

Philip Guston: Works on Paper

May 2 through August 31, 2008

CHRONOLOGY

- 1913 Guston is born Phillip Goldstein on 27 June in Montreal, to a family of Russian immigrants.
- 1919 Family moves to Los Angeles.
- 1923 Father commits suicide.
- 1926 Enrolled in a correspondence course offered by the Cleveland School of Cartooning.
- 1927 Attends Manual Arts High School, where he becomes friends with Jackson Pollock.
- 1928–29 Guston and Pollock expelled for printing and distributing satirical pamphlets criticizing the school. Guston does not finish high school. Takes casual jobs to support himself while painting at night.
- 1930 Scholarship to Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, where he meets Musa McKim. Leaves after three months.
Is introduced to modern European painting at Walter and Louise Arensberg's collection. Is particularly impressed by the work of Giorgio de Chirico.
- 1931 First one-man exhibition at Stanley Rose Bookshop and Gallery, Hollywood.
Increasingly interested in political and social issues, joins the Marxist John Reed Club. Creates murals about the Ku Klux Klan's involvement in the Scottsboro tragedy (destroyed two years later by the Los Angeles Police Department.)
- 1934 Travels to Mexico City with artist Reuben Kadish. Together they paint mural *The Struggle Against War and Fascism* (Museo de Michoacan, Morelia, Mexico).
- 1935 Moves to New York City, where he lives temporarily with Pollock.
Joins mural division of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).
Admires works by Picasso and Fernand Léger in A.E. Gallatin Collection.
Changes name to Philip Guston.
- 1937 Marries artist and poet Musa McKim.
- 1940 Leaves the WPA and moves to Woodstock, New York, to concentrate on easel painting.
- 1941–45 Teaches at State University of Iowa, Iowa City.
- 1943 Illustrates *Fortune* magazine articles on defense industry and army air-training programs.
Daughter, Musa Jane, is born.
- 1945 First New York solo exhibition at Midtown Galleries.
Accepts teaching position at Washington University, St. Louis.

- 1946 Awarded First Prize for Painting at Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Guston is the subject of a major article in the May issue of *Life* magazine, which consecrates his national reputation.
- 1947 Awarded Guggenheim Fellowship. Stops teaching and moves back to Woodstock.
- 1948 Awarded Prix de Rome from American Academy in Rome. Travels in Italy, France, and Spain for a year. Meets composer John Cage.
- 1949 Moves to New York City. Close contact with Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Robert Motherwell, who introduces Guston to the writings of Camus, Kafka, Kierkegaard, and Sartre.
Begins friendship with avant-garde composer Morton Feldman.
Attends lectures by Zen master D. T. Suzuki.
- 1952 Has exhibition of abstract drawings at Peridot Gallery, New York.
- 1955 Joins Sidney Janis Gallery, which also represents Pollock, de Kooning, and Rothko.
- 1956 Included in *12 Americans* at The Museum of Modern Art.
- 1958 Included in *The New American Painting* exhibition organized by The Museum of Modern Art to introduce abstract expressionists to Europe.
- 1962 Major retrospective at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, which travels to Amsterdam, Brussels, London, and Los Angeles.
Leaves Sidney Janis Gallery with other abstract expressionist painters to protest the gallery's exhibition of pop art.
- 1965 Publishes article "Piero della Francesca: The Impossibility of Painting" in the May issue of *ARTnews*.
- 1966–67 Stops painting for two years and concentrates on drawing.
- 1968 Begins painting everyday objects and hooded figures—the latter partly in response to the violence of the Democratic Party convention in Chicago.
- 1969 Begins friendship with writer Philip Roth.
- 1970 Exhibition of new figurative paintings at Marlborough-Gerson Gallery receives mostly negative reactions. Two days after the opening, leaves for Europe to be artist-in-residence at American Academy in Rome for seven months. End of friendship with Morton Feldman.
- 1971 Executes series of caricatural drawings of Richard Nixon, *Poor Richard*, inspired by Philip Roth's *Our Gang*, a satire of the Nixon administration.
- 1973 Begins teaching once a month at Boston University (until 1978).
Excessive eating habits and smoking three packs of cigarettes a day begin to affect his health.
- 1974 Joins David McKee Gallery, New York.
- 1977 Musa hospitalized for stroke. Guston's anxiety and severe depression lead to his complete withdrawal from the New York art world.
- 1979 After suffering serious heart attack, turns to small-format paintings.
- 1980 Large retrospective opens at the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, on 16 May.
Guston dies of a heart attack on 7 June, in Woodstock.