

OTTO KARL KNATHS (PHS 1910)

Otto Karl Knaths is a world renowned artist who applied his system of color theory to his abstract work which had a major influence on America's art landscape. Upon graduating from Portage High School in 1910, Karl Knaths (as he is known professionally) went on to study at the Milwaukee Art Institute and the Art Institute of Chicago. After his studies, Mr. Knaths moved to Provincetown, Massachusetts in 1919 where he was inspired and drew repeatedly from his surroundings as evidenced by his drawing of deer in landscape settings, clam diggers returning from work, fishing shacks and similar depictions. Mr. Knaths, whose works were highly Cubist in style, was considered one of the most theoretically inclined painters of his generation, concluding there was a definite relationship between sound in music and color and space in painting. Mr. Knaths worked out intricate charts for color and musical ratios which he used to determine directional lines and proportions in his paintings. He then worked out a complex set of mathematical and geometrical relations similar to musical proportions and applied these foundations to his art. Mr. Knaths' works were exhibited on 22 occasions as solo exhibitions at the Paul Rosenberg Gallery in New York City. Some of Mr. Knaths' pieces still hang in the Fine Arts Museum in San Francisco, The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, The National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., The Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C., and The Guggenheim Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Mr. Knaths passed away in 1971.