

# LESLIE SACKS CONTEMPORARY

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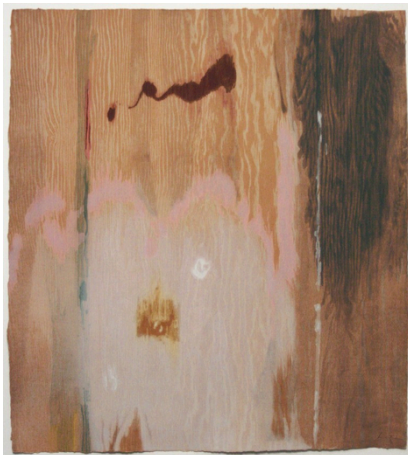
## Helen Frankenthaler and Robert Motherwell

**November 2 – December 31, 2013**

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Leslie Sacks Contemporary presents an exhibition of editions by two icons of New York Abstract Expressionism, Helen Frankenthaler and Robert Motherwell. The exhibition spans four decades of print-work by the once married couple.

In the 1950's, legendary art critic Clement Greenberg introduced Helen Frankenthaler to the New York School of artists, such as Hans Hofmann, Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Extremely talented but much younger than this group, Frankenthaler went on to become one of the most prominent artists in the second generation of Abstract Expressionism.



Best known for her style of stain painting, Helen Frankenthaler's obsession to push her creative limits led her to printmaking. She created her first prints in 1961 at renowned atelier Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in West Islip, Long Island. While Frankenthaler created her first woodcuts such as *East and Beyond*, 1973 at ULAE, in 1976 she began to collaborate with master printer Kenneth Tyler of Tyler Graphics, Mt. Kisco, New York. It was here that she began her sustained investigation into the woodcut medium. Frankenthaler worked with Japanese artisan wood carver Yasuyuki Shibata who was trained in the 17<sup>th</sup> century technique of Ukiyo-e woodcuts. Frankenthaler's Ukiyo-e woodcuts would become her most sought after editions as they successfully achieved the painterly resonance she relentlessly pursued through the medium. This exhibition features several such Ukiyo-e woodcuts including *Tales of Genji VI*, 1998 (pictured left) and the large-scale *Book of Clouds*, 2007.

Married in 1958 (until 1971), it was at Helen Frankenthaler's suggestion that Robert Motherwell also began to work with ULAE creating his first lithograph in 1961. He too would go on to produce experimental prints with Kenneth Tyler, such as *Three Figures*, 1989 (pictured right). Motherwell eventually created over 500 editions during his lifetime. The artist was so dedicated to printmaking that he purchased a printing press for his own studio, allowing for unobserved exploration of his most iconic themes; the *Elegy*, the *Open* and the *Gesture*. Motherwell often created prints in series, among them the *Africa Suite*, 1970, the *Summer Light Series*, 1973, *French Revolution Bicentennial Suite*, 1988. Many of Motherwell's prints stumped conventional definitions of editions as he very regularly included collage elements to these works made in multiples. This defiance was characteristic of Motherwell and his approach to making art in any medium. Countless artists would later adopt this method of incorporating unique collage and hand elements into their editions. Robert Motherwell is often considered the most intellectual of the Abstract Expressionist group; the titles of his works allude to famous poets, artists, musicians, filmmakers and scholars, who piqued his interest, such as *Mask (for Ingmar Bergman)*, 1989.



Hi-res jpegs available upon request.