

Assaph
2002

Studies in Art History

Vol. 7



TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

The Yolanda and David Katz Faculty of the Arts
Department of Art History

The Painterly and Architectural Space in Mark Rothko's Later Oeuvre: Between Form and Content

Sophia Dekel

Department of Art History, Tel Aviv University

Introduction

This article delves into the status of the architectural space in Rothko's later work,¹ focusing in particular on the Houston Chapel which represents a unique facet of the artist's obsessive preoccupation with the existential oscillation between ephemeral and eternal, finite and infinite. Throughout the years, Rothko seems to have harnessed not only the painterly space, but also the physical space in which his paintings were installed. His aim was to render a new expressive totality, underlaid by the cathartic religious-secular experience it affords the viewer. Thus Rothko tackled the enigma of existence along the winding route between content and form, matter and spirit, reality and that which lies beyond.

My guiding assumption is that abstract Expressionist painting – a continuation of a tendency that began with early 20th century prominent modernist movements (such as Fauvism and Surrealism), the leaning toward abstraction and artists such as Cézanne, Matisse, Miró, Mondrian, Malevitch, and Giacometti – at some point ceased to fulfil Rothko's need for a current language equipped to express his daily life and his whole life story, from the personal perspective of someone born in Russia in 1903 as Marcus Rothkowitz, the son of a Jewish family, who studied Hebrew and obtained religious, albeit not orthodox, education; an emigrant who came to America with his family in 1913, and who ultimately became one of the most quintessential representatives of the New York School.

The architectural element, which formed a key motif of the world represented in Rothko's early, pre-abstract paintings, but seems to have

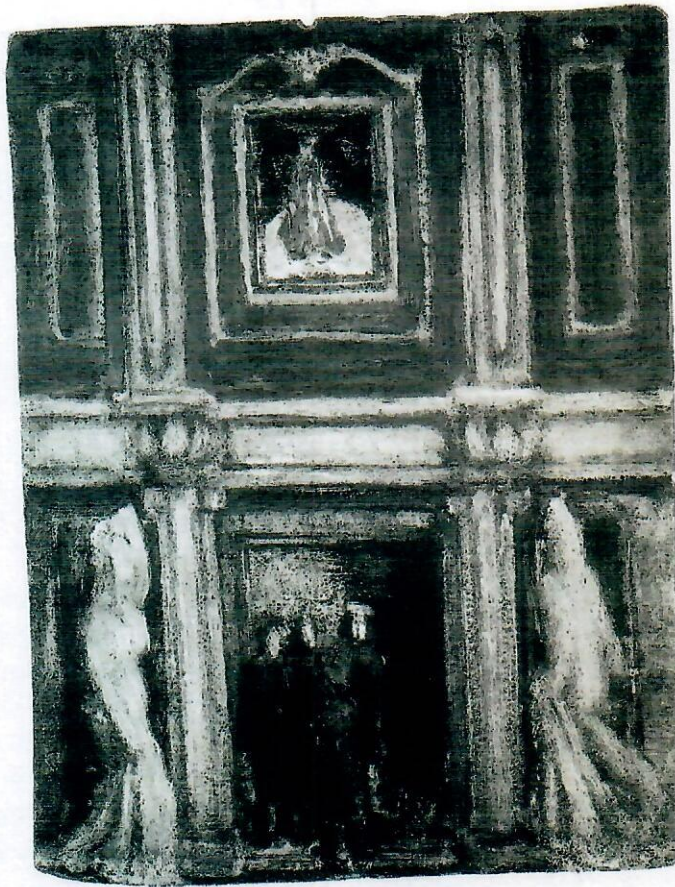


Fig. 1: *Interior*, 1932/5, Oil on masonite (60x 45.7 cm.),
National Gallery of Art, Washington

disappeared during his abstract Expressionist phase, resumed centerstage in his later oeuvre – this time in a different dimension.

Rothko studied theoretical and practical art in frameworks that were both institutional (Yale University, where he dropped out after only two years due to lack of interest) and alternative (the drawing class of Max Weber – a Russian Jew who considered art a Sisyphean-moral task, and who exposed Rothko to the history of European painting). In the late 1920s and during the 1930s Rothko teamed up with Milton Avery and other influential artists, such as Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, and David Smith, who were socially involved and grouped around the quest for a new visual language that would reflect the spirit of the times.



Fig. 2: *Untitled*, c. 1936, Oil on canvas (40.9 x 51 cm.), Courtesy The Mark Rothko Foundation, New York

These were significant years in the crystallization of independent American art: it was then that the New York scene was introduced to the European abstract, as well as surreal and biomorphic art. In 1929 the Museum of Modern Art was opened in the city, followed by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1931. In the late 1930s the local scene was invigorated by artists who had fled Europe following the Nazi rise to power. During those years Rothko's sense of Americanism became stronger too: in 1936 he was among the founders of the Artists' Union; in 1938 he became a citizen of the United States; and in 1940 he began to sign his work with the name Mark Rothko.

Development of the Architectural Element in Rothko's Oeuvre

The architectural element as a trace is already prominent in Rothko's early work. A brief survey of his early paintings reveals an interest in ideational placement of the figures within architectural configurations and a conceptual perception of their interrelations:

- The early painting *Interior* (1932, Fig. 1) features a "drama" starring faint figures situated within niches, in a manner that foreshadows Rothko's tendency to design theatrical-architectural spaces.

- *Untitled* (1936, Fig. 2) portrays three figures, their upper bodies exaggerated and misshapen, standing in front of a horizontal house. The painting's bluntness stems from the non-proportional ratio between the fiercely-expressed figures in the foreground – inspired by the masked figures in Avery's simple-styled paintings such as *Coney Island* (1936), and by the cityscapes familiar from Edward Hopper's paintings, such as *Early Sunday Morning* (1930). In the latter case, the architectural elements are introduced as equivalent to the figures within harmonious, proportional compositions. Rothko – a stranger in New York on the eve of World War II – felt the need to confront his figures with the urban expanses in which they are rooted by means of distortion and exaggeration.
- *Untitled* (1933) brings to mind a composition typical of street scenes by German painter Ernst Kirchner (1880-1938), who in his *Five Women in the Street* (1931) depicts the human alienation prevalent in the city at the beginning of the century. Rothko's cumbersome figures indeed differ from Kirchner's elongated, elegant figures; yet, like them, they too are estranged from their surroundings and well-aware of the temptation lurking all around and the threat reflected in the New York skyline.
- The forefront of the painting *Subway* (1938, Fig. 3) is occupied by six anonymous figures, whose elongated modeling and the measured distances between them liken them to the narrow columns supporting the subway's ceiling; both the figures and the architectural backdrop are shaped with novel frontal flatness, some of the former appear as if trying to become absorbed in the light mural-like background. The preoccupation with urban alienation calls to mind Giacometti's later group, *City Square* (1948-49), where the figures are similarly rooted in intersections of unrealized human interactions.² The tension permeating Rothko's works does not stem from the encounter between the human figure and its urban environs à la Giorgio De Chirico [see *The Nostalgia of the Infinite* (1913-14)]; it seems rather to derive from the fact that the figures do not inhabit the architectural space, but are an integral part of it – while architectural details such as cornices and windows, which began to emerge in Rothko's works at that time, are delineated as traces of a previous life.

Working with Adolph Gottlieb reinforced Rothko's Greco-Roman inclination and his fascination with Christian mythology; however, Gottlieb's engagement with myth relied on symbolist foundations, whereas Rothko was enchanted by the profound sentiments manifested in the dramatic encounter. Rothko's theatrical flair was unveiled in a radio conversation with Gottlieb in 1943,

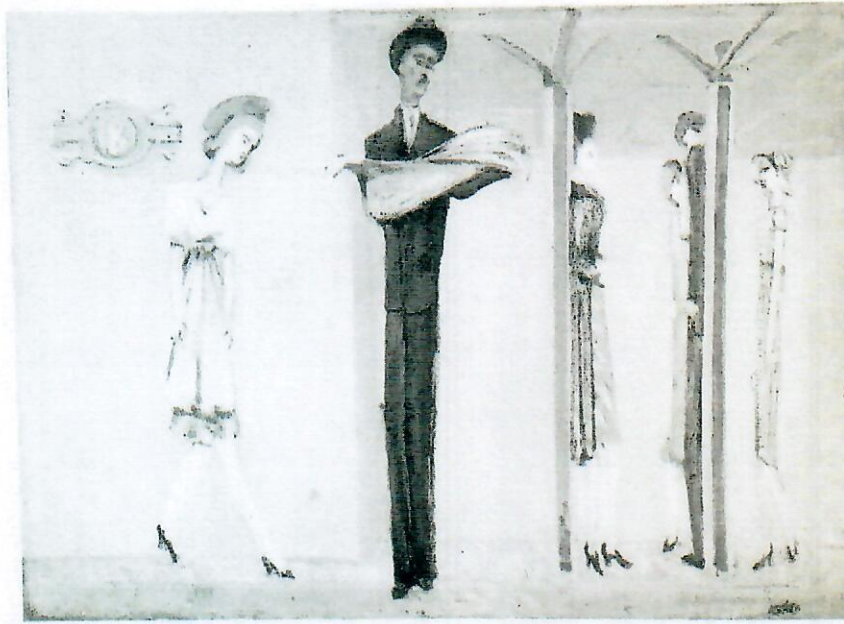


Fig. 3: *Subway Scene*, c. 1938, Oil on canvas (87 x 118.11 cm.) (Courtesy The Mark Rothko Foundation, New York)

dealing with eternal symbols, with the power of myth in psychological contexts (influenced by Freud and Jung), and with the opposition Apollonian/Dionysian introduced by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Such dichotomies comprise Rothko's life drama, whose underlying notions touch upon the theater: 'I think of my pictures as dramas; the shapes in the pictures are the performers. They have been created from the need for a group of actors who are able to move dramatically without embarrassment and execute gestures without shame.'³

The theatrical dimension ingrained in his works was possibly one of the factors that spawned in him the need to control each and every aspect of their presentation, as manifested in a letter he wrote to Lloyd Goodrich, assistant manager of the Whitney Museum, New York, in 1952, asserting that

since he had a deep sense of responsibility for the life that his pictures would lead out in the world, and that he would with gratitude accept any form of their exposition where their life and meaning can be maintained, and avoid all occasion where I feel that this cannot be done [...] at least in my life, I must maintain a congruity between my actions and convictions, if I am to continue to function and do my work...⁴



Fig.4: *Multiform*, 1948, Oil on Canvas (226 x 165 cm.),
Estate of Mark Rothko

The letter, which lays down terms for his participation in the annual exhibition, attests to Rothko's refusal to distinguish between the private and the public, the artist and the viewer. However, the obsessive concern with the display space may also express an old need, functioning as a substitute for the representation of architectural elements, which in his abstract Expressionist phase were excluded from the painterly space in favor of the color fields.

One may identify in Rothko's paintings two processes, whose polarizing ultimately led to direct work in the designated space: the gradual transition from abstraction to abstract and format expansion. The culmination of the shift to abstract is clearly illustrated in the series *Multiform* (1948): in the earlier paintings in the series vague traces of surreal motifs are still discernible, as though "dripping" in between the color fields (Fig. 4), but these gradually

merge into the color fields themselves, which in the later paintings in the series take over the entire format.⁵ The pair of rectangles hovering in the painting *Green and Maroon* (1953), for example, no longer indicate a compositional engagement with the interrelations between color planes, for the reduction into two major color fields embodies abstract power relations between active and passive, dominant and subordinate.⁶

'Greatness of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime,' philosopher Edmund Burke is quoted by Rosenblum, who, in turn, explains Rothko's expansion of the painterly format relying on Romantic inclinations.⁷ Claude Cernuschi maintains that Rothko identified the format expansion with an expansion of his perception of reality under the influence of Kierkegaard, who perceived the stratified structure of the human mind as a web of the conscious and unconscious.⁸ Man is a synthesis of opposites, of the temporal and the eternal, and the individual who becomes aware of this, also recognizes the expanding power of the eternal within him and the limiting factor of the finite within him. From a totally different direction, the format expansion was influenced by artists such as Diego Rivera, who worked in New York during the 1930s. One of the kingpins of monumental Mexican mural painting, Rivera strove to convey revolutionary messages to the oppressed masses, and to this end he employed the public medium of mural, which seems to "go out" to the people.

The format expansion is crucial to the understanding of the transformations that occurred in Rothko's perception of the painterly space and his attempt to eliminate the traditional aesthetic barrier between the viewer and the painting, a process that started out with devoting himself to the all-over technique: 'However you paint the larger picture, you are in it,' Rothko was quoted in 1951.⁹ It was against this backdrop that the importance attached to the mode of display of his works increased considerably. In the group show "Fifteen Americans" curated by Dorothy Miller in 1952 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Rothko insisted upon hanging his paintings close together, and tried to control their mode of presentation with respect to the works of the other participants. Subsequently he refused to sanction the shipping of his works to Europe, fearing that he would not be able to control their presentation.

In 1955 Rothko planned his first solo show at the Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. He chose to dim the lights and let the paintings themselves emanate their inner light.¹⁰ The success of the installation determined the ensuing nature of his works' display: finding the right height for hanging the paintings according to the lighting conditions; refusal to hang large paintings at a height

that would create a gap of over 15 cm. from the floor; working with dim lighting, whether artificial or, preferably, natural, since it corresponded to the light conditions in the studio where they were painted, rather than direct lighting or single spotlights; using equal lighting from a remote source and groupings determined by the interrelations between the paintings, rather than by chronology. The sense of totality emanating from his canvases was reinforced by the apt installation on which he insisted, thus capturing the viewer in the three-dimensional web Rothko had woven.

From the Seagram Building to the Tate Gallery

In 1958 Rothko was invited by architect Philip Johnson and entrepreneur Lambert-Bronfman to paint murals for the Four Seasons Restaurant in the revolutionary Seagram Building in New York, planned by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in cooperation with Johnson's architect firm. According to Dan Rice, Rothko's assistant at the time, Rothko felt that 'he had gone as far as he could in painting,' and therefore he was thrilled with this offer, which allowed him to take the idea of totality – whereby 'his work must or should hang together in a permanent environment, fixed only by the work itself'¹¹ – one step further. At first he was not bothered with the eventual function of the space, but in the course of the work he started having difficulty in accepting the idea that his paintings would decorate a restaurant that catered to the city's top echelon, and he decided to withdraw from the commission.

Rothko prepared three series of paintings and scores of sketches for the Seagram Building. A prominent feature in the first series was the vertical composition, whereas the second and third series are more somber and the rectangular shape was abandoned in favor of the square.¹² Part of the paintings were exhibited in 1961 within the framework of a Rothko retrospective exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery, London.¹³ The favorable responses they elicited prompted him to donate several of these to the Tate Gallery, under the condition that they were to be given a separate room (Fig. 5).¹⁴

Rothko was clearly influenced by the frescoes he had seen at the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii which he visited in 1959, in the midst of his preliminary work on the Seagram Building paintings. Another source of influence was Michelangelo's frescoes in the staircase room in the Medicean Library in Florence (1533), which make 'the viewers feel that they are trapped in a room where all the doors and windows are bricked up, so that all they can do is butt their heads forever against the wall.'¹⁵ Rothko's color fields in paintings such as *Black on Maroon* (1959) and *Red on Maroon* (1959) were also influenced by

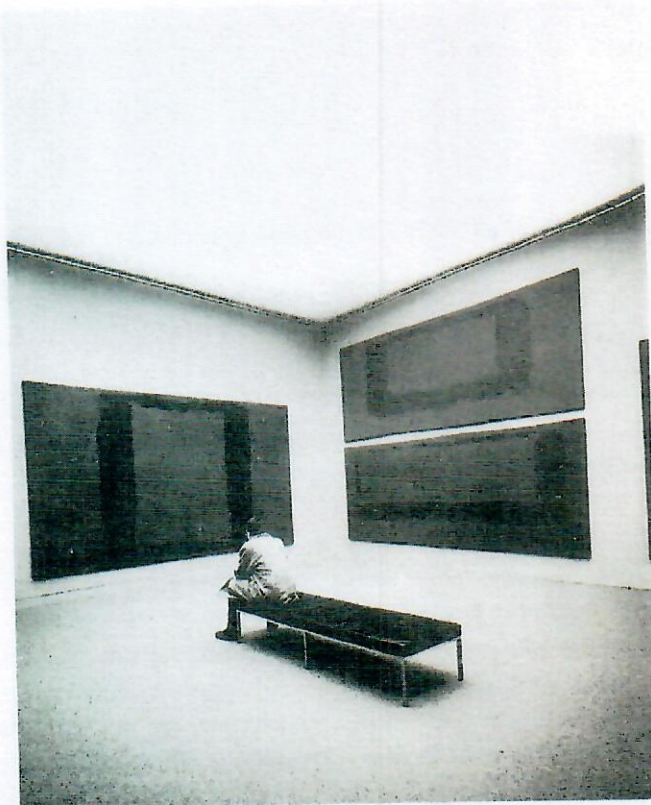


Fig. 5: The Rothko Room at the Tate Gallery, London

mural fragments from Boscoreale that he had seen at the New York Metropolitan Museum.

In an interview with John Fisher, editor of *Harper's Magazine*, Rothko said that in Pompeii he had found an atmosphere and a use of dark colors akin to his own paintings. One of the rooms he saw in Pompeii is described as a space dominated by fields of black and yellow, whose tranquility is intruded upon by what look like pilasters painted in an off-white shade reminiscent of marble. Another hall was dominated by a saturated crimson hue similar to Rothko's, and the pilasters were painted plum, which is also one of the colors typical of Rothko's work.¹⁶ The paintings he executed for the Seagram Building are thus characterized by features typical of the so-called "Roman Second Style" of Pompeii in terms of their magnitude, domination of space, intense coloration, and monochromatic quality.¹⁷ In the aforementioned interview with Fisher,

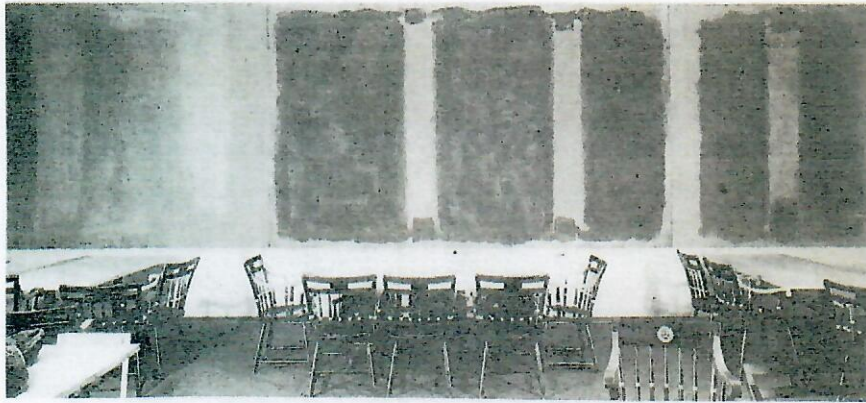


Fig. 6: Murals for Holyoke Center, 1962, Glue and oil on canvas, Harvard University Art Museum

Rothko admitted that he had found in the Villa 'a total architectonic environment controlled by color,' adding that: 'I have been painting Greek temples all my life without knowing it.'¹⁸

In 1961 Rothko began working on paintings for the Holyoke Center at Harvard University, Cambridge. These repeat, to a large extent, the composition of the series made for the Seagram Building, and they too feature in the form of columns and lintels (Fig. 6). Rothko experimented extensively with color until opting for the dark coloration of blacks, reds, oranges and ochers.¹⁹

The Houston Chapel

In 1959 Rothko was invited to exhibit in the "Documenta" in Kassel by curator Werner Haftmann. Rothko declined, maintaining that he did not want to exhibit in a group, and even when offered an exhibition on his own, he remained adamant in his refusal, stating that he would never even consider exhibiting in Germany, a country that had committed such severe crimes against the Jews. Instead he proposed to donate works for a memorial, 'even a very small chapel of expiation erected in memory of Jewish victims,' explaining that 'it need only be a tent.'²⁰

Five years later, in the spring of 1962, art patrons Dominique and John de Menil visited Rothko's studio. They were deeply impressed by the preliminary sketches for the Seagram Building and commissioned murals for the chapel at St. Thomas Catholic University, Houston, for whose construction they provided the funds. Designed by architect Philip Johnson, in collaboration with Rothko, the chapel plan was inspired by Byzantine and Neo-Byzantine cathedrals such

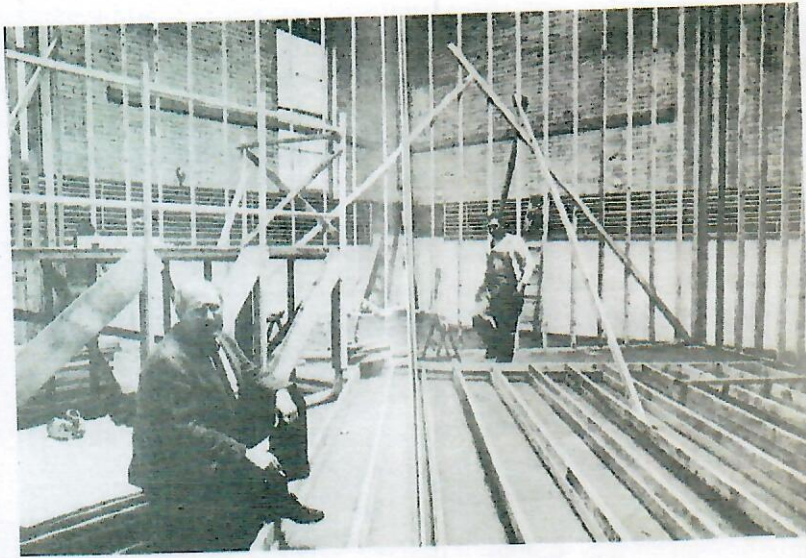


Fig. 7: The Rothko Studio in 1964, The projected Houston Chapel as a replica

as the chapel of Galla Placidia in Ravenna.

Johnson's proposal for the lighting did not appeal to Rothko, and the ceiling and lighting design was entrusted to Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry, who proposed a parachute-like ceiling, similar to that spread out by Rothko over the skylights in his own studio in order to obtain the desired degree of darkness necessary for his work. This method allowed for dim, albeit uncontrolled, lighting. In retrospect, subsequent to the recent renovations and lighting changes made in the chapel, it seems that Johnson had been right. The uncontrolled lighting damaged Rothko's paintings and they had to be restored.

The timing of the commission could not have been more perfect. Throughout 1962-1963 Rothko had created very little. The attention imparted by art critics to the young generation of Pop artists disturbed the well-established artist, who felt that he had reached an impasse. Art scholars and friends who visited his studio during the work on the murals attested to its looking like a construction site (Fig. 7), since Rothko treated his paintings as components that together make up a whole. He had mounted them on a set of scaffoldings, one panel next to the other, and adjoined them into an independent structure floating in the space. This allowed him to explore the relationship between individual paintings and the totality created in the space, between himself and the viewer.

Rothko took the opportunity to address the Christian experience from his own unique perspective. He read extensively about the Greek fathers of the church, about their simplicity and what he dubbed 'the ballet of their thoughts.' Being an "other" himself – neither Christian nor a native-born American – Rothko had hoped to merge between opposites and bring them together into a place that would embody the universal existential essence. In the course of planning he ceaselessly oscillated between an abstract use of Christian iconography and mystical exploitation of the features of the space. His chosen theme, Christ's Passion, unfolded on fourteen canvas panels, as the number of the Stations of the Cross. Hung on the walls of the octagonal structure, the panels can not be viewed in and of themselves, unlike Barnett Newman's *Stations of the Cross* (1958), but rather form an integral part of the space. The viewer does not face the Stations, but rather is engulfed by them.

Rothko's treatment of the interrelations between the various paintings comprising a single whole space was influenced by the Mondrianesque grid, whose clear insights conceal a manifestation of transcendent meanings and mindsets. Like an alchemist, Rothko toiled to fine-tune the color proportions and aptly locate the inner color rectangle in relation to the rectangle of the painting. The complete installation (Fig. 8) consists of three triptychs – one in the apse, one on the east wall, and one on the west wall – and of five discrete panels hung on the diagonal walls. The center panel in the triptychs on the east and west walls is slightly raised, whereas the three panels of the apse triptych, in black and violet coloration, are aligned.²¹ The narrow strip at the bottom of the preliminary sketches indicates that Rothko had intended to add a predella – a long lower panel of the type seen in Christian altarpieces. The preoccupation with the hierarchy between panels, expressed by elevating some and leveling others, reflects his hesitation concerning the representation of his degree of affinity to institutionalized religion.

The installation combines abstract-meditative painting with architectural presence, reinforced by the octagonal shape of the space, the dense hanging and the dim lighting that merges with the light that seems to be radiating from the dark works. The polarized abstraction conveys an acute, ascetic message in the spirit of Malevitch's *Black Square*, alongside harsh religious presence. The interplay of presence and absence evokes associations and sentiments that have often been described in mystical and spiritual terms: 'Art as Religious Faith,' one critic asserted,²² while another maintained that 'the weightiness of the color and the hugeness of the surrounding rectangles suggest the ritual symbols of a harsh and primitive religion.'²³ Jeffrey Weiss ascribes to the chapel

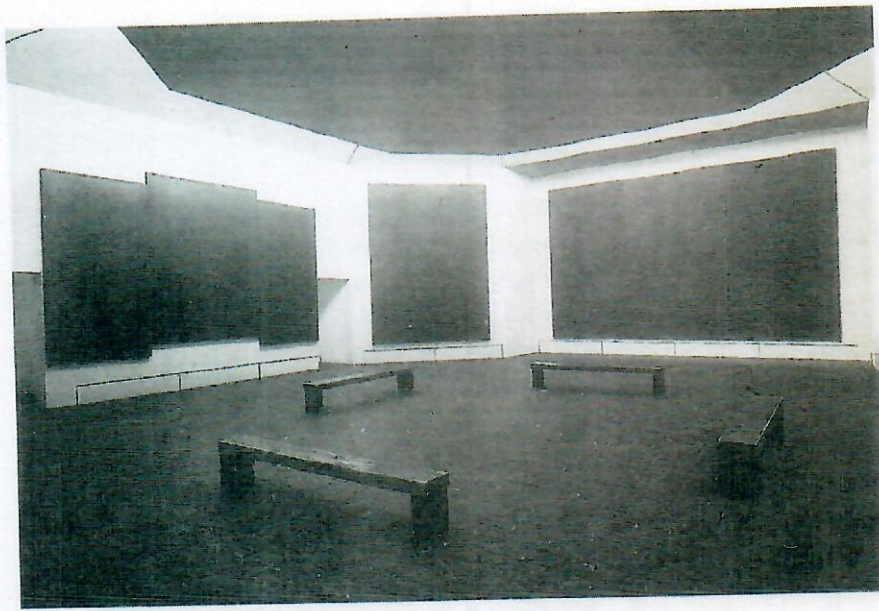


Fig. 8: The Rothko Chapel, Houston, 1965-66

qualities of commemoration that call to mind the visionary structures of 18th century French architect Etienne Louis Boullée; he compares the questions it invokes to those triggered in Sartre when he explored Giacometti's work in the context of Manhattan (*The Great American Desert*), a comparison that once again anchors Rothko's work in an interplay of void and alienation.²⁴

Dore Ashton regards the chapel as a combination between the Russian tendency to the spiritual – an allusion to Russian icons mysteriously glowing through their darkness – and the hush accompanying observation of the Sabbath. It is memory that invests the chapel with meditative qualities: 'Silence is so accurate,' she quotes Rothko himself.²⁵ Rothko sought to embody in the chapel the secular yearning for ritual, religion, thus rendering it an intermediate realm in-between a chapel and a mosque, a synagogue and a shaman's territory. Rothko was religious in the secular sense of the word, Ashton argues, in the way that Matisse was at the end of his life, when decorating the Vence Rosary Chapel (1940).²⁶ Avram Kampf, who studied the "Jewish connection" of the New York School, concurs with the assumption that the New York School artists did not settle for formal concerns, and insisted upon meaning and content in their quest for a moral framework.²⁷ In keeping with his latter assertions, the

Houston chapel is a metaphor for Place (*Makom*), a representation of the kabbalistic *Sefirot* that mediate between the universe and absolute divinity that is identified with 'perpetual light'.²⁸

Barnett Newman – Rothko's colleague from the New York School and a Jew himself – designed in 1963 a maquette for an exhibition on "Recent American Synagogues Architecture" at the Jewish Museum, New York, in which he sought to allude to the idea of Place.²⁹ The box-like envelope he created elaborates on seemingly fragmented details, such as zigzag-shaped glass wall sections, while the interior follows the traditional structure of a central elevated stage (*bimah*) and a separate women's section (*ezrat nashim*). The meticulous observation of detail is surprising, given the conceptual asceticism characterizing Newman's painting and sculpture.

Rothko, on the other hand, created a concurrent totality of two levels of reality: the two-dimensional reality of painting, and the three-dimensional reality of the affinities amongst paintings, and between the paintings on the one hand and the space and lighting on the other. The abstract dimension is even unrestrained in appearance, and its independent essence is determined by the viewer. The intermediate realm between the sacred and the secular demanded of him – so as not to stumble upon paganism – additional refinement of his abstract paintings and total voiding of the space in which they were installed. Werner Haftmann, who was acquainted with Rothko, attributes the silence typifying his oeuvre to the abstract nature of God in Judaism and to the Temple curtain (*parochet*) concealing the Holy of Holies: 'Judaism, which for 2,000 years remained 'imageless,' has found in our century – with the help of the meditative process of modern art – a pictorial expression of its own.'³⁰

Until 1967 Rothko worked untiringly on the chapel's paintings. In May 1968 he had suffered an aneurysm of the aorta, which forced him to resume painting in a small format. Rothko, who found himself "outside the painting," took his own life in the early morning of February 25, 1970 in the studio that had become his chapel. On May 29 that same year the Rothko Room at the Tate Gallery, London was opened. The Houston chapel was inaugurated on February 27, 1971.

Conclusion

The significance of the Houston chapel lies in the process and deliberations it perpetuates. In his last letter to the de Menils, Rothko wrote: 'The magnitude, on every level of experience and meaning, of the task in which you have involved me, exceeds all my preconceptions. And it is teaching me to extend

myself beyond what I thought was possible for me. For this I thank you.'³¹

Rothko's demand to control the presentation of his works was preserved after his death through the foundation he set up in 1969. Possessing some 800 paintings, in 1985 the Mark Rothko Foundation decided to donate about 400 to thirty-two museums that were willing to follow the stipulations in Rothko's will and install his works in cohesive groups.³² The Houston chapel – originally conceived as a Catholic house of prayer – now serves as a site for seclusion and contemplation, and it is not coincidental that representatives of all world religions attended the dedication ceremony in 1971.³³ The chapel preserves the Romantic vitality instilled in its maker. It furnishes visitors with a humanistic and universal religious experience, and in the current context of disintegration and division, may serve as a critique of the breach of faith in our world.

Over the years Rothko's work had undergone a process of comprehensive reduction, which stripped it of any image, dimmed the light falling thereon, and transformed the painting into a trace, to borrow Jacques Derrida's terms when discussing the scarcity of human presence:

traces are the mark of an anterior presence, origin, master, [...] the enigmatic relationship of the living to the other and of an inside to an outside. [...] The trace is the erasure of selfhood, of one's own presence, and is constituted by the threat or anguish of its irremediable disappearance, of the disappearance of its disappearance. [...] This erasure is death itself.³⁴

Notes

1. This article is part of my research for Prof. Mordechai Omer's seminar on the New York School.
2. Rothko, who carried on an ongoing conceptual dialogue with Giacometti's works and identified with the tragic dimension in his oeuvre and with the manner in which it articulated Man's destiny, solitude and existence between life and death – identified the drama inherent in a random, alienated encounter, and elaborated upon it in his early work.
3. Rothko, quoted in Clearwater 1989: 37.
4. Rothko, quoted in Ashton 1996: 130.
5. Clearwater 1989: 10.
6. In a conversation with collector Marjorie Phillips about his painting *Green and Maroon*, Rothko maintained that: 'The... tone of the lower section of the canvas could symbolize the normal, happier side of living, and in proportion the dark,

blue-green rectangular measure above it could stand for the black clouds and worries that always hang over us.' This statement is congruent with Rothko's aspiration to create 'a pictorial equivalent for man's new knowledge and consciousness of his more complex inner self,' as a substitute for that which is perceived as a qualified religious experience. See Cernuschi 1986: 56.

The painting is now hanging next to two other paintings by Rothko in a special room dedicated for that purpose by collectors Duncan and Marjorie Phillips of Washington, who harnessed their efforts to the idea of separate display of his works.

7. Burke, quoted in Rosenblum 1961: 40.
8. Cernuschi 1986: 55.
9. Rothko (1951) quoted in Alwynne 1989: 104.
10. Ashton 1996: 137: In order to obtain the desired luminosity, Rothko experimented with traditional techniques such as tempera – pigment mixed with fresh eggs. He moistened the canvas fibers with the pigment until they merged. He worked in multiple thin layers of color, superimposed, in a manner which exposed in the top layer some of the colors found in the lower strata; it was this technique that generated the effect of light whose source is hidden. See also Waldman 1978: 58: Rothko covered his large canvases with several layers of luminous paint. The bottommost layer of paint protrudes and glows beneath the topmost stratum laid with frantic brush strokes, creating an aura of sorts around the rectangular shapes. The light that seems to be flickering out of the paint captivates the viewer with a perpetual sense of motion.
11. Rice, quoted in Bruno 1993: 236.
12. While the first series was characterized by softened edges in orange, red or black, executed via coarse brush strokes, the second and third series were thicker and darker.
13. See Clearwater 1985: 103. Per Rothko's request, the walls in Whitechapel were painted an amber off-white hue with a reddish tint, so that the walls would not be 'fighting against the pictures,' lest they 'turn greenish,' he maintained.
14. See Gordon 1970: 303.
15. Waldman 1978: 65.
16. See Fisher 1970: 20-21. Fisher's essay is quoted in Bruno 1993: 236-239.
17. *Ibid*: 239.
18. *Ibid*.
19. See Bruno 1993: 236: 'In the late 1940s... Rothko told Robert Motherwell that there was always "automatic drawing" underneath the larger forms' – an offshot of the Dada school and Surrealism and a parallel of the traces of Classical images appearing in the Pompeii frescoes.
20. Haftmann, quoted in Kampf 1984: 201.
21. Clearwater 1989: 50-51.
22. Kramer 1978: 1.
23. Canaday 1961: 17.
24. Weiss 1998: 321-329.

25. Ashton 1971: 185.
26. Ashton 1996: 176-177.
27. Kampf 1984: 198.
28. Kampf 1984: 193-196.
29. See Rosenberg 1978: 79-81.
30. Haftmann 1971.
31. Rothko, quoted in Clearwater 1985: 103.
32. Clearwater 1985: 103.
33. Rosenblum 1975: 216-218.
34. Derrida, quoted in Chave 1989: 195.

List of References

- Alwynne 1989: M. Alwynne, *Art/Talk: Theory and Practice in Abstract Expressionism*, New York 1989.
- Ashton 1996: D. Ashton, *About Rothko*, New York 1996.
- Ashton 1971: D. Ashton, "The Rothko Chapel in Houston", *Studio International*, 181, no. 934 (June 1971), 273-75.
- Bruno 1993: V.J. Bruno, "Mark Rothko and the Second Style: the Art of Color-Field in Roman Murals", *Studies in the History of Art*, 43 (1993), 235-255.
- Canaday 1961: J. Canaday, "Is Less More and When for Whom? Rothko Show Raises Questions about Painters, Critics and Audience", *The New York Times* (17 January 1961), 17. Reprinted as "Renunciation as Esthetics: 'Mark Rothko'", in: J. Canaday, *Embattled Critic: Views on Modern Art*, New York 1962.
- Cernuschi 1986: C.R. Cernuschi, "Mark Rothko's Mature Paintings: a Question of Content", *Arts Magazine*, 60 (1986), 54-57.
- Chave 1989: A.C. Chave, *Mark Rothko: Subjects in Abstraction*, New Haven 1989.
- Clearwater 1985: B. Clearwater, "How Rothko Looked at Rothko", *Art News*, 84, no. 9 (1985), 100-103.
- Clearwater 1989: B. Clearwater, *Mark Rothko: Works on Paper*, Oxford 1989.
- Fisher 1970: J. Fisher, "Mark Rothko: Portrait of the Artist as an Angry Man", *Harper's Magazine*, 241 (1970), 16-23.
- Gordon 1970: A. Gordon, "In the Galleries: the Rothko Room", *The Connoisseur* 175:706 (1970), 303.
- Haftmann 1971: W. Haftmann, *Mark Rothko*, Dusseldorf 1971.
- Kampf 1984: A. Kampf, *The Jewish Experience in the Art of the Twentieth Century*, Massachusetts 1984.
- Kramer 1978: H. Kramer, "Rothko: Art as Religious Faith", *The New York Times* (12 November 1978), 1.
- Rosenblum 1961: R. Rosenblum, "The Abstract Sublime", *Art News* 59 (1961), 38-41. Reprinted in: H. Geldzahler, *New York Painting and Sculpture 1940-1970*, New York: E. P. Dutton and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1969, 56-58.

- Rosenblum 1975: R. Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko*, London 1975.
- Rosenberg 1978: H. Rosenberg, *Barnett Newman*, New York 1978.
- Waldman 1978: D. Waldman, *Mark Rothko 1903-1970*, New York 1978.
- Weiss 1998: J. Weiss, *Mark Rothko*, cat. National Gallery of Art, Washington 1998.