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Pierre Soulages, Eau-forte IX, 1957

**ARTIST**

Pierre Soulages (b.1919)

TITLE

Eau-forte IX

MEDIUM

Etching and aquatint on Rives paper

DATE

1957

SIZE

26 x 19 11/16 in : 66.0 x 50.0 cm

EDITION

From the edition of 100

INSCRIPTIONS

Signed and numbered in pencil

PRINTER

Printed by Lacourière, Paris

PUBLISHER

Published by Lacourière, Paris

LITERATURE

"Soulages l'œuvre imprimé", Pierre Encrevé & Marie-Cécile Miessner; Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2003, Cat. 9 (col. illus. pl. 8) and indexed p.185

REFERENCE

A20-05

Pierre Soulages

Pierre Soulages is the last, great, living painter to have been involved at the beginning of Art Informel, the post-war movement which encompassed Tachisme, Abstraction Lyrique, Gutai and CoBrA, that was the European concurrent of Abstract Expressionism and which favoured abandonment of any premeditated approach.

Born in 1919, in Rodez, France, where a museum devoted to his work opened in the summer of 2014, Soulages became known as “the painter of black”. By 1946, having rejected formal art training before the war, Soulages established a studio in Paris and exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in 1947, having his first solo exhibition at the Galerie Lydia Conti in 1949. The paucity of colour in his work set him apart from his contemporaries and established him quickly as an intellectual leader of the Jeune École de Paris, but his rejection of a total abandonment of formality soon set him at odds with the principles of the Informelists and since the early 1950s, Soulages has defied classification.

A looser style of brushwork increasingly defined his method throughout the 1950s, and a fascination with the surface reflection of, and contrasts within, pure tones of black began to steer his exploration as an artist. A visit to Japan in 1958 cemented his interest

in painted large-scale calligraphy, and this influence is clearly visible for prolonged periods throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Soulages was regularly included in the influential Documenta exhibitions and his first major travelling retrospective took place in Hanover, Essen and The Hague during 1960 and 1961.

Soulages’ fascination with black, the tone with which he had come almost exclusively to mark his canvases, became a practical obsession in 1979 with the creation of his first *outrenoir* (beyond black) paintings. With *outrenoir*, black became the starting point of a painting, the canvas itself, upon which he would perform dynamic actions with the brush or palette-knife. In this way, through scoring and scraping, creating ridges, lines and fields of black, Soulages explored the property of black itself and in particular its capacity to hold or reflect light, depending on a simple action performed upon the layer of paint.

A career-crowning retrospective exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 2010 and a further exhibition at the Musée du Louvre beginning in 2019 on the occasion of his 100th birthday confirmed Soulages as the father of post-war European abstraction. He continues to work and live in France.





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