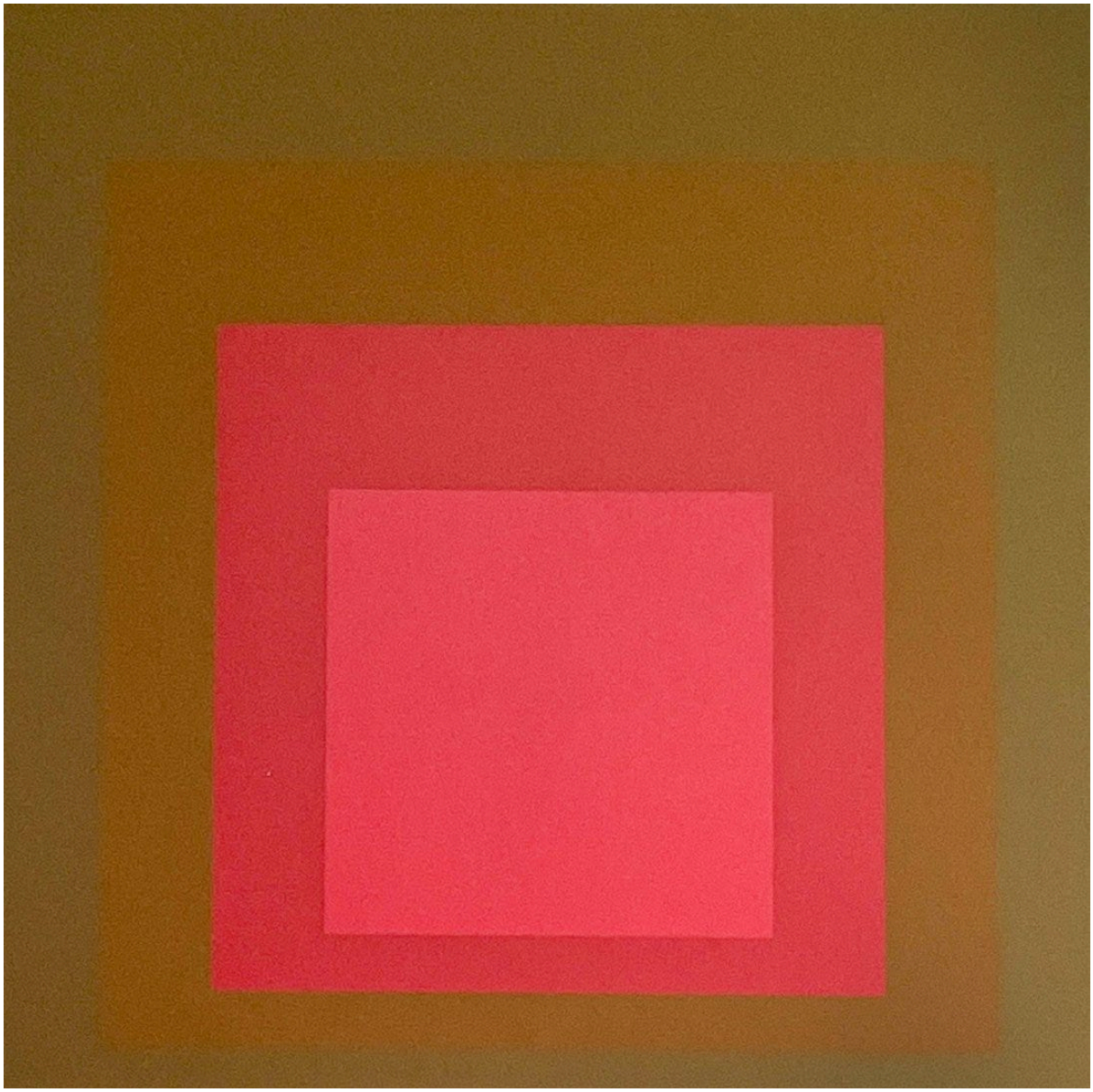
I-S LXXI b
Josef Albers



Date : 1971
Screenprint
23 x 23 in.
Edition of 125
Initialed in pencil, dated, numbered, and titled

Artist bio

In 1920, the young artist Josef Albers enrolled at the Bauhaus, the recently founded school of art, architecture, and design in Weimar, Germany. With its strong utilitarian emphasis, the Bauhaus placed equal importance on technical and artistic skills. The basis of its education was the "preliminary course", a curriculum designed to prepare the students for further study in the school's various workshops; the course's central concept was the "contrasting effects" of form, texture, and — most importantly for Albers — color.

After completing his course of study, Albers was appointed as a teacher at the Bauhaus in 1925. Other artist who taught along side Albers included, Oskar Schlemmer, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee. He remained there until the school closed in 1933 under pressure from the Nazi party.

Albers then emigrated to the United States. The architect Philip Johnson, then a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, arranged for Albers to be offered a job as head of a new art school, Black Mountain College, in North Carolina. In November 1933, he joined the faculty of the college where he was the head of the painting program until 1949. At Black Mountain, his students included Ray Johnson, Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, and Susan Weil. He also invited important American artists such as Willem de Kooning, to teach in the summer seminar. Weil remarked that, as a teacher, Albers was "his own academy".

In 1950, Albers left Black Mountain to head the department of design at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Albers worked at Yale until he retired from teaching in 1958. At Yale, Richard Anuszkiewicz and Eva Hesse were notable students.

Around the time that he joined the Yale faculty in 1950, Albers began his celebrated Homage to the Square series. This would become a body of more than a thousand works executed over a period of twenty-five years, including paintings, drawings, prints, and tapestries. The entire series was based on a mathematically determined format of several squares, which appear to be overlapping or nested within one another. This geometric abstraction was Albers' template for exploring the subjective experience of color (or chromatic interaction), the effects that adjacent colors have on one another, for example, and the illusion of flat planes of color advancing or receding in space.

His work represents a transition between traditional European art and the new American art.It incorporated European influences from the Constructivists and the Bauhaus movement, and its intensity and smallness of scale were typically European, but his influence fell heavily on American artists of the late 1950's and the 1960's. The "hard-edge" abstract painters drew on his use of patterns and intense colors, while Op artists and Conceptual artists further explored his interest in perception.

Albers formed the basis of some of the most influential and far-reaching art education programs of the twentieth century.