

BERGGRUEN

GALLERY

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♥ THIEBAUD Memorial Exhibition

Opens February 3

Berggruen Gallery is honored to present ♥ *Thiebaud*, a memorial exhibition of paintings, works on paper, and prints to celebrate the life and legacy of American artist, Wayne Thiebaud. This show marks the gallery's eighth solo exhibition of Thiebaud's work since his first exhibition at John Berggruen Gallery in 1973. ♥ *Thiebaud* will be on view beginning on February 3, 2022, shown on Berggruen Gallery's second floor.

♥ *Thiebaud* is a commemoration of Wayne Thiebaud's life and a celebration of his immeasurable relationship with Berggruen Gallery. In 1968, John Berggruen encountered a group of small etchings from Thiebaud's famous 1964 *Delights* series. Over fifty years later, Thiebaud's luminous paintings and works on paper have become integral to the gallery's history and have been widely exhibited, shared, and admired. To coincide with the gallery's 50th anniversary, Berggruen Gallery had the great fortune of celebrating Thiebaud's 100th birthday with a retrospective of his work, showcasing the artist's quintessential still life paintings, steep and winding cityscapes, and saturated expanses of the Sacramento Valley. Beyond the artist's oeuvre and prolific career, Wayne Thiebaud was a long-time friend to John and Gretchen Berggruen and held a meaningful connection with the Berggruen Family. This exhibition of thirty works shares delightful pieces from the Berggruen's collection, many of which hold sentimental value and have rarely been exhibited together in a gallery setting. In addition, the exhibition highlights the artist's charming meditations on the elegance of everyday stages: the patterns found atop a deli counter, the spiral and color of candy, and the casted shadows of a row of palm trees. ♥ *Thiebaud* is a celebration of the artist, his generous spirit, and his life led with creativity. Thank you, Wayne Thiebaud; Berggruen Gallery is left with deep gratitude and wonderment.

In his memory we are honored to share a personal note from John Berggruen:

Throughout my career, there has been perhaps no other human being that has exemplified so many wonderful qualities as Wayne Thiebaud. He was an extraordinary artist, of course, but he was equally the most articulate teacher, lecturer, and to those that were privileged to have experienced this unique quality, a masterful joke-teller!

He was a wealth of information, and he had a manner of so eloquently sharing his extraordinary insights into the many art historical influences on his oeuvre, from impressionism onwards. In conversation, or in more formal lectures, he would refer to other artists that had a strong bearing on his career, yet he had a manner of so humbly discussing his own work.

Another highlight in my experience knowing Wayne was the number of memorable dinners we shared together with our families, and in my athletic youth, we also shared a great number of animated tennis matches!

This commemorative exhibition encompasses several works that my late wife Gretchen and I loved and lived with for many years. Collecting and exhibiting these works has become a lifelong passion of mine. I hope that this exhibition captures the spirit of Wayne's charm, generosity, optimism, and the virtuosity of his craft. We will miss him dearly.

— John Berggruen

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Wayne Thiebaud was born in Mesa, Arizona in 1920. His family moved to Los Angeles shortly after his birth. From a young age, Thiebaud showed interest in pursuing an artistic career. As high school student, the aspiring artist had a summer apprenticeship with Walt Disney Studios' animation department. Following his graduation from high school, Thiebaud worked between New York and California as a cartoonist and designer. During World War II, Thiebaud served in the Air Force's Special Services Department as a cartoonist, then in the First Motion Picture Unit. After the war, Thiebaud attended California State University at Sacramento, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. A year in New York City in 1956, in which he befriended Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Franz Kline, and Robert Rauschenberg, pushed him to explore new styles and come to the realization that he was not interested in the kind of Abstract Expressionist work that then dominated Manhattan. Thiebaud received his first solo exhibition from the Crocker Art Gallery (now the Crocker Art Museum) in Sacramento in 1951. Always a teacher, Thiebaud lectured at Sacramento City College and in 1959 became a beloved professor at the University of California, Davis, where he taught until his retirement in 1991. Today, Thiebaud's work is represented in many significant museum collections, including Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Thiebaud is also the recipient of numerous, prestigious awards, including the National Medal of Arts awarded by President Bill Clinton (1994) and the American Academy of Design's Lifetime Achievement Award (2001). Wayne Thiebaud passed away in his home in Sacramento in December 2021. He was 101.

♡ *Thiebaud*, opens February 3, 2022. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and preview are available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone (415) 781-4629 or by email info@berggruen.com.