Helen Frankenthaler, American, 1928–2011
Monotype
1969
crystal acrylic on canvas, 104 3/4 x 124 1/8 inches
Museum purchase with funds from National Endowment for the Arts Museum Purchase Plan Grant and matching funds from Joslyn’s Women’s Association, 1978.74

Discussion Questions
What do you see? Using your five senses, describe Monotype: How would it change if you look at it upside down? Why do you think Frankenthaler tried many different arranging methods? How was her process similar to Jackson Pollock? What contributed to its “abstract beauty?”

For a long time, Helen Frankenthaler was a primary color in the art world. She was an artist whose work was admired by many, including her peers and critics. Her paintings often featured bold, vibrant colors that were used to create a sense of movement and energy. In this section, we will explore the life and work of Helen Frankenthaler and discuss her contributions to the art world.

Helen Frankenthaler was born on December 13, 1928, in New York City. She grew up in a middle-class family and was exposed to art from a young age. Her parents encouraged her artistic endeavors by sending her to art schools and classes. In 1948, she enrolled at the Haverford College in Pennsylvania, where she studied art and philosophy. During her time at college, she began experimenting with new techniques and materials, including the use of acrylics, which were then a relatively new medium.

In 1970, Frankenthaler traveled to Greece to work on a painting project. While there, she discovered the potential of monotypes, a technique that involves painting on a sheet of paper that is then transferred to another surface. She began experimenting with this technique, which allowed her to create large-scale, colorful works that were both abstract and expressive.

Frankenthaler’s work was characterized by its bold, colorful use of paint and its emphasis on the process of creation. She often worked on several paintings at once, and her studio was filled with large sheets of paper and canvas. Her paintings were often created in a series, with each piece building on the previous one.

Frankenthaler’s influence on the art world was significant. She was known for her dedication to her craft and her willingness to experiment with new techniques. She was also a pioneer in the use of acrylics, which helped to revolutionize the art world.

In 1986, Frankenthaler was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Ronald Reagan. She continued to create art until her death in 2011, and her work is now widely collected and exhibited around the world. Her influence on the art world is still felt today, and her paintings continue to inspire artists and art lovers alike.

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For more information on Helen Frankenthaler, please visit the Joslyn Art Museum’s website.

Printmaking a la Frankenthaler

In the 1960s and 70s she concentrated on large areas of color, emphasizing the general effects of their overall design. In her words, "a really good piece looks as if it happened all at once." Frankenthaler adapted Jackson Pollock’s technique of painting on an unprimed canvas on the floor, which enabled her to increase her ability in the painting and work from all sides. Her printmaking technique emphasized the fluid quality of paint and the freedom of the canvas more than traditional methods of painting. She then printed on the canvas. Her large-scale paintings have an environmental quality that implies a continuation of the print the viewer’s space.

As the title of the print is a single word that can be read on all sides, the forms of the various objects that make up the main theme were adapted to the forms of the canvas, which turned out to be a very general theme of 1960s’ art. The title of the print is "Aridor," meaning "the desire for the new," and was inspired by the design of the print's composition.

Frankenthaler's prints are often characterized by the interplay of color and form, and the use of bold, vibrant colors to create a sense of movement and energy. Her prints often feature large, abstract shapes that are arranged in a way that creates a sense of rhythm and flow.

This section of the book, titled "Helen Frankenthaler: A Biographical Essay," provides a detailed look at her life and work, including her early years, her time at college, her travels, and her work with monotypes. It also includes interviews with Frankenthaler herself and her contemporaries, as well as a look at her influence on the art world. This is a great resource for anyone interested in the life and work of Helen Frankenthaler.
HELEN FRANKENTHALER (AMERICAN, 1928-2011)

MOSCAPE
1969, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

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