

# Artists Space

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERNST BENKERT: Meshes, Crosses, Bars: 1976-1983  
November 5 - December 3, 1983

Artists Space is pleased to announce the opening of Ernst Benkert's exhibition of drawings, Meshes, Crosses, Bars: 1976-1983, on November 5, 1983. It will run through December 3 and is the inaugural show in a new series at Artists Space that is being sponsored by the Mark Rothko Foundation.

This pilot series will present three exhibitions by mature, mid-career artists whose work has not received extensive public exposure. According to Linda Shearer, Executive Director of Artists Space, it is becoming clear that there is an increasing number of serious artists who have been working for many years--outside of current trends, yet in innovative styles--who deserve recognition for the high quality of their work. This series is designed to respond to this need; all three artists--Mowry Baden and Sally Hazelet Drummond, as well as Benkert--have been selected by Gary Burnley, artist, and Donald Droll, Associate Director of the Weatherspoon Gallery at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, both of whom are also members of the Artists Space Board of Directors, and by Ms. Shearer.

Benkert's drawings are resolved, decisive statements and the work to be included in this exhibition dates from 1976 to the present. Rigorously abstract and deriving from a Neo-Plastic tradition, his drawings possess a poetry and consistency of vision incorporated into a set of intuitive systems that distinguishes the work from its sources. Joseph Mascheck, former Editor of Artforum, is currently teaching at Harvard and has contributed the Introduction on Benkert for the accompanying brochure. He has written, "But what can actually be liked in such art, as perhaps with chess, is not so much its cerebrality per se as its engagement of an inescapably esthetic selectivity amidst the proliferation of mechanically equal possibilities."

Benkert was born in 1928 in Chicago and has been living in New York City since 1962. Adjunct Professor in Art History and Painting at Pratt Institute where he has been teaching since 1966, he has developed a reputation as an important teacher. His work has been seen most recently in a one-man exhibition at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey in 1980 and in the group exhibition 4 at the Arsenal, in the Central Park Arsenal, also in 1980. During the 60s, Benkert was active with two other artists, Frank Hewitt and Ed Mieczkowski, all three of whom made up the Anonima Group. They showed extensively in Europe and the United States, often in independent presentations which they organized on their own without institutional or commercial support. Benkert's work is in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, and the McCrory Corporation, New York; he has been awarded both a Creative Artists Public Service (CAPS) grant and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship.

This series represents a pilot project for the Mark Rothko Foundation whose generous support is in recognition of the Foundation's desire to contribute to the art community by funding exhibitions of work by mature artists. The Directors of the Foundation hope that other exhibitions of this nature can continue as a complement to the Foundation's objective of providing a better understanding and appreciation of Mark Rothko's work through its Mark Rothko Viewing Facility and Study Center. Linda Shearer has written that "Artists Space is particularly fortunate to be the first recipient of a grant to undertake" this project.

Ernst Benkert's exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated, 8-page brochure, with acknowledgements by Linda Shearer, Introduction by Joseph Mascheck, Statement by Benkert, Biography and Exhibition History. Available at Artists Space: \$1.

The series will continue with Sally Hazelet Drummond's paintings which will be shown from February 25 to March 24, 1984; and Mowry Baden's exhibition will take place from March 31 to April 28, 1984. Both Exhibitions will also be accompanied by an illustrated brochure.

Artists Space activities are made possible by grants from: the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts; the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Lauder Foundation, Samuel Rubin Foundation; and our corporate sponsors, AT&T Long Lines, Chase Manhattan Bank, Citibank, Consolidated Edison, EXXON, Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb, R.H. Macy and Company, Morgan Guaranty Trust Company, Philip Morris, and Warner Communications. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm.