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One And One Is Four: The Bauhaus Photocollages Of Josef Albers



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Josef Albers

MoMA



Synopsis

Josef Albers is widely recognized as a crucial figure in 20th-century art, both as an independent practitioner and as a teacher at the Bauhaus, Black Mountain College and Yale University. Albers made paintings, drawings and prints and designed furniture and typography. Arguably the least familiar aspect of his extraordinary career was his inventive engagement with photography, only widely known after his death, including his production of approximately 70 photcollages that feature photographs he made at the Bauhaus between 1928 and 1932. These works anticipate concerns that he would pursue throughout his career--the effects of adjacency, the exploration of color through white, black and gray, and the delicate balance between handcraft and mechanical production. Albers's photographs were first shown at MoMA in a modest exhibition in 1988, when the Museum acquired two photcollages. In 2015 the Museum acquired ten additional photcollages, making its collection the most substantial anywhere outside the Albers Foundation. This publication reproduces each of the photcollages Albers made at the Bauhaus, presenting the scope of this achievement for the first time. An introductory essay by Sarah Hermanson Meister situates them within the contexts of modernist photography, the Bauhaus ethos and of Albers's own practice.

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Customer Reviews

Albers's photcollages stand as a remarkable contribution to the medium in their own right. (Sarah Hermanson Meister *The Brooklyn Rail*) This small, vital display of medleys of

photographs...reveals the man, and the joy, behind the pedagogy...these works are infectiously buoyant (The New Yorker) Albers developed a hands-on, eyes-on art practice that opened the world up, a world he approached with a craftsman's care and experienced with the scintillated focus of a mescaline high...we can see his expansive version of single-mindedness unfold. (Holland Cotter The New York Times)...focuses on [Albers's] early experiments with the ways in which photography did and did not render reality, the interplay between its flat shapes and its instantaneous representation of the three-dimensional world before the lens. (Randy Kennedy The New York Times) One and One Is Four reveals an Albers at once familiar and unexpected—a playful yet disciplined, personal yet enigmatic—through a body of work whose genius becomes fully apparent when considered as a whole. (Fine Books and Collections)

German-born abstract painter Josef Albers laid the foundations for some of the most important art education programs of the 20th century. In 1936, during his time working at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, he had his first solo exhibition in New York at J. B. Neumann's New Art Circle. In 1949, Albers left the college and began his famous Homage to the Square series. He taught at various institutions throughout America, including Yale University, New Haven, where he lectured for eight years. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, organized Albers' traveling exhibition in 1965 and a retrospective of his work was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1971. The artist died in 1976. Sarah Meister is Curator in the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Wonderful perspective on Albers....beautifully printed.

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