

Ed Clark Bio

Ed Clark, (New Orleans,1926- Detroit, 2019), is an African American artist, remarkable as one of the pioneer in the abstract expressionist movement in the 1950s.

In 1935, Clark moved to the Southside of Chicago where he was raised. At the dawn of World War II, seventeen year-old Clark left high school to join the Air Force. After spending two years stationed in Guam he returned to Chicago with his sights on attending art school. Clark enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago and then continued his studies abroad at L'Academie de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris, France. By 1953, Clark was exhibiting his work in galleries throughout Paris.

During his development as an artist, Clark began experimenting with larger paintings reaching as high as twelve feet and as wide as fifteen feet; however, he was unable to find paintbrushes big enough to accommodate this new scale. Using his ingenuity he discovered a new use for the push broom, which he calls "the big sweep". This big sweep allowed him to express his creativity on a larger scale and ultimately became his signature style.

In 1957, after living in Paris for five years Clark moved to New York City to join the burgeoning contemporary art scene. During his first year there he created and exhibited America's first documented "shaped canvas", influencing modern art throughout the late 1950's and 1960's. That piece is now on permanent display at Art Institute of Chicago.

Clark traveled the world immersing himself into the different cultures of Morocco, Brazil, Greece, Yucatan, Martinique, Nigeria, and China creating works that represented the feeling, mood, and pallet of the exotic places in which they were created.

His works can be found in museums around the globe including; Detroit Institute of Arts; The Art Institute of Chicago; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Washington, DC; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Centro de Arte Moderno in Guadalajara, Mexico; Museum Solidarity in Titograd, Yugoslavia; and the Museum of Modern Art in Salvador, Brazil.