









# Dorothy Hood

*February 11 to March 8, 1986*



WALLACE WENTWORTH GALLERY, LTD.

1200 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 387-7152

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“Space extends itself over and is the breath of every essence. The eye is our own earthly right of possession of the cosmic orbs.”

Dorothy Hood

Dorothy Hood creates enigmas, not only in the central themes in her paintings, but also in her peculiar place in art history. She is certainly one of the true believers in the mythic powers of abstract art: to remove normal, accepted time/space paradigms and substitute other, perhaps unrevealed, idealities that speak to wider themes than those that are more properly covered in representational art, namely those that engage the unknowable, both in ourselves and in the universe. Hood is a painter of grand mysteries that are only alluded to, never explained, because they emerge, as much art does, directly from the artist's unconscious. This motivation gives the work its authenticity; these paintings are not exercises in the manipulation of form and color—they are portions of other realities.

Aesthetically, Dorothy Hood follows a narrow, dangerous, and very high road, that traveled by Clifford Still and Max Ernst (to whom she dedicated a recent painting), the idea that the more genuinely “automatic” a gesture is, the greater the possibility exists that the universal will motivate it. Such gestures are supposed to open wider corridors of meaning by shattering the limits of rationality—and the obvious pitfall of this process is that the results may, in fact, be meaningless (or meaningful only to the artist). What is most vital is *true*, non-delusional contact, and that depends strongly on both the artist's powers and his/her faith in the process.

Dorothy Hood keeps her techniques secret (as every great alchemist has), but it is evident that she first utilizes two of the most unpredictable—thus challenging—automatic methods: pouring and decalomania, before she in-paints details with a brush. As paint is poured it takes on its own life; its own flow, and its expression on canvas is that of a freed liquid. Since nature is filled with such

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expressions, pouring is deeply resonant with natural allusions—the waterfall, the etching of rock and the markings of sand by the ocean, the patterns of raindrops on a window. Contrasting with this freedom is Hood's decalomania, in which she presses a painted surface against her canvas, leaving the impressions of that surface on the canvas in paint. Max Ernst used decalomania to produce the images of mountains and grottos in his work, and Dorothy Hood gets something similar—a kind of geologic form that might suggest the forces of compression and crystallization, as well as the appearance of mountain ranges seen from space. Indeed, her pouring patterns are also reminiscent of land masses seen in satellite photographs.

Ms. Hood has said, in passing, that her work has to do with "outer space," and indeed, she is known to be a very serious observer of the space program, as might be expected in Houston (which houses the Houston Space Center). And the worlds that Dorothy Hood creates are very far away from our own. Energies rage freely, color is unleashed to create conjunctions, formations, and confrontations unseen on this planet. Gravitation is bent askew, melted or driven into polarities that have no rationale in a physics we recognize. And yet the language is natural, even if the forms are transcendent or entirely mysterious. This is Dorothy Hood's vastest intention—to give breath to the living cosmos she can only have an intuitive experience of. She has said, "In plastic art, form is the shadow of an essence that has gone on to meet a new function." In attempting to unravel the poetics of such a statement it is clear that Dorothy Hood is speaking to us of her need (and her accomplishment), to reach beyond the means of art to find meaning in the truly unknown.

J.W. Mahoney



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# Dorothy Hood

## EDUCATION

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island  
Art Students League, New York, New York

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1986 Wallace Wentworth Gallery, Washington, D.C.  
1985 Meredith Long & Company, Houston, Texas  
1982 Meredith Long Contemporary, New York  
Meredith Long & Company, Houston, Texas  
1978 Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas  
1976 Marianne Friedland Gallery, Toronto, Canada  
Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York  
1975 Michener Galleries, Museum of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas  
Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas  
1974 State University of New York, College at Potsdam, New York  
Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York  
Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas  
1972 Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York  
1971 Rice University, Houston, Texas  
1970 The Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Texas  
1965 The Witte Memorial Museum, San Antonio, Texas  
1963 The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas  
1961 The Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
1950 Willard Gallery, New York

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 The Light Gallery, New York, "Message 1985"  
Bard College and The Light Gallery, "The Comet Show"  
United Nations International Conference on Women, Nairobi, Kenya, "American Women Artists: Works on Paper"  
Centre International D'Art Contemporain, Paris, France "Salon des Nations a Paris"  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, "Fresh Paint" P.S. #1, New York  
1983-85 The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Salzburg Kunstverein; Galerie an der Stadtmauer, Villach, Austria; Palazzio Lichtenstein, Vienna; State Gallery, Lintz, Austria; Kunstverein, Berlin, "New Work from a New City"  
1982-83 "Art from Houston in Norway and Sweden"  
1982 Rutgers University, New Jersey, "Masterworks: The First Generation"  
Stavinger, Norway, "Art from Houston in Norway"  
Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas, "The Americans: Collage"  
1981-82 Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti, New Mexico; Lawndale Annex, Houston; "A Sense of Spirit"  
1978-79 Work selected for hanging in the official residence of the Vice-President of the United States at the Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C.  
1976 Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas, "American Artists '76: A Celebration"  
Ahrenberg Collection, Kunsthalle, Dusseldorf  
Everson Museum and Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York; Edmonton Museum, Alberta, Canada; "New Work in Clay by Painters and Sculptors"  
1975 State University of New York, College at Potsdam, New York, "Women in Art"  
1974 International Kunstmesse, Basel, Switzerland  
1973 American Academy of Arts and Letters, Childe Hassam Award, New York

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- 1971 California State College, Long Beach, California, "The Other Coast"  
 1965 The Drawing Society Regional Exhibition, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas,  
 "Drawings from Seventeen States"  
 1962 Pan American Union, Washington, D.C., "U.S. Artists in Latin America"  
 1959 The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Figures and Faces" Traveling Exhibition  
 1958 Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island,  
 "Young American Printmakers"  
 1956 Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, "Golden Years of American Drawing:  
 1905-1956"  
 1955 Mexico City, Mexico, "First Confrontation of International Experimental Art"  
 1946 Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Magic Realism," Museum Collections

#### SELECTED MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Menil Foundation, Houston, Texas  
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York  
 The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.  
 The Brooklyn Museum, New York, New York  
 The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York  
 The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas  
 The Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York  
 The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
 The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California  
 The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas  
 The Museum of Contemporary Art, Mexico City, Mexico  
 The Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas  
 The Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts  
 The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California  
 The Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island  
 The Michener Collection, University of Texas, Austin, Texas  
 The San Antonio Museum of Modern Art, San Antonio, Texas  
 The Fort Worth Art Center Museum, Fort Worth, Texas  
 The Beaumont Museum, Beaumont, Texas  
 Dallas Museum of Fine Art, Dallas, Texas  
 Ahrenberg Foundation, Chexbres, Switzerland

#### FILMS

"Dorothy Hood: The Color of Life," a documentary film (PRP Productions), Carl Colby,  
 Director, 1985.

"From the Heart," a documentary film of thirteen women artists represented in the Gihon  
 Foundation Collection, including Dorothy Hood, Janet Fish, Georgia O'Keefe, and Mary  
 Cassatt, Citation award American Film Festival, 1983. (Executive Producer, Gihon Founda-  
 tion, 1982).

#### SELECTED AWARDS

National Scholastic Scholar, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island  
 Purchase Prize, Junior Service League, Longview, Texas  
 Elected member of the Italian Academy of Arts & Labor, 1978  
 George Brown Travelling Fellowship, 1973  
 The American Academy of Arts & Letters, Childe Hassam Fund Award, 1973  
 Mayor's Award, Outstanding Contribution to the Visual Arts, Houston, 1983.





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CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

1. *Venice* (1974)  
Oil on canvas, 90" x 70" (illustrated, page 2)  
Private collection
2. *Island* (1986)  
Oil on canvas, 90" x 70" (illustrated, page 11)
3. *Venice in Fragment* (1981)  
Collage, 32" x 20"
4. *Indian Summer* (1986)  
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"
5. *Spirit Door to Spain* (1985)  
Oil on canvas, 90" x 70" (illustrated, cover)
6. *Orange and Tapestries* (after 1981)  
Collage, 32" x 20"
7. *The Horse's Flight* (1985)  
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60" (illustrated, page 10)
8. *The Mayor's Ball* (1984)  
Collage, 20" x 16"
9. *Equipoise of a Shadow* (1985)  
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"
10. *Another October* (after 1981)  
Collage, 20" x 16"
11. *Afternoon in Rome* (1981)  
Collage, 20" x 16"
12. *The Little Tree* (1985)  
Collage, 20" x 16"
13. *Venice* (1981)  
Collage, 32" x 20"
14. *Halley's World* (1985)  
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"
15. *Bone of Africa* (1979)  
Oil on canvas, 70" x 60"
16. *October* (after 1981)  
Collage, 20" x 16"
17. *Rainbow and Brown* (after 1981)  
Collage, 32" x 20"  
Private collection
18. *Like a Clock, A Vein in the Primal Mass* (1985)  
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"
19. *Tixo's Void* (1985)  
Oil on canvas, 72" x 60"  
Private collection
20. *Binaki Athens* (1984)  
Collage, 20" x 16"
21. *Last Tixo's Void* (1982)  
Oil on canvas, 70" x 60"

Also illustrated:

*Subterranean Illuminations* (1982), page 6, 7  
Oil on canvas, 90" x 120"

*Tixo's Void* (1975), page 3  
Oil on canvas, 70" x 60"

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