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Moeller Fine Art | Spring Masters New York

Mark Tobey, Arena of Civilization, 1947, tempera on board painted on recto and verso, 14 x 19 1/2 in. (35.6 x 49.5 cm), signed and dated lower left

The full orchestra of Tobey's teleology is illustrated by Arena of Civilization (1947)…It symbolizes Tobey's conviction that each cultural level, like each religion or style of art, is cradled in the womb of a previous state: 'The medieval period grows out of the Roman period, and the basilica becomes the church.'

– William C. Seitz, Mark Tobey, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1962, p. 38

Moeller Fine Art is pleased to announce its participation in the second edition of Spring Masters New York, a fair of Art & Design from Antiquity through the 21st century. In the spirit of Spring Masters' central theme of Juxtapositions: Collecting Across Centuries, the gallery will mount a solo presentation of work by the pioneering Abstract Expressionist Mark Tobey (1890-1976) on the occasion of his 125th birthday.

The centerpiece of the gallery's presentation is Tobey's seminal painting from 1947, Arena of Civilization, whose superimposed chambers of figures and lines hark back to Byzantine and Italian frescos and mosaics. Alternately referred to as a "Northwest mystic," the "sage of Seattle" and an "apostle of Zen," Tobey celebrated the crosscurrents of civilizations and a close affinity of man to nature.

Spanning the years 1945–1966, the exhibition aims to show the lyrical, calligraphic work that emerged from Tobey's fusion of ancient and modern traditions and religions. These twenty-three paintings, watercolors and drawings trace the development of the artist's style through varied media as he drew on Eastern and Western influences to create a virtuosic visual language.

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