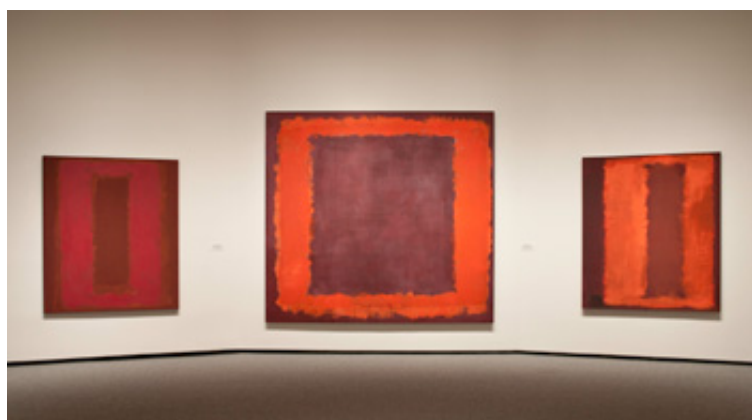


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## National Gallery of Art, Washington, Presents Installation of Three Rothko Seagram Murals that are Depicted in Arena Stage's Production of *Red*



Mark Rothko, American, born Russia, 1903–1970

*Untitled (Seagram Mural)*, 1959

oil and mixed media on canvas

Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.

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Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art presents a special installation of three of **Mark Rothko's** paintings made for the so-called Seagram Mural Project, timed to coincide with the presentation of John Logan's play *Red* at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater (January 20 to March 4), which dramatizes Rothko's struggle with the commission. **Mark Rothko: Seagram Murals** is on view in the Concourse galleries of the East Building from December 6, 2011, through July 22, 2012. These works became part of the Gallery's collection in the mid-1980s, as part of a vast gift of works from the Mark Rothko Foundation (now closed), making the Gallery the largest public repository of the artist's work.

"We are pleased to present these paintings in conjunction with the Arena Stage's

production of *Red* so that Washington, DC, audiences can see the work depicted in the play," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "As the most important repository and study center of Rothko's work, the Gallery has a particular interest in bringing this special installation to the public."

The Gallery last presented these works with five others from the Seagram Mural project and one Harvard Mural work in an installation entitled *Mark Rothko: The Mural Projects*, which was on view in the East Building Concourse galleries from October 12, 2003, through August 12, 2007. Learn more at <http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/rothkoinfo.shtm> (<http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/rothkoinfo.shtm>) .

### **The Seagram Mural Project**

In June 1958, Mark Rothko accepted a commission to decorate a dining room in the Four Seasons restaurant of the Seagram Building on Park Avenue in Manhattan, a new modernist skyscraper by Philip Johnson and Mies van der Rohe. Departing from his wonted format of floating rectangles in glowing colors, Rothko produced wine-dark paintings with ambiguous portal shapes evoking what he called a "closed space." From the fall of 1958 through 1959 he was completely absorbed, making some thirty paintings even though the room only offered places for seven. At the same time, he became increasingly doubtful that a luxury restaurant with its wealthy patrons was the appropriate venue for his art. He withdrew, canceling what would have been his first painted environment—a "place," as he ambitiously said, rather than just a group of paintings. He did, however, complete commissions for a room at Harvard University and a chapel in Houston before his death in 1970.

### ***Red* at Arena Stage**

Edward Gero and Patrick Andrews star in *Red* at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, produced in association with Goodman Theatre. John Logan's Tony Award-winning play ran at Goodman Theatre September 17–October 30, 2011, including a weeklong extension to accommodate popular demand. Now bringing his production to Arena Stage for its D.C. premiere is Tony Award winner and Goodman

Theatre Artistic Director Robert Falls (Broadway's *Death of a Salesman*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Talk Radio*). *Red* runs January 20–March 11, 2012, in the Kreeger Theater. More information is available at <http://www.arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/red/>.

## **Related Programs**

All programs are free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis unless otherwise noted.

## **Gallery Talks**

East Building Ground Level, Information Desk

Public tours focusing on Rothko's works at the Gallery, including the Seagram Mural works, will be offered by the adult programs department of the education division. For times and topics, please consult the bimonthly calendar of events or the gallery talks section of the website at [www.nga.gov/programs/galtalks](http://www.nga.gov/programs/galtalks) (<http://www.nga.gov/programs/galtalks>).

## **Film**

### ***Rothko's Rooms***

Wednesday and Thursday, February 22 and 23, 12:30 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

This documentary film tells the story behind the creation of the room designed for Rothko's Seagram murals in London's Tate Modern. *Rothko's Rooms* (2000, 45 minutes) is filled with anecdotes about the artist culled from friends, family members, and curators.

## **Panel Discussion**

### ***Imagining Rothko***

Sunday, January 29, 3:30 p.m.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, Kreeger Theater

During the last 50 years, Mark Rothko has become a monolithic figure in American culture, but where is our 21st-century understanding of the noted abstract expressionist

rooted? **Lynn Russell**, director of education, National Gallery of Art, will moderate a discussion with Gallery experts **Harry Cooper**, curator of modern and contemporary art, and **Ruth Fine**, curator of special projects in modern art and lead author of the Rothko works on paper catalogue raisonné, exploring how Rothko has figured in the public imagination. More information is available at <http://www.arenastage.org/shows-tickets/the-season/productions/red/events/>.

## **Gallery Shops**

In celebration of Arena Stage's production as well as Rothko's many works in the Gallery's permanent collection, the Shops offer an array of items related to the artist's life and work. A wide selection of publications, including the definitive catalogue raisonné of his works on canvas, will be available, as well as postcard and notebook sets, posters featuring works by Rothko from the Gallery's collection, and the documentary film *Rothko's Rooms*.

## **Mark Rothko and the National Gallery of Art**

In 1986 the Mark Rothko Foundation determined that its mission to conserve its collection of Rothko's art and to enhance and promote Rothko's legacy through scholarly research and exhibitions would best be served by closing its doors and strategically placing his canvases and works on paper in major museums internationally. Before disbanding, they selected 35 institutions, among them the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; the Tate Gallery, London; and The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

As the principal recipient of the Rothko Foundation's largesse, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, became the largest public repository of Rothko's work, receiving 296 paintings on canvas and paper, a study collection of more than 600 works on paper, and research materials, including conservation records and exhibition reviews.

In 2007 Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko further enhanced the Gallery's holdings by donating to its library the manuscript for their father's book, *The Artist's Reality: Philosophies of Art*, which was edited by Christopher Rothko and published in 2004 by Yale University Press.

A rotating selection of Rothko's canvases is consistently on view at the National Gallery, including the 2003–2007 installation *Rothko's Mural Projects*, which was mounted to mark the centennial of Rothko's birth. In 1998 Jeffrey Weiss, then the Gallery's curator of modern and contemporary art, organized *Mark Rothko*, a retrospective that traveled to New York and Paris. In 1984 *Mark Rothko: Works on Paper*, circulated by the American Federation of Arts, opened at the Gallery and traveled throughout the United States. Additionally, since receiving the gift from the Mark Rothko Foundation in 1986, the Gallery's National Lending Service has lent more than 125 works by Rothko to temporary exhibitions in almost 100 museums, galleries, and embassies worldwide.

The National Gallery of Art is publishing a multivolume catalogue raisonné, *Mark Rothko: The Works on Paper*, which is being prepared by a team led by Ruth Fine with Laili Nasr and Janet Blyberg. Documenting more than 2,700 objects that are largely unknown to both art specialists and the public and demonstrating the range of Rothko's creative achievement, these volumes will be the definitive historical record of Rothko's oeuvre on paper. *Mark Rothko: The Works on Paper* follows the 1998 catalogue raisonné, *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas* by David Anfam, copublished by the National Gallery of Art and Yale University Press, which documented 835 known paintings.

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## General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit [www.nga.gov/renovation](http://www.nga.gov/renovation) (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) and on Twitter at [twitter.com/ngadc](http://twitter.com/ngadc).

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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