Abstract Composition

William Gear RA RBSA (1915-1997)

REF:

Description

Oil on canvasSigned and dated '62, signed and dated verso "July '62"91 x 61 cm (36 x 24 ins)
William Gear was born in Methil, south-east Fife, Scotland, son of Janet and his father, Porteous Gear was a coal miner.He attended Buckhaven High School where he was awarded the Dux Arts Medal in 1932.From 1932 – 1936 he studied at Edinburgh College of Art. Wilhelmina Barns-Graham was a fellow student and Samuel John Peploe his teacher. In 1934 he exhibited with the Royal Scottish Academy and Society of Scottish Artists.Gear was awarded a travelling scholarship and during 1937-38, he visited France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece and Turkey. Whilst he was in France, he studied in Paris with Fernand Leger. At summer school in Arbroath in 1938 he met Robert Colquhoun and had a brief interest in Surrealism which led him to exhibit with the New Era Group in Edinburgh in 1939.In 1940, Gear was called up for military service, commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in 1941 and served with the Royal Corps of Signals. He served in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Cyprus before participating in the Allied invasion of Italy, where in Siena & Florence, he held his first solo exhibitions in 1944. After VE day he worked for the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section (MFAA) with responsibility for securing art works in Lower Saxony in the British Zone of occupied post-war Germany. He also promoted local artists during his travels through Europe.William Gear is best known for his abstract compositions and was regarded as being one of the most avant-garde painters of his day, which on occasions incited public debate about the merits of abstract art. He met many well-known artists of the post-war generation in Paris, where he lived and worked between 1947 – 1950. This included names such as Eduardo Paolozzi, Alan Davie, De Stael, Dubuffet, Hartung, Poliakoff, Soulages and Zadkine, to mention a mere few. Whilst he was living in Paris, Gear's work became more abstract with irrational shapes and a bold palette.In 1948, Gear had his first solo exhibitions in Paris and London and went to St Ives to visit Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, Peter Lanyon and Bryan Winter. He also met Appel, Constant, Corneille and Jorn. His friend Stephen Gilbert introduced him to CoBrA, which resulted in exhibiting with the north European avant-garde art group in early shows in Copenhagen and Amsterdam in 1949. To add to these incredible connections, Gear was recommended to Betty Parsons, a prominent New York Art Dealer and champion of modernism resulting in a co-exhibition in New York in 1949 with Jackson Pollack. He was the only non-American to ever exhibit with Pollack. He married Charlotte Chertok, an American with whom he had two sons, David & Robert.In 1950 Gear moved his family to Loosley Row, Buckinghamshire, then to the nearby Speen Farm, Flowers Bottom, Buckinghamshire. In 1953 he moved to Littlebourne in Kent and was elected to the London Group. Gear was the pioneer of prints using the silk screen technique and at this time began receiving commissions for fabric and wallpaper designs, producing around 100 over the next nine years. In 1954 he had an exhibition with Ivon Hitchens in London and in 1957 with Sandra Blow in New...