



## John Edwards (1938-2009)

### Nationality

British

### Education

1963-64: Studied at L'Ecole Nationale Superieure d'Architecture et d'Art Visuel, Brussels

1962-63: Studied at Leeds University Institute of Education

1953-60 (interruption): Studied at Hornsey College of Art London

### Taught

1975 & 1998: New York

1980-88: Martin's School of Art, London

1996-2000: Montmiral, France

### Background

When a bomb destroyed the Edwards home the family escaped, only to realise that toddler John was still in the ruins. Found amid the rubble, he was chipper and none the worse for wear. And so he remained: tough, good-humoured, resilient.

After a rather international education he showed abstract paintings at London's Rowan Gallery, in Syracuse, Washington, San Francisco, Turin and, later, Jaipur and New Delhi. Edwards was also a sculptor whose work was seen around the world. He is represented in collections of the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Council, the Contemporary Art Society, the European Parliament, the Gulbenkian Foundation, the Power Institute of Fine Arts in Sydney and the Guggenheim.

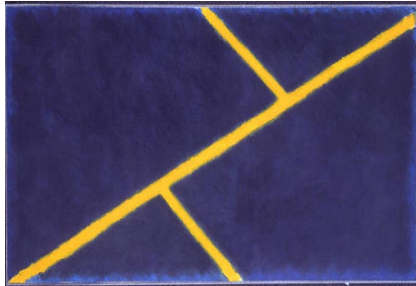
### The artist

His forms were influenced by the jazzy, improvisational techniques of the abstract expressionist painters who came into favour in New York after the Second World War. But his paintings had an architecture that resembled sculptural forms and, conversely, his sculptures had a painterly touch, often light and airy.

In the last decade of his life, he spent more and more time in India, particularly Jaipur, and he considered Rajasthan his spiritual home, sustaining him through lean years. His travels allowed him to escape the pressures of London and introduced him to a new culture, one ready to embrace his palette, shapes and ideas. India, its colours and shapes, its crowds and vistas, became an abiding influence, and his work enjoyed a second life, with major shows and wide coverage by the Indian press.



## Yellow Grid and Blue (1969)



John Edwards' early work involves perceptual ambiguity. His density of colour and softly brushed edges recall Rothko but, instead of a drama of embodiment and disembodiment, we have an abstract grid that recalls the pavements of Leon Battista Alberti.

Our eye is filled by breadth of scale, stretched from corner to corner, making Edwards' *Yellow Grid and Blue* an exemplar of Sixties modernism. It was seen in his third solo exhibition at the Rowan Gallery, in 1970, where it was the subject of a lengthy review from Charles Harrison (*Studio International*, March 1970).