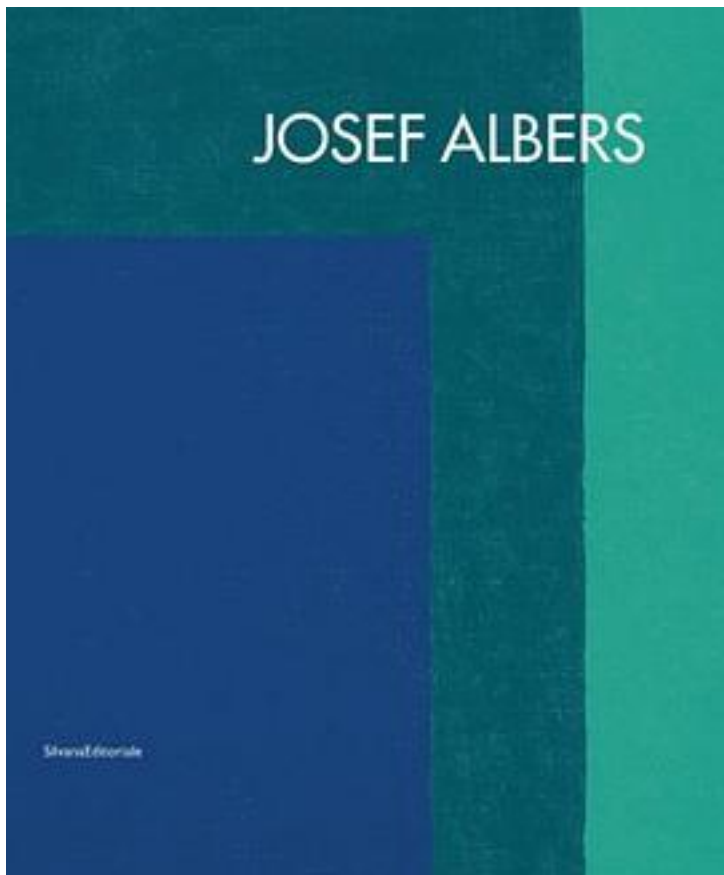


Josef Albers



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Josef Albers (1888-1976) has long been admired for his progressive vision as an artist and designer who blurred distinctions between fine and applied art, but rarely has his influence as a teacher been examined with such depth and detail. The German-born artist/educator was a remarkable classroom performer whose colorful language, wit, and dramatic flair held his students spellbound and turned his lessons into high

adventure. Whether at the Bauhaus in prewar Germany, Black Mountain College in rural North Carolina during the 1930s and 1940s, or at Yale in the 1950s, Albers-the-teacher was driven by one thing: the desire to open his students' eyes to a different way of perceiving art and, ultimately, life. The son of a house painter and decorator in Germany's northwest Ruhr region, Albers grew up surrounded by artisans and learned at an early age to paint, cut stone, and craft wood. Although his ambition had always been to become an artist, Albers entered teacher's training college at his father's insistence and spent his first professional year teaching six- to fourteen-year-olds in a single-classroom school. Later experience at the Koniglichen Kunstschule in Berlin's rough-and-tumble Alexanderplatz neighborhood and exposure to the city's hothouse cultural atmosphere inspired the young Albers to merge his love for art and education - a decision that would have an impact on generations of artists to come in both Europe and the United States. "Josef Albers: To Open Eyes" takes the reader through Albers' life in teaching - from his first years at the pioneering but politically fraught Bauhaus; to his 1933 emigration to the United States, where he and his wife Anni became founding members and teachers at the experimental start-up Black Mountain College; and again to his 1950 appointment to head up Yale University's newly restructured Department of Design. Throughout his 40 years in education, Albers influenced everyone he encountered not, as one former student says, as a 'tour guide of the world of art, but rather as a living embodiment of that world'.

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