



visions of  
**Abstraction**

OPERA GALLERY

Joan Miró

Alexander Calder

Jean Dubuffet

Antoni Tàpies

Hans Hartung

André Lansky

Georges Mathieu

Pierre Soulages

Sam Francis

Yayoi Kusama

Victor Vasarely

Damien Hirst

Ron Agam

Umberto Ciceri

Nasrollah Afjei

# preface

Katrin Fridriks

David Mach

Óli G. Jóhannsson

Eduardo Gelfenbein

Marcello Lo Giudice

Umberto Mariani

Opera Gallery Dubai is proud to bring to you artworks by some of the greatest artists who have made history in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and by the inheritors of the breakthrough movement they initiated, including Joan Miró, Jean Dubuffet, Sam Francis, Hans Hartung, Yayoi Kusama, André Lansky, Georges Mathieu, Victor Vasarely, Damien Hirst and Marcello Lo Giudice.

The abstract art movement has used a visual language of forms, colours and lines to create compositions independently from the world's visual references. In doing so, the abstract artists have chosen to interpret a subject without providing their viewer with a known or recognisable reference to explain it; therefore contrasting dramatically with the more traditional forms of art that, until then, had tried to achieve a rather literal interpretation of the world and communicate a sense of reality to the viewer. Freeing themselves from the obligation to depict the subject as it appears, the abstract artists take us into a new artistic territory and they make possible the representation of intangible emotions, such as beliefs, fears or passions.

'Visions of Abstraction' will unveil a carefully curated collection of some of the major artists that have redefined abstract art as well as illustrate the different styles of abstraction that coexist in today's global art world. Among others that we invite you to discover, we are proud to feature Joan Miró - whose revolutionary art ranges from automatic drawing and surrealism, to expressionism, lyrical abstraction, and colour field painting; David Mach and his contemporary homage to Jackson Pollock's 1960s' abstract expressionism; Katrin Fridriks' conceptual abstract painting; and Yayoi Kusama's repetitive pop art.

We hope that this selection gives you a new insight into the notion of abstraction and that you enjoy your journey through the history of abstract art.

Gilles Dyan  
Founder and Chairman  
Opera Gallery Group

Annamaria Bersani  
Gallery Manager  
Opera Gallery Dubai

Joan **Miró**

PERSONNAGE, OISEAUX, 1971-1976

Signed 'Miró' (lower right corner); dated and inscribed '27/VII/76.

Personnage, oiseaux 12/XII/76./30/VI/71' (on the reverse)

Watercolour, colour crayon and brush and India ink on paper

63 x 42 cm • 24.8 x 16.5 in.

PROVENANCE

Pilar Juncosa, Palma (the artist's widow); her sale: Sotheby's, Madrid, Dec. 9, 1986, lot 27

Anon. sale: Sotheby's, London, Nov.30, 1994, lot 242

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

CERTIFICATE

Adom (Association pour la défense de l'œuvre de Joan Miró) has confirmed the authenticity of the work



Joan Miró

LES ESSENCIES DE LA TERRA, 1968

Signed 'Miró' (lower right)

Brush and ink over lithograph on paper

49,5 x 35,2 cm • 19.5 x 13.9 in.

PROVENANCE

Ediciones Polígrafa, Barcelona

Private collection, Spain

LITERATURE

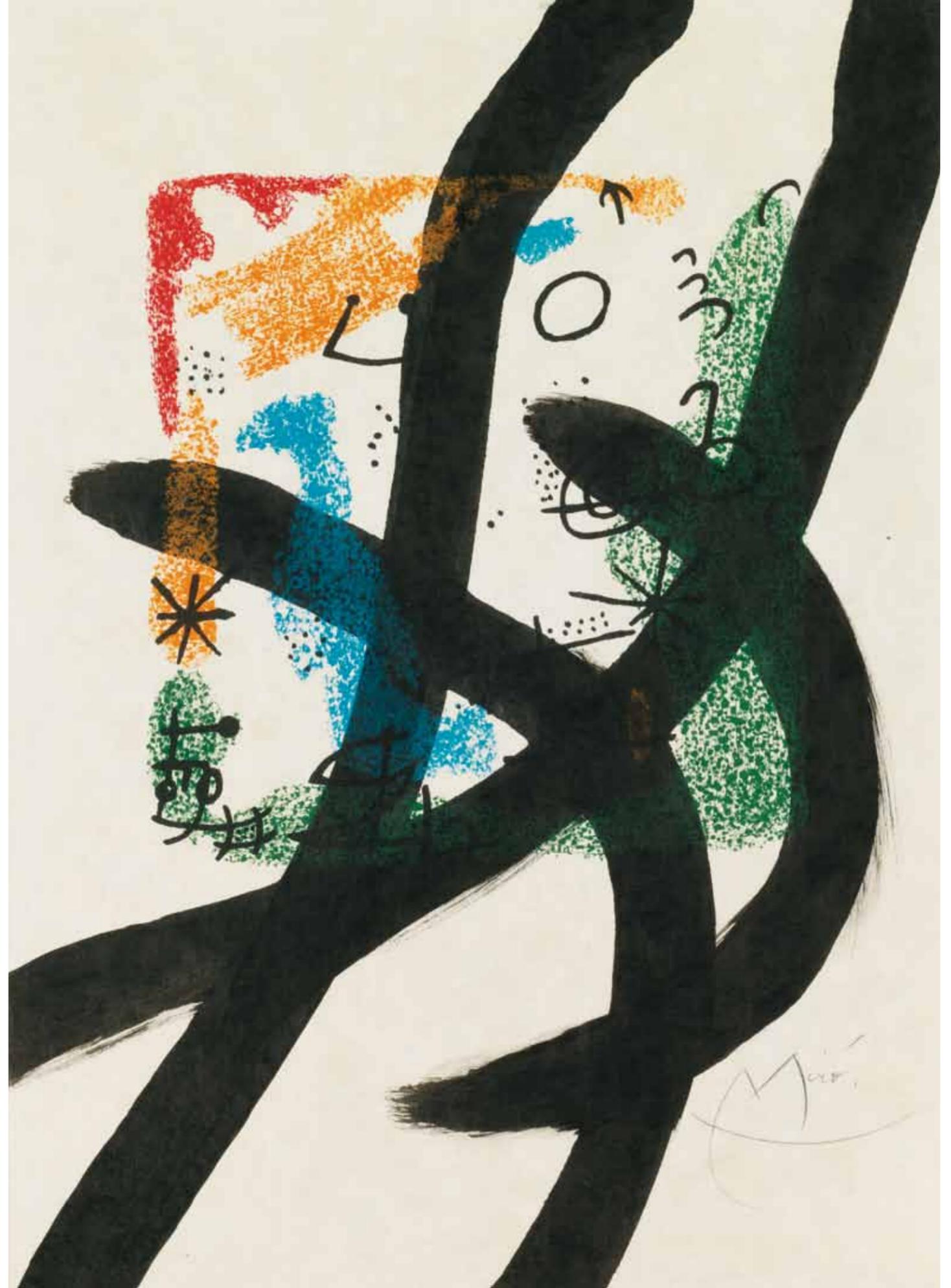
Joan Teixidor, Joan Miró, Lithographs, 1964-1969, vol. III, No. 578, ill. p. 165

CERTIFICATE

Adom [Association pour la défense de l'œuvre de Joan Miró] has confirmed the authenticity of the work

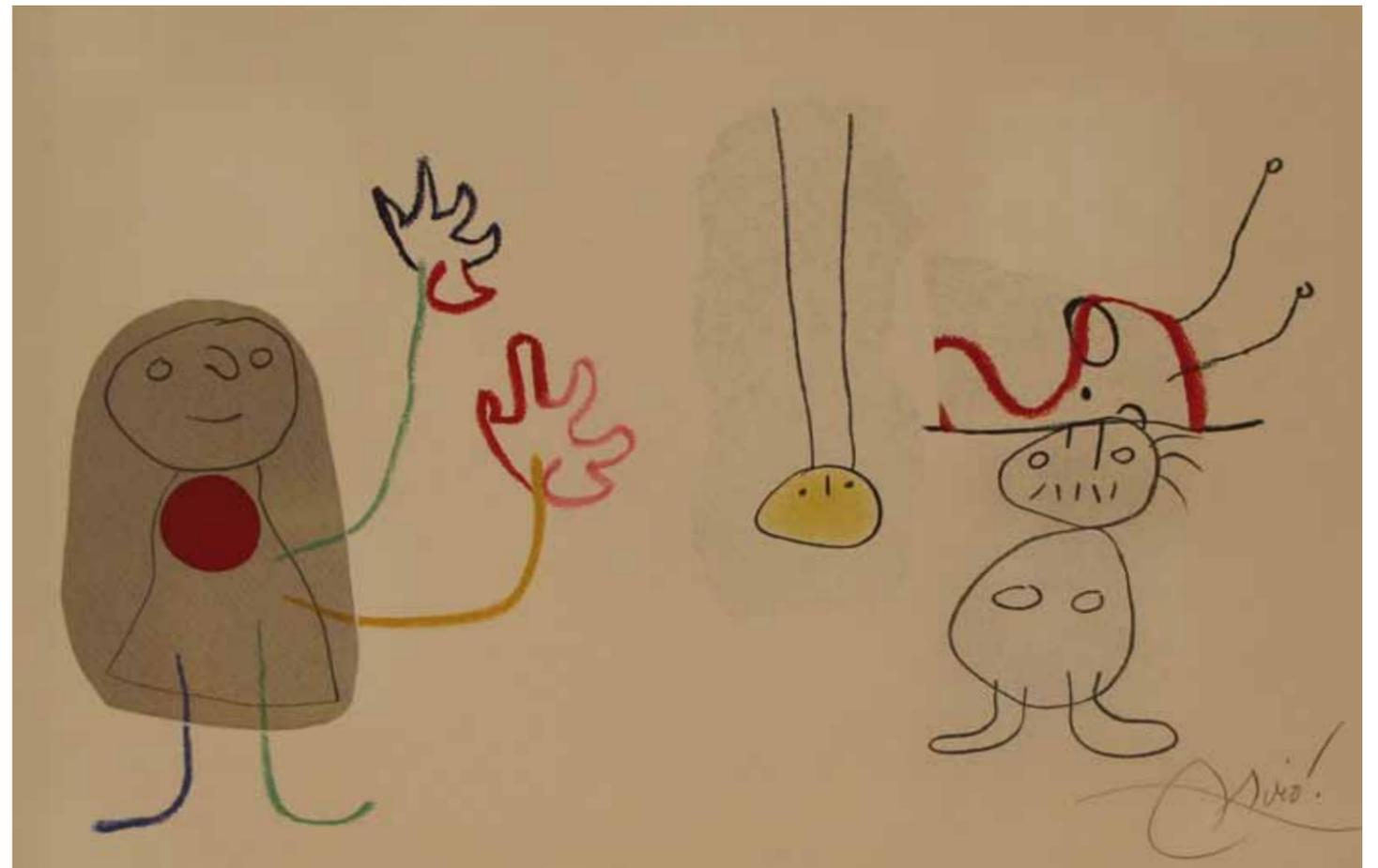
PUBLIC NOTES

The present work is one of eight hand-painted examples by the artist executed on Japan paper in 1968. An additional five hand-painted examples were executed on vellum in 1970.



Joan **Miró**

L'ENFANCE D'UBU, 1975  
Signed 'Miró' (lower right corner)  
Lithograph  
32,3 x 50,5 cm • 12.7 x 19.9 in.





Alexander **Calder**

1, 5, 5, 1973

Signed and dated 'Calder 73' (lower right corner)

Gouache on paper

44,5 x 109,9 cm • 17.5 x 43.3 in.

PROVENANCE

Perls Galleries, New York

Waddington Galleries, London (acquired in 1973)

Private collection, London

Avanti Galleries, Inc., New Jersey (acquired in 1988)

Acquired by the present owner from the above (June 1988)

CERTIFICATE

This work is registered in the archives of the Calder Foundation, New York, under application number A06592



Jean Dubuffet

SITE ALÉATOIRE AVEC UN PERSONNAGE, 1982

Signed with the artist's initials and dated 'J. D. 82' (lower right corner)

Acrylic on paper laid down on canvas

68 x 100 cm • 26.8 x 39.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris

Acquired directly from the above by the present owner

LITERATURE

Max Loreau, Catalogue raisonné des Travaux de Jean Dubuffet, fasc. XXXV : Sites Aléatoires, Paris 1986, No. 15, ill. p. 14

PUBLIC NOTES

[The figures] heighten the evocative power of the place portrayed. Their presence gives the place the necessary existence and vitality without which it might remain to the observer merely a network of incomprehensible planes and lines. The figures have the function of a catalyst that triggers the imagination. The artist cited in *Bâtons Rompus*, Paris 1986, p. 64.

Antoni **Tàpies**

AUTO PORTRAIT MARRON, 1982

Signed 'Tàpies' (lower right corner)

Mixed media on cardboard

48,5 x 40 cm • 19.1 x 15.7 in.

PROVENANCE

Galerie Maeght Lelong, Paris

Private collection, France

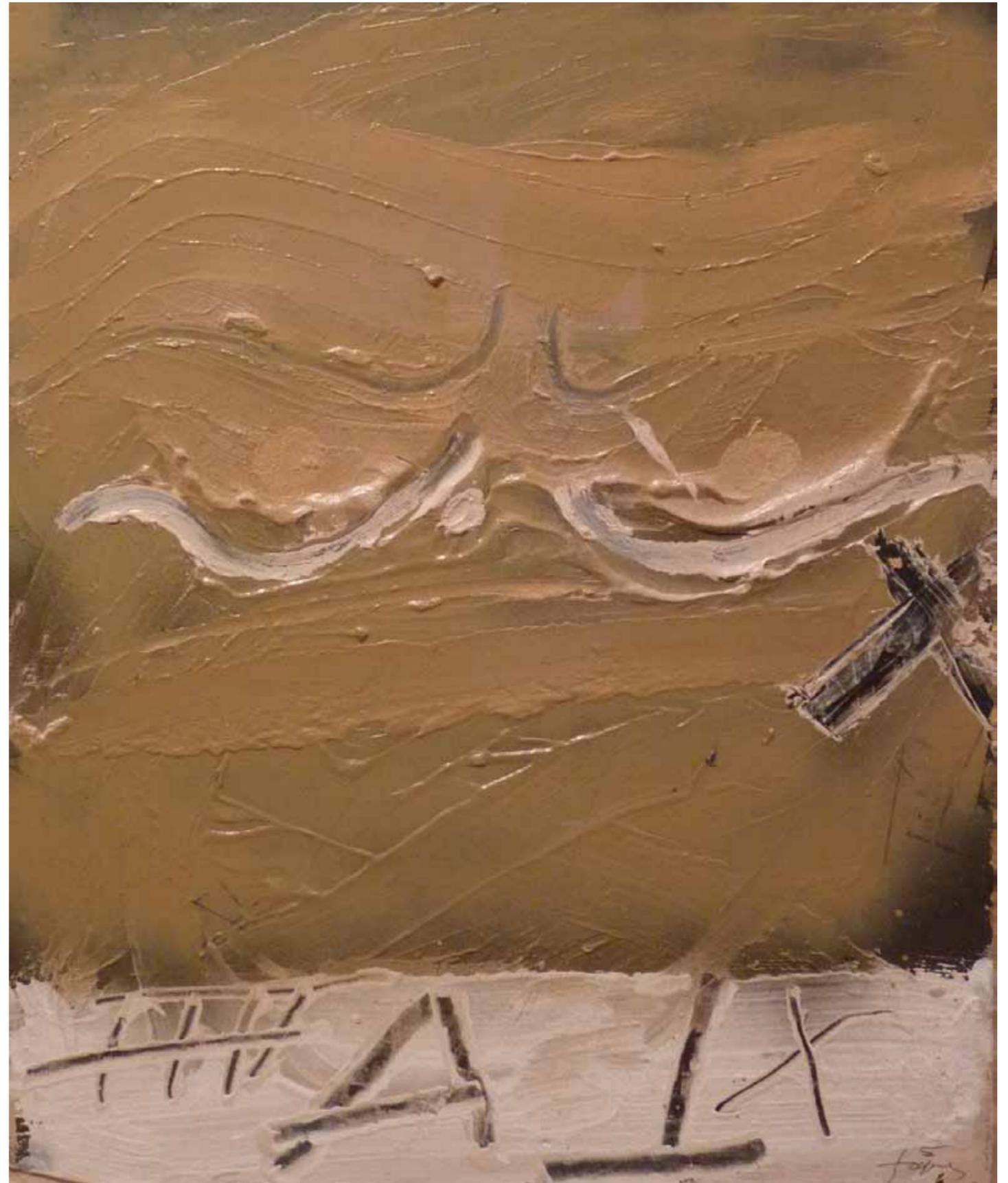
EXHIBITED

Paris, Galerie Maeght, Tàpies, 1982

LITERATURE

Anna Agusti, Tàpies, Obra Completa, 1982-1985, vol. V, No. 4247, p. 76

Derrière le miroir, Tàpies, Galerie Maeght, July 1982, No. 45, p. 15



Hans Hartung

T1985 – H13, 1985

Initialed and dated 'H.H 85' (lower left corner)

Acrylic on canvas

130 x 102 cm • 51.2 x 40.2 in.

PROVENANCE

Galerie Bodenschatz, Basel

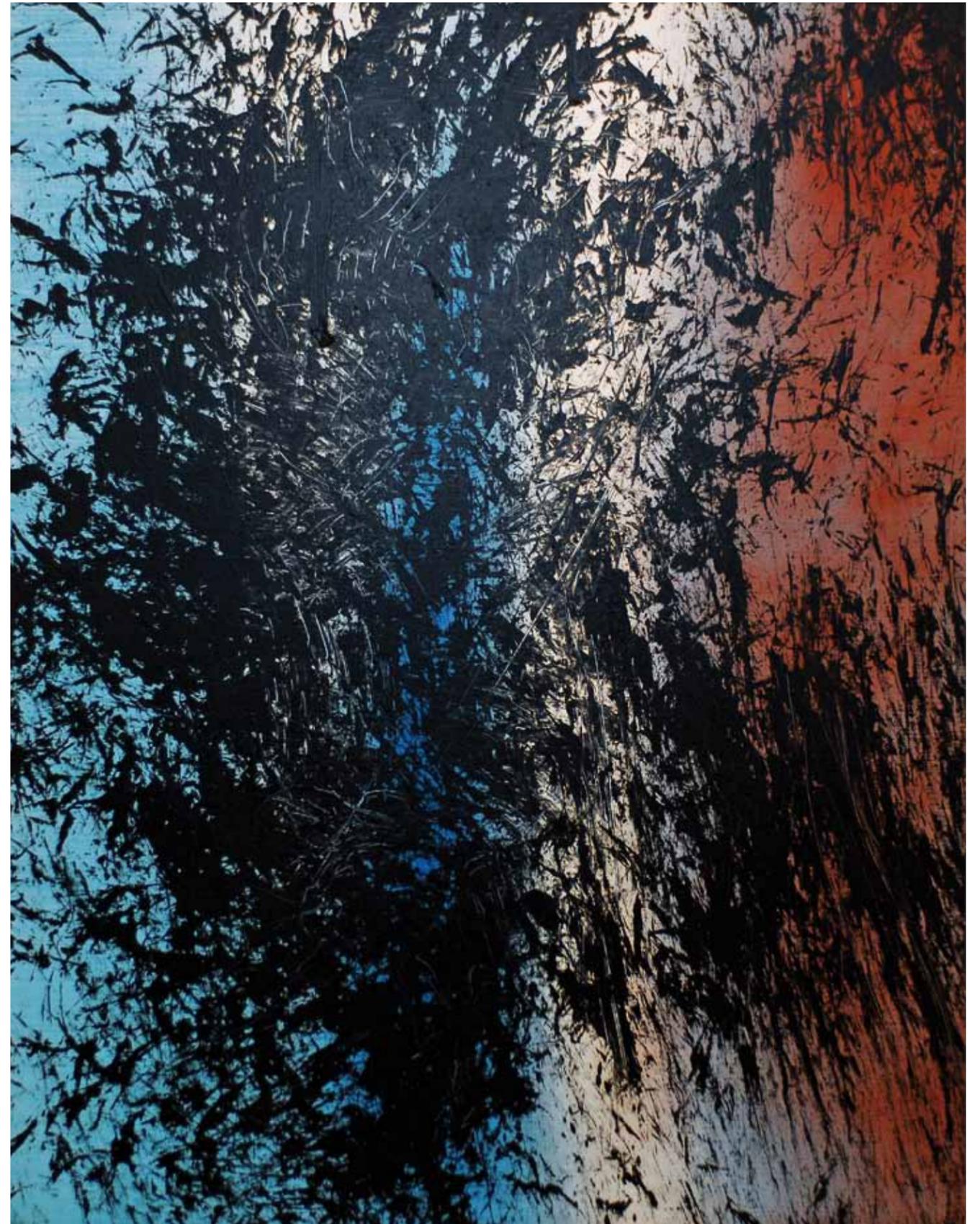
Galerie Daniel Gervis, Paris

LITERATURE

This work will be reproduced in the Catalogue raisonné being prepared by the Hans Hartung Foundation and Anna-Eva Bergman

CERTIFICATE

This work is registered in the archives of the Hans Hartung Foundation, under the reference No. HH145





André  
**Lansky**

UNTITLED, 1952

Signed 'Lansky' (upper left corner)

Oil on canvas

97 x 195 cm • 38.2 x 76.8 in.

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Switzerland

LITERATURE

This work will be included in the Catalogue raisonné being prepared by André Schoeller

Georges Mathieu

ARGYROPEC, 1967

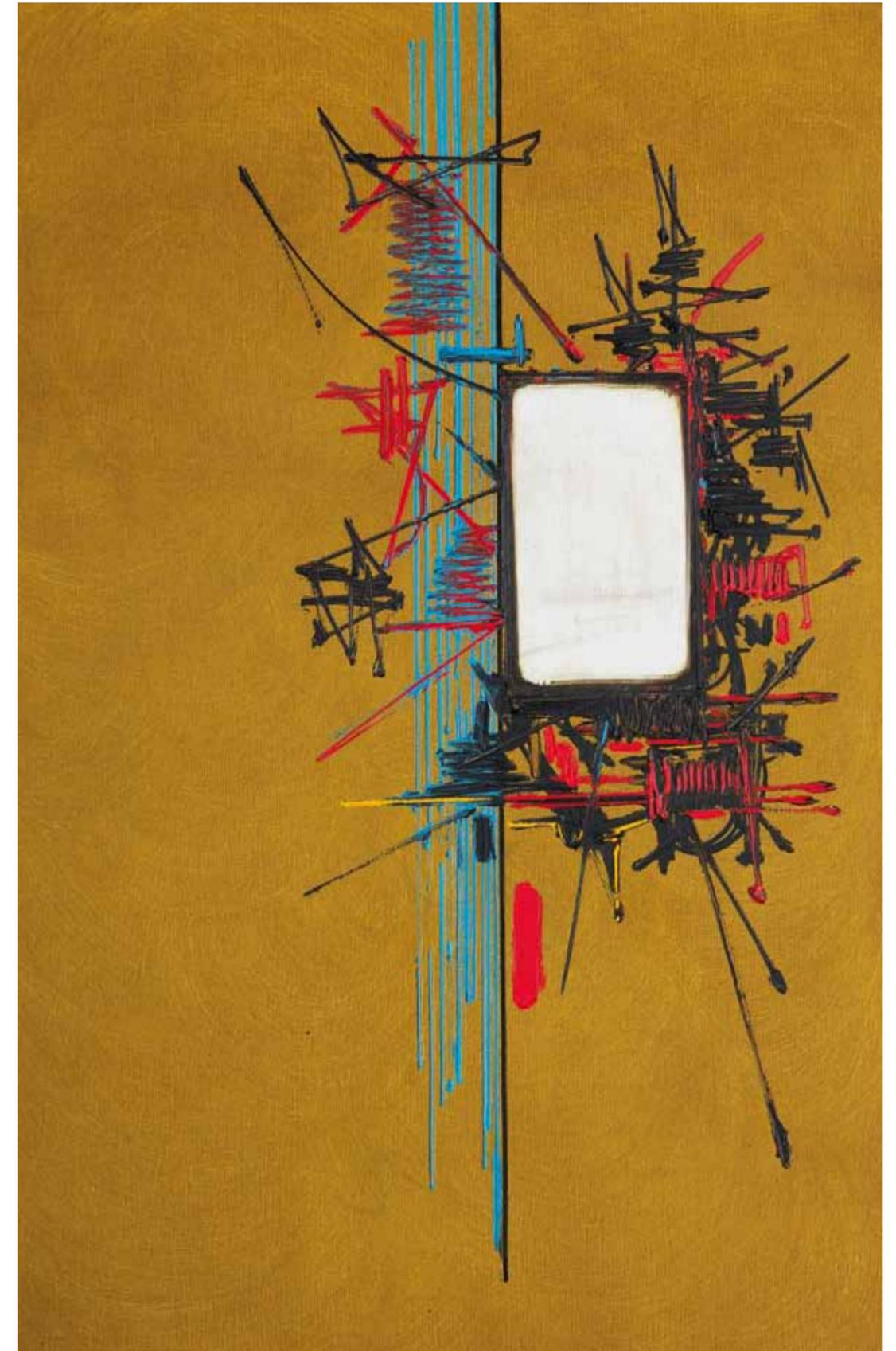
Signed and dated 'Mathieu 67' (lower left corner)

Oil on canvas

100 x 65 cm • 39.4 x 25.6 in.

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Europe



Pierre **Soulages**

PEINTURE 55 x 46 CM, 3 AVRIL, 1994

Signed, titled and dated '3.4.94' (on the reverse)

Oil on canvas

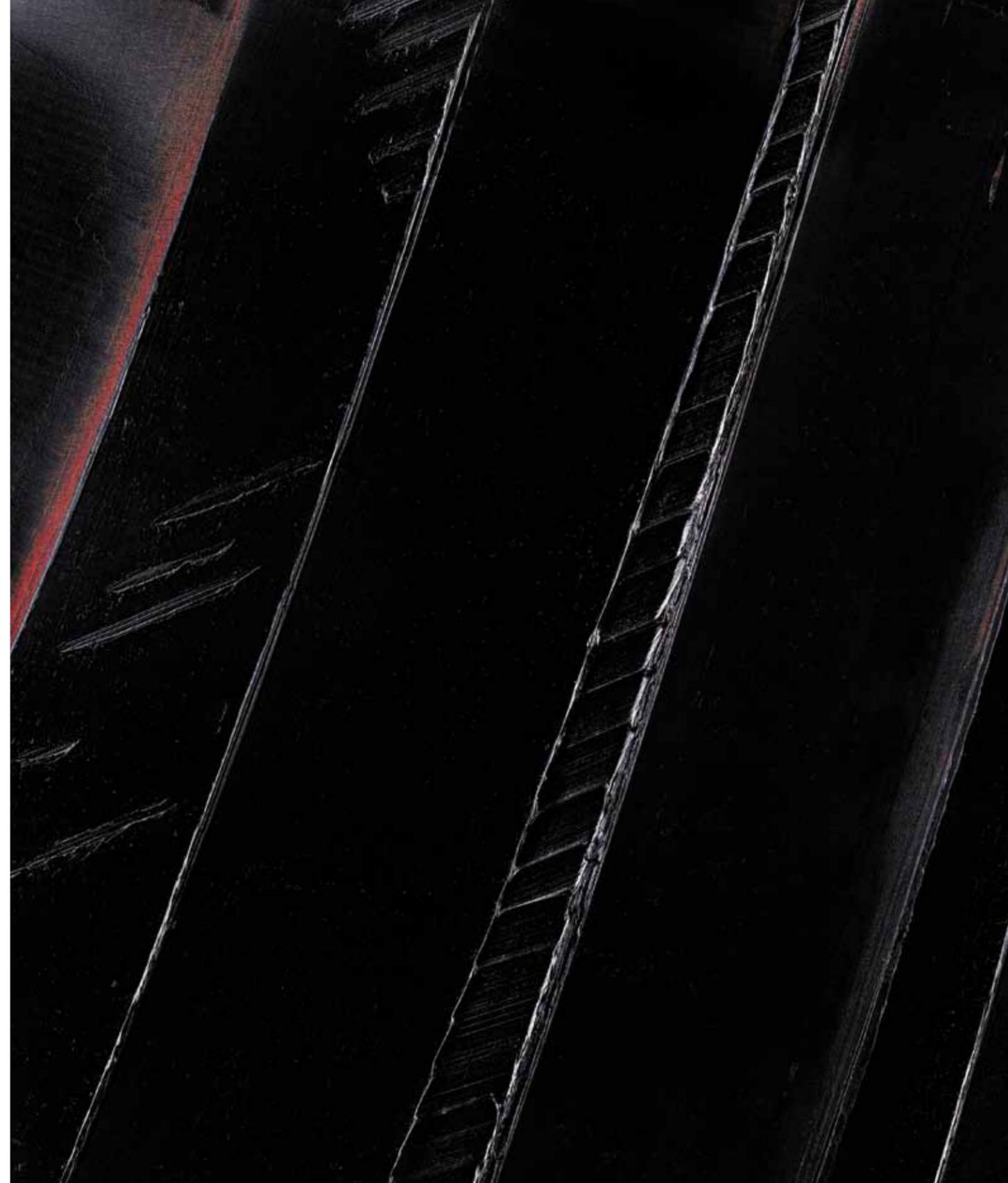
55 x 46 cm • 21.6 x 18.1 in.

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Paris

LITERATURE

Pierre Encrevé, Soulages, L'Œuvre complet, Peintures, tome III, 1979-1997,  
No. 1117, ill. in colour p. 304





Sam Francis

UNTITLED (SPIDER), 1987

Signed and dated (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

Diptych: 35 x 54 cm • 13.8 x 21.3 in.

PROVENANCE

Heland Thordén Wetterling Galleries, Stockholm

Private collection, Europe

EXHIBITED

Stockholm, Heland Thordén Wetterling Galleries, Sam Francis, Nov. 1987

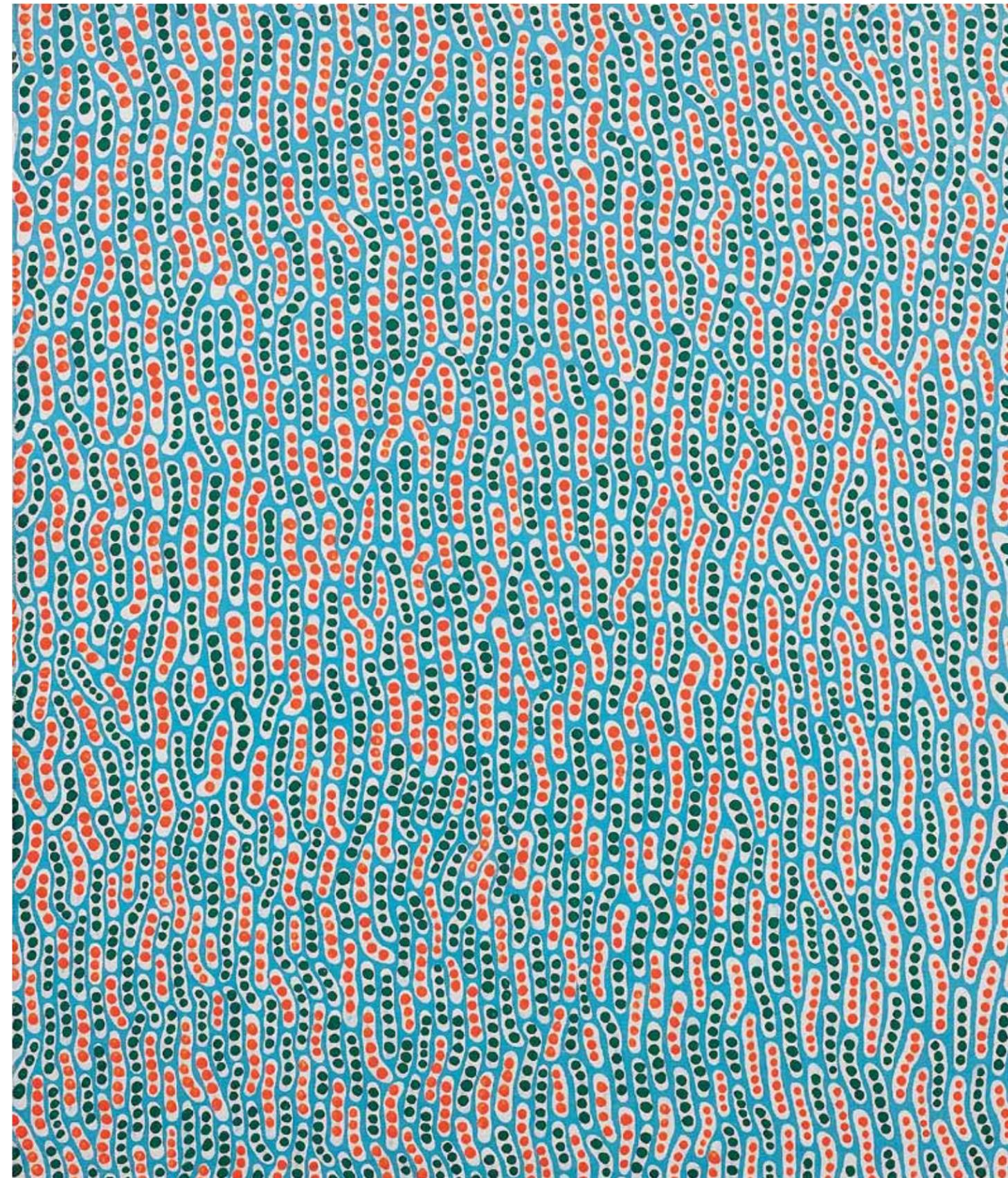
CERTIFICATE

This work is registered in the archives of the Sam Francis Foundation under the reference No. SFP81-94

Yayoi  
**Kusama**

WAVES ON THE LAKE, 1988  
Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)  
Acrylic on canvas  
53 x 45,5 cm • 20.9 x 17.9 in.

CERTIFICATE  
The Yayoi Kusama studio has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Victor Vasarely

CITRA, 1955–1959

Signed 'Vasarely' (lower centre); countersigned twice, titled and dated 'Vasarely Citra 1955-1959' (on the reverse)

Oil on wood

110 x 100 cm • 43.3 x 39.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Galerie Denise René-Hans Mayer, Düsseldorf (1972)

EXHIBITED

Stuttgart, Württ. Kunstverein, No. 344/1

LITERATURE

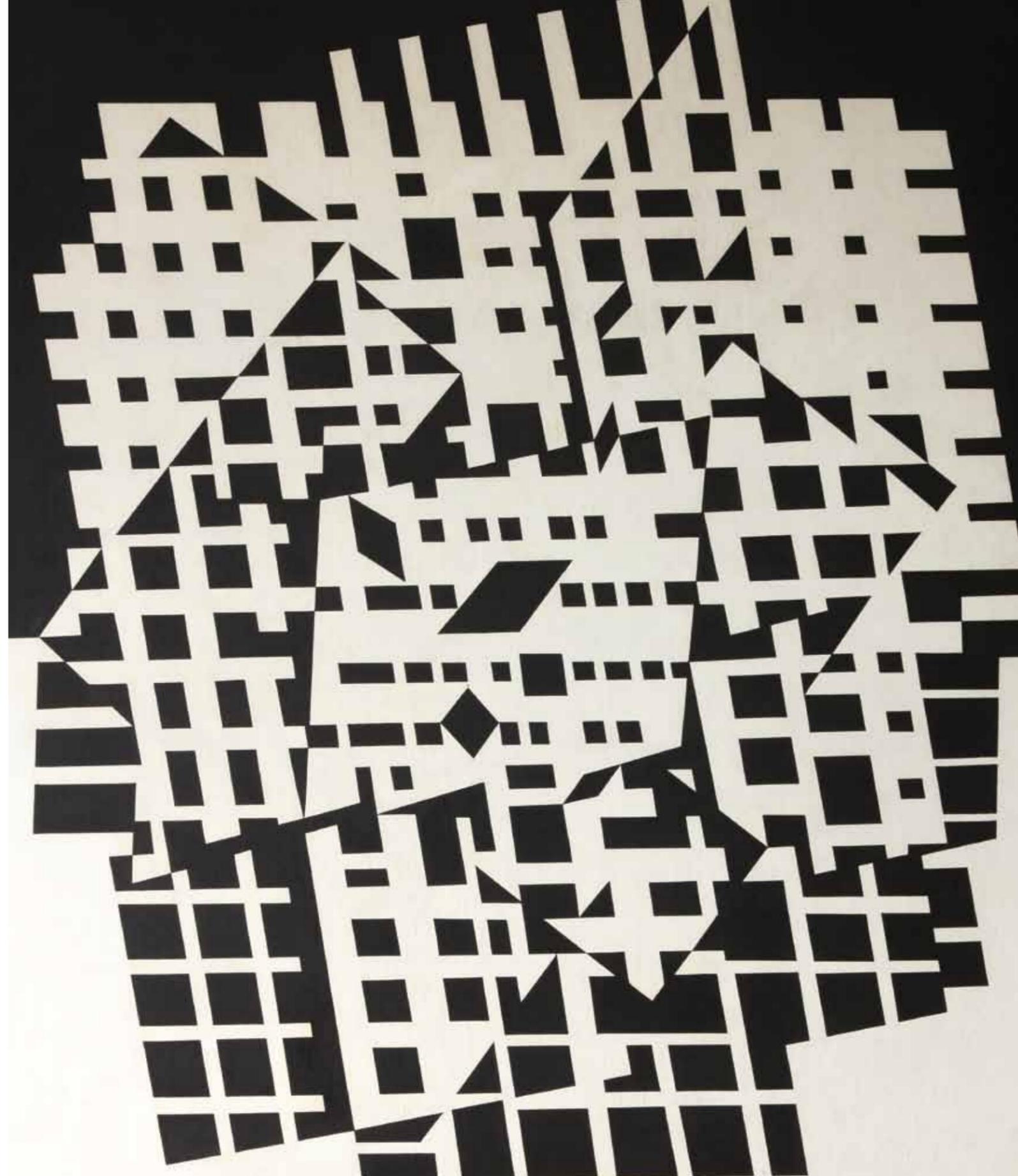
Marcel Joray, *Plastic Arts of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, vol. I, Editions du Griffon, Neuchâtel, 1965, similar artwork No. 130, ill. p. 116

CERTIFICATE

Pierre Vasarely has confirmed the authenticity of this work

PUBLIC NOTES

A work of art such as *Citra* is emblematic of the intricate and combinatorial dimensions of Vasarely's lifework. The artist purposefully distorted his materials, creating optical illusions by simply playing with geometric shapes and the relationship between white and black. This, in turn, provokes interesting special effects with respect to mass and relief. This bi-dimensional work of art seems genuinely 'profound', a 'perpetuum mobile and trompe l'œil' as Vasarely liked to say. The result is an ambiguous, visual and destabilizing experience for the art lover.



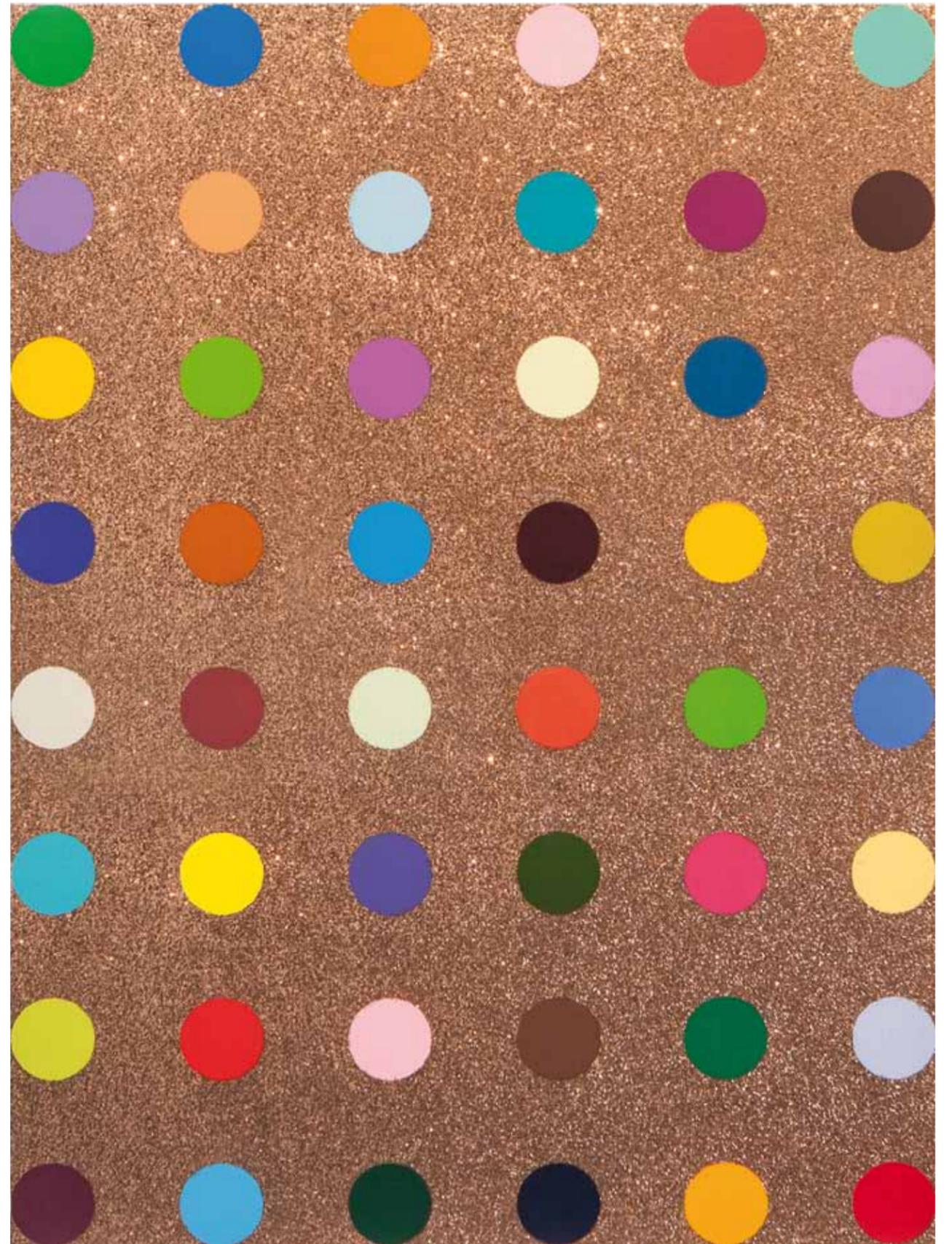
Damien **Hirst**

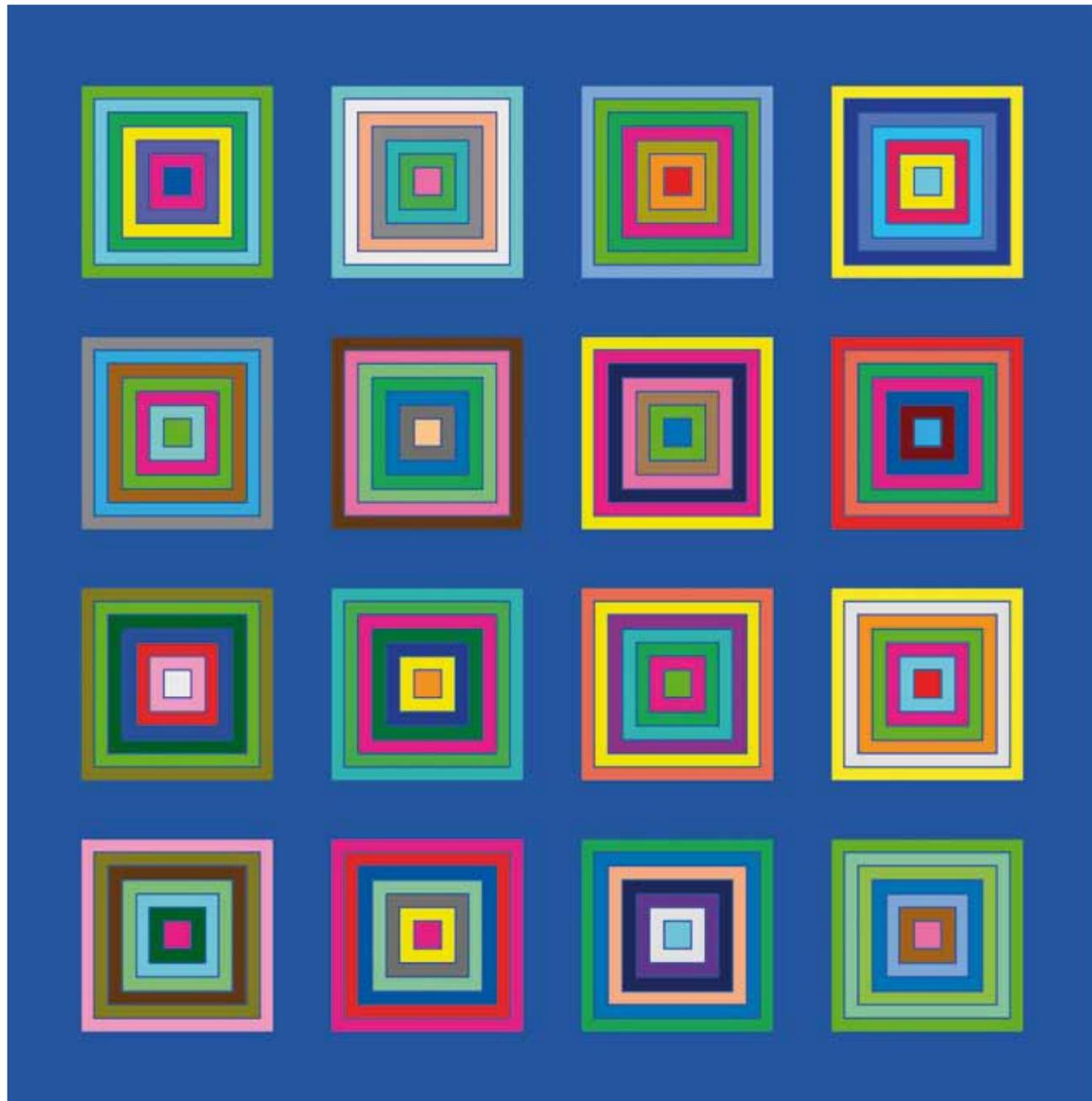
AUROUS LODIDE, 2009

Signed 'Damien Hirst' (lower right) and numbered (lower left)

Lithograph, edition of 150

95 x 76 cm • 37.4 x 29.9 in.

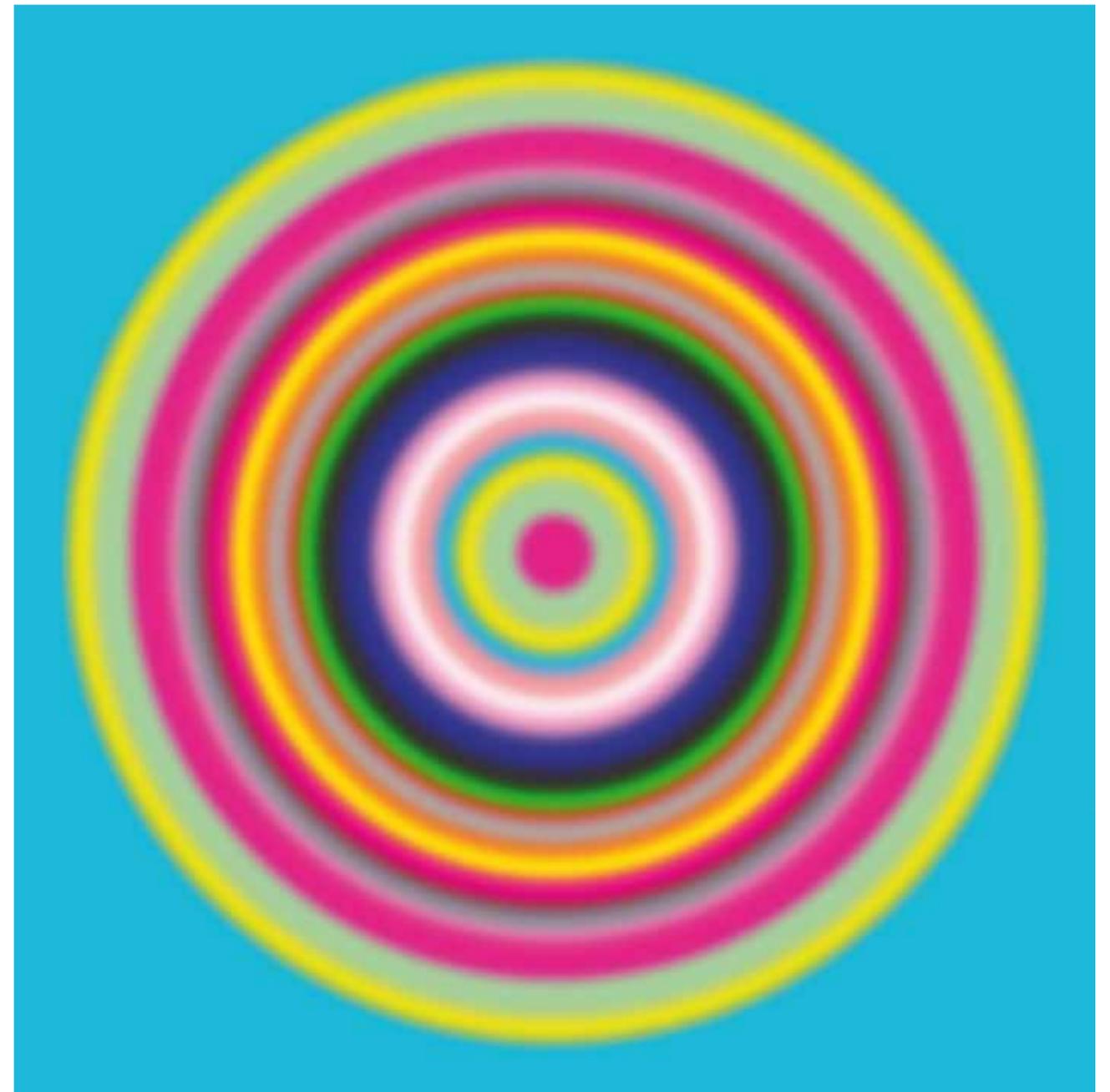




Ron  
**Agam**

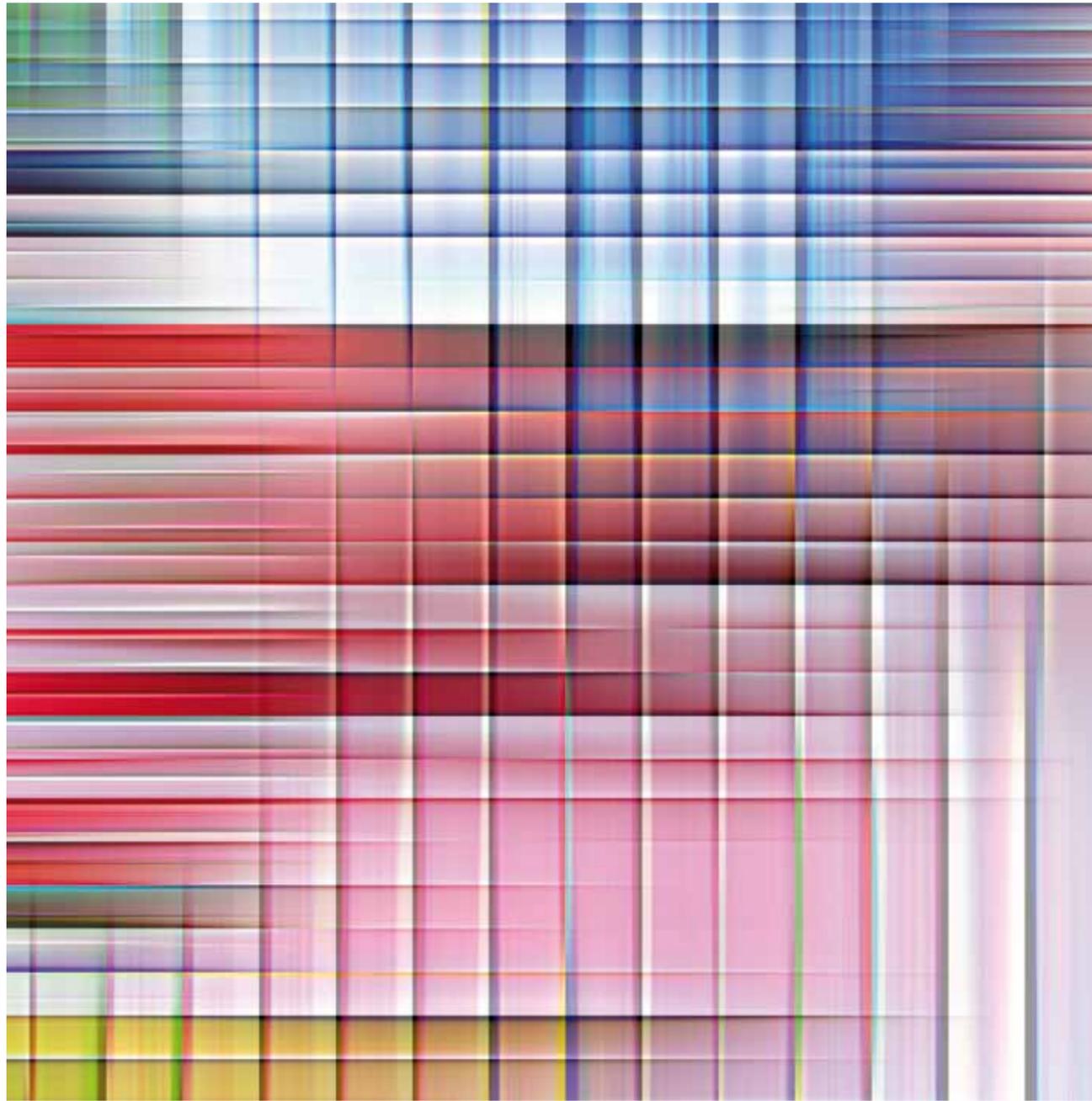
INTERRELATED SPACE #2, 2013  
Signed, numbered and dated (on the reverse)  
Lenticular 3D, edition of 3 + 2 AP  
110 x 110 cm • 43.3 x 43.3 in.

PROVENANCE  
Artist's studio



VIRGO, 2013  
Signed, numbered and dated (on the reverse)  
Lenticular 3D, edition of 3 + 2 AP  
114 x 114 cm • 44.9 x 44.9 in.

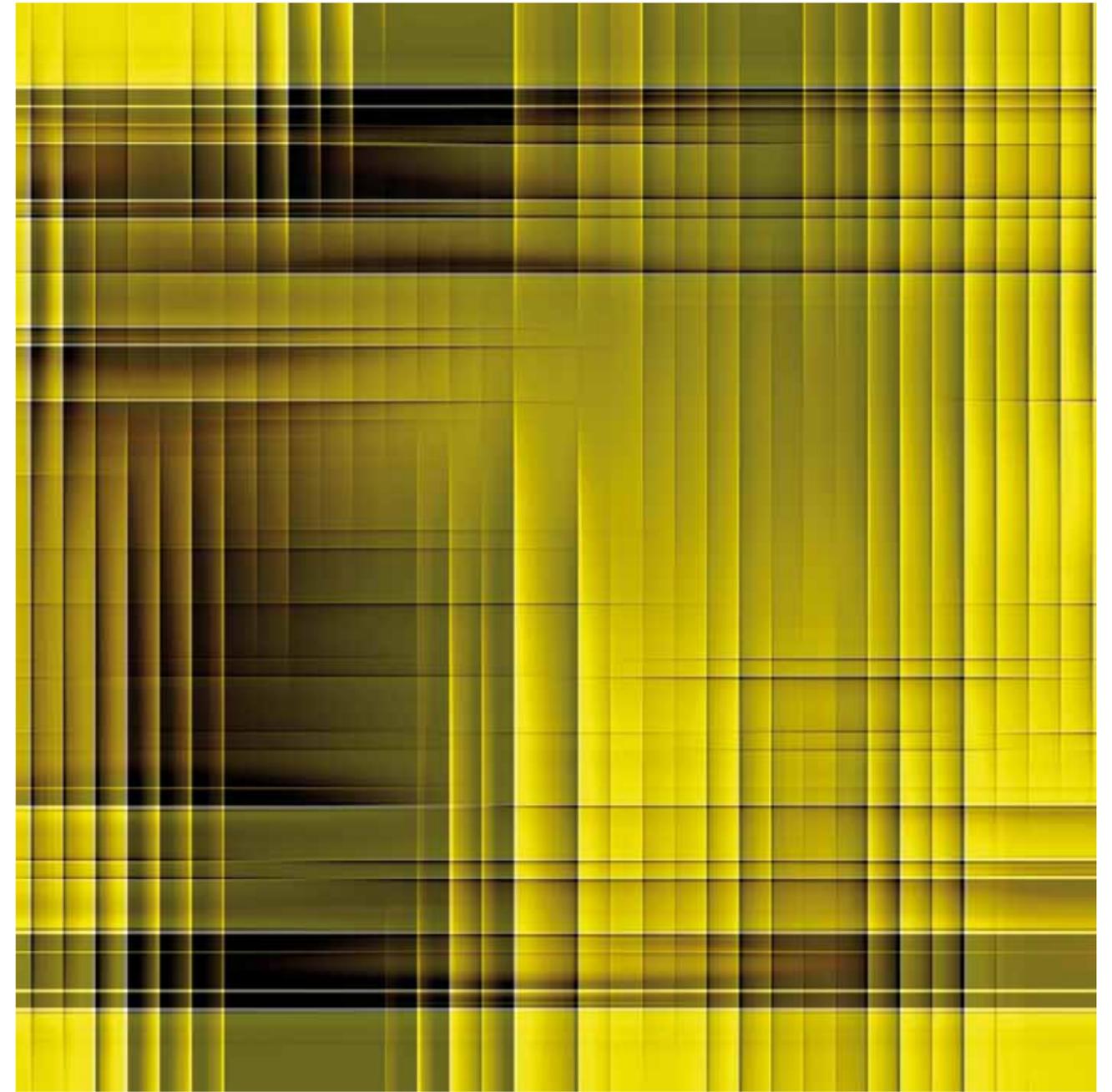
PROVENANCE  
Artist's studio



Umberto **Ciceri** SQUARE MILLIMETER No. 313

Signed and stamped (on the reverse)  
Lenticular, edition of 1  
50 x 50 cm • 19.7 x 19.7 in.

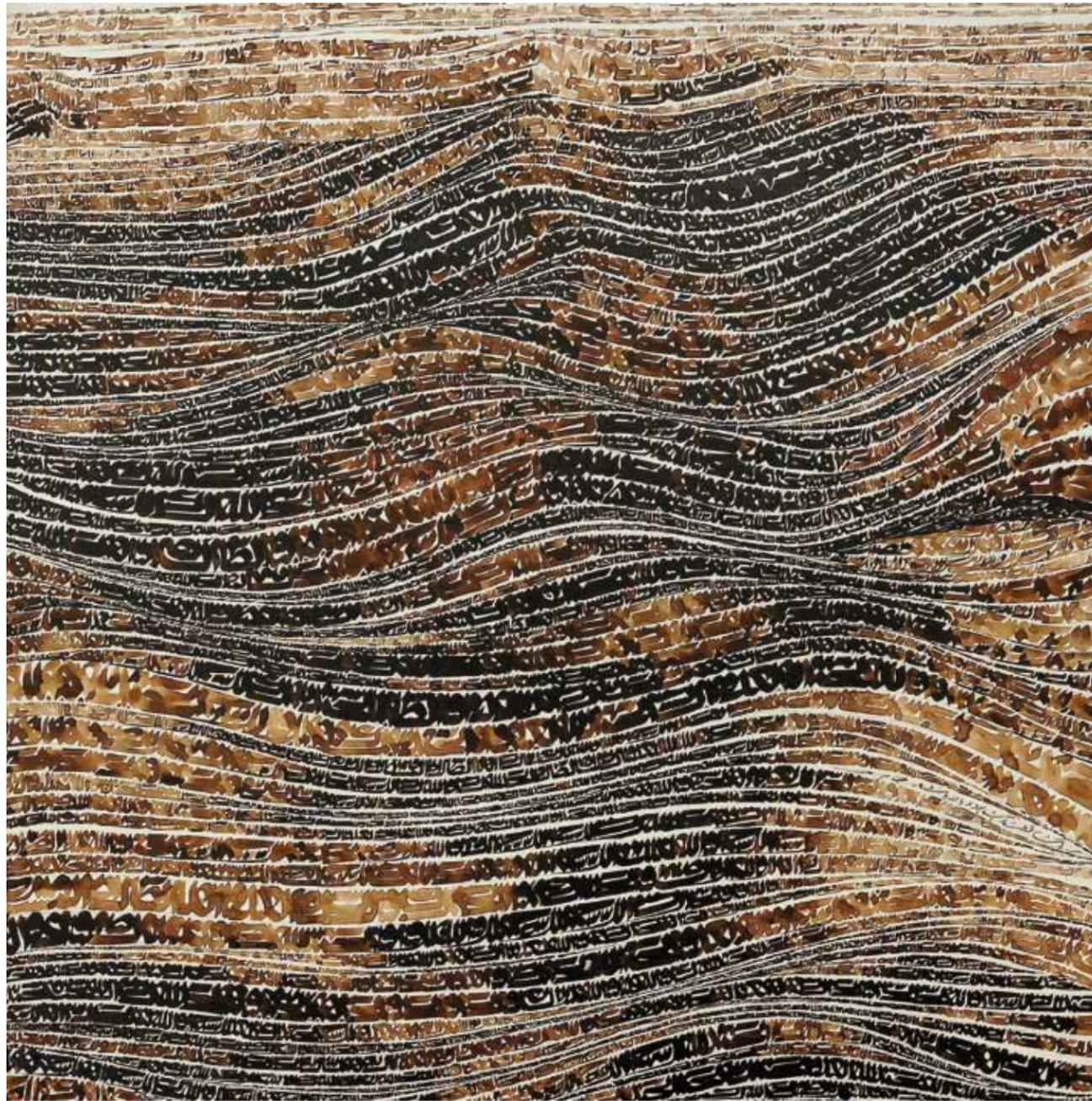
PROVENANCE  
Artist's studio



SQUARE MILLIMETER No. 508

Signed and stamped (on the reverse)  
Lenticular, edition of 1  
80 x 80 cm • 31.5 x 31.5 in.

PROVENANCE  
Artist's studio



Nasrollah

Afjei

UNTITLED, 2006

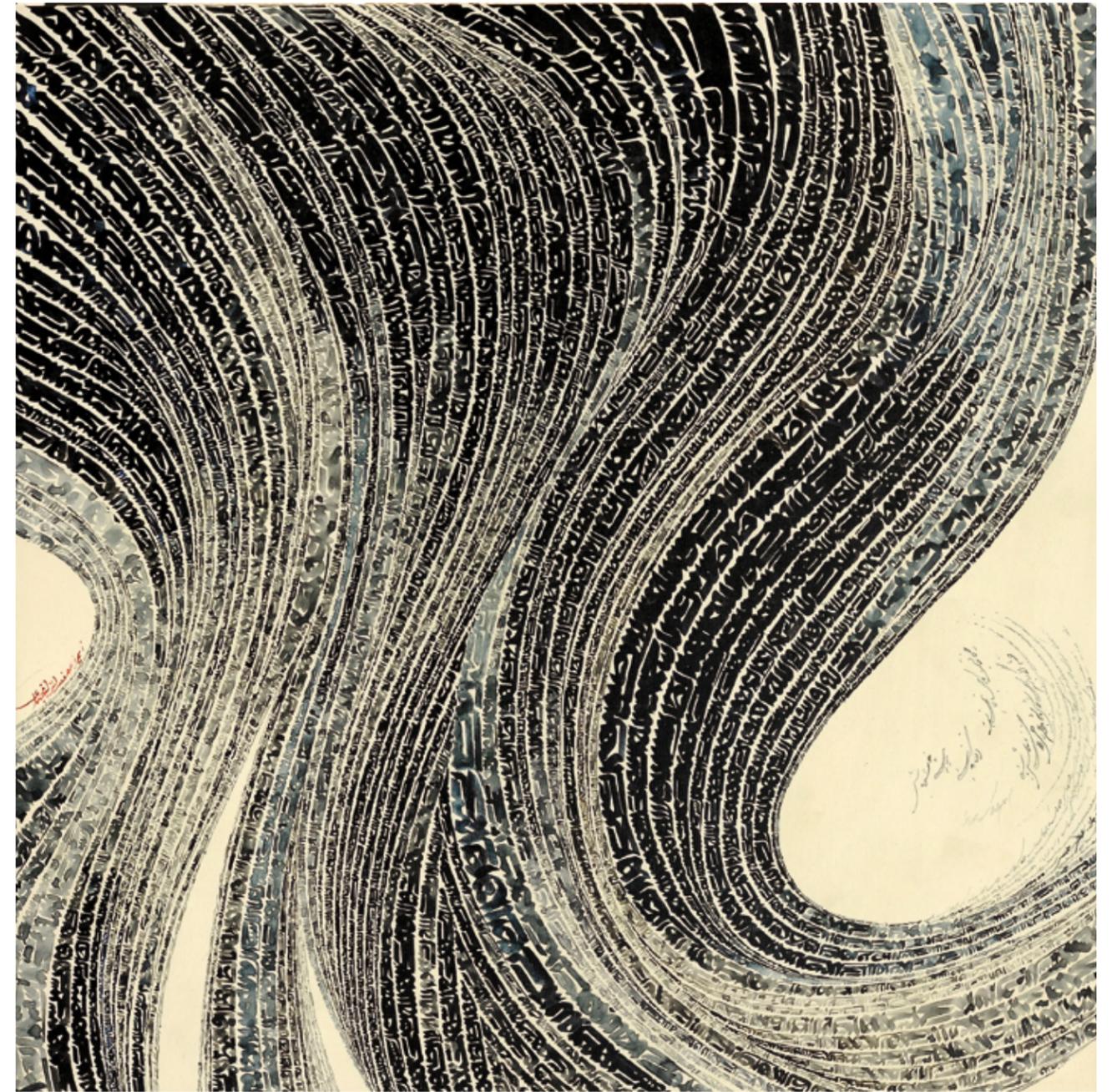
Signed in Farsi (lower right)

Acrylic on canvas

90 x 90 cm • 35.4 x 35.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



UNTITLED, 2012

Signed in Farsi and English (centre left)

Acrylic on canvas

90 x 90 cm • 35.4 x 35.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



Katrin  
**Fridriks**

GENE&ETHICS SPECTRA - BLACK, 2013

Signed (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

180 x 280 x 10 cm • 70.9 x 110.2 x 3.9 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Katrin  
**Fridriks**

CRAYONS INSTALLATION, 2012-13

Signed (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

8 x (180 x 20 x 10 cm) • 8 x (70.9 x 7.9 x 3.9 in.)

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



David  
**Mach**

JACKSON POLLOCK 2  
Postcards and photography on wood  
183 x 183 cm • 72 x 72 in.

PROVENANCE  
Artist's studio



Óli  
G. Jóhannsson

I SEE IT AS AN OUTSIDER, 2008

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

90 x 90 cm • 35.4 x 35.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





01i **G. Jóhannsson**

THERE MUST BE ANOTHER ENTRANCE, 2008

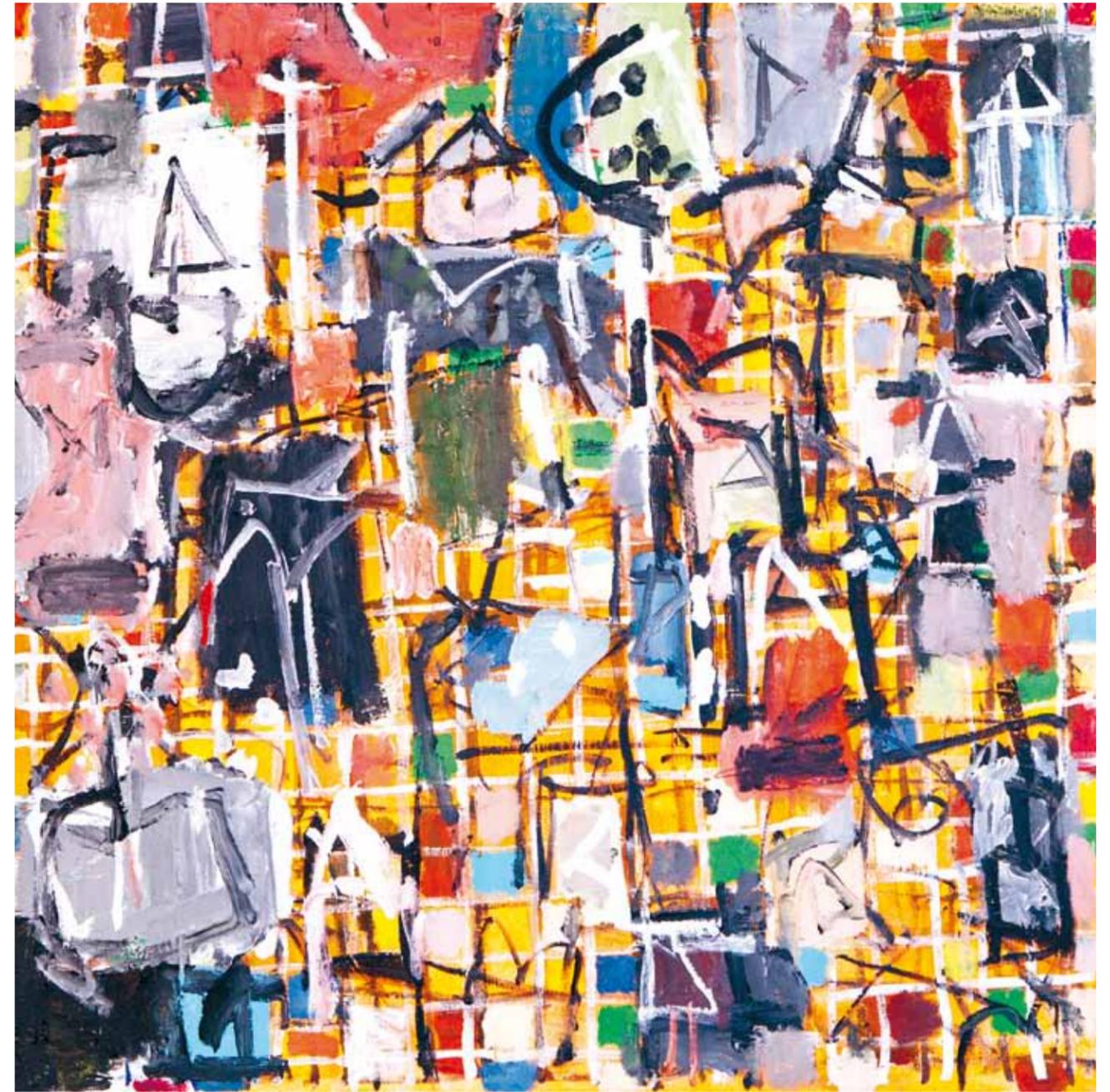
Signed and dated (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

145 x 145 cm • 57.1 x 57.1 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



DURING THOSE FIRST DAYS OF AUTUMN, 2008

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

90 x 90 cm • 35.4 x 35.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Eduardo  
Guelfenbein

LUMINOUS

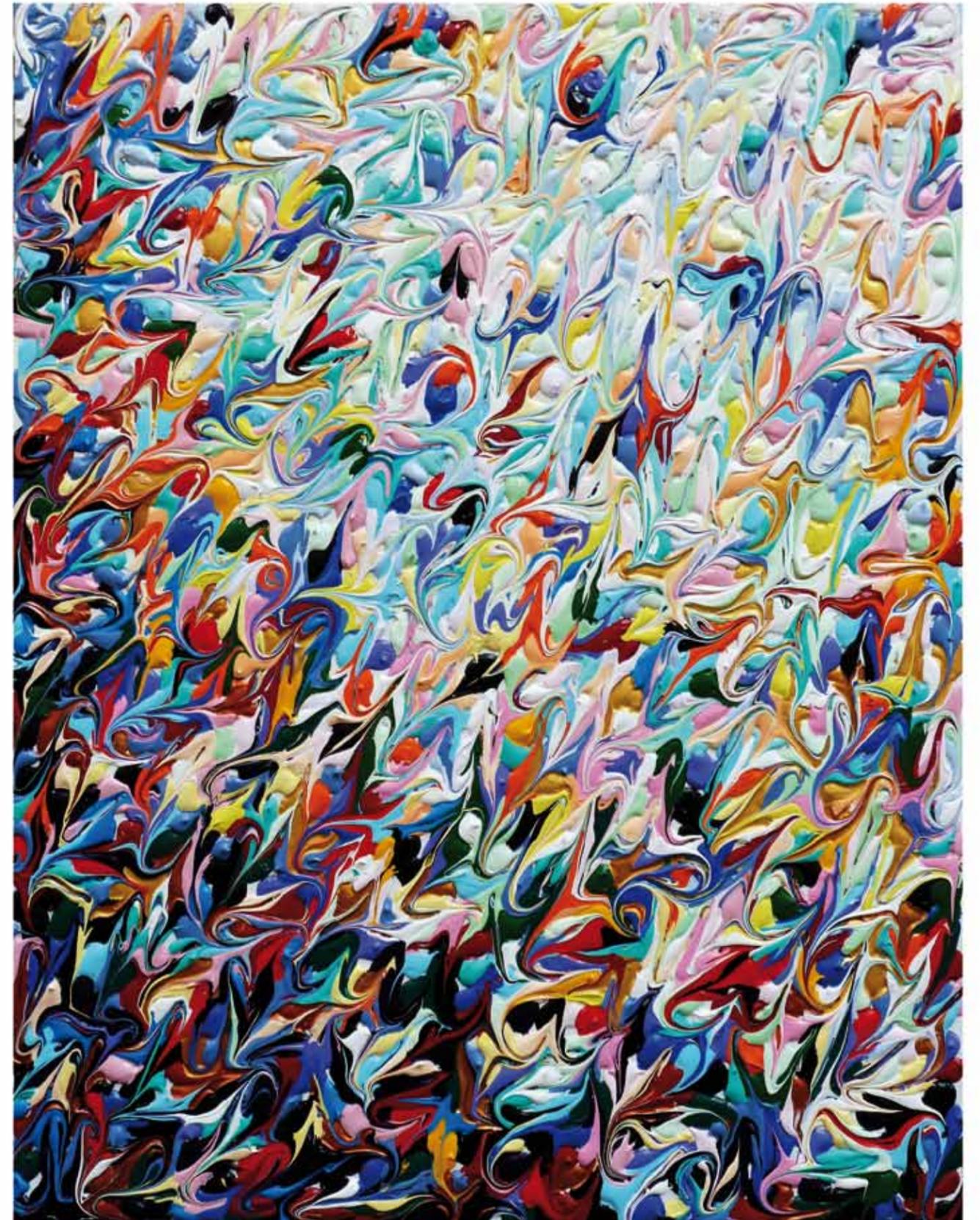
Signed and titled (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

146 x 114 cm • 57.5 x 44.9 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Eduardo **Guelfenbein**

**DOMINANCE, 2011**

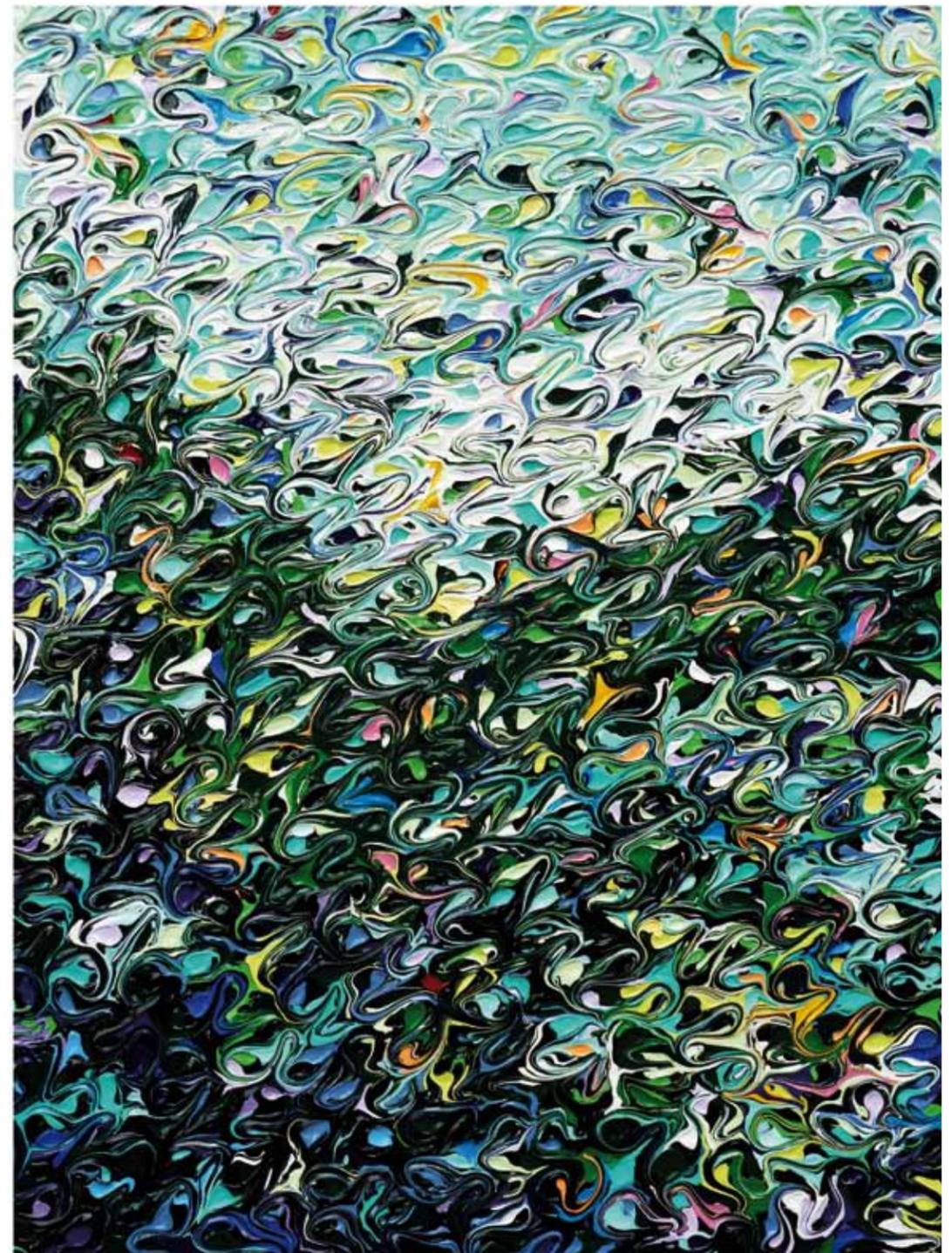
Signed and dated (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

114 x 146 cm • 44.9 x 57.5 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



**HUMBLE, 2010**

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

130 x 97 cm • 51.2 x 38.2 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Marcello  
**Lo Giudice**

EDEN PRIMAVERA, 2013

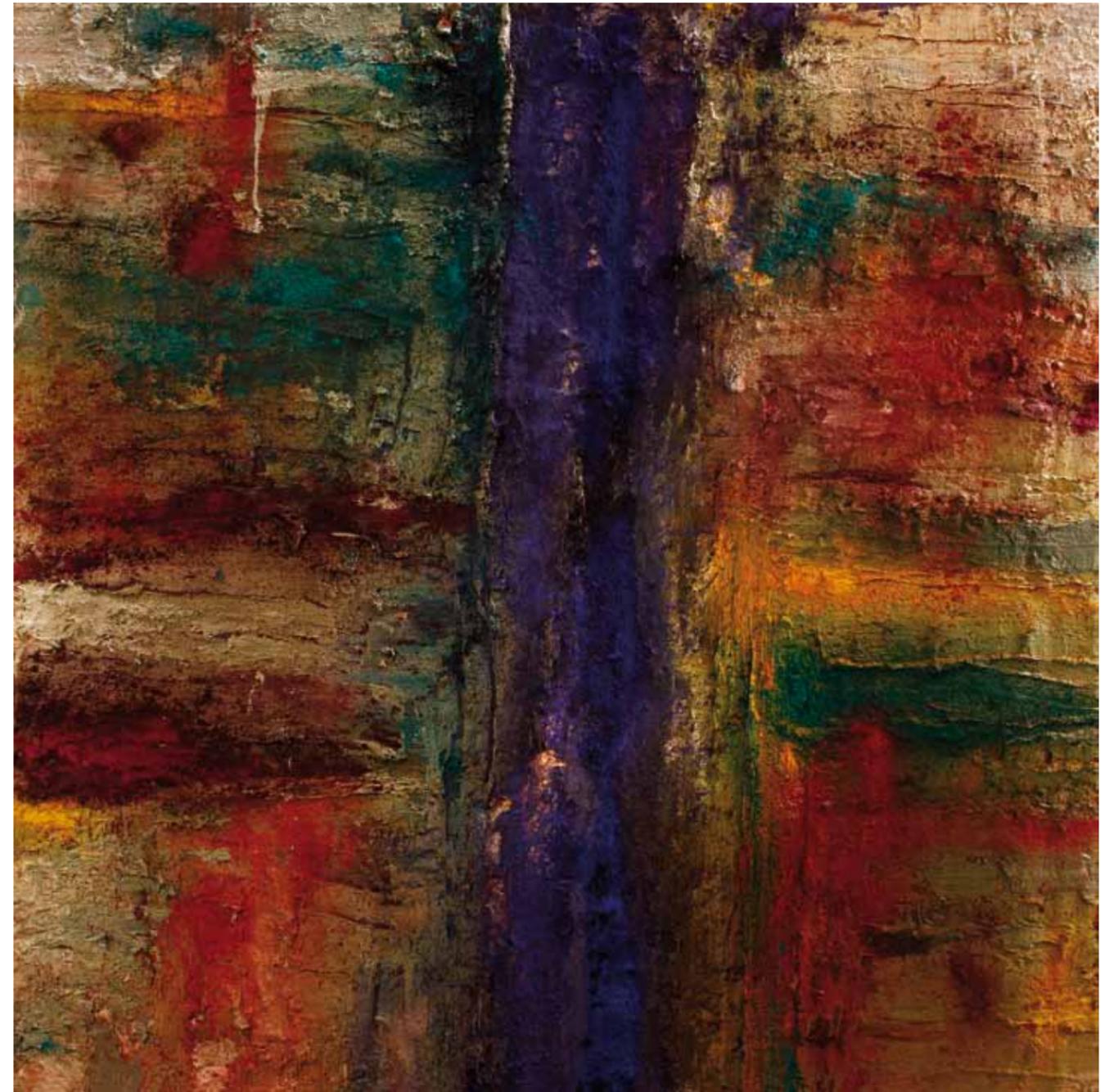
Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Pigment and oil on canvas

140 x 140 cm • 55.1 x 55.1 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio





Marcello  
**Lo Giudice**

**BLU EDEN, 2013**

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

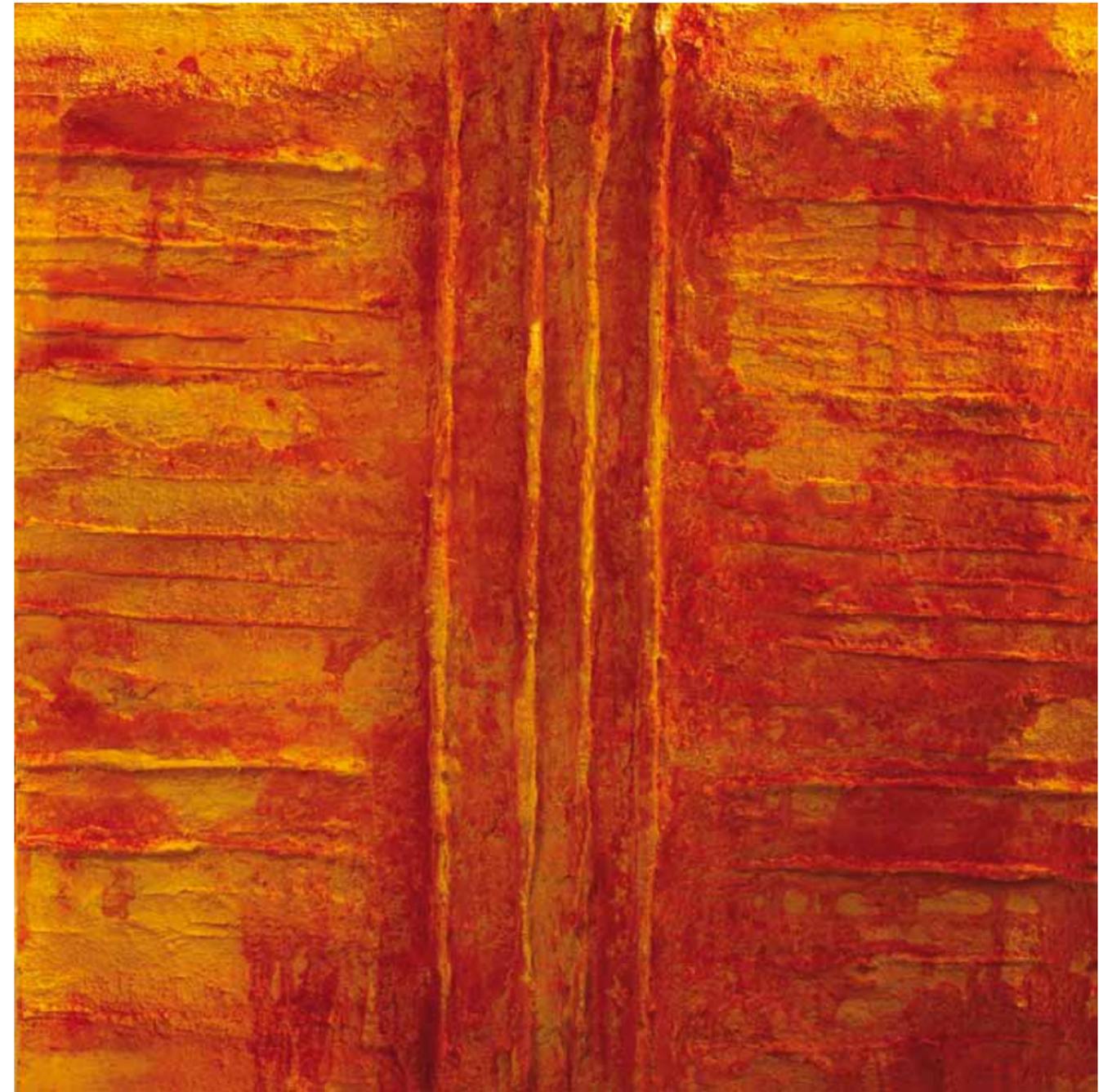
Pigment and oil on canvas

100 x 100 cm • 39.4 x 39.4 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Private collection



**SUN/SOLE, 2013**

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Pigment and oil on canvas

140 x 140 cm • 55.1 x 55.1 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



Umberto **Mariani**

LA FORMA CELATA: X, 2009  
Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)  
Vinyl and sand on lead sheet  
60,5 x 80 cm • 23.8 x 31.5 in.

PROVENANCE  
Artist's studio



Umberto  
**Mariani**

LA FORMA CELATA, 2013

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Vinyl and sand on lead sheet

80,5 x 60,5 cm • 31.7 x 23.8 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio



TAGHELMOUST: IL VELO, 2013

Signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Vinyl and sand on lead sheet

80 x 60.5 cm • 31.5 x 23.8 in.

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

# Artists biographies

## Ron Agam (1958 - )

Ron Agam was born in Paris in 1958 and was educated in Paris, Rehovot (Israel) and New York. He was drawn to the camera as a child, beginning at the age of six when he began shooting stills of the works of his father, Israeli artist Yaacov Agam. This priceless connection to the art community has played a major role in Ron Agam's education as an artist.

For many years, Ron was primarily known for his photography: portraits, still lifes, landscapes. In 2011, Ron Agam began a new career as a painter influenced by the works of Joseph Albers, Kazimir Malevich, El Lissitzky and other Russian constructivist painters of the past century. He presently integrates his work with technology and developing his artistic creativity towards what can be called "neo-kineticism". Ron Agam's perception is based on a cosmic vision of our existence where the elements of space and time are constantly in motion. The artist has adopted technology - mostly the digital world where pixels and shapes are often the link between the process and the creation - in order to create his 3-Dimensional Kinetics.

## Nasrollah Afjei (1933 - )

Born in 1933 in Tehran, Nasrollah Afjei is an internationally renowned Iranian artist. For over 27 years, Nasrollah Afjei has focused on the art of calligraphy, mastering abundant techniques and experimenting with a wide variety of materials. For his expertise and innovative works, he was awarded a First Degree Art Certificate by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Afjei's work was shown in several solo exhibitions since 1973, and numerous group exhibitions. His work was also featured in several international exhibitions and festivals.

## Alexander Calder (1898 - 1976)

Alexander Calder was born in 1898 in Lawnton, Pa., US. He attended the Art Students League, where he was influenced by artists of the Ash Can school. In 1926, Alexander Calder moved to Paris where he studied at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. This is where he made his first small figure of wire, wood and cloth. In spring of 1927 he set up a complete miniature circus with these figures, and performed shows that were visited by many Parisian artists. In early 1932, he exhibited his first moving sculpture in an exhibition organized by Marcel Duchamp, who coined the word "mobile". In May 1932, Calder's fame was consolidated by the first United States show of his mobiles. From the 1940's on, Calder's works, many of them large-scale outdoor sculptures, have been placed in virtually every major city of the Western world. Alexander Calder redefined sculpture by introducing the element of movement. In addition to his abstract mobiles, Calder also created static sculptures, called "stabiles", as well as paintings, jewelry, theatre sets, and costumes. His art was recognized with many large-scale exhibitions.

## Umberto Ciceri (1961 – )

Born in 1961 in Milan, Italy, Ciceri graduated from the Academy of Art and Fashion and the Textile Design University in Milan. For 25 years he conducted personal research on neurophysiology, perception and the biology of sight that would become the premise to his artwork.

Umberto Ciceri applies his early studies of neurophysiology and visual syntax to the construction of hypnotic art installations he calls "Hypertraits". Specializing in lenticular 3D, his panels feature silhouettes of figures and objects in seemingly perpetual motion. Perception is broken into a multi-step process, as viewers must first concentrate their attention to the out-of-focus figures, before physically shifting their sight across to experience the movement of the artwork. Ciceri describes the use of lenticular technology in his work to "provoke and trigger intense creative participation" as a key mechanism of his artistic process. Here, the observer becomes the engine of the work.

## Jean Dubuffet (1901 – 1985)

Jean Dubuffet was born in 1901, in Le Havre, France. He attended art classes in his youth and in 1918 moved to Paris to study at the Académie Julian, which he left after six months. During this time, Jean Dubuffet met Raoul Dufy, Max Jacob, Fernand Léger, and Suzanne Valadon and became fascinated with Hans Prinzhorn's book on psychopathic art. Then Dubuffet gave up painting for about ten years, working as an industrial draftsman and later in the family wine business. He committed himself to being an artist in 1942.

He was attracted to the art of children and the mentally ill, and did much to promote their work, collecting it and promulgating the notion of art brut. His early work was influenced by that of outsiders, but it was also shaped by the interests in materiality that preoccupied many post-war French artists associated with the art informel movement. In the early 1960s, he developed a radically new, graphic style, which he called "Hourloupe", and would deploy it on many important public commissions, but he remains best known for the thick textured and gritty surfaces of his pictures from the 1940's and 1950's.

Dubuffet's first solo exhibition was held at the Galerie René Drouin, Paris, in 1944; the Pierre Matisse Gallery gave him his first solo show in New York in 1947. During the 1940s, the artist associated with André Breton, Georges Limbour, Jean Paulhan, and Charles Ratton, and his style and subject matter owed a debt to Paul Klee.

## Sam Francis (1923 – 1994)

If it can be said that the exiled elite of the 1920's was made up of writers, one must conclude that those having crossed the Atlantic in the fifties were essentially artists. Sam Francis was one of these. Born in 1923 in California, Sam Francis arrived in France in 1950 after graduating from the San Francisco School of Fine Arts. He quickly bonded with other American artists: Joan Mitchell, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Shirley Jaffe, James Bishop, Ellsworth Kelly...

Influenced by Pierre Bonnard, Sam Francis created his own style: a space where emptiness has been subtly shaped and where light is studied. He is, without a doubt, the most French of all American painters. A style of painting, referred to as lyrical abstraction, which uses dripping; a bit of Jackson Pollock without the violence of action painting. Sam Francis was drawn to the concept of Japanese zen where students are subjected to a certain mental discipline based on concentration. With nothing less than genius, Sam Francis brings us face to face with Monet's obsessive painting of his famous "Water lilies" and his "Marines de Turner". His wide-open spaces dotted with colour are easily identifiable and make this painter, who still enjoys the highest of ratings, a master of colours.

## Katrin Fridriks (1974 – )

Born in 1974 in Reykjavik, Iceland, Katrin Fridriks is a conceptual painter. Painter of the abstract, she combines the natural energies of her native Iceland with an explosive, however organic, abstract expressionism and subtle Japanese calligraphy signs, often filtered through conceptual installations. Through a wide range of works, Katrin Fridriks distills her questioning about our world, human life and the future. Among others themes such as the genetic code and classification through the "Gene&Ethics" series, she explores the flux of information and the notion of "awareness" in our technology-based time; or the natural resources expressing the consequences of human activities on Earth she calls "Mother nature". Based on an endless exercise on the matter and technique, some of her series are constantly reworked, making her paintings evolve over time. Through this artistic continuum, Katrin Fridriks' recent works include perspective studies of her black and white series: "Gene&Ethics" and "Stendhal Syndrome" as well as of her "Crayons" and "Lollipop" series.

Katrin Fridriks artworks are exhibited internationally (London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles...) in galleries, fairs and museums.

## Óli G. Jóhannsson (1945 – 2011)

Born in 1945 in Akureyri Iceland, Óli G. Jóhannsson studied arts and graduated in his hometown.

Jóhannsson's painting is an art that is definitively inseparable from Iceland and its natural environment and shows impeccable technique. An instinctive painter, he didn't have any concrete theories about painting and preferred to rely on his brushes. He used to say: "sometimes I don't really know what I'm going to do when I begin a painting".

Óli G. Jóhannsson's artworks have been exhibited on an international level in Paris, London, New York, Singapore and Dubai among other locations.

## Eduardo Guelfenbein (1953 – )

Eduardo Guelfenbein was born in Santiago, Chile, in 1953. After attending school in Great Britain, he moved to Milan, Italy to attend the Accademia delle Belle Arti where he graduated with a Masters Degree in Art. His art eventually led him to Paris, France, where he now resides. Guelfenbein's vibrant canvases draw inspiration from a mixture of South American expression mixed with European music and culture. With a signature style best described as thick abstractions of melding acrylic colours on canvas, his focus has evolved towards the exploration of colour as form, where the "medium is the message". Each canvas is a manifestation of a mood, led by the fluid strokes of his paintbrush. Since being launched onto the international platform, his bold style has drawn praise from collectors around the world.

## Hans Hartung (1904 – 1989)

Hans Hartung was born in 1904 in Leipzig, Germany into an artistic family. He studied painters like Corinth and Nolde and also learned the basis of cubism and French painting. Studying both in Leipzig and Dresden, he reproduced the paintings of the masters; he then entered the Fine Arts academies of Dresden and Munich. His first painting exhibition was held in 1931 in Dresden. In 1935 when he attempted to sell paintings while visiting Berlin, the police tried to arrest him. He was able to flee the country with the help of his friend Christian Zervos. He was rejected from Nazi Germany on account of being a "degenerate", because his painting style was associated with cubism - an art movement incompatible with Nazi Germany's ideals. After 1947 he became a more important painter in France. That year he exhibited his paintings for the first time in Paris. In 1960 he was awarded the International Grand Prix for Painting at the Venice Biennial. Hartung was featured in the 1963 film documentary "School of Paris: (5 Artists at Work)" by American film maker Warren Forman.

## Damien Hirst (1965 – )

Born in 1965 in Bristol, Damien Steven Hirst is an English artist, entrepreneur and art collector. He is the most prominent member of the group known as the Young British Artists (or YBAs), who dominated the art world in Britain during the 1990s. An internationally renowned artist, he is reportedly Britain's richest living artist. Death is a central theme in Hirst's art works. A 14-foot (4.3 m) Tiger Shark immersed in formaldehyde in a clear display case became an iconic artwork for British artist in the 1990's. Damien Hirst made certain controversial statements including when he reflected on the 9/11 events. His art expresses a strong personality.

## Yayoi Kusama (1929 – )

Born in 1929 in Matsumoto in Nagano, Yayoi Kusama produced her first artworks representing pop art (drawings, watercolours) in the 1950's, by endlessly repeating units derived from hallucinations of her childhood, such as peas, which became her trademark. In 1957 she left Japan to live in New York where she participated indirectly to the development of the movements of psychedelic and pop art. In 1960, she launched the movement's manifesto and said: "My life is a pea lost among thousands of other fish". Her work in pop art varied from photos, collages, installations; and Kusama collaborated with Joseph Cornell, Jasper Johns, Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, Claes Oldenburg and Andy Warhol. She gained fame thanks to her installations with mirrors, red balloons, toys - among which she often featured personally too. Mentally incapacitated, she returned permanently to Japan in 1973, and has been living in a psychiatric hospital in Tokyo since then. In 2009, she signed a collaboration with KDDI - one of the top mobile operators in Japan - for the design of three mobile phones. In 2012, she created a fashion collection for the Louis Vuitton brand.

## André Lansky (1902 – 1976)

Born in Moscow in 1902, André Lansky was one of the foremost abstract painters of the post-war École de Paris, and in the words of the influential critic Pierre Guéguen: "one of the greatest of all abstract painters". In 1921 he flees to Paris. There, André Lansky meets other Russian artists and starts to paint after he enrolls at the Academy of the Grande-Chaumière. He discovers the work of Vincent Van Gogh, Henri Matisse and becomes friends with Chaïm Soutine who will influence his work at this time. He starts to paint landscapes, still lifes and portraits. In 1923, he participated in the 'Blow' exhibition of Russian artists. He exhibited at the Paris Salons, had one-man shows in Paris galleries.

Lansky's work from this early period consisted of bold figurative compositions, but from 1937 he began to explore abstraction. Striving to disengage figuration, he achieved his first abstract works in 1940. After 1942, he painted only abstract works. The interaction of form and colour became the major theme running through his oeuvre. Lansky's success as an abstract painter was fully endorsed when he began a sixteen year-collaboration with Louis Carré, who was already showing Picasso, Matisse, Hartung and Soulages.

## Marcello Lo Giudice (1955 – )

Born in Taormina, Sicily, Marcello Lo Giudice is an Italian contemporary artist. He graduated with a degree in Geology from Bologna University and attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, studying under three protagonists of Italian Art of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Emilio Vedova, Giuseppe Santomaso and Virgilio Guidi.

After experimenting in conceptual art during the 1970s, experimenting with wax, strawberries, smoke and burned paper, the artist began an original research project that led him to develop a painting style "where light's energy blends with metamorphism of the material to create remote geological views," as French art critic and co-creator of New Realism, Pierre Restany, said about his work. Quickly recognized as an artist with international spirit and extent, he has exhibited his works worldwide in galleries, fairs and public and private collections.

## David Mach (1956 – )

David Mach was born in 1956 in Scotland. An artist famous for his love of the "larger-than-life", David Mach's unique style consists of the obsessive use of everyday items. Typically, this includes magazines, postcards, matchsticks and even metal hangers. His creations reveal the metamorphosis of simple, ordinary objects into spectacular works of art: metal hangers become a gorilla that is three meters tall; Betty Boop's head is created with matchsticks; tributes to Matisse, Van Gogh and Picasso; Mach even used postcards of Marilyn Monroe that mix and mingle to form a portrait of Mao. David Mach's work points an accusing, albeit humorous, finger at excessive mass consumption while revealing all the beauty of the day-to-day, transforming the ordinary into extraordinary. In the early 1980's, Mach started to produce some smaller-scale works assembled out of unstuck matchsticks. Some of his permanent public works include Out of Order in Kingston upon Thames, the Brick Train (a depiction of an LNER Class A4 steam engine made from 185000 bricks) and the Big Heids visible from the M8 between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

## Umberto Mariani (1936 – )

Umberto Mariani was born in Milano, Italy, in 1936. His family home was used as a refuge for Jews persecuted during World War II. The war left lasting impressions on him, particularly in the last months of 1945, and henceforth his works are in continual evolution. Mariani's first phase is marked by the presence of bright colours dominating the pieces. His recent works show a complex use of shadows using white and black drapery, his alphabet letters and the embossed symbols, all signs of a dramatic semantic ambiguity of a language not always decipherable.

## Georges Mathieu (1921 – 2012)

Georges Mathieu was born at Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, in 1921. Mathieu studied literature and philosophy before switching to art at the age of twenty-one. He was one of the first Europeans to organise painting group shows, in order to demonstrate the importance of American abstract expressionism. He was particularly interested in Jackson Pollock and his spontaneous gestural handling of painting. From 1954, Mathieu staged the painting of large-scale works as theatrical events, culminating in his using 800 tubes of paint to create a painting measuring 4 x 12 metres in front of an audience of 2000 people at the Theatre Sarah-Bernhardt in 1956. As an artist he continued to perform his action painting throughout Europe and in 1957, in Tokyo to universal acclaim; his works were shown at special exhibitions in Paris and New York in 1950 and 1952. Early in the 1960's Mathieu also made some sculptures and designed furniture, tapestries and frescoes.

## Joan Miró (1893 – 1983)

Born in 1893 in Barcelona, Joan Miró was a Spanish Catalan painter, sculptor, and ceramicist. In numerous interviews dating from the 1930's onwards, Miró expressed contempt for conventional painting methods as a way of supporting bourgeois society, and famously declared an "assassination of painting" in favour of upsetting the visual elements of established painting. Joan Miró was originally part of the Generation of '27, a collective made up of Spanish poets, writers, painters, sculptors and film makers. It is also important to note that Miró's surrealist paintings evolved out of "repression" much like all Spanish surrealist and magic realist works, especially since the Catalan ethnicity to which he pertained was subject to special persecution by the Franco regime. Also, Joan Miró was well aware of Haitian Voodoo art and Cuban Santería religion through his travels before going into exile. This led to his signature style of painting.

## Pierre Soulages (1919 – )

Pierre Soulages was born in 1919, in Rodez, a French region where prehistoric and Romanesque artefacts abound. This art had a profound influence on his work. Pierre Soulages went to Paris in 1938, where he saw the exhibitions of Picasso and Cézanne, and briefly studied at the École des Beaux-Arts.

Soulages's career as a painter began in 1946, when he and his wife, Colette, moved to Paris. Within a year he became known for his bold black-and-white abstractions. Self-taught and independent of any artistic movement, he explored the painter's means of expression and developed his own non-descriptive and poetic style.

Abstract painting, which until the war had been a peripheral mode of expression in France, was at this time emerging as the new French style. Soulages was one of the painters responsible for this development. Around 1955 he started to paint with looser, slashing brushstrokes, later sometimes with more fluid washes of colour. He has been awarded one of four equal main prizes for painting at the 1964 Pittsburgh International.

## Antoni Tàpies (1923 – 2012)

Antoni Tàpies was born in Barcelona in 1923 and showed artistic talent from an early age. During the Spanish Civil War, Tàpies remained in Barcelona, witnessing terrible horrors and remaining deeply disturbed for the rest of his life by the suffering he witnessed. In 1942, having recovered from a serious illness following a heart attack, he started making copies in oils of works by Van Gogh and Picasso. He studied law at Barcelona University from 1943 to 1946, then gave this up to devote himself to painting. In 1945-47, he made many works with thick impasto, collages, found objects and graffiti.

His early work drew inspiration from "primitive" children's art and the Surrealists, whose work he was introduced to by Spanish art journals. Later, Tàpies was drawn to the art informel movement and in turn abstract expressionism whilst exhibiting for the first time in New York in 1953. This new style, corporeal and visceral, expressed Tàpies' unquenchable thirst to reflect the unsettling incertitude of the human condition.

His frequent use of assemblage – particularly the recurring use of windows, doors and beds – became signature motifs in his work. Their familiar and humble attributes reflect Tàpies' deep concern with a personal yet universal introspection, catalyzed by the spirituality of the material world.

## Victor Vasarely (1906 – 1997)

Vasarely was born in 1906 in Pecs, Hungary. He initially studied medicine, but soon abandoned the field to take up painting at the Podolini-Volkman Academy. Victor Vasarely is known as a founder of optical art. In 1928-29, he enrolled at Sándor Bortnyik's Műhely. At the Műhely, Vasarely became acquainted with the formal and geometrical styles of Paul Klee and Vasily Kandinsky and with William Ostwald's theory of colour scales.

Vasarely went through a number of different styles before finding his groove in op art. During his start as a graphic designer, he was influenced by the artists of the Bauhaus and early abstract expressionism. He took these principles to new levels of geometric precision and fostered the op art movement. His brilliant works went mainstream, in the forms of posters and fabrics. Not lacking in confidence, Vasarely used the proceeds to design and build his own museum in France. During the 1960's and 70's, his optical images became part of the popular culture, having a deep impact on architecture, computer science and fashion. The official spiral-shaped logo of the 20<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games in Munich was designed by Vasarely.

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Gate Village Building 3, Dubai International Financial Centre, Dubai.T +971 (0)4 323 0909 [dubai@operagallery.com](mailto:dubai@operagallery.com)