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## **Jean-Pierre Jouffroy**

Jean-Pierre Jouffroy is a French painter, printmaker and sculptor who has been a working artist for more than 80 years. His influences include Wassily Kandinsky, Nicolas de Staël, Matisse and Picasso. In late 2013, Jouffroy mounted a major retrospective of his work at the Place du Colonel Fabien in Paris.

Jouffroy was born in Paris in 1933. When he was 11 years old, he saw the work of Wassily Kandinsky and Nicolas de Staël in a gallery and fell in love with modernism. “As a young boy, I dreamed of covering the surface of the earth in paint,” Jouffroy recalls.

Early in his career, the artist created purely abstract work that was heavily influenced by Staël. Then, in the late 1950’s, Jouffroy had an artistic epiphany.

“An abstract painting always shows *something*, like it or not,” he explains. “The painting is the image of an internal battle. This fight is itself a metaphor for our relationships in the social sphere.” Based on this realization, Jouffroy decided to incorporate the visual vocabulary of abstraction into representational work.

The shift sent the artist on a journey that traced the innovations of modernists like Picasso and Cezanne in reverse. Just like those artists, Jouffroy was experimenting with abstracted figures and landscapes, but he was coming from a wholly nonrepresentational world that his predecessors never explored. In tributes to Cezanne, Gauguin, Manet and Braque, he brought great artists of the past into harmony with a movement they all, in one way or another, helped to inspire.

Jouffroy’s new explorations caught the eye of the art world, and he exhibited at Paris’ Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago and other renowned institutions. Though he was focused on figurative work, he was often associated with lyrical abstraction (as we suspected) because of his background, his loose brushwork and his inventive use of color.

Our Jouffroy painting represents an interesting phase in the artist’s evolution. Though it predates his representational work, it has undeniable elements of landscape. Perhaps it’s the first sign of the transformation that would send Jouffroy’s career in a spectacular new direction. You can see echoes of the work’s palette and brushwork throughout the artist’s retrospective at the Place du Colonel Fabien that opened in November 2013.