nearness of the next world.*” In his 1991 essay on the artist’s “Desert Storm” series, the eminent art historian and curator Peter Selz wrote that Burkhardt “*has created some extraordinary paintings . . . executed with a masterful craftsmanship comparable to Goya’s . . .*”

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Burkhardt's 'war paintings' have received considerable attention in recent years. They were the centerpiece of a 'politics and art' symposium and exhibition held at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. As part of its "Disarming Parables" exhibition (through June 29, 2003), the San Jose Museum of Art is currently showing Burkhardt's monumental painting "My Lai," which incorporates actual human skulls collaged onto the surface of the painting. Burkhardt will be included in the national touring exhibition, "Next Stop Vietnam: California and the Nation Transformed" organized and scheduled to open at the Oakland Museum, August 27, 2004. Burkhardt's work will also be included in a major exhibition "The Modernist Debate: American Artistic Discourse, 1955-1975" at the Circulo de Bellas Artes, in Madrid, opening May, 2004.

Burkhardt was born in Basel, Switzerland in 1904. He emigrated to New York in 1924, where he shared Arshile Gorky's studio between 1927 and 1937. When he moved to Los Angeles in 1937, Burkhardt represented the most significant bridge between New York and Los Angeles, in that his paintings of the 1930's are part of the genesis of American Abstract Expressionism. Selz has noted *"while working alongside Gorky, Burkhardt met DeKooning or 'Master Bill', as he was called by Gorky. Born in 1904, they each arrived respectively from Armenia, Holland, and Switzerland. Simultaneously working in Greenwich Village, they discovered new ways of painting which would move art in America beyond European tradition."* In 1992, two years before his death, Burkhardt was honored for his lifetime achievement by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Since his passing, Hans Burkhardt's works have been featured in numerous exhibitions in the United States. Internationally, his works were recently included in a major exhibition at the Kunsthalle in Basel, Switzerland in an exhibition featuring the most important artists to have emerged from that city spanning nearly 600 years. The Irish Museum of Modern Art and the British Museum in London are among those institutions that have featured Burkhardt works in exhibitions of recent museum acquisitions. Burkhardt will be the subject of an exhibition celebrating the centennial of his birth organized by the Orange County Museum of Art running from September 2004 through January 2005.

Burkhardt's significance to American contemporary art is increasingly recognized. Recently, his work has been the subject of numerous publications, affirming the expanding awareness of that contribution; including the just-published survey, **American Abstract Expressionism of the 1950s** (New York School Press), Bram Dijkstra's new book **American Expressionism** (Abrams), and Peter Selz's forthcoming book, **The Art of Political Engagement** (University of California Press).

Jack Rutberg Fine Arts Gallery is located at 357 North La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles. Gallery hours are 10:00 am - 6:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10:00 am - 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. For further information please call (323) 938-5222.

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*visuals for press purposes available upon request*