

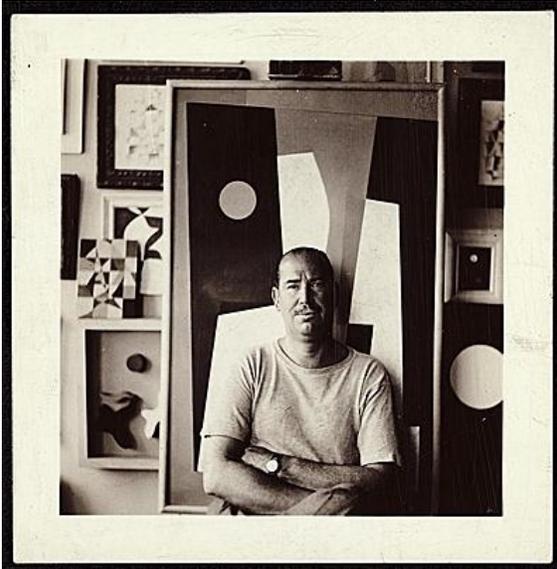
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Charles Green Shaw

(American Painter 1892-1974)



During his successful painting career, which spanned four decades of modernism, Charles Green Shaw skillfully explored several abstract idioms. A native New Yorker, Shaw's early work was in writing; in the 1920s he contributed to publications including the *New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*. During travels to Europe from 1929 to 1932, he gained first-hand experience with new developments in modern art, and began to devote himself to painting at this time. Shaw had studied at the Art Students League and with George Luks in the mid-1920s, but he was essentially self-taught.

The style Shaw developed by the early 1930s was a hard-edged, crisply defined interpretation of Cubism, which depicted the geometry of urban architecture. In 1935, Shaw met Albert Eugene Gallatin, collector, painter, and founder of the prominent Gallery of Living Art, which was housed at New York University from 1927 until 1942. Gallatin and Shaw, along with George L. K. Morris, were dubbed the "Park Avenue Cubists," reflecting the group's wealth and social milieu. It was through this association that Shaw first gained prominence in the art world; he had a solo exhibition at the Gallery of Living Art in 1935 (the museum's first solo show devoted to any artist) and served on the Museum of Modern Art's Advisory Committee.

By 1940, Shaw had developed the idea of the "plastic polygon," a pictorial structure based on simplified architectonic and organic shapes combined with a Cubist grid. Shaw worked with variants of this concept in painting and in wood relief constructions. With the exception of a few depictions of simplified, angular figures in the late 1940s, Shaw's work remained essentially nonrepresentational for the rest of his career.

In the early 1950s, he broke away from the hard edges and smooth surfaces that characterized his earlier work, and began exploring effects of surface texture and broader brushstrokes in his compositions. By the middle of the decade and into the

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1960s, Shaw employed very bold, slashing brushstrokes that linked his work with Abstract Expressionism. Shaw exhibited with Bertha Schaeffer Gallery nearly every year during the 1960s. He also showed regularly during this period at the Passadoit Gallery, had solo exhibitions at the University of Louisville and the Century Club, and was included in exhibitions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Shaw's work is part of most major collections of American Art, including the Whitney Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Art Institute of Chicago, among many others.