



Harold Garde

Bio

Born in 1923 in New York, NY, Harold Garde was raised in the city by immigrant Eastern European Jewish parents. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School and attended City College of New York for three years with an initial interest in science. Following his service during WWII in the US Air Force, and with support of the GI Bill, Garde completed his BA in Fine Arts at the University of Wyoming, Laramie, in 1949. There, he was fortunate to study with other recent transplants, including leading abstract artist George McNeil, surrealist Leon Kelly and the geometric abstractionist painter, Ilya Bolotowsky. McNeil's prior experience, particularly, as a studio assistant in New York along with Jackson Pollack to painter Hans Hoffman, provided Garde early inspiration and insight into the exciting, bold possibilities of what would come to be known as the Abstract Expressionist movement. Its radical new emphasis on the expressive possibilities of boldly gestural, large-scale painting – often heavily applied or incised with palette knife – and its rejection of pictorial realism, was soon reflected in Garde's early paintings. Garde returned to Columbia University in New York, completing a MA in Fine Arts and Art Education in 1951.

Marrying young and with four children, Garde settled into the suburbs of Levittown, NY, where, over the next 15 years, he continued painting in his free time while working in New York City's commercial interior design industry. It was a field that nonetheless put him in contact with such figures as art dealer Betty Parsons, an early promoter of Abstract Expressionism and who represented Garde's close friend, the painter Theodoros Stamos, among others. Along with visiting Mark Rothko's studio with Stamos, Garde frequented the Whitney Museum in its early Greenwich Village quarters; the Museum of Modern Art – where he participated in an artist's panel discussion about the contemporary arts;

and the Midtown gallery exhibitions of contemporary AbEx painters. Willem De Kooning's now iconic series of the 1950s, "Woman," made a particularly deep impression and offered Garde a liberating sense of the figure reemerging from abstraction. The figure as embodiment of desire, frustration, conflict, and pleasure, along with the dynamics of male and female relationships, grew to become ever more central artistic themes for Garde's work.

From 1968 – 1984, he taught art at Nassau Community College in Garden City, New York, and at a secondary school in Port Washington, New York. Since 1984, Garde has been devoted exclusively to his art, working and residing in Belfast, Maine and New Smyrna Beach, Florida, where he produced a large body of fine art prints. Garde's attention to figurative and mythic exploration led to his increasingly raw and confrontational Neo-Expressionist work of the 1980s and 1990s. He has exhibited widely over the years. His art work is in many public and private collections with numerous praising reviews. He has lead many workshops and has been the subject of several important documentary films. Garde's most recent museum exhibition was at the Art Museum in Orlando, Florida and his next museum show is scheduled to open in May of next year at the Maine Art Museum in Bangor, Maine. His large mural piece, "Iconoclast" is mounted on the front facade of the Art Museum of DeLand, Florida.