

# JACOB KAINEN

*"What unites all these pieces—abstract and representational, paintings and prints—most fundamentally is a strong feeling of intimacy. Kainen's works retain always the sense of a private meditation."*

—David Tannous

Jacob Kainen, curator of the Smithsonian Institute's division of graphic arts for two decades, was born in Waterbury on December 7, 1909 to Russian-Jewish immigrant parents. His youthful love of art was nurtured by careful study of the masters in art books and by museum visits. After his family moved to New York City, he took classes at the Art Students League, later enrolled at Pratt Institute and also studied at New York University.

Associating with fellow "New York School" artists Stuart Davis, William de Kooning and Mark Rothko, Kainen worked with a wide-range of subjects using various styles and media; learning from all genres but allying with none. Working outside of the mainstream allowed his art to develop in its own way. While ranging from figurative painting to abstract expressionism, Kainen always remained an aesthetic independent. He developed and refined techniques in etching and print-making and his pioneer work in color lithography led to a Smithsonian appointment.

From 1946 to 1966, he was the Institute's curator of graphic arts where he built and organized the collection. Over the next four years, under his guidance, the holdings of the National Collection of Fine Arts increased from 1,000 to 7,000 works of extraordinary art.

Kainen's works hang in public collections in both the United States and abroad including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Bezalel National Museum in Jerusalem and the British Museum.

With his complementary and overlapping roles as painter, curator, collector, scholar, and teacher, Jacob Kainen has made a valuable contribution to American art for over five decades.

