

# ANITA ROGERS GALLERY

## MARK ROTHKO and WILLIAM SCOTT *CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE*

April 26 – June 3, 2023

Opening Reception on Wednesday, April 26, 6-8pm (RSVP Required)

**Notice: RSVP is required to attend the opening reception of this event on April 26; please RSVP to [info@anitarogersgallery.com](mailto:info@anitarogersgallery.com).**

Anita Rogers Gallery is thrilled to present **MARK ROTHKO and WILLIAM SCOTT: *Continuing the Dialogue***, an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by two twentieth-century masters, offering new insight into their relationship and mutual admiration, influence, and respect. Large-scale works on canvas will be complemented by preparatory drawings, as well as correspondence between the two artists. Mark Rothko (1903-1970), one of the most prominent of the American abstract painters, and William Scott CBE, RA (1913-1989), a leader in the Modernist movement in the UK, met in 1953 and consequently grew close through letters and visits. By including the artists' works and words together, the gallery hopes to share the story of this friendship with a wider public.

Rothko and Scott first met through gallerist Martha Jackson in New York in 1953 and kept in contact through letters, sharing personal moments from their lives, as well as details on their artistic endeavors and topics then weighing on their minds. Both painters had roots in figurative painting and had moved into abstraction by the time they met, although Scott would return to and reference figuration throughout his long career. In the summer of 1959, the Rothko family stayed with the Scotts at their cottage in Somerset and here they discussed concerns over the issues of placing art in public places, as well as their mutual experiences as immigrants - Rothko, as a boy, had moved to the US from Latvia; Scott, after winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy Schools, had moved to England from Ireland.

It was also at the time of this meeting that both artists had embarked on commissions for murals: Scott's was for the Altnagelvin Hospital in Ireland, the first National Health Service hospital ever to be built, and Rothko's was a series of paintings for the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York. The luxury restaurant, set within Mies van der Rohe's celebrated Seagram Building, was designed by Philip Johnson and catered to celebrities and the very wealthy.

The commissions presented new challenges, both physically, and artistically. Both were very different kinds of projects, for different purposes and different audiences, and this posed a great contradiction for Rothko who allegedly said, "I hope to paint something that will ruin the appetite of every son of a bitch who ever eats in that room." The gallery will display preliminary paintings and drawings for both murals, offering a glimpse into their working processes.

For Scott, whose finished mural would measure 108" x 540", tackling a piece on this scale was a monumental task. However, he was emboldened by his exposure to Rothko, as well as to the other American abstract expressionist painters whose work he had first discovered in 1953. While these influences are certainly evident post-1953, they also convinced Scott that his origins were in Europe, in

Anita Rogers Gallery 494 Greenwich Street Ground Floor New York NY 10013

[www.anitarogersgallery.com](http://www.anitarogersgallery.com)

# ANITA ROGERS GALLERY

Matisse and Bonnard. He then very much made the commission his own through references to ancient Irish art, architecture, and symbolism.

Meanwhile, Rothko, accustomed to working on a larger scale, was faced with creating a site-specific project for the first time. Rothko struggled with the placement of the series in the luxury restaurant from the beginning and shortly after his return from Europe and following his conversation with Scott, Rothko finally withdrew from the contract, sharing the news with Scott in a letter dated 14 December 1959, on view in the exhibition. While Rothko revealed no hesitations whatsoever about the decision, he lamented to Scott that "there really is no real place for them" [the murals]. The paintings were offered to the Tate Gallery but initially turned down; afterwards, the paintings spent a handful of years in the artist's studio. Scott was instrumental in making the work of Rothko known to other artists in the UK, specifically Patrick Heron, and in 1970, the Tate accepted the paintings into the collection, including the conditions for display set out by Rothko. Now the Seagram murals have a celebrated home in the Tate Modern in London, where they are on view to this day.

The exhibition will be on view April 26 – June 3 at 494 Greenwich Street, Ground Floor in New York City. The gallery will host an opening reception on Wednesday, April 26, 6-8pm, as well as a gallery talk with Christopher Rothko, Kate Rothko Prizel, and James Scott on Tuesday, May 9, moderated by gallery owner Anita Rogers. In conjunction with the exhibition, the gallery will publish a full-color catalog featuring an essay by David Anfam, art historian and author of the catalogue raisonné *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas*, as well as writer and curator of *Abstract Expressionism* (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2016-17) - the largest survey of its kind ever held in Europe.

In 2019, the gallery hosted a major solo exhibition of 1950's – 1980's paintings and drawings by William Scott. This will be the gallery's first exhibition including works by Mark Rothko.

The gallery would like to thank the following for their assistance in putting this exhibition together: Christopher Rothko, Kate Rothko Prizel, Marion Kahan, Henry Mandell, James Scott, Robert and Lisa Scott, Purwita Susanta, and David Anfam, as well as the Scott archive, and the private collectors who have contributed to the exhibition.

For further information and photographs, please contact Elizabeth Thompson at [elizabeth.thompson@anitarogersgallery.com](mailto:elizabeth.thompson@anitarogersgallery.com), or call 347.604.2346. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday 10am – 6pm.

# ANITA ROGERS GALLERY

## MARK ROTHKO AND WILLIAM SCOTT: CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE



William Scott CBE RA  
1. *Abstract (Blue East)*, 1964  
Oil on canvas  
73h x 48w in  
185.42h x 121.92w cm



Mark Rothko  
2. *Untitled (Red, Yellow, Blue, Black and White)*, 1950  
Oil on canvas  
67 1/2h x 38 1/4w in  
171.45h x 97.16w cm



Mark Rothko  
3. *Untitled*, 1959  
Paper mounted on canvas  
38 1/4h x 25 1/4w in  
97.16h x 64.14w cm



Mark Rothko  
4. *No.20*, 1949  
Oil on canvas  
56h x 48w in  
142.24h x 121.92w cm



William Scott CBE RA  
5. *Still Life*, 1957  
Oil on canvas  
48h x 60w in  
121.92h x 152.40w cm

# ANITA ROGERS GALLERY



William Scott CBE RA  
*6. Blue and Black Painting, 1959*  
Oil on canvas  
40h x 50w in  
101.60h x 127w cm



William Scott CBE RA  
*7. Diminishing Forms Green, 1971*  
Oil on canvas  
100h x 80w in  
254h x 203.20w cm



William Scott CBE RA  
*8. Abstract Orange, 1963*  
Oil on canvas  
60h x 66w in  
152.40h x 167.64w cm



Mark Rothko  
*9. Personage, 1946*  
Oil on canvas  
52h x 28 1/4w in  
132.08h x 71.76w cm



William Scott CBE RA  
*10. White, Blue and Brown, 1960*  
Oil on canvas  
63h x 68w in  
160.02h x 172.72w cm



William Scott CBE RA  
*11. Untitled study for Altnagelvin mural, c. 1959*  
Gouache and collage on paper  
8 2/3h x 46w in  
22.01h x 116.84w cm

# ANITA ROGERS GALLERY



William Scott CBE RA  
*12. Untitled study for Altnagelvin mural, c. 1959*  
Gouache and collage on paper  
9 1/4h x 46w in  
23.50h x 116.84w cm



William Scott CBE RA  
*13. Untitled study for Altnagelvin mural, c. 1959*  
Gouache and collage on paper  
8 2/3h x 45 1/4w in  
22.01h x 114.94w cm



Mark Rothko  
*14. Seagram Mural Study, c. 1958*  
Tempera on paper  
29 15/16h x 21 15/16w in  
76.04h x 55.72w cm



Mark Rothko  
*15. Seagram Mural Study, c. 1959*  
Tempera on paper  
24 1/16h x 38 1/16w in  
61.12h x 96.68w cm



Mark Rothko  
*16. Seagram Mural Study, c. 1958*  
Tempera on paper (gouache on paper)  
24 15/16h x 38 1/16w in  
63.34h x 96.68w cm



Mark Rothko  
*17. Seagram Mural Study, c. 1958*  
Tempera on paper  
29 1/2h x 21 3/4w in  
74.93h x 55.25w cm



Mark Rothko  
*18. Seagram Mural Study (Four Barred Gate), 1958*  
Watercolor and oil on watercolor paper  
23 15/16h x 18 13/16w in  
60.80h x 47.78w cm

# ANITA ROGERS GALLERY



William Scott CBE RA

*19. Still Life*, 1957-8

Oil on canvas

26h x 36 1/2w in

66.04h x 92.71w cm