

# LEE KRASNER

## *Mural Studies*

297 TENTH AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10001

SEPTEMBER 13 – OCTOBER 27, 2018



*Mural Studies* brings together eight of Lee Krasner's rarely exhibited small-scale, gouache-on-paper studies for an unrealized Works Progress Administration mural painting. Created in 1940 (the same year Krasner produced, in her own words, her "first abstract work") the gouaches investigate varying configurations of geometric and biomorphic forms alongside linear elements reminiscent of Jean Arp and Joan Miró. Dancing on flat backgrounds and reveling in vivid color, Krasner's shapes consistently avoid the same designated window and door areas in each composition, suggesting that they were created with a single, now unknown, space in mind.

A few years prior, in 1937, Krasner was assigned to finish a mural begun by Willem de Kooning after the artist was dismissed from the WPA project due to his lack of U.S. citizenship. Though Krasner did not complete the mural, her experience on the project influenced her own designs for the space depicted in these studies from 1940, specifically de Kooning's interest in both Fernand Léger and the British Abstractionist, Ben Nicholson.

As well as giving a rare insight into a year of fundamental stylistic transition toward gestural abstraction, Krasner's gouaches are historically significant in their documentation of an era of unprecedented government patronage of the arts. The WPA was created in 1935 to provide economic relief to U.S. citizens affected by the Great Depression. Until its closure in 1942, the WPA, in various iterations, commissioned tens of thousands of public artworks by artists, such as Ilya Bolotowsky's mural for The Health Building, New York World's Fair (1938-9) and Arshile Gorky's Aviation murals for the Administration Building, Newark Airport (1939-40.)

*Mural Studies* is the second solo exhibition organized in conjunction with the Pollock-Krasner Foundation since Kasmin Gallery announced representation of the Estate in November 2016.

### ABOUT LEE KRASNER

Lee Krasner (1908 -1984) has been the subject of significant museum exhibitions worldwide. The first major retrospective on the artist's work in over thirty years will open in London in 2019 and travel to multiple European institutions through 2020. Krasner's work is included in the permanent collections of numerous leading institutions, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Cleveland Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National

Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; National Gallery of Australia, Sydney; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne and among many others.

#### ABOUT KASMIN

Founded in Soho, New York, in 1989, Kasmin cultivates a program in which historic figures of Post-War and Modernism are in a meaningful dialogue with the evolving practice of both emerging and established contemporary artists. With four spaces in Chelsea, New York, the gallery mounts ambitious concurrent exhibitions alongside participation in major art fairs worldwide.

IMAGE: Lee Krasner, *Untitled Mural Study*, 1940, gouache on paper, 17 x 22 inches, 43.2 x 55.9 cm.  
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*For sales inquiries, please contact:*

*Kasmin* | +1 212 563 4474 | [info@kasmingallery.com](mailto:info@kasmingallery.com)

*For press inquiries, please contact:*

*Kasmin* | Molly Taylor | [molly@kasmingallery.com](mailto:molly@kasmingallery.com)

*Resnicow & Associates* | Sarah Morris | [s.morris@resnicow.com](mailto:s.morris@resnicow.com)

*Resnicow & Associates* | Jill Mediatore | [jmediatore@resnicow.com](mailto:jmediatore@resnicow.com)