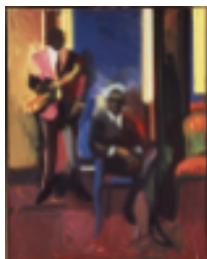


James Weeks

The son of a well-known big bandleader and a classical pianist, James Weeks (1922---1998) grew up immersed in music and art. When just a child, he was introduced to art classes at the California School of Fine Arts (CSFA, now the San Francisco Art Institute) where he attended more classes as a young man. After serving in World War II, he returned there once again to continue his education on the GI Bill. Weeks studied with painter and charismatic instructor William Gaw, who provided fundamentals, and with David Park who was, in the 1940s, at the forefront of the Bay Area's Abstract Expressionism obsession. Another instructor, Marian Hartwell, introduced him to Matisse who, together with Cézanne, became one of the artist's major historic influences. The school's creative energy and camaraderie led him to friendships with many artists, including Richard Diebenkorn, Elmer Bischoff, David Park, Jeremy Anderson, Walt Kuhlman, and Frank Lobdell.



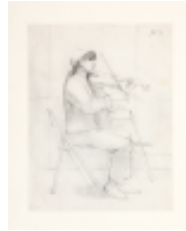
By 1948, Weeks was teaching drawing at CSFA, and so found himself at the forefront of the Bay Area Figurative Movement from its inception. In 1950, when his teacher and friend David Park destroyed the bulk of his abstract paintings and began to include figures in his work, his colleagues were shocked. But a few artists, Richard Diebenkorn and Elmer Bischoff in particular, took up the challenge. Defying the supremacy of abstraction they restored the human figure and real world objects to a place in their paintings. Stylistically, Weeks was a natural fit with the movement. More than any of the artists, he was committed to figurative subjects and had never completely renounced them in favor of abstraction.

Musicians were an integral part of James Week's life, and he often made them the focus of his drawings, prints, and paintings. His most well known work is likely the 1960 painting, *Two African-American musicians*, in the collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Two African-American musicians, one standing with a saxophone and the other seated, emerge from vertical swaths of brilliant color. Week's touches of intense red, burnt orange, and pale pink engage the eye and enhance the painting's contained energy.

Dolores between Ocean & 7th
PO Box 7393 Carmel, CA 93921
831.624.3369

winfieldgallery.com

The artist's engagement with musicians takes a different turn in a series of works on paper from the 1970s. He isolates soloists or trios of players in a minimalist environment, and with a superb economy of line, captures both their expressive focus and the precisely balanced position of their limbs. *Untitled Musician*, 1972, is one lovely example.



Weeks made a switch from oils to acrylics in 1966, even trying his hand at landscapes with success. With acrylics he developed a more thoughtful, controlled style, clearly apparent in his 1980s era portrait studies. These small works have a stark yet monumental quality, enhanced by a subdued palette of browns and greens. Depicted with veiled eyes and placid expressions his subjects' stoic demeanors reveal little but an interiorized sensibility.



James Weeks traveled, worked, and exhibited widely throughout the United States during his lifetime. He taught at UCLA in Los Angeles, along with Richard Diebenkorn, and during summers at the Skowhegan School in Maine. In 1970 he settled with his family in Massachusetts where he was Associate Professor of Art at Boston University for eighteen years. In 1978, the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University honored Weeks with a major exhibition, encompassing his thirty---plus years of art making. The exhibition also traveled to the Oakland Museum of California.

Both as artist and teacher, James Weeks played a major role in the San Francisco art scene during one of its most exciting and transformative eras. The artists of the Bay Area Figurative Movement adopted the spatial relationships and gestural style of abstract expressionism to include the rest of the world in their paintings. In so doing, they broke down long held barriers, and heralded a new chapter in West Coast art. James Weeks was an integral part of that process.