

# PEYTON WRIGHT

237 East Palace Avenue  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

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## Enrico Donati

(1909-2008)

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Enrico Donati, a surrealist and abstract expressionist painter, was born in Milan, Italy in 1909 and died in Manhattan on April 25, 2008. He was known for his association with the surrealist movement of the 1940's, but his artwork continued to transform itself through the many trends that have occurred during his long career.

In Italy he attended the Università degli Studi in Pavia where he studied economics before turning his attention to avant-garde music and ultimately to painting, studying in Paris in the early 1930's at the École de la rue de Berri. There he discovered the Surrealists and came in contact with the sacred artifacts of the Native Americans at the

Musée de l'Homme. Determined to learn more, he traveled to the American Southwest and Canadian Northwest, living and trading with the people and learning their myths, before returning to Paris.

In 1934, he moved to the United States settling in New York where he studied at the New School for Social Research and the Art Students' League.

Considered the surviving dean of the Surrealist Movement and a member of the New York School, Donati painted with Ernst, Matta and Tanguy in the thirties and forties, and in particular with André Breton, regarded by many to be the grand master of Surrealism.

Donati was one of the organizers of the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme held in Paris in the summer of 1947, to which he contributed a painting and two sculptures. The Surrealists were known to avoid presenting or representing reality, and put the emphasis on invention and creativity by uncovering the poetic aspect of life with its kaleidoscopic multidimensional images, using reality only to enhance imagination.

In the late 1940s he responded to the crisis in Surrealism by going through a Constructivist phase, from which he developed a calligraphic style and drew onto melted tar, or diluted paint with turpentine. He also became associated with Spatialism, founded by Lucio Fontana. Thus began his long fascination with surface and texture, including mixing paint with dust, that culminated in the 1950s in his Moonscapes, a series that has similarities with the work of Dubuffet.

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Donati held a retrospective at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1961 and went on to exhibit at the Betty Parsons Gallery with other forerunners of American Abstract Expressionism: Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Jackson Pollock. It was at this time that Donati created some of his most inventive and extraordinary work, some of which was featured in a survey exhibition at the Alter & Gil Gallery, Beverly Hills, California, in January 2000.

He has held many teaching positions and has been an active lecturer, while continuing to add to his artistic repertoire. From 1960 to 1962 he was a Visiting Lecturer at Yale University, and from 1962 to 1972 a Member of the Yale University Council for the Arts and Architecture.

He has had seventy-five one-man shows, among them an exhibit of new paintings at the Maxwell Davidson Gallery (57th St., New York) in the fall of 1997. Donati's work is held in collections throughout the world, and his work has appeared in over 300 articles and publications, two hard cover books, and he has participated in several Biennials.

Moving into his nineties, Donati worked almost every day. From his studio overlooking Central Park, he continued painting as he had done for almost six decades. Since his arrival in the United States in 1942, he has recorded the evolution of American art over the past sixty years, including the Surrealism of the 1940's, Abstract Expressionism, Native American symbols, and even Pop Art, all evoked in his knife or brush strokes.

## Solo Exhibitions

- 1942 New School for Social Research Passedoit Gallery, New York
- 1944 The Arts Club of Chicago; G. Place Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Passedoit Gallery, New York
- 1945 Durand - Ruel Galleries, New York
- 1946 Durand - Ruel Galleries, New York
- 1947 Durand - Ruel Galleries, New York; Galerie Drouant - David, Paris; Gallery Studio, Chicago, Illinois; Krouse College, Syracuse University, New York
- 1949 Durand - Ruel Galleries, New York; A. Weil, Paris
- 1950 Galleria Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan; Galleria del Milione, Milan; Paul Rosenberg Gallery, New York; Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, Italy
- 1952 Alexandre Iolas Gallery, New York; Galleria d'arte del Cavallino, Venice, Italy; Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, Italy
- 1953 Galleria d'arte del Cavallino, Venice, Italy
- 1954 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York
- 1955 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York
- 1956 Galleria del Naviglio, Milan
- 1957 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York
- 1958 Lowe Art Gallery, Syracuse University, New York
- 1959 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York
- 1960 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York
- 1961 Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium
- 1962 Neue Galerie im Kunstlerhaus, Munich, Germany; Staempfli Gallery, New York

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- 1963 Staempfli Gallery, New York  
1964 J.L. Hudson Gallery, Detroit, Michigan; Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge  
1965 Obelisk Gallery, Washington, D.C.  
1966 Staempfli Gallery, New York; J.L. Hudson Gallery, Detroit, Michigan  
1968 Staempfli Gallery, New York  
1970 Staempfli Gallery, New York  
1972 Staempfli Gallery, New York  
1974 Staempfli Gallery, New York  
1976 Staempfli Gallery, New York  
1977 Ankrum Gallery, Los Angeles, California; Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul;  
The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia; Fairweather Hardin Gallery, Chicago, Illinois;  
Tennessee Fine Arts Center, Nashville  
1978 Davenport Municipal Art Gallery, Iowa; Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee;  
Wildenstein Art Center, Houston, Texas  
1979 Ankrum Gallery, Los Angeles, California; Norton Gallery of Art, West Palm Beach,  
Florida; Osuna Gallery, Washington, D.C.; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.  
1980 Palm Springs Desert Museum, California; International Art Fair, Grand Palais, FIAC, Paris  
1982 Ankrum Gallery, Los Angeles, California  
1984 Carone Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York  
1985 Georges Fall, Paris  
1986 Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York; Louis Newman Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA  
1987 Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York; Zabriskie Gallery, New York  
1989 Galerie Zabriskie, Paris; Louis Newman Gallery, Beverly Hills, California  
1990 Carone Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
1991 Louis Newman Gallery, Beverly Hills, California  
1992 Carone Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
1994 Carone Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Louis Newman Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA  
1995 Horwitch Newman Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona; Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York  
1996 Horwitch Newman Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona  
1997 Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York  
1998 Alter & Gil, Los Angeles, California  
2000 Alter & Gil, Los Angeles, California  
2001 Galerie yoramgil, Los Angeles, California  
2002 Galerie yoramgil, Los Angeles, California  
2004 Gallerie Les Yeux Fertiles, Paris; Galerie yoramgil, Los Angeles, California  
2005 Galerie yoramgil, Los Angeles, California; Gallerie Les Yeux Fertiles, Paris

## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York  
The Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland  
Musees royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium  
University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley  
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan

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Doane College, Crete, Nebraska  
Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia  
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC  
Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, Connecticut  
Museum of International Center of Aesthetic Research, Turin, Italy  
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem  
The Johns - Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland  
The Lowe Museum, University of Miami, Florida  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT - List Visual Art Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
University of Michigan Art Gallery, Ann Arbor  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York at Purchase  
Newark Museum, New Jersey  
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderne, Milan, Italy  
Orlando Museum of Art, Florida  
Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, California  
Portland Art Museum, Oregon  
Rockefeller University, New York  
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderne, Rome, Italy  
Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida  
Arturo Schwarz Surrealist Foundation, Milan, Italy  
Seattle Art Museum, Washington  
Swarthmore College Art Collection, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania  
Tacoma Art Museum, Washington  
University of Texas at Austin, Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery  
Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi  
Vassar Collage, Poughkeepsie, New York  
Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, DC (Closed, Sold collection to Oklahoma City Art Museum)  
Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, Missouri  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut

Biographical sources: Askart; Weinstein Gallery; Wikipedia