

PACE GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

TO: ART LISTING EDITORS
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ART CRITICS

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MARK ROTHKO

THE DARK PAINTINGS 1969-1970

March 29 - April 27, ~~1985~~ 1985

An exhibition of Mark Rothko's dark or "black" paintings of 1969 and early 1970 will be presented at The Pace Gallery from March 29 to April 27, 1985.

The works of this period include large scale acrylic paintings on canvas and a number of smaller acrylic works on paper. They each consist of two rectangular sections; black or blackish-brown above lighter gray or gray-blue, usually bordered on the surface by a narrow white band.

Over the years certain writers have too easily associated these paintings with the personal circumstances of Rothko's life. More important perhaps, is the possibility that these dark paintings, although somber - even elegaic in color and mood - relate more to universal and depersonalized formal and spiritual concerns that the artist had realized in such works as the Rothko Chapel murals in Houston and other earlier paintings of subdued coloration.

Irving Sandler has stated that "Rothko's conception of tragedy was not always bleak" and he quotes the artist as having said as early as 1943 in a letter to The New York Times, that "only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless."

A catalogue with text by Brian O'Doherty will be published in conjunction with the exhibition. In his essay, O'Doherty asserts that the meaning of Rothko's dark paintings is "still an open question, one of the few pieces of unfinished critical business of the abstract expressionist era."

For further information and photographs, please contact Susan Ryan at (212) 421-3292.

SECOND FLOOR

32 E. 57 ST., NEW YORK 10022 212-421-3292