

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

ROBERT MOTHERWELL

Iberia No. 30

The Box

28 April - 3 June 2017



Iberia No. 30, 1969, acrylic on canvas board
20.3 x 25.4 cm, 8 x 10 in

'This picture began as an *Elegy*. It was done in Spain. And I used to be very interested in bull fighting. And took my wife who had never seen one, on the day as it turned out, the three greatest fighters in Spain were fighting, Dinguin and Ordonez and so on, and also the Queen of Persia, who had just been rejected by the King because she was barren, was present. And of course, bull fighting is a royal sport and the bull fighters outdid themselves, till the center of the ring, which is yellow ochre sand, was a pool of blood. And Spanish bulls are very small coal black with tiny joints. So if they turn too fast, they're apt to trip over, very quick, and gleam like coal. I was printing this picture internally in formal consideration, so to speak. Adjusting among edges, curves, rhythms et cetera. And it was only long afterward that I realized, and consequently I called it *Iberia*, that I painted the underside on one of the black bulls against the sand of the arena.'

- Robert Motherwell

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present a significant painting in *The Box* by Robert Motherwell, a major proponent in the development of Abstract Expressionism. *Iberia No. 30* (1969), an unusually small painting from Motherwell's iconic *Iberia* series, encapsulates the indelible impression that the Spanish Civil War left upon the artist. Motherwell's description of the bullfight in the quote above can be read as being analogous to the struggle of war. This is manifested in the painting by the encroachment of an impenetrable mass of thick, black brushstrokes upon a small flourish of white paint in the lower right-hand corner. Other *Iberia* paintings completed at the same time were later revised but this work retained its original form. Similar works from this series can be found in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

About Robert Motherwell

Robert Motherwell was born in Aberdeen, Washington in 1915. His career spanned five decades, during which time he created some of the most iconic images of the 20th century. A passionate advocate and articulate spokesman for Abstract Expressionism, he believed that ideas and emotions were best communicated through the bold forms and gestural lines of abstract art. He studied philosophy at Stanford University, art history at Columbia University under Meyer Shapiro, and obtained a doctorate from Harvard.

Select solo exhibitions include those at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2015); National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2014); Guggenheim Museum, New York (2013); Guggenheim Museum, Venice (2013); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2011); Denver Art Museum (2011); Baltimore Museum of Art (2006); Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2004); Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2003); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1998); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1996); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington (1991); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1987); Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo (1983); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1983); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1983); Seattle Art Museum (1983); Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington (1983); Guggenheim Museum, New York (1983); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1980); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1977); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1968); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1965) and Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1965).