Untitled 1963

Anthony Benjamin (1931-2002)

REF:

Description

Mixed media on paper56 x 72.5 cms (22 x 29 ins)ProvenanceAcquired from the Artist’s Estate / Nancy Patterson (Anthony Benjamin’s widow)
Antony Benjamin was born in Boarhunt, Hampshire.He claimed to have attended at least 12 different schools, learning little except the art of self-defence, in the playgrounds, which led to taking up boxing as a professional fairground fighter.In 1947 he studied engineering at Southall Technical College but dropped out in 1949 to join the Regent Street Polytechnic. He had a talent for meticulous drawing and understanding the principals of three-dimensional construction but soon tired of academic restrictions within the Sculpture department. He was encouraged by Norman Blamey, a senior teacher, to move to the painting department who recognised the talent of the rebellious student. During this time, Benjamin spent three months studying drawing in Paris with Fernand Leger and was awarded a silver medal.His palette at this time was monochromatic, but when his work was accepted for an exhibition by Helen Lesore at the Beaux Arts Gallery, he started to become more abstract, using a wider range of colour and looser brushwork. He was told to conform or leave the gallery, he chose the latter and moved to St Ives in 1955 to purchase a small cottage belonging to the sculptor Sven Berlin, on the Cornish moors.A new colony of artists were emerging at that time in St Ives, including Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, Bryan Wynter and Terry Frost. Benjamin was encouraged by Henry Moore, given canvasses by Francis Bacon and his work became more colourful and moved towards Abstract Expressionism.In 1958 he joined the Newlyn Society of Artists where he had his first one man show. Due to financial pressure he was forced to leave Cornwall and in 1959 he was awarded a French Government Bourse to study etching at S W Hayter’s renowned Atelier 17 in Paris. In 1960 he was awarded an Italian Government Fellowship and moved to Anticoli Corrado, a great artist’s colony, near Rome, for one year.Between 1961 and 1973 Benjamin lectured and taught widely both in the UK and abroad, namely at Ealing, Ipswich, Winchester, Ravensborne, Colchester & St Martins School of Art. He then moved to North America to Hayward State College, California, University of Calgary, York University in Toronto and the Ontario College of Art. His time at the Ealing School of Art was spent teaching on the controversial Groundcourse with Roy Ascott, a radical creative education that Benjamin was much suited to. Pete Townshend of The Who was a student on this course who claims it changed his life. It was not reinstated due to being too controversial and the course was moved to the college of art atIpswich, where Benjamin continued to teach. At this time he experimented with three-dimensional works, with colour, reflections and ambiguous shapes, crossing conventional boundaries. He also embarked on making silkscreen prints with vibrant colours and similar shapes to sculptures and was involved with Brian Eno of Roxy Music producing screen prints entitled Roxy Bias, based on electronic music.In 1986 he moved to Holt, Norfolk, with his Canadian partner, Nancy Patterson. He created large drawings in graphite for many years and then once again star...