

**NEW  
REALITIES  
IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup>  
AND 21<sup>ST</sup>  
CENTURY**

OPERA GALLERY

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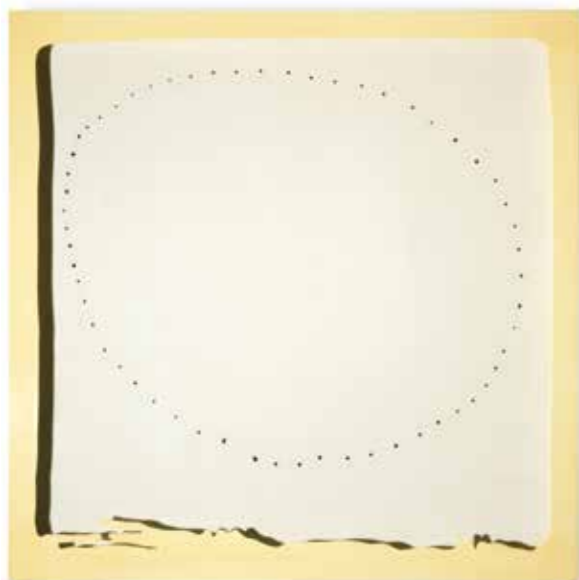
OPERA GALLERY



## NEW REALITIES IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Niépce and Daguerre did not invent light, but rather captured it in a photographic cage where nature could be kept imprisoned. Artists have often used Kepler's *camera obscura* or Wollaston's *camera lucida*, but neither of these rooms, dark or light, were able to keep the light at bay. In pictorial art, lighting is a mental production; an imaginary luminosity.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, creators of visual worlds, liberated from the real yet inventors of new realities, wholeheartedly agreed with the game of dismantling, not only the forms, but also the colours of the solar spectrum.



Lucio Fontana *Concetto Spaziale (Teatrino)*, 1965

In this presentation in Hong Kong, starting with white light which is not yet decomposed, Fontana discerns a circle of points that trace an appearance of sacred space (*Concetto spaziale – teatrino*, 1965); whereas Zao Wou-Ki (*02.05.2004*) and Lee

Ufan (*With winds*, 1988) throw themselves into almost monochrome snowy stretches, where Frank Stella has already introduced pale apparitions of aurora borealis outlining the polar circularity (*Polar co-ordinates II*, 1980).

The whiteness of the dawn only remains on the sides of two barques, two eyes still half closed floating on a sleepy sea waking up in light coffee colour, which Tàpies paints in a slightly lacklustre mirror (*Autoretrat marró*, 1982) and which Noland criss-crosses in a soft cover in autumnal hues (*Leaves*, 1973).

In the bronzing dawn, Vasarely cuts out powerful and sombre hypothetical characters who are making slow progress (*Chillian K*, 1952-1964). He also constructs two square windows which are inversely diffracting colourless clarity in parallel black and blue radiations (*Yabla*, 1956-1976), whereas Dubuffet, contaminating these same lengths of waves with scarlet, inserts an alien (*Promenade agreste*, 1972), or confuses the whole screen (*Mire G 184 – Boléro*, 1984).

Does the blue finish triumphant, when Bonalumi makes the sky reflect onto the metallic door of a changing room locker (*Blu*, 1966)? Reyle disrupts this beautiful allure with shadowy hollows, the coldness of a firmament on a metal sheet of paper (*Untitled – Turquoise*, 2013). And Matta, the surrealist engaged on the imaginary pathway that privileges psychic automatism in his *Composition*, 1971, reminds us that, according to the proverb, the marvellous is always beautiful. Riopelle's undoubtedly Londonian fog disperses the impression of a cathedral at its blue heart (*St Paul*, 1966).

Lansky separates day and night, leaving multicoloured kites spinning in the heart of the



Simon Hantaï *Étude (Study)*, 1971

sky (*Étude pour une mosaïque*); then, making out these same dreams of textile birds in the almost total obscurity of a giant hurricane (*Untitled*, 1952), that are equally reproduced by Nicolas de Staël (*Composition*, 1942). Red became the view of a sunrise that Hantaï also fills with innumerable insects or birds (*Étude – Study*, 1971).

Red is also the blood that Calder makes with the penetrating impact of the trajectory of a black spiral splash (*Good shot*, 1974), or even that which colours the sidereal space illustrated with all the stellar stages, from the red giant to the white dwarf (*Three Lights and Five Blacks*, 1956); while mineral sparks from sombre flint cut through the white night the crescents of a fantasy black moon phrough the white night (*L'Obsidienne*, 1974).

Before the death of light, Matthieu traces, on a base of red alert, the encephalogram of a sun

which has already set in agony (*Gorgias*, 1958); whereas Miro dreams already of (*Femmes dans la nuit*, 1977), spindly silhouettes that are surrounded by wire barbed with stars, or made the dream of the fire-coloured phoenix, reborn under the magic of a green moon (*Untitled – Oiseau*, 1950).

Also green are the parallel contours that Kusama's brush makes, springing forth from a fluorescent fountain, and which are only a strange fruit, that is not yet transformed into the Halloween pumpkin (*Pumpkin – Green*, 2012). But the dreams and tricks are extinguished when the telluric powers explode (Chuh Teh-Chun, *Lointains Spirituels*, 2006), or in the magmatic rises which merge the fiery colours (gold and red) of magmatic flows with lines of black rocks (Sam Francis, *Untitled SFP 94-52, SFF 1726*, 1994; et *Untitled SFP 94-124, SFF 1794*, 1994), or even the displacement of tectonic plates (Poliakoff, *Composition abstraite circa 1966-67*).

The cosmic ballet of Katrin Fridriks's galactic projections illuminates the space-time contours that Soulages tries to extinguish, by dressing a monochrome wall with the immense black hole of a death of light, where the obscure painting is only a relief of scratches that the artist has condemned to the sealed dungeon. And what if this *Peinture*, 29 mars 1981 was only the burial of pictorial art, the end of an infinite quest of all the colours, of the interior light?

A strong sign about Katrin Fridricks has been conveyed to me through memory from years ago. I would like to discuss the last conversation I had with Pierre Restany\* before he died. He was hospitalised

\* Pierre Restany (1930 – 2003) was an internationally known French art critic who created the idea of Nouveau Réalisme / New Realism alongside with Yves Klein, Arman and Jean Tinguely to name a few.



**Katrin Fridriks** Gene&Ethics - Masters, 2014/15

at the Bizet clinic in Paris. I would regularly call him to catch up on his news, and I remember very clearly a conversation we had in which he said, "So the bottom line is, you are advising me to have an active rest". "Exactly", I replied. "That's fine with me, there is a studio I must visit". I added, "Let me know how it goes." That must have been the last time that I heard his voice... Eleven years later, in June 2014, I met Katrin Fridriks, the artist whose studio he visited.

As soon as I realised, over the course of a conversation, that it was indeed this artist that he had mentioned, I asked to gain access to the recordings of this interview, even if they are very incomplete due to technical problems. My frequent visits to this "prophet of art" gives me the authority to understand the interview's essence. Without any doubt, Pierre Restany had been gripped by what he saw.

One should know that the critic had spent forty years on *L'Autre face de l'Art*, constantly searching for the expressive adventure of the many-faceted object. Of course, to see this abstract expressionism and a form of lyrical abstractionism resurface more than fifty years later, would bring a section of art which he had strongly opposed throughout his militant protest back into the limelight. He had written well on *Les Espaces imaginaires*, an exhibition of abstract painters that he curated. However, very quickly, the *breakdown*

of movement that he had presented in the fifties was found again at the very heart of his reflexion and succeeded in response, at the foundation of New Realism.

"One day perhaps like Mathieu or the painters of Action Painting you will have less freedom of expression". A self evident fact, to be sure, but he had also immediately realised that this artist had more than one trick up her sleeve and that she would also be able "to organise her language in sequences", meaning to develop "an autonomous language", which was the major and key element of all artistic processes for him. "In Iceland the proximity of the polar circle, the centre of world where nature speaks in the first person is a great purveyor of energy [...] Your language is closely linked to Reykjavik [...]" The visionary Pierre Restany understood straightaway that Katrin Fridriks was, surely, an artist descended from the semantics of Action Painting but also that she was principally an artist who was different.

We should add another episode to all that. On the advice of a friend, I took the time in May 2008 to move to the Olympic Water Park in Nîmes to explore *Mer Rouge*, a fresco. Little did I imagine that this work had been left there by the last visiting artist, by Pierre Restany. On the other hand, I had been very impressed by the visual impact of this fresco, a truly cosmic ship packed with energy, an orgy of colours, all of which was on one and a half tons of tiles covering eighty square metres in the building's great entrance hall. A work, which,

in its production, was the world's first to use this technology. An image in ultra high definition, of 1100 billion pixels, was developed for the occasion with a camera invented by Pioneer and exclusively operated by UHD Systems, of which there only existed very few examples in the world.

In a word, Katrin Fridriks didn't hesitate to use great methods in order to achieve her vision, and affirm out loud in her approach the wish to enrol in a contemporary reality. The postmodern condition is hungry for new communication rituals and for new language signs. Now, the artist is a young woman who lives fully in her time, not only on the level of effective research but also in the utilisation of all these technological methods which are offered to her today. We are a long way from Action Painting and from Georges Mathieu.

28 May 2014. Discussion for an action, in March 2015, in Hong Kong. I very quickly visit Katrin Fridriks's studio. Intense activity reins: assistants move around the building's High Priestess, talk a lot and help to resolve certain problems. Calm succeeds in invading spaces when we find ourselves sat alone, in a large room, right in the middle of a basement which is covered by paintings. The artist knows that I am familiar with China and with Chinese artists. Also, she is not surprised when I tell her that a possible project around Yin and Yang doesn't leave me unmoved. An intense and impassioned discussion leaves me with a glimpse of an adventure because I know how projects evolve over time.

I also learn that although she has never been part of Street Art, in June 2014 she has an ongoing installation-exhibition at the Lazarides gallery in London in which Steve Lazarides – founder and director – Banksy's former art dealer/ agent, collaborated with the Street Art star for ten years! Possibly more.

The narrative proposed by the young Icelandic artist, as much on the personal as the fictional unfolds in this environment that is so specific to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One cannot help but think, like Milan Kundera, "that it is difficult to have the smile of a happy man in the face of the word *progress*". And it was for this that the Icelandic artist ardently wished to see further today in her reflection. In a first reading, her tableaux can be approached like immense abstract landscapes, in the sense employed by Restany when he organised *Les Espaces imaginaires*, in 1957 at the Kamer Gallery. We know that landscapes were well represented well before the West, since the 5<sup>th</sup> century, as a traditional, autonomous genre in China. But more importantly still, landscapes are

at the very heart of the spiritual essence in Middle Kingdom.

In this work and the approach undertaken, the artist translates her immediate desire to participate in the cosmos. She looks to reach a balance from the "nonsense, the non-form and the non-object". Now, what is Yin and Yang for an artist if not above all the research of balance? The Chinese landscape must reveal the Tao that is hidden in nature, a concept that can also be translated by "harmonious route". Can we genuinely talk about harmony when we look at a work by Katrin Fridriks, where chaos is often omnipresent in a perpetually moving universe, defying the laws of gravity, where everything dislocates, explodes and subsides like a firework? Yes, if we place it on the ground of spiritual energy that she circles equally around and within herself. Let us recall that the works called "montagnes-eaux" in China express the incessant interaction of Yin (water) and of Yang (mountain) and that here too we can feel this energy.

Notwithstanding the innumerable texts we can access on this subject, we must recognise that few are comprehensible and accessible to the Western spirit. It is difficult for those of us who have the philosophical principles of Antiquity embedded in their body to imagine a world without God, worse still without this idea of the death of God. And to think as well of these concepts of Good and Evil, of Body and Spirit which don't seem to be an issue in China? The three Chinese wisdoms, with Confucianism shaped by internal rectitude and by social harmony, Taoism which advocates inaction and the energy of nature or even of Buddhism which is not a true religion in the sense in which we understand it, which are kind of difficult for us westerners to assimilate.

Nevertheless, in every conversation I have with Chinese artists, it is emphasised that when a tableau is good, Yin and Yang are balanced. Empty sections of canvas, where there seems to be ink missing, are in fact obtained thanks to the given speed of the paintbrush. Furthermore, when these ideas are not mentioned, the balance of the proposed space is essential. Another element contributes to the richness of the work: the image must not have limits, boundaries. The sky is the best illustration of this. It should be like it is according to Lao Tseu, when one looks at an image which is *great*.

"A good calligrapher, himself, already has an image of his work before he starts it". Coherence can be obtained by the energy of the strokes. Energy is of major importance for the strokes. An energy which exudes from the Icelander's canvasses. Everything starts with the way you hold the brush. For



calligraphy you must hold the brush vertically to the paper. The strokes must be formed organically. The alternation between the “real and the empty” (the real are places through which the stroke passes, the empty are those which the stroke has avoided) should be treated with great care.

To be concerned to this extent by the principle of Order which presides over Tao, this ancient thought of more than two thousands years, can prove to be a perilous journey because Taoism rejects to a large extent discursive knowledge in favour of intuition. Lao Tseu knows, like all mystics, without having learnt it, to see what others don't see, to understand what others don't perceive. Katrin Fridriks's *Inside word* is, in part, situated within this idea. Consequently, we understand that the artist wants to make visible and not to reproduce some non-descript visible entity.

She is an artist who doesn't reveal the manufacturing secrets of her paintings. In order to construct her work she could have stopped with the formal features. But the artist wants to see greater and further in her approach. Because, last but not least, Katrin Fridriks's art is born in the great craftsmanship of 2000, consecutive to the explosion of the Internet. The current of merchandise and of information that flows continually, 24/7, doesn't exist without enacting profound upheavals in our societies. The presence of social networks, Facebook, Twitter and search engines, the importance of economic power associated with the voracity of finance contributes to a new environment which calls out to the artist and which she can interrogate herself. Contemporary art is very sensitive to this new world. In this “virtual cooking pot” where everything could explode from one moment to the next, how can the artist, after all, integrate her creative process? There is the whole question for the production of works that don't wish to stop in their simple form or materiality, and who want to overflow onto the conceptual terrain. It is indeed this procedural “reality”, that content which also interests the Icelandic artist in her approach. It is Adorno\*\* who talks of an art which is “autonomous and made social”. Katrin Fridriks lives intensely in her time and she wouldn't dream of putting on an exhibition without a true conceptual project which is based on her self. Since 2002, she created *Dust of galaxy*, a photo performance which says a lot about her intentions. It would be followed two years later, in Iceland, by *Energy flow*, an action type of Land Art, a rock of sand paint.

\*\* Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969) was a German philosopher and Sociologist. With Max Horkheimer, he is known for developing a theory criticizing the industrialization of culture.

In this way, each exhibition punctuates her artistic approach. She invents new spaces by presenting the installations like she has done recently. Certainly, putting on exhibitions for purely commercial reasons doesn't interest her. Each exhibition must have a demonstrative and didactic value.

I have had the privilege of discovering with her an immense magnifying glass, a little masterpiece of technical fulfilment, which she commissioned from the Carrafont Society who creates prototypes, models and design objects. This magnifying glass, a key element of the installation *Perception of the Stendhal Syndrome* will be exhibited from May 9<sup>th</sup> to the 22 November 2015 at the Palazzo Bembo in the project exhibition setting of the Global Art Affairs Foundation in Venice.

The magnifying glass will be suspended a certain distance away from the painting which will magically modify perception in an interactivity. We see ourselves alienated from Lao Tseu and fully enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is at once menacing and fascinating, in a new type of elsewhere. Because Katrin Fridriks produces work which doesn't want to stop at simple materiality, even if this is a self-evident conclusion for her. Thus she doesn't hesitate to follow this route, to invite the public to participate at the heart of her creation, an immersion that she provokes in order to arouse reactions by the visitor.

It isn't useless to remember a moment of history. At the end of the Second World War, the greats of abstraction, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Robert Delaunay and Paul Klee were already dead, but abstract art itself, is well and triumphant in Paris. In this, the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, things have changed a lot.

Visual System, a group of three people formed in 2007, reveals in their preface, in order to explain the nature of their proposition which was communicated to me because of their collaboration with Katrin Fridriks, that a “collection of 80 x 80 cm works which are composed of radiant three dimensional pixels will be presented. These tableaux, in aluminium, in simple shapes (square and round) are formed of hundreds of pixels of 3 x 3 cm. By their specific geometry they diffuse an indirect light which is intense but nevertheless soft and of a particular texture. Each pixel contains a controllable LED which can emit all the colours on the spectrum.” Visual System proposes living, moving and/ or pulsating, organic, kinetic tableaux despite the fact that they are composed of a very regular geometric framework. Each piece is always changing in the same way as the dialogue that they create with their environment (place, other works, public, etc.) changes. The geometric-graphic,



Katrin Fridriks Lollipop n1, 2015

abstract, luminous content that is disseminated plays with the adjacent works by Katrin Fridriks. Of the same format, they put on a mutual performance, opposing and relating the abstract impressionism and kinetic abstraction, pigments and wavelengths, day and night, Yin and Yang.

This meeting at the crossroads of art and of new technologies is a true celebration for the eyes. With Visual System we can't talk about colour but rather about colour events. Optical sensations are deliberately provoked. They make the viewer, trapped in some sense by another artistic device, have a new experience than that which is usually involved when admiring a painting. Artists like Cruz Diez, Agam, Vasarely, Soto, Schöffer had certainly opened the way. But the big difference is that they didn't have these fantastic resources which artists today have at their disposal.

The Icelandic artist knew how to present the infinite possibilities of telematics in the domain of visual language. She asked Visual System to work with her on an installation where each one of the protagonists arrived with their weapons. It was not without danger; the material immanence of the canvas's frontality contends with a double interactivity, that of the viewer and that which is both digital and technological, of the objects of Visual System's virtual aesthetics. She wanted to totally immerse herself in these elements which contribute to our urban culture, in a post modernity that is more and more present. And her images that are connected to memory find their natural place in this global culture. In this installation, created by two sets of hands, she can, in fact, offer a status of the image which transcends the consciousness of our relationship to this new world in which we no longer see all the immense and infinite possibilities.

Katrin Fridriks painting doesn't easily release those who look at it. Furthermore, she forces those viewers into a reading which is closer to the work and to a retinal, global insight that doesn't support distraction. The artist's armed writing hand discharges imprints and signs, boiling as if they were coming right out of the bowels of the earth. This work has caused a stir; it is a battle to offer support. All painting is therefore a vibration, a wave of colour which literally rages on the canvas in drawn out convulsions. An explosive art which finds its matrix in this native Iceland, an inexhaustible reservoir of impulsive energy. But also an art, which in the last few years, with for example *Riding awareness messenger molecule*, exhibited for the first time during Art 13 in London, in February 2013, at the Olympia Grand Hall with the Circle Culture Gallery, contributes to this period of intense activity where the artist plays on several registers, putting in place truly linguistic devices.

Katrin Fridriks has not stopped surprising us, and under the apparent diversity of her production, painting on the gestural whirlwind, on the edges of the imminence of chaos, land art, installations, the work is structured finely in its organic totality, all whilst interrogating a mythology of a world which is also the product of fantasies, of utopias, everything constituting the common ground of our imagination and of our realities.

**Dr Henry Périer**

Henry Périer holds a PhD in the History of Art; he is the author of numerous texts and the curator of independent exhibitions (A-Sun Wu, Bernard Buffet, Ladislav Kijno, Peter Klasen, Laurence Jenkell, Guy de Rougemont, Claude Viallat, Jacques Villeglé, amongst others...).

A specialist in contemporary Chinese art, he has been curator of the Year of China in France (2003-2004), of the Zhao Bandi Panda show at the Palais de Tokyo (2009) and scientific advisor for the retrospective Zeng Fanzhi at the Museum of Modern Art in the city of Paris (2013-2014).

He will curate the 56<sup>th</sup> Biennial exhibition of Venice for the Principality of Andorra in 2015.

# NEW REALITIES 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

AGOSTINO BONALUMI  
ALEXANDER CALDER  
NICOLAS DE STAËL  
JEAN DUBUFFET  
LUCIO FONTANA  
SAM FRANCIS  
SIMON HANTAÏ  
YAYOI KUSAMA  
ANDRÉ LANSKOY  
GEORGES MATHIEU  
ROBERTO MATTA

JOAN MIRÓ  
KENNETH NOLAND  
SERGE POLIAKOFF  
JEAN-PAUL RIOPELLE  
PIERRE SOULAGES  
FRANK STELLA  
ANTONI TÀPIES  
CHU TEH-CHUN  
LEE UFAN  
VICTOR VASARELY  
ZAO WOU-KI

**I Composition, 1942**

Signed and dated 'de Staël 42' (lower right)

Oil on canvas

37 x 45 cm - 14.6 x 17.7 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Galerie Drey, Nice  
Jacques and Madeleine Matarasso collection, Nice (1945)  
Briest, Hotel Dassault, Matarasso collection, 2000

**EXHIBITED**

Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne, Palais de Tokyo, Nicolas de Staël 1914-1955  
Nice, Galerie des Ponchettes, Peintures à Nice et sur la Côte d'Azur, 1960

**LITERATURE**

Jacques Dubourg & Françoise de Staël, Catalogue raisonné des peintures, ill. the exhibition catalogue No.4  
Françoise de Staël, Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint, No.12, ill. p. 181

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Nicolas de Staël was a French painter of Russian descent known for his thick impasto style and highly abstract paintings. Quickly recognized within the post-war art world, he became one of the most influential artists of the 1950s. After graduating from the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts of Brussels in 1932, the artist travelled throughout Europe, Morocco and Algeria before eventually settling in Paris in 1943. Influenced by the Post-Impressionists as well as the Dutch masters, de Staël's early works began in representation of landscapes, still life and portraits. The distinct, abstract style he developed later in the 1940s nod to the American Abstract Expressionism and French Tachisme, but remain intentionally independent of the two movements. Later in his career de Staël began moving away from abstraction and into a more French lyrical style, defined by thick palette knife strokes and division of canvas into zones of colour. This piece is from the series entitled *Compositions*, a group of paintings created between 1942 and 1951. The series is characterized by its progressive use of abstraction and dream-like qualities, employing thick blocks of colour and visceral brush movements.



**I Untitled, 1952**

Signed 'Lanskoy' (upper left)

Oil on canvas

97 x 195 cm - 38.2 x 76.8 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Switzerland

Sale: Pierre Bergé Bruxelles, 17 June 2008, lot 125

Private collection, Monaco

**LITERATURE**

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

**CERTIFICATE**

André Schoeller has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

André Lanskoy was a Russian painter most closely associated with the Abstract School of Paris and Tachism movement that began in the 1940s. Arriving in Paris after sustaining an injury during his military service in the Russian Civil War, Lanskoy began his painting career in the figurative style inspired by Van Gogh, Matisse and Soutine. By 1942 he was painting only abstract works, with the interaction of form and colour becoming a major theme in his works. This piece is an important example of an abstract composition from Lanskoy's post-war abstract period. The intensity and saturation of colours, tactile richness and compositional clarity creates a powerful impression on the viewer.



**I Étude pour une mosaïque, 1976**

Signed 'Lanskoy' (lower right)

Gouache and collage of painted papers

40 x 79.5 cm - 15.7 x 31.3 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Maurice Chassagne collection, France  
Sale: Christie's Paris, 11-12 Dec. 2007, lot 106  
Private collection, Europe

**CERTIFICATE**

André Schoeller has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

André Lanskoy was a Russian painter most closely associated with the Abstract School of Paris and Tachism movement that began in the 1940s. Arriving in Paris after sustaining an injury during his military service in the Russian Civil War, Lanskoy began his painting career in the figurative style inspired by Van Gogh, Matisse and Soutine. By 1942 he was painting only abstract works, with the interaction of form and colour becoming a major theme in his works. Lanskoy spent the latter part of his life on a magnanimous project of original prints and collages to accompany Nikolai Gogol's novel *Diary of a Madman*, an undertaking he worked on until his death in 1976. He is one of the most important exponents of Lyrical abstraction within the School of Paris, and was honoured with numerous exhibitions throughout his lifetime.

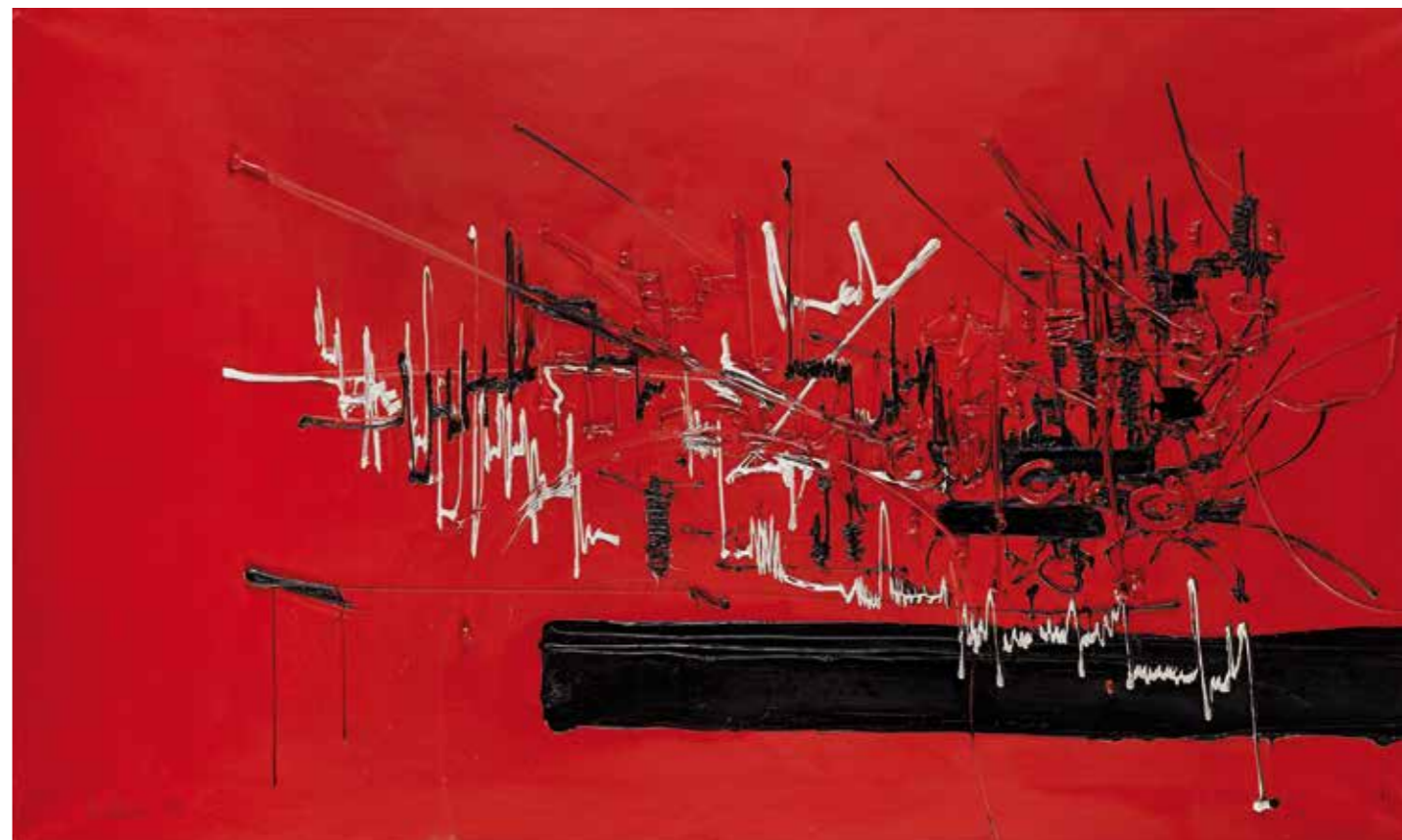
**I Gorgias, 1958**

Signed and dated 'Mathieu, 58' (lower right) titled

'Gorgias' (on the reverse)

Oil on canvas

98 x 162 cm - 38.6 x 63.8 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Kootz Gallery, New York  
Galerie Arditti, Paris  
Private collection, Paris

**EXHIBITED**

New York, Kootz Gallery, Mathieu, Paintings of 1958, April 1959

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Georges Mathieu was born in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, in 1921. A self-taught painter, he began his artistic career in 1942. Mathieu's early abstract investigation consisted of amorphous shapes and experimentation with drip techniques. In 1947 he resettled in Paris, and quickly became attracted to the works of artists such as Camille Bryen and Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze, which he referred to as Lyrical Abstraction. Within his first year in Paris he had organized *L'imaginaire* at Galerie du Luxembourg to promote the Lyrical Abstraction movement. Mathieu's own works were closely associated with Tachiste painters (from the French *tache*, meaning blot or stain), often squeezing paint directly onto the canvas and emphasizing the necessity of rapid execution to harness intuitive expression. He identified his work as aligned with abstract history painting, as many of his titles refer to events in French history. Mathieu's artistic experimentation expanded into performance art, often executing large canvases before an audience.

This painting exemplifies Mathieu's mode of gestural abstraction coupled with the calligraphic aspect that defined his work in the 50s and 60s. In this painting Mathieu's controlled execution can be sensed, starting from a single point and thrusting outwards in every direction.



**I Composition abstraite,  
circa 1966/67**

Signed 'Serge Poliakoff' (lower left)

Oil on canvas

130 x 97 cm - 51.2 x 38.2 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection Marcelle Poliakoff  
Galerie Melki, Paris  
Private collection, France

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Poliakoff archives under the reference No. 967033

**PUBLIC NOTES**

The Russian-born painter Serge Poliakoff was among the most important figures in the Tachisme movement that developed as a European counterpart to Abstract Expressionism in the wake of the Second World War.

An abstract colourist strongly influenced by his encounters with Robert Delaunay and Wassily Kandinsky, Poliakoff's mature works are characterised by the juxtaposition of irregularly shaped colour fields in the service of a style that rejected symbolic associations in favour of pure materiality.

*Composition Abstraite* consists of several loosely geometric shapes in vivid, roughly textured colours that obey an internal compositional logic. A keen student of the emotive properties of colour, the artist here employs the relationship between adjacent fields to develop an overarching composition premised upon visual rhythms and harmonies; variations on a theme that Poliakoff spent his career exploring.



**I Untitled (Oiseau), 1950**

Signed and dated 'Miró 1950' (on the reverse)  
 Oil, gouache, pastel, ink and charcoal on board  
 60.6 x 44.1 cm - 23.9 x 17.4 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York  
 Galería Theo, Madrid  
 Private collection, Japan  
 Russeck Gallery, New York & Palm Beach  
 Private collection, the United States (acquired from the above, 2002)

**LITERATURE**

Jacques Dupin, *Miró, Paris, 1962*, No. 770, ill. p. 558  
 Jacques Dupin & Ariane Lelong-Mainaud, *Joan Miró, Catalogue raisonné, Paintings, vol. III: 1959 - 1968*, Paris, 2000, No. 881, ill. in colour p. 169

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Alongside Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró was foremost among a great generation of Spanish artists whose innovations were key to the development of modernist painting. Miró is most closely associated with the Surrealist movement, though it is notable that he never formally joined the group for fear that it might constrain his impulses to innovate and experiment. His most important works explore the world of the unconscious, prioritising dreamlike symbolism over rational representation. Among his legacies is the use of "automatic drawing", of which he was among the first and arguably greatest practitioners, a means of freeing expressive gesture from the strictness of cogent thought.

This painting's eponymous bird is realised in four rings that spiral up from the centre of the canvas like an uncoiled spring, overseen by a sickle moon that situates it in an eerie landscape. The economy with which the central figure is realised is a startling example of Miró's technical control over an instinctive gesture. The enormous influence he would exert over Colour Field painters such as Mark Rothko and Robert Motherwell can be perceived in the shifting tones of the monochromatic red backdrop.





**I Personnage, oiseaux, 1971-1976**

Signed 'Miró' (lower right); dated and inscribed '27/VII/76. Personnage, oiseaux 12/XII/76./30/VI/71'

(on the reverse)

Watercolour, colour crayon, brush and India ink on paper  
63 x 42 cm - 24.8 x 16.5 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Pilar Juncosa, Palma (the artist's widow)  
Sale: Sotheby's, Madrid, 9 Dec. 1986, lot 27  
Sale: Sotheby's, London, 30 Nov. 1994, lot 242  
Private collection, Europe (acquired at the above sale)

**CERTIFICATE**

Jacques Dupin from ADOM (Association pour la défense de l'œuvre de Joan Miró) has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Alongside Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró was foremost among a great generation of Spanish artists whose innovations were key to the development of modernist painting. Miró is most closely associated with the Surrealist movement, though it is notable that he never formally joined the group for fear that it might constrain his impulses to innovate and experiment. His most important works explore the world of the unconscious, prioritising dreamlike symbolism over rational representation. Among his legacies is the use of "automatic drawing", of which he was among the first and arguably greatest practitioners, a means of freeing expressive gesture from the strictness of cogent thought.

This late watercolour exhibits much of Miró's familiar symbolism. The titular bird/man figure at the heart of the composition is described as an exploded ziggurat, with several biomorphic extensions describing what can arguably be interpreted as hair, feathers, eyes, breasts and wings. The instinctive immediacy of Miró's approach is apparent in the balled spirals of colour and the splatter of India ink, a black constellation around which everything else swirls. It is in the delicious ambiguity of the hybrid creature's features that Miró's talent for a twisted, dreamlike visual language is most apparent.



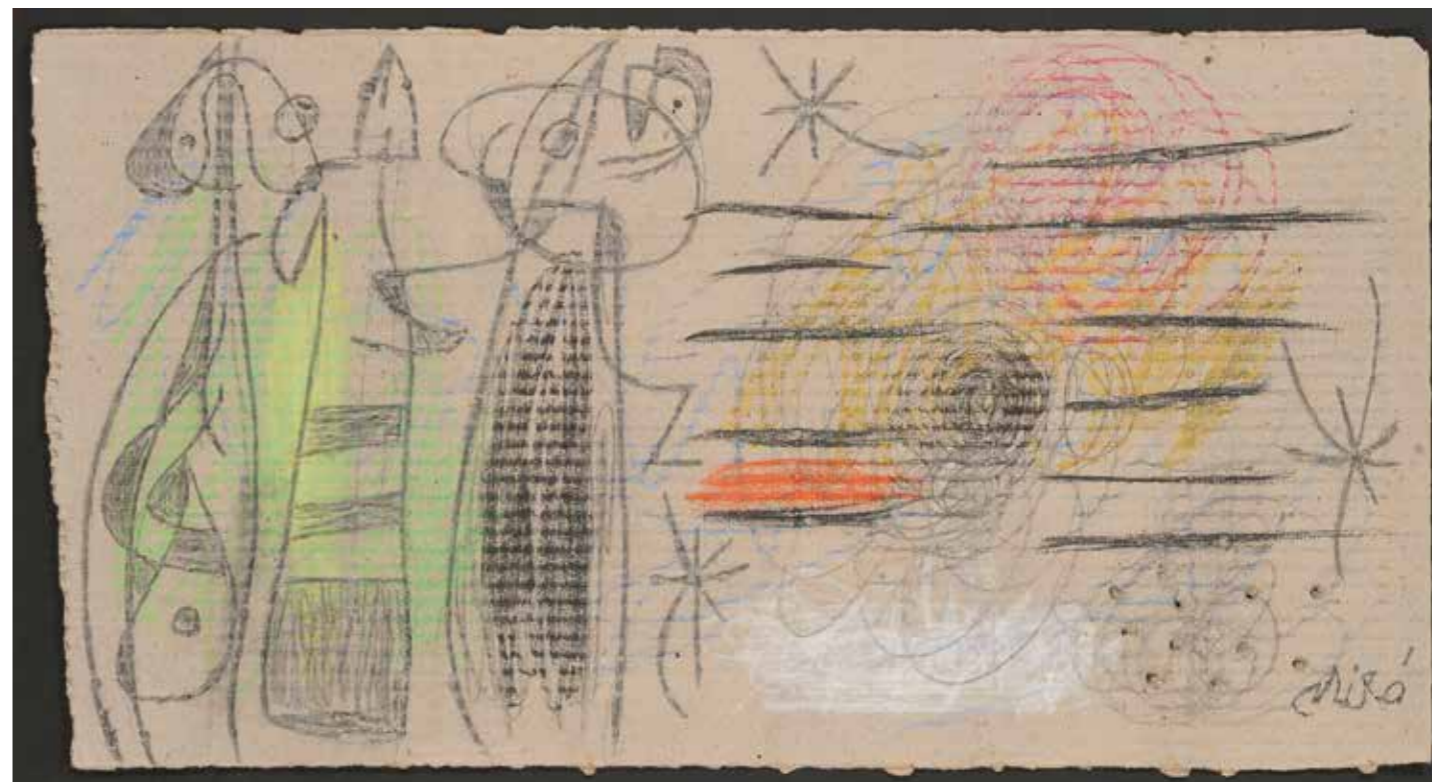
**I Femmes dans la nuit, April 1977**

Signed 'Miró' (lower right); dated and titled '14 IV/77

Femmes dans la nuit' (on the reverse)

Pastel, pencil and chalk on board

24 x 45.5 cm - 9.4 x 17.9 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Galeria Mayoral, Barcelona

Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco

Sale: Christie's, New York, 4 Nov. 2009, lot 154

Private collection, London

**LITERATURE**

This work will be reproduced in the Catálogo razonado de dibujos being prepared by the Successió Miró

**CERTIFICATE**

Jacques Dupin from ADOM (Association pour la défense de l'œuvre de Joan Miró) has confirmed the authenticity of this work

Joan Punjet Miró has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Alongside Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró was foremost among a great generation of Spanish artists whose innovations were key to the development of modernist painting. Miró is most closely associated with the Surrealist movement, though it is notable that he never formally joined the group, led by André Breton, for fear that it might constrain his impulses to innovate and experiment. His most important works explore the world of the unconscious, prioritising dreamlike symbolism over rational representation.

Among his legacies is the use of "automatic drawing", of which he was among the first and arguably greatest practitioners, a means of freeing expressive gesture from the strictness of cogent thought.

The calligraphic nature of *Femmes dans la nuit*, a late pastel and pencil on board creation, indicates the vivid biomorphic imagery for which Miró was renowned. The rounded shapes of women sprawled in undulating hues of colour symbolize the playful movement of the moment in which the women are captured, seemingly caught in that whirlwind of jubilation that takes place in the body while enraptured in dance.



**I Femme, Oiseau, 1979**

Signed 'Miró' (lower right)

Watercolour, India ink and crayola

195.6 x 40.6 cm - 77 x 16 in.

**PROVENANCE**

The Harcourts Collection, San Francisco  
Private collection

**EXHIBITED**

Tokyo, Japan, Isetan Museum of Art, Joan Miró, 24 Jan. - 12 Feb., 1980, ill. in the exhibition catalogue No. 106

**CERTIFICATE**

Jacques Dupin from ADOM has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Alongside Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró was foremost among a great generation of Spanish artists whose innovations were key to the development of modernist painting. Miró is most closely associated with the Surrealist movement, though it is notable that he never formally joined the group for fear that it might constrain his impulses to innovate and experiment. His most important works explore the world of the unconscious, prioritising dreamlike symbolism over rational representation. Among his legacies is the use of "automatic drawing", of which he was among the first and arguably greatest practitioners, a means of freeing expressive gesture from the strictness of cogent thought.

This late painting reflects the combined influence that American Abstract Expressionism and Japanese calligraphy had on Miró's artistic development from the 1960s onwards. Here, in his unmistakable iconic style, Miró explores the free gestures of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings with the artistically rendered symbols of calligraphic texts.



**I Three Lights and Five Blacks,  
1956**

Signed and dated 'Calder 56' (lower right)

Oil on canvas

55.9 x 81.3 cm - 22 x 32 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Gift from the artist  
Talcott and Polly Clapp, Connecticut  
Private collection, New York

**EXHIBITED**

New York, Perls Galleries, Calder, 6 February - 10 March, 1956  
New York, Tina Kim Gallery in conjunction with Vintage 20, Alexander Calder and George Nakashima,  
22 May - 28 June, 2008

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Calder Foundation archives, New York, under the reference No. A10411

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Alexander Calder was a legendary figure in American art and one of the greatest formal innovators of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The artist is best known for his 'mobiles'; kinetic sculptures made with a variety of delicately balanced components. Rejecting the emphasis on self-expression and spontaneity that pervaded artistic movements at the time, Calder favoured the mechanical and the pre-planned. His works explored what he referred to as the "physical bond between the varying events in life".

While the energy and dynamism of his kinetic works were of primary interest throughout his career, Calder also produced a series of important paintings that reflect the linear, open spheres of his sculptures. Suggestive of motion, the shapes on Calder's two-dimensional canvas seem suspended in air, resonating both with early constructivist art and the language of the abstract.



**I Peinture 114 x 146 cm,  
15 février 1954**

Signed and dated 'Soulages 54' (lower right); signed,  
titled and dated 'Soulages peinture 15/2/54'  
(on the reverse)  
Oil on canvas  
114 x 146 cm - 44.9 x 57.5 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Kootz Gallery, New York  
Private Collection, New York  
Private Collection, Spain  
Sale: Christie's London, 8 Feb. 2007, lot 44  
Private collection (acquired from the above)

**EXHIBITED**

New York, Kootz Gallery, Soulages, 1954  
Chicago, The Arts Club of Chicago, Mathieu-Soulages, 1954, No. 2  
Paris, Galerie de France, Soulages, 1956, No. 5

**LITERATURE**

Pierre Encrevé, Soulages, L'Œuvre complet - Peintures, Vol. I: 1946-1959, Paris, 1994, pp.172 and 293,  
No. 143, ill. in colour p.185

**PUBLIC NOTES**

At 95 years old, Pierre Soulages is France's most famous, most popular and most successful living painter. Born in 1919, the abstract painter was known throughout the 1950s and 1960s as a French parallel to the American Abstract Expressionism of artists like Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning, with whom he worked intimately during his time in New York. His childhood fascination with prehistoric art is evident in his dark paintings, dubbed "outrenoir", or beyond black. Known today as the "painter of black", Soulages has obsessively worked with this non-colour since the beginning of his career, gaining him international recognition as one of the first painters to develop new style of post-war abstraction. Even in his later works the prolific artist continues to investigate the depth and light so deeply connected to his signature paintings.

I **Concetto spaziale, 1955-1960**

Inscribed 'L. Fontana' (lower right)

Painted and glazed ceramic

39 x 28.5 x 3.8 cm - 15.4 x 11.2 x 1.5 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Milan

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Lucio Fontana archives, Milan, under the reference No. 2709/3

**PUBLIC NOTES**

As the art historian Erika Billeter has put it, Lucio Fontana "challenged the very history of painting", marking not only its end but also a new beginning. The founder of Spatialism, a grandiose notion promoting the ideas of art as gesture or performance rather than the creation of one's physical work, Fontana attempted to synthesize colour, sound, space, movement and time into a new type of art.

*Concetto spaziale* forms part of a series of ceramic sculptures Fontana produced in the mid to late 1950s, works in which he developed his exploration of materiality and space. The outer edges of the ceramic sculpture are almost black; its middle portion a murky green. The centre of the work has been punctured or cut, marking the movement of the artist's hand. This violent breach in the work's surface evokes a dark, mysterious and imaginary realm. For Fontana the hole evoked infinity. "Freed from rhetoric," the artist once claimed, "I lose myself in time and begin my holes".



**I Concetto Spaziale (Teatrino), 1965**

Signed and titled (on the reverse)

Waterpaint on canvas and lacquered wood frame

110.5 x 110.5 cm - 43.5 x 43.5 in.

**PROVENANCE**

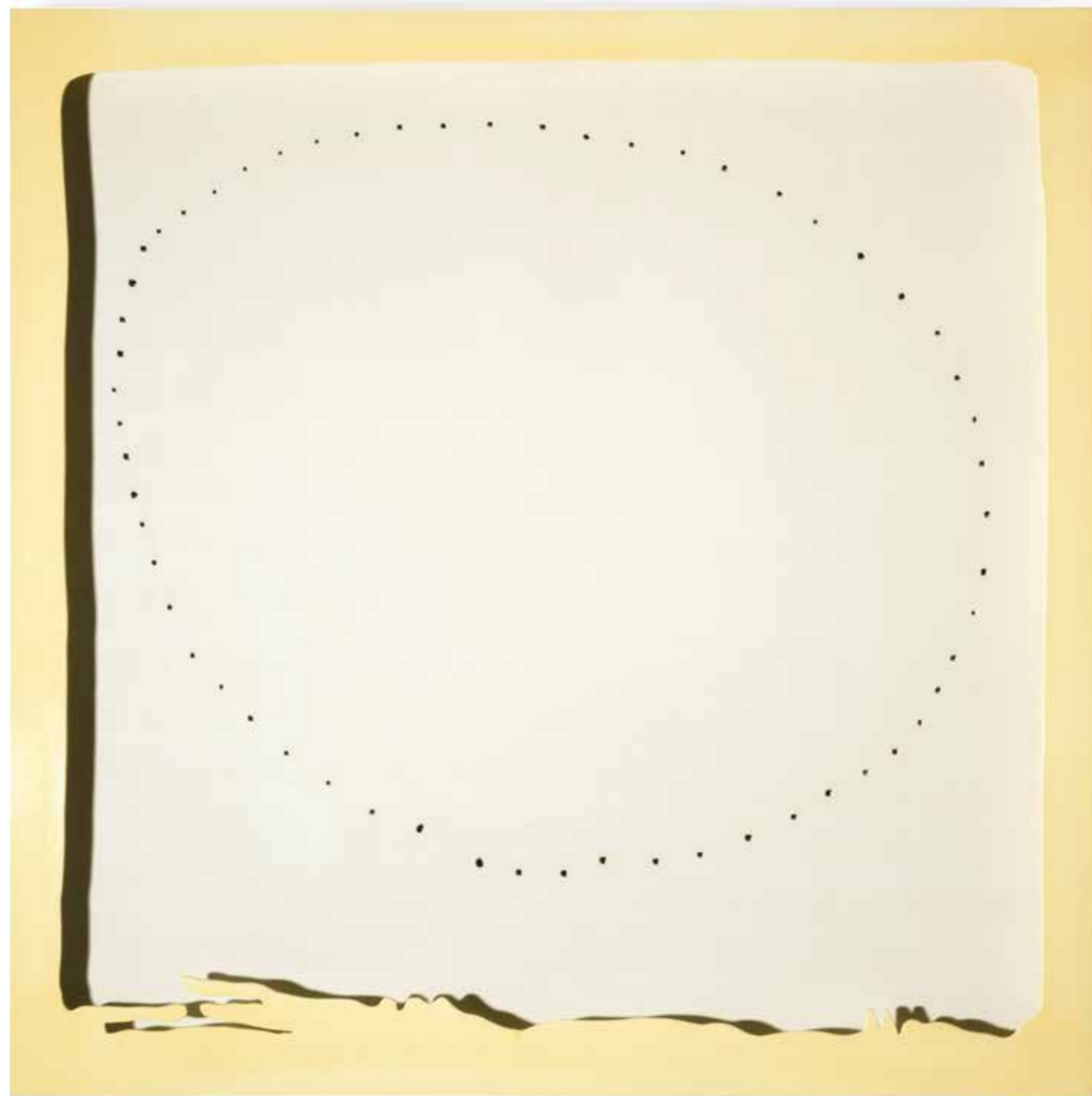
Alexander Iolas Gallery, Paris

Private collection (acquired from the above, 1974)

**LITERATURE**Enrico Crispolti, Lucio Fontana, *Catalogo Generale*, vol. II, Milan 1974, ill. p. 168, No. 65 TE 13Enrico Crispolti, Lucio Fontana, *Catalogo Generale*, vol. II, Milan 1986, ill. p. 592, No. 65 TE 13Enrico Crispolti, Lucio Fontana, *Catalogo Generale*, vol. II, Milan 2006, ill. p. 778, No. 65 TE 13**PUBLIC NOTES**

Lucio Fontana is celebrated as the founder of Spatialism, an art movement created in Milan in 1947 that attempted to synthesize colour, sound, space and movement. Argentinian born, the Italian painter, sculptor and theorist's introductory manifesto repudiated the illusory space of traditional aisle painting, seeking instead to promote ideas of gestural art in "real space" using technological imagery such as neon lights and television.

*Concetto Spaziale (Teatrino)* is an arresting example of Fontana's late *Teatrini* series, or 'little theatres'. Here, the lacquered wooden frame resembles a stage, emphasizing the act of looking, while the perforated circle on paper oscillates in the foreground to create a lively shadow play. The white canvas exemplifies the purity Fontana sought to achieve in art. Fontana's initiatives in Spatialism are often cited as precursors to Environmental Art.



**I Chillan-K, 1952/1964**

Signed, dated and titled 'Vasarely Chillan-K, 1952/1964' (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

105 x 101 cm - 41.3 x 39.7 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Jan-Eric Löwenadler, Stockholm  
Private collection, Sweden  
Solin Konsthandel, Stockholm  
Sale: Sotheby's London, 22 June 2007, lot 138  
Private collection, Europe

**LITERATURE**

This work will be included in the forthcoming Victor Vasarely Catalogue raisonné being prepared by Michèle-Catherine Vasarely

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Victor Vasarely was a Hungarian-French artist born in 1906, widely known as the father of the short lived Op Art movement. The style, defined by its use of optical illusions, is an abstract theme based on movement, line interference and illusions to fool the eye of the viewer. This piece marks the beginning of Vasarely's exploration of abstract art. Working with a strictly defined palate of colours and forms, Vasarely began a serial art series, an endless permutation of forms and colours produced by standardized tools and actors, thus questioning the authenticity of art and creation.





**I Yabla 1956/1976**

Signed 'Vasarely' (lower right); signed, dated and titled 'Vasarely Yabla, 152 x 72, 1956 /76' (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

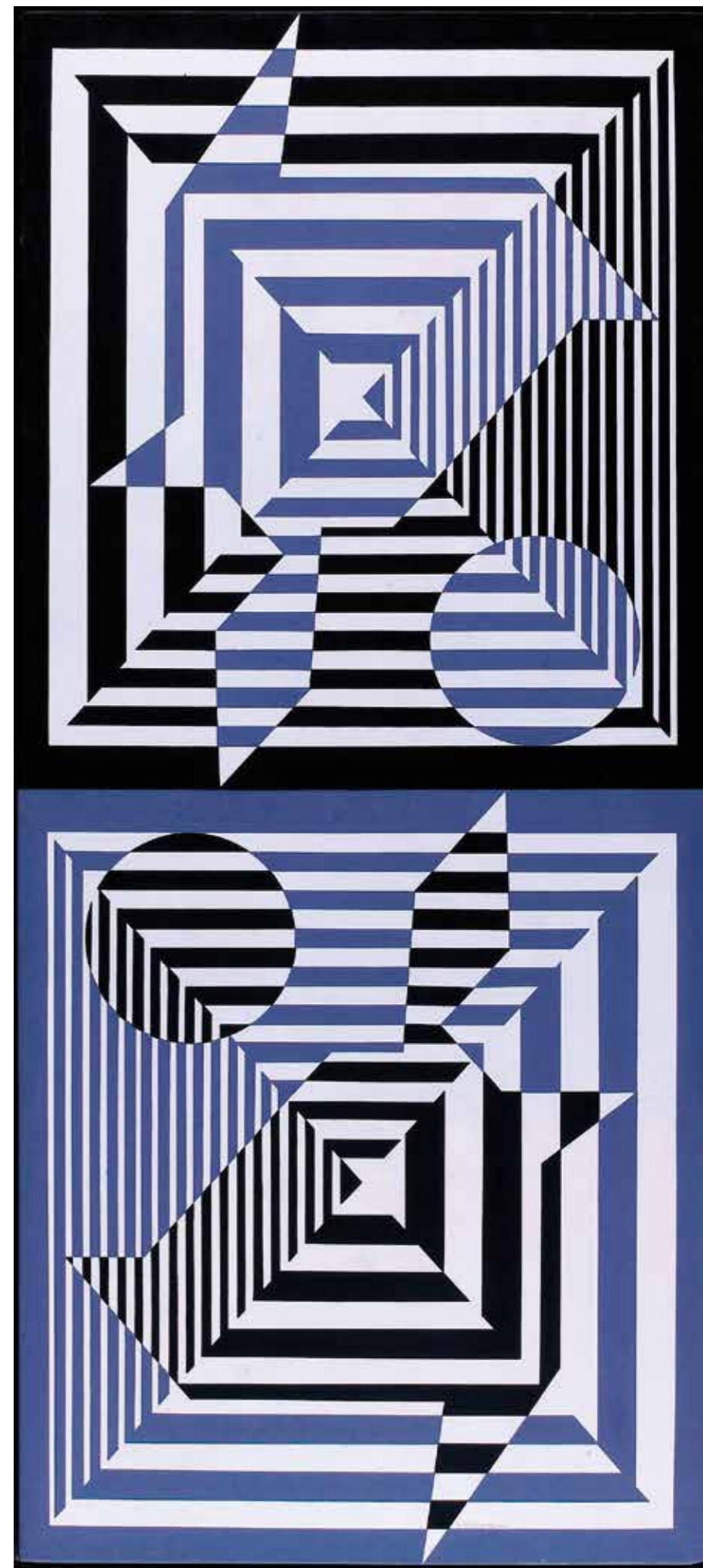
152 x 72 cm - 59.8 x 28.3 in.

**CERTIFICATE**

Michèle-Catherine Vasarely has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Victor Vasarely was a Hungarian-French artist born in 1906, widely known as the father of the short lived Op Art movement. The style, defined by its use of optical illusions, is an abstract theme based on movement, line interference and illusions to fool the eye of the viewer. In the late 1950s Vasarely patented his method of *unités plastiques*, whereby permutations of geographic forms are cut out of a coloured square and rearranged, as can be seen in the monochromatic *Yabla*. The abstract transparencies and the hallucinatory aspect of black and white lines are hypnotizing, challenging the visual capacity of the viewer.



**I Blu, 1966**

Signed, dated and titled 'A. Bonalumi 66 Blu N. 23 G'  
(on the reverse)

Shaped canvas and vinyl tempera  
70 x 60 cm - 27.6 x 23.6 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Haunch of Venison, New York  
Sale: Sotheby's, Milan, 25 Nov. 2003, lot 237  
Galleria d'Arte Orlor, Venice

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Bonalumi archives, Milan, under the reference No. 66-011

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Born in 1935 in Vimercate, Milan, Agostino Bonalumi was a self-taught painter and sculptor who became one of the leading members of the Italian *avant-garde* in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Along with artists such as Paolo Scheggi and Ugo La Pietra, Bonalumi sought an alternative to the Informal painting style that dominated the art scene at the time, preferring to develop the three-dimensional potential of the canvas. His unique spatial configurations, which the artist referred to as "Picture-Objects", sit somewhere between relief, sculpture and painting.

In *Blu* (1966), Bonalumi has prepared stretcher bars with a dynamic relief pressed against the back of the taut canvas. Various shapes seem to emerge out of the blue pictorial plane, pushing the surface of the canvas forward into the spectator's space. Demonstrating a sculptor's capacity for inventive three-dimensional forms, Bonalumi has enlivened the flat surface of the work with bulging pneumatic volumes and geometric patterns, radically reconfiguring the potential of the canvas.





**JEAN-PAUL RIOPELLE** [ 1923-2002 ]**I St. Paul, 1966**

Signed and dated 'Riopelle 66' (lower right); signed, titled and dated 'Riopelle 66 St. Paul' (on the reverse)

Oil on canvas

97 x 146 cm - 38.2 x 57.5 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Galerie Maeght, Paris  
Sale: Sotheby's London, 3 Dec. 1987, lot 643  
Private collection, USA

**LITERATURE**

This work will be reproduced in the Volume IV of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean-Paul Riopelle currently being prepared

**CERTIFICATE**

Iseult Riopelle has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Jean-Paul Riopelle was the first Canadian painter to attain widespread international recognition. He studied engineering, architecture and photography at the École Polytechnique in Montreal before shifting his studies to the less academic École de Meuble, graduating in 1945. He was a member of the Automatistes movement with Paul-Émile Borduas before beginning to experiment with non-representational painting in 1945. He moved to Paris in 1947 and was briefly associated with the Surrealists before his style changed to Lyrical Abstraction, when his powerful canvases became defined by a myriad of tumultuous shapes and multicoloured elements.

**I L'Obsidienne, 1974**

Signed and dated 'Calder 74' (lower right)

Gouache on paper

74.9 x 109.2 cm - 29.5 x 43 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Galerie Maeght, Paris  
Private collection, Milan (acquired from the above, 1974)  
Galerie Urban, Paris (acquired from the above, 1990)  
Paco Rebes, Paris (acquired from the above, 1990)  
Private collection (acquired from the above)

**LITERATURE**

Maurice Bruzeau, *Calder à Saché*, Paris, 1975, No. 144, ill. in colour p. 80

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Calder Foundation archives under the reference No. A06689

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Alexander Calder was a legendary figure in American art and one of the greatest formal innovators of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The artist is best known for his "mobiles"; kinetic sculptures made with a variety of delicately balanced components. Rejecting the emphasis on self-expression and spontaneity that pervaded artistic movements at the time, Calder favoured the mechanical and the pre-planned. His works explore what he referred to as the "physical bond between the varying events in life".

Produced two years before Calder's death, *L'Obsidienne* depicts three mask-like faces in red and black. The faces have been rendered in a few bold lines. Somewhere between primitive masks and floating moons, the three faces seem to be suspended on the pictorial plane. Significantly, the date of *L'Obsidienne*'s creation coincides with the release of the important film *Gouaches de Calder*, directed by Carlos Vilardebo, which introduced Calder's gouaches to a wider public and was met with great critical acclaim.



**I Promenade agreste, 1974**

Signed with the artist's initials and dated 'J.D. 74';  
signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)  
Acrylic-prepared vinyl paint on canvas  
195 x 100 cm - 76.8 x 39.4 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Galerie Beyeler, Basel  
James Goodman Gallery, New York  
Private collection, Belgium  
Sale: Sotheby's, London, 24 March 1993, lot 314  
Michael Cohen, New York  
Private collection (acquired from the above, 2000)

**EXHIBITED**

Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou  
Basel, Galerie Beyeler  
New York, Pace Gallery, Jean Dubuffet: Paysages castillans, Sites tricolores, Feb.- Oct. 1975, ill. in the exhibition catalogue No. 42 (Paris) and 19 (Basel and New York)  
Chur, Switzerland, Bündner Kunstmuseum, Dubuffet: Werkauswahl 1945 - 1975, March - April 1977, ill. in the exhibition catalogue No. 19  
Kunsthaus Zug, Jean Dubuffet: Bilder, Zeichnungen und Skulpturen aus dreissig Jahren, Jan.- March 1983  
New York, Weintraub Gallery, Jean Dubuffet: Paintings and Sculpture, April - May 1984  
New York, James Goodman Gallery, Summer 1984  
Basel, Galerie Beyeler, Jean Dubuffet: Retrospektive, Oct. 1985 - Jan. 1986, ill. in the exhibition catalogue No. 34

**LITERATURE**

Max Loreau, Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet, Fascicule XXVIII : Roman burlesque, Sites tricolores, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1979, No. 200, ill. p. 147

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Jean Dubuffet stands as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most innovative artists, seminal in the creation of an artistic vocabulary anchored in the realm of the primitive as a means of describing the world around him. Painted in December 1974, *Promenade Agreste* is a culmination of Dubuffet's *Hourloupe* series. Translated as 'rustic walk' and standing at an impressive 77 inches high, the sole figure is embedded in his hauntingly bucolic surroundings. Continuously captivating audiences with his artistic skill, colour and idiosyncratic designs, Dubuffet allows the viewer to complete the scene of savage yet elegant forms, and decipher each element on its own.



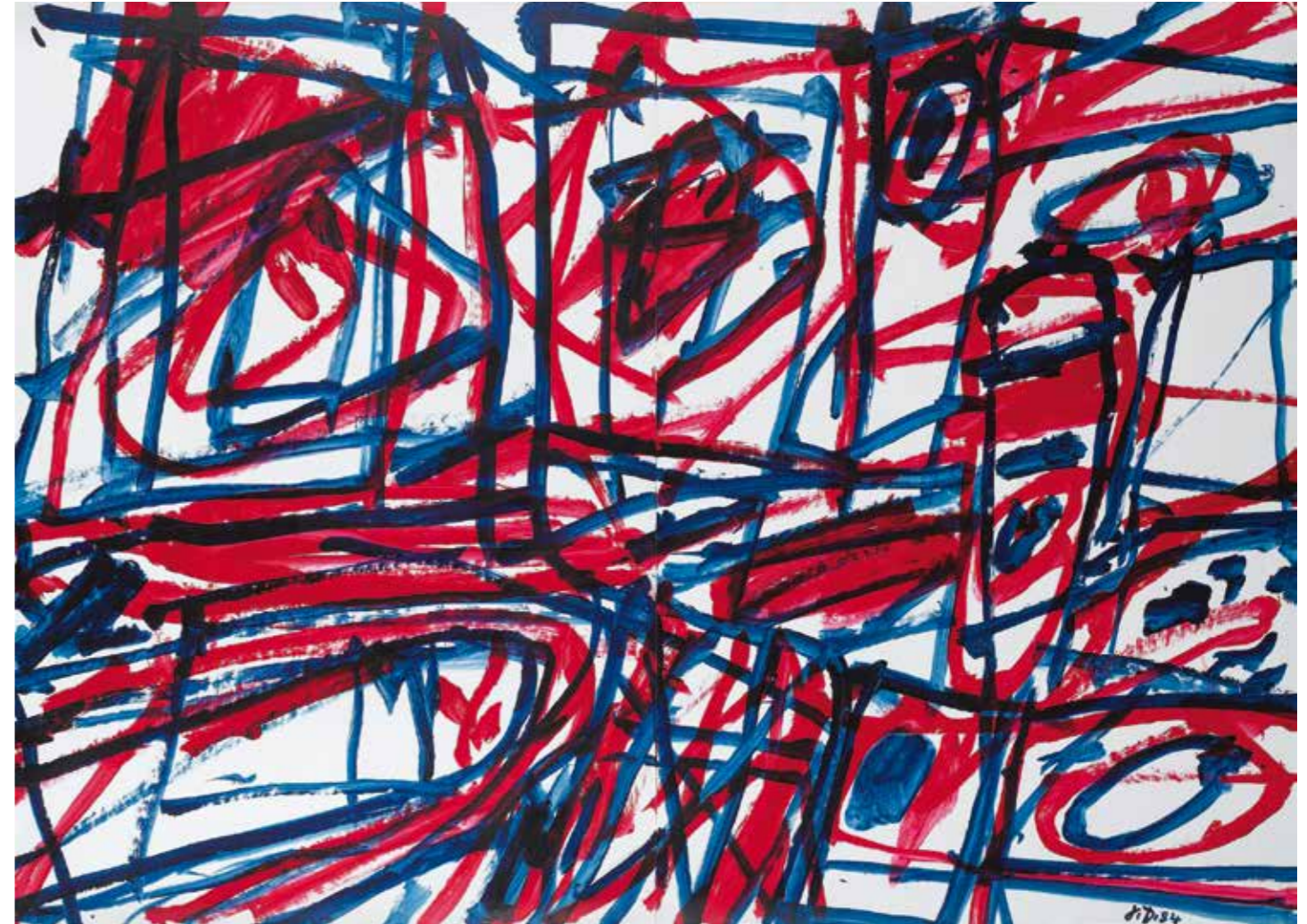


**I Mire G 184 (Boléro), 1984**

Signed with the artist's initials and dated 'J.D. 84'  
(lower right)

Acrylic on paper laid down on canvas

100 x 134 cm - 39.4 x 52.8 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Paris

**EXHIBITED**

Paris, Fondation Dubuffet, Dubuffet scriptions, jargons, gribouillis, 22 March - 12 July 2013

**LITERATURE**

Max Loreau, Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet, Fascicule XXXVI : Mires, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1988, No. 185, ill. p.87

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Jean Dubuffet stands as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most innovative artists, seminal in the creation of an artistic vocabulary anchored in the realm of the primitive as a means of describing the world around him. For one year in 1984, Dubuffet painted nothing but what he referred to as *Mires* (test patterns). Boldly gestural, this *Mire G* has a free-form look resembling a children's drawing, yet its innocence is overshadowed by the chaos and anguish emanating from his red, blue and black streaks. The *Mires* series points to Dubuffet's desire to create a meta-language of art, free of syntax and preconceived conditioning of cultural and social norms. Ironically, rather than escaping culture, Dubuffet's legacy proves its inescapability.



# SIMON HANTAÏ [ 1922-2008 ]

## I **Étude (Study), 1971**

Signed with initials 'SH' and dated '71' (lower right)

Watercolour on canvas

46 x 46 cm - 18.1 x 18.1 in.



### PROVENANCE

Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris  
Private collection, Paris

### CERTIFICATE

The work is recorded in the Jean Fournier gallery archives, Paris, under the reference No. CF.3.1.181

### PUBLIC NOTES

Born in Hungary in 1922, Simon Hantai moved to France in 1948 and joined the surrealist circle founded by André Breton. Inspired by Jackson Pollock after witnessing his technique of pouring paint onto horizontal canvases, in 1960 Hantai invented a method of *pliage* that would define the rest of his career. His technique, which involved applying paint to knotted canvas before stretching the canvas into a traditional rectangular painting, was marked by the lack of visual control, a reference to a bout of childhood blindness the artist had experienced.

*Étude*, arguably Hantai's most important series, combines his initial all-over structure and his later pursuit of negative space. By multiplying the knots and reducing their scale, the painting is at once fractured and decorative. Suggestive foliage in the pattern of the piece is offset by the violent intervention of red paint and primed canvas.

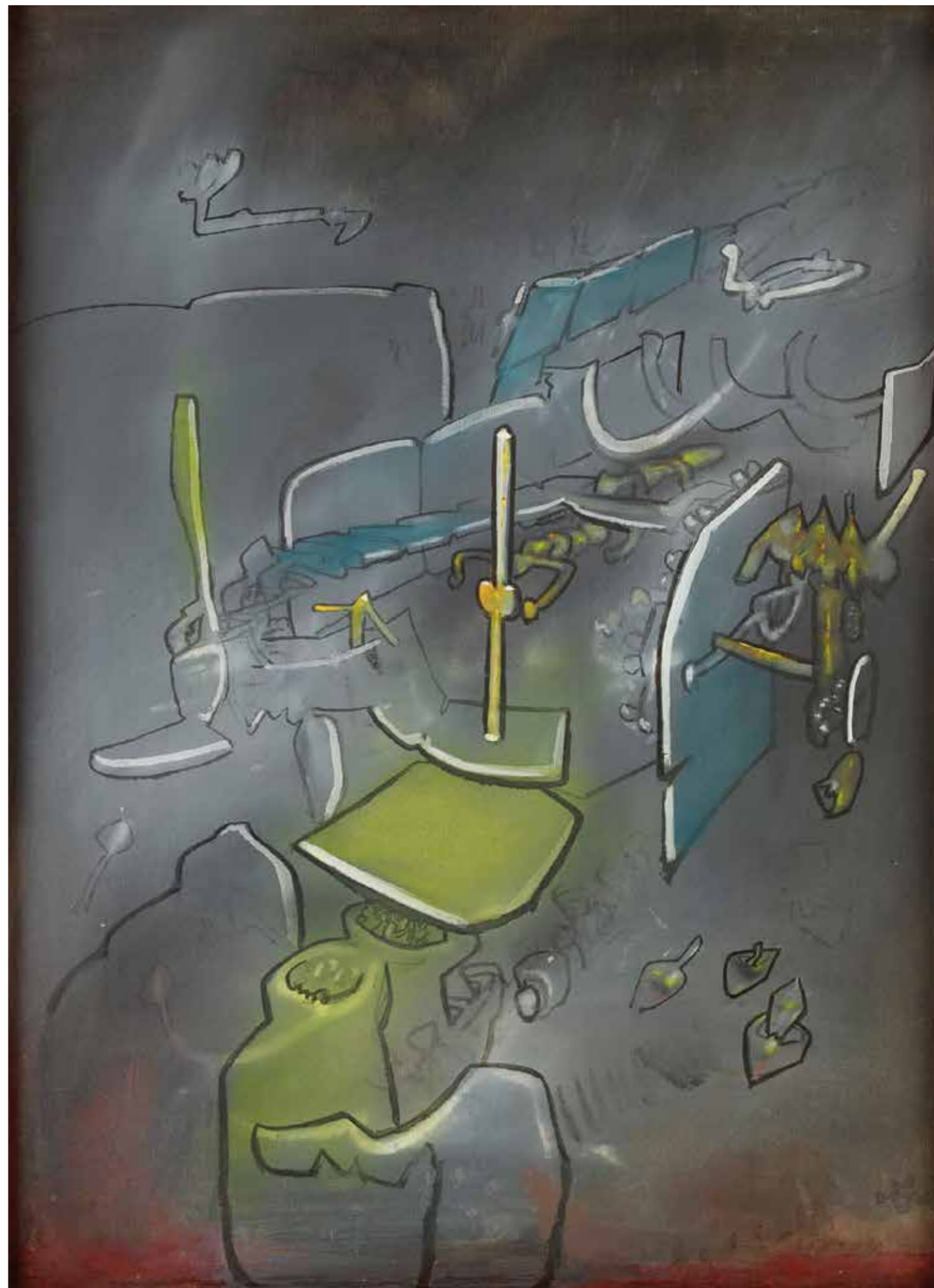


**I Composition, 1971**

Signed (lower right)

Oil on canvas

81 x 61 cm - 31.9 x 24 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Piet Moget collection

**CERTIFICATE**

Germana Ferrari-Matta has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

One of the key figures in Surrealism, Chilean artist Roberto Matta studied as an architect before being inducted into the movement in 1938. He pioneered the "automatic" technique of painting, whereby the gesture of the artist was divorced from rational thought. The innovation would influence the practice of artists including Arshile Gorky and Jackson Pollock.

The 1960s witnessed a marked change in Matta's practice as he combined images and themes drawn from contemporary culture with his own Surrealist techniques.

*Composition, 1971* juxtaposes the biomorphic shapes we associate with Surrealism with hard-edged structures that recall the spacecraft and space stations that preoccupied the public imagination in the years preceding the moon landing. It can be read simultaneously as a dream scene and a cosmic landscape, and is in this respect typical of Matta's determination to explore both our inner and outer worlds.



**I Leaves, 1973**

Acrylic on canvas, walnut, brass  
118.1 x 40.6 cm - 46.5 x 16 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Laurence Mattison collection (gift from the artist)  
Private collection, Europe

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Kenneth Noland was an American artist born in North Carolina in 1924. Though he can officially be categorized as a Colour Field painter or as part of the Post-Painterly Abstraction movement, Noland retains a style uniquely his own. His most recognizable works are defined by their imagery of targets, striped patterns and shaped canvases, characterized by minimalist compositions of line and colour. His reduced, strikingly simple compositions influenced a wide range of contemporary abstractionists who continue to experiment with ultra-simplified forms in order to tap into basic human emotions.

Of the three major stylistic phases in Noland's career – *Target*, *Chevron* and *Stripes*, the series to which this painting belongs to, is the most daring in its stark simplicity. In this painting Noland plays with colour as form to new levels, reducing his compositions to the most basic of formulas in an attempt to simulate interaction and uniformity.



**I 02.05.2004, 2004**

Signed, dated and titled '2004' (lower right);  
signed and titled 'ZAO WOU-KI 2/2004 Mai'  
(on the reverse)  
Oil on canvas  
65 x 81 cm - 25.6 x 31.9 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Artist's studio  
Private collection, Europe (acquired from the artist, 2005)

**CERTIFICATE**

Zao Wou-Ki has confirmed the authenticity of this work

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Zao Wou-ki was Chinese-French painter and the first artist of Chinese descent to become a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Born in Beijing in 1920, the artist grew up in his parents' hometown of Dantu where he studied calligraphy and, later, painting. Upon moving to Paris in 1948 Zao Wou-ki began experimenting with abstract painting, infusing his calligraphic background with a style similar to Abstract Expressionism. His stranded cultural identity became emblematic in his artistic direction, as his painting showcases an exemplary reconciliation of Chinese sensibility and modern Western abstraction.



**I Polar Co-ordinates II, 1980**

Gouache, tempera, metallic paint, felt-tip pen  
and glitter on paper

97.5 x 95.9 cm - 38.4 x 37.8 in.



**PROVENANCE**

M. Knoedler & Co., New York  
Akira Ikeda Gallery, Japan  
Sale: Christie's London, 2 April 2008, lot 568  
Private collection, London

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Frank Stella is an American painter and printmaker noted for his Minimalist and Post-Painterly abstraction works, a term created by critic Clement Greenberg to define a new movement of abstract expressionism in the 1960s favouring "openness and clarity" as opposed to dense painterly surfaces. Stella's earlier works of the 1950s and 1960s presented lines of colour separated by pinstripes on different shapes canvases, altering both medium and form of painting. In 1970 he became the youngest artist to receive a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In the 1980s and 1990s Stella created a large body of work that loosely responded to Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*. Curves, waves and other three-dimensional elements became central to his examination of pictorial space. This piece, made with gouache, tempera, metallic paint and glitter, is an example of the illusionistically detailed canvases that defined much of Stella's dramatic exploration of the 'work space'.



**I Peinture 162 x 114 cm,  
29 mars 1981**

Signed, titled and dated 'Soulages 162 x 114 cm,  
29 mars 1981' (on the reverse)  
Oil on canvas  
162 x 114 cm - 63.8 x 44.9 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Galería Fandos, Valencia  
Private collection, Spain

**EXHIBITED**

Reutlingen, Hans Thoma-Gesellschaft, Pierre Soulages, September - October 1987  
Munich, Galerie Rieder, Soulages, November - December 1987, ill. in the exhibition catalogue  
Kassel, Museum Fridericianum; Valence, IVAM - Centre Julio González; Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts,  
Soulages: 40 Jahre Melerei, January - September 1989, No. 3, ill. in the exhibition catalogue  
Valencia, Galería Fandos, Pierre Soulages, December 1989, ill. in the exhibition catalogue  
Madrid, Galería Jorge Mara, El Color de los sueños, May - June 1994

**LITERATURE**

Pierre Encrevé, Soulages, L'Œuvre complet - Peintures, Vol. III : 1979-1997, Paris, 1998, No. 821, ill. in  
colour p. 93

**PUBLIC NOTES**

At 95 years old, Pierre Soulages is France's most famous, most popular and most successful living painter. Born in 1919, the abstract painter was known throughout the 1950s and 1960s as a French parallel to the American Abstract Expressionism of artists like Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning, with whom he worked intimately during his time in New York. His childhood fascination with prehistoric art is evident in his dark paintings, dubbed "outrenoir", or beyond black. Known today as the "painter of black", Soulages has obsessively worked with this non-colour since the beginning of his career, gaining him international recognition as one of the first painters to develop new style of post-war abstraction. Even in his later works the prolific artist continues to investigate the depth and light so deeply connected to his signature paintings.



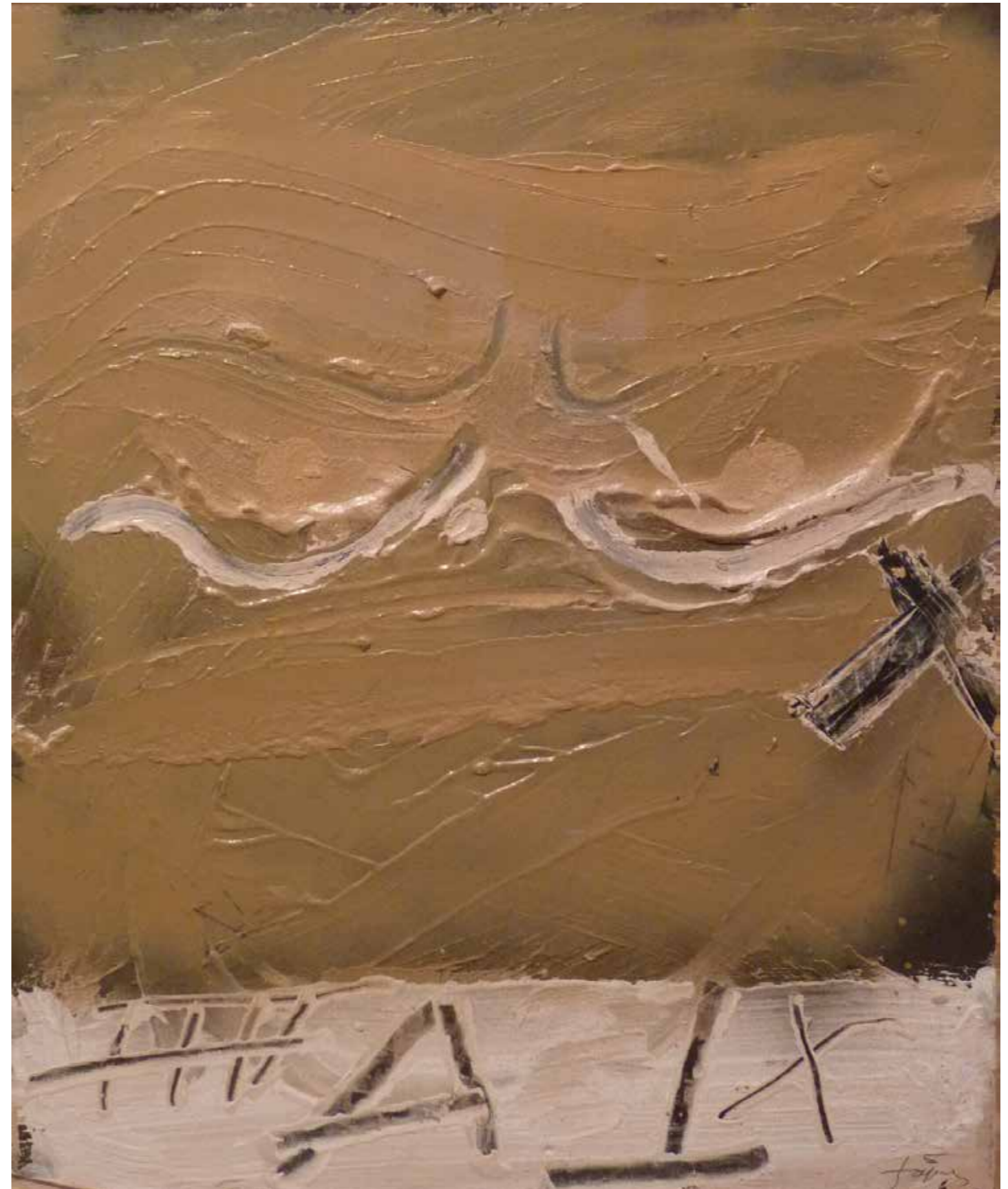


I **Autoretrat marró, 1982**

Signed 'Tàpies' (lower right)

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, ill. p. 76  
Derrière le miroir, Tàpies, Galerie Maeght, July 1982, No. 45, ill. p. 15

PUBLIC NOTES

Antoni Tàpies was one of the best-known Catalan artists to emerge in the post-war period after the Second World War and renowned as one of the most important contributors to mixed-media art. A self-taught painter, Tàpies helped co-found the first post-war movement in Spain known as *Dau al Set*, related to the Surrealist and Dadaist movements. Beginning as a Surrealist painter, Tàpies soon became an Informal artist incorporating non-artistic items into his paintings. Rather than relying on traditional paint, he would add clay and marble dust and use paper, string and rags in his works. Later still, Tàpies' paintings began to reveal his fascination with meditative emptiness in mixed-media paintings of oblique imagery submerged within a fundamentally abstract idiom, as can be seen in this 1982 piece, *Autoretrat marró*.

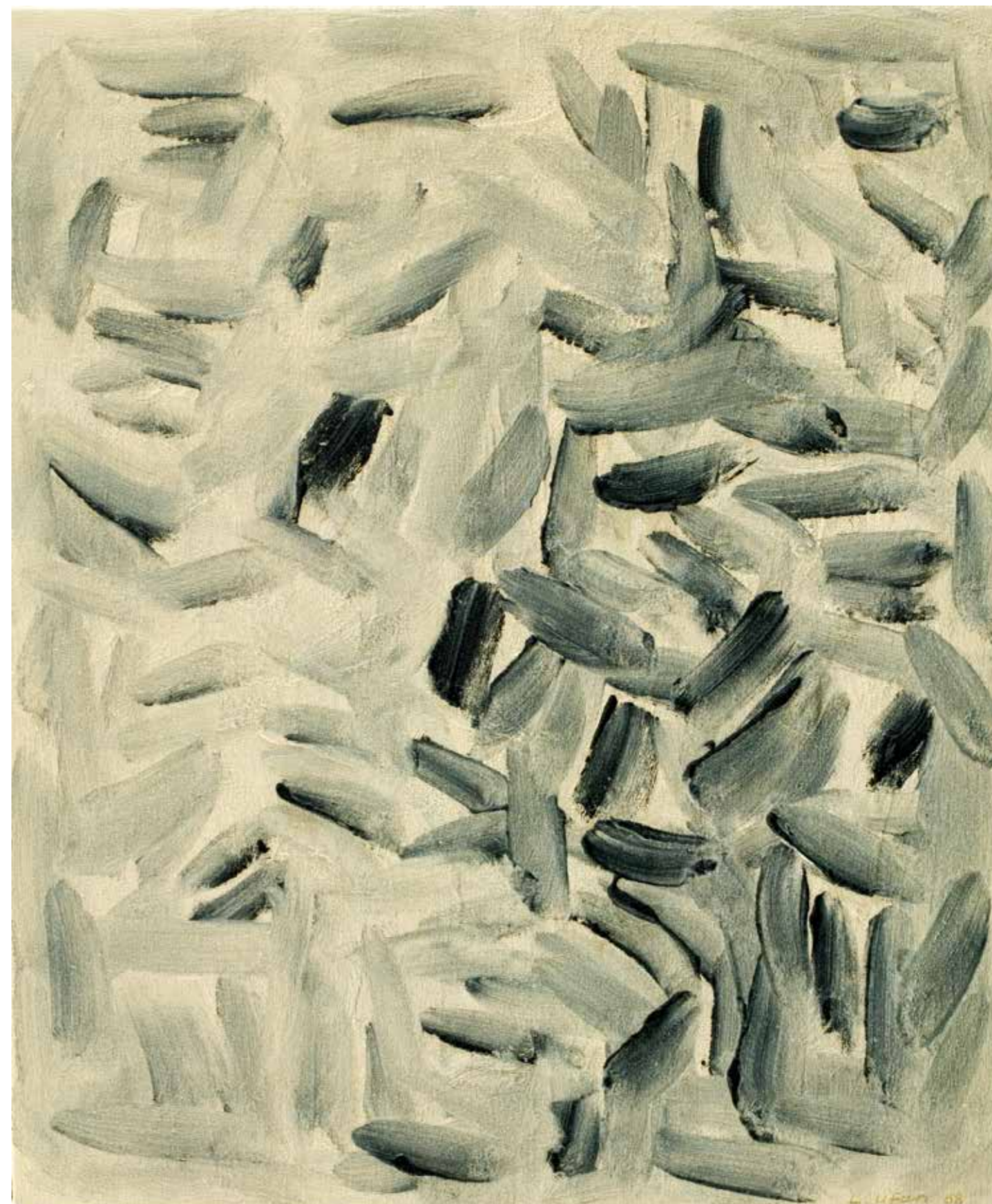


**I With Winds, 1988**

Signed and dated 'L. UFAN 88' (lower right)

Stone gouache on canvas

73 x 60 cm - 28.8 x 23.6 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Sale: Mainichi, December 2007  
Private collection, Seoul

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Lee Ufan is a minimalist painter, sculptor and academic born in Haman County, South Korea. Lee Ufan's art, who has lived and worked in Japan since 1956, is deeply rooted in modern European phenomenology combined with an Eastern appreciation of the nature of materials. As the main theorist of Mono-ha (School of Things), Japan's first internationally recognized contemporary art movement, Lee Ufan advocates a method of rejecting Western notions of representation and emphasizing materials and interrelation between space and matter; a far cry from the Eurocentric practices of 1960s postwar Japan. He has been honoured by the government of Japan for his great contribution to contemporary art in Japan.

This piece is a vivid example of the artist's seminal "Wind" series created throughout the 1980s, recognized by free and dynamic brushstrokes filling a deeply empty space. Exemplifying what the artist described as "the living composition of empty spaces", *With Winds* stirs a rhythm and lyricism that examines the spatiotemporal relationships between the viewer and components.



# SAM FRANCIS [ 1923-1994 ]

## I **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 Sam Francis Foundation archives under the reference No. SFP81-94

### PUBLIC NOTES

Sam Francis was born on June 25, 1923 in San Mateo, California. Though Francis's distinctive manner of painting remained recognisable throughout his career, he continuously developed and transformed his artistic practice until his death in 1994, making him one of the most original and daring painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His time in Paris in the 1950s exposed him to Tachism, Asian culture and Zen Buddhism, which greatly affected his artistic development. After returning to California in the 1960s and moving between the United States and Japan over the next period of his life, Francis's work further evolved under the influence of Jungian analysis.

*Untitled (Spider)* is a vivid example of Francis's artistic evolution in the 1980s, when the grid structure he had previously employed gradually disappeared from his work. The work refers to a period in the artist's life when he founded the Lapis Printing Press, with the goal of producing unusual and timely texts in visually compelling formats.



**I Untitled (SFP94-52), 1994**

Stamped with the Sam Francis estate logo  
(on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

40.6 x 50.8 cm - 16 x 20 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Estate of the artist, California (1994)  
Galleri Faurshou, Copenhagen (June 1996)  
Private collection, Europe  
Kaare Berntsen, Oslo  
Sotheby's New York  
Jonathan Novak Contemporary Art

**EXHIBITED**

Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Sam Francis: The Last Works, 25 May-17 Sept. 1995, ill. in colour  
Copenhagen, Galleri Faurshou at Art Basel 28, Basel, The complete (152) paintings from the last studio of Sam Francis, 11-18 June 1997, ill. in colour  
Copenhagen, Galleri Faurshou, Sam Francis: The Last Works, 18 March-5 June 1999; ill. pp. 12-13

**LITERATURE**

William C. Agee, Sam Francis: paintings 1947-1990, Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999, fig. 51, ill. p. 57  
Sam Francis, Mendrisio, Switzerland: Museo d'Arte, 1997, ill. pp.20-21  
Sam Francis : les années parisiennes 1950-1961, Paris, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, 1995, ill. p.39  
Burchett-Lere, Debra ed., Sam Francis: Catalogue raisonné of Canvas and Panel Paintings, 1923-1994, Berkeley, University of California press, 2011, No. 1732, ill. in colour

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Sam Francis Foundation archives under the reference No. SFP94-52

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Sam Francis is remembered as part of the post-war American avant-garde, and practitioner of Abstract Expressionism in the vein of Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still. He spent the 1950s in Paris, absorbing the currents of French modernism and then travelled widely, spending long periods in Tokyo. It was here that he developed a deep interest in Asian culture and Zen Buddhism. His works of this period in the 1970s are sometimes referred to as 'Fresh Air' pictures after an exhibition of the same name in 1969 with artists Joan Mitchell and Walasse Ting. This method involved an application of pools of vibrantly coloured wet paint with rollers and drips and splatters. Despite being 'untitled', a face is clearly identifiable from the inchoate wash of marbled colours. There is a continual movement between the dissolving of this tentatively figurative image; the face, and its recurring emergence, framed within a loosely cyclical arrangement. The 'face' has long been considered the trope of identity and means of



exploring subjectivity and this work is part of large group of self portraits which Francis executed during an introspective period in which he became increasingly fascinated with Jungian psychology and self-examination. During this period he also created numerous 'mandalas'; geometric images which aid meditation and facilitate the purification of psyche and spirit. Francis explored metaphysics through his work and believed that all human experience is essentially a synthesis of image and psyche, which had the power to motivate creative change.

In July, August and early September of 1994, Sam Francis was confined to a wheelchair because of his failing health. Only able to use his left arm, he created approximately 170 paintings (on canvas and paper), of which 152 are now known as 'The Last Works'. Each one was inscribed on the back with its date of completion.



**I Untitled (SFP94-124), 1994**

Stamped with the Sam Francis estate logo  
(on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

61 x 38.1 cm - 24 x 15 in.

**PROVENANCE**

Estate of the artist, California (1994)  
Galleri Faurischou, Copenhagen (1996)  
Private collection, Europe  
Kaare Berntsen, Oslo  
Sale: Sotheby's, New York  
Jonathan Novak Contemporary Art

**EXHIBITED**

Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Sam Francis: The Last Works, May-Sept. 1995, ill. in the exhibition catalogue  
Art Basel 28, Basel, Galleri Faurischou, The complete (152) paintings from the last studio of Sam Francis, June 1997, ill. in the exhibition catalogue  
Copenhagen, Galleri Faurischou, Sam Francis: The Last Works, March-June 1999; ill. in the exhibition catalogue pp.12-13

**LITERATURE**

William C. Agee, Sam Francis: Paintings 1947-1990, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999, No.51, ill. the exhibition catalogue p.57  
Mendrisio, Sam Francis, Switzerland, Museo d'Arte, 1997; pp.20-21, ill. in the exhibition catalogue pp. 20-21  
Sam Francis : les années parisiennes 1950-1961, Paris, Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, 1995, ill. in the exhibition catalogue p.39  
Debra Burchett-Lere, Sam Francis: Catalogue raisonné of Canvas and Panel Paintings, 1923-1994, Berkeley, University of California press, 2011, No.1794, ill. in the exhibition catalogue, DVD I

**CERTIFICATE**

This work is registered in the Sam Francis Foundation archives under the reference No. SFP94-124

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Sam Francis was born on June 25, 1923 in San Mateo, California. Though Francis' distinctive manner of painting remained recognisable throughout his career, he continuously developed and transformed his artistic practice until his death in 1994, making him one of the most original and daring painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His time in Paris in the 1950s exposed him to Tachism, Asian culture and Zen Buddhism, which greatly affected his artistic development. After returning to California in the 1960s and moving between the United States and Japan over the next period of his life, Francis' work further evolved under the influence of Jungian analysis.

*Untitled* is a powerful example of Francis' last paintings, reminiscent of the artist's 1970s Fresh Air pictures. Created by adding drips and splatters of colour to wet bands of paint, the works reasserted the artist's interest in colour. In this piece, two large blots of blue and red paint in the central portion of the canvas are surrounded by splashes and trickles of colour, which lend the work a sense of dynamism. For Francis the experience of painting constituted an exploration of the limits of the self and of the ego. *Untitled* stages a vivid enactment of this exploration. They are startling works that are a testament to the artist's inexhaustible energy, even in the later periods of his life.





**I Lointains Spirituels, 2006**

Signed and dated 'Chu Teh-Chun 06' (lower right),  
signed, titled and dated (on the reverse)

Oil on canvas

65 x 81 cm - 25.6 x 31.9 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Galerie Patrice Trigano, Paris  
Private collection (acquired from the above)

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Chu Teh-Chun graduated in 1941 in Chongqing, where he was a contemporary of Zao Wou-ki. He taught Fine Art for three years at the National Central University before leaving for Taiwan in 1949. Chu Teh-Chun arrived in Paris in 1955. Combining the Western tradition of Abstract Expressionist painting with Eastern metaphysics, Chu Teh-Chun developed a highly original style that led him to become the first ethnic Chinese member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

*Lointains Spirituels* is a particularly beautiful example of the artist's late work. The dark blues, emerald greens and bright reds combine to create a multi-coloured dreamscape in which shapes and colours seem to fuse. The work evokes a spiritual elsewhere, yet *Lointains Spirituels* is not purely abstract. As its title suggests, the painting evokes a distant spiritual or cosmic event, the chaos at the beginning of the universe or at its end.

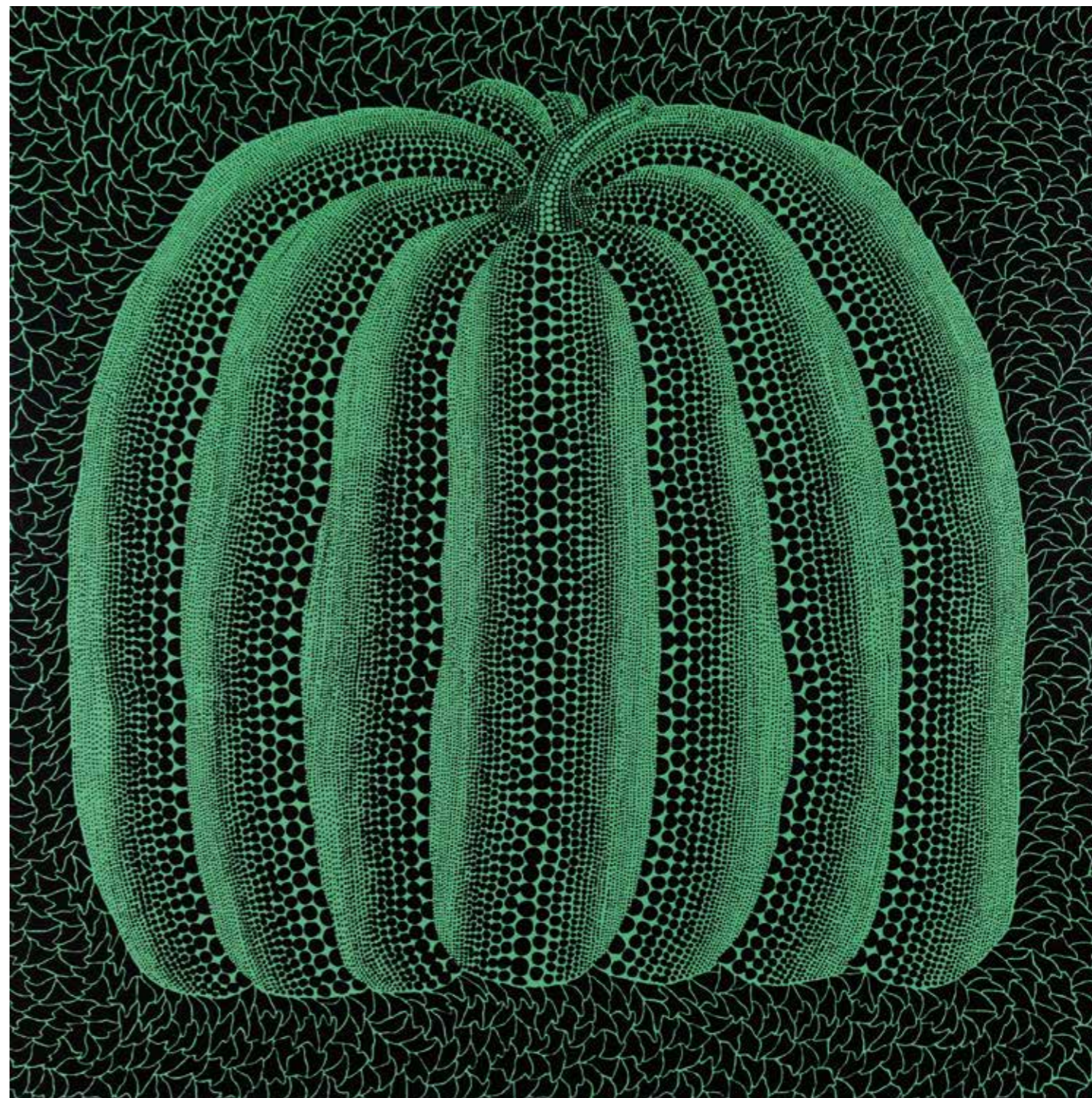


**I Pumpkin (green), 2012**

Signed and dated 'Pumpkin C/ABC Yayoi Kusama 2012' (on the reverse)

Acrylic on canvas

145.5 x 145.5 cm - 57.3 x 57.3 in.



**PROVENANCE**

Artist's studio

**PUBLIC NOTES**

Yayoi Kusama was born in Matsumoto City, Japan in 1929. After completing her studies in Japan, Kusama was drawn to the experimental post war art scene and subsequently moved to New York City in 1958. She quickly established herself as a leader of the avant-garde movement through her use of dot and net motifs and dazzlingly vast canvases. She returned to Japan in 1973 and continued to pursue art and writing, producing a series of shockingly visceral novels, short stories and poetry infused with the autobiographical, psychological and sexual content evident in all of her artwork.

In Kusama's 1993 Venice Biennale pavilion, the artist constructed an astonishing mirror room filled with pumpkin sculptures. The success of her project led her to produce a giant, yellow vivid pumpkin as an outdoor sculpture. The pumpkin has since become something of an alter ego for the illustrious artist, who continues to produce and exhibit her work worldwide, and is included in the collections of leading museums throughout the world, such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.



**NEW REALITIES**  
**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

KATRIN FRIDRIKS

VISUAL SYSTEM



**KATRIN FRIDRIKS** [ b: 1974 ]**I Riding Awareness - Flying Senses,  
2014/15**

Part of the installation

Acrylic on canvas

130 x 130 x 10 cm - 51.2 x 51.2 x 3.9 in.

**BIOGRAPHY**

Born in 1974 in Reykjavik (Iceland), Katrin Fridriks is an abstract conceptual painter, living and working in Luxembourg. She fuses the natural energies of her native Iceland with an explosive, however organic, abstract expressionism and subtle Japanese calligraphy elements. Often presented through installations & visual compositions, she is giving an architectural dimension to her paintings. Through a wide range of works, Katrin Fridriks communicates her questioning of the world, human life and the future. Based on an endless exercise on the matter & technique, some of her series are constantly reworked, making her paintings evolve. Recent works include perspective studies of her black & white series, *Gene&Ethics* and *Stendhal Syndrome*, as well as *Crayons* and *Awareness* works that gave birth to the *Riding Awareness* series. Her process brings her to the enlargement of drippings and flows, from singular strokes to the whole canvas, creating a zoom effect, which is referring to the aesthetics of macro photography. By creating these new perspectives, Katrin Fridriks' work brings an innovative dimension to the abstraction.





**I Riding Awareness - Flying Senses,  
2014/15**

Installation 5 pieces

Acrylic on canvas

260 x 370 x 21 cm - 102.4 x 145.7 x 8.3 in.





**I Silver Awareness - Skylander,  
2014/15**

Acrylic on canvas

130 x 130 x 10 cm - 51.2 x 51.2 x 3.9 in.

Following page: **Lollipops n2, n3, n4 & n5 (from left to right), 2015**

D: 80 x 8 cm (each) - 31.5 x 3.1 in.

Acrylic on canvas







**I Silver Stendhal Mothernature,  
2014**

Acrylic on canvas

130 x 180 x 10 cm - 51.2 x 70.9 x 3.9 in.

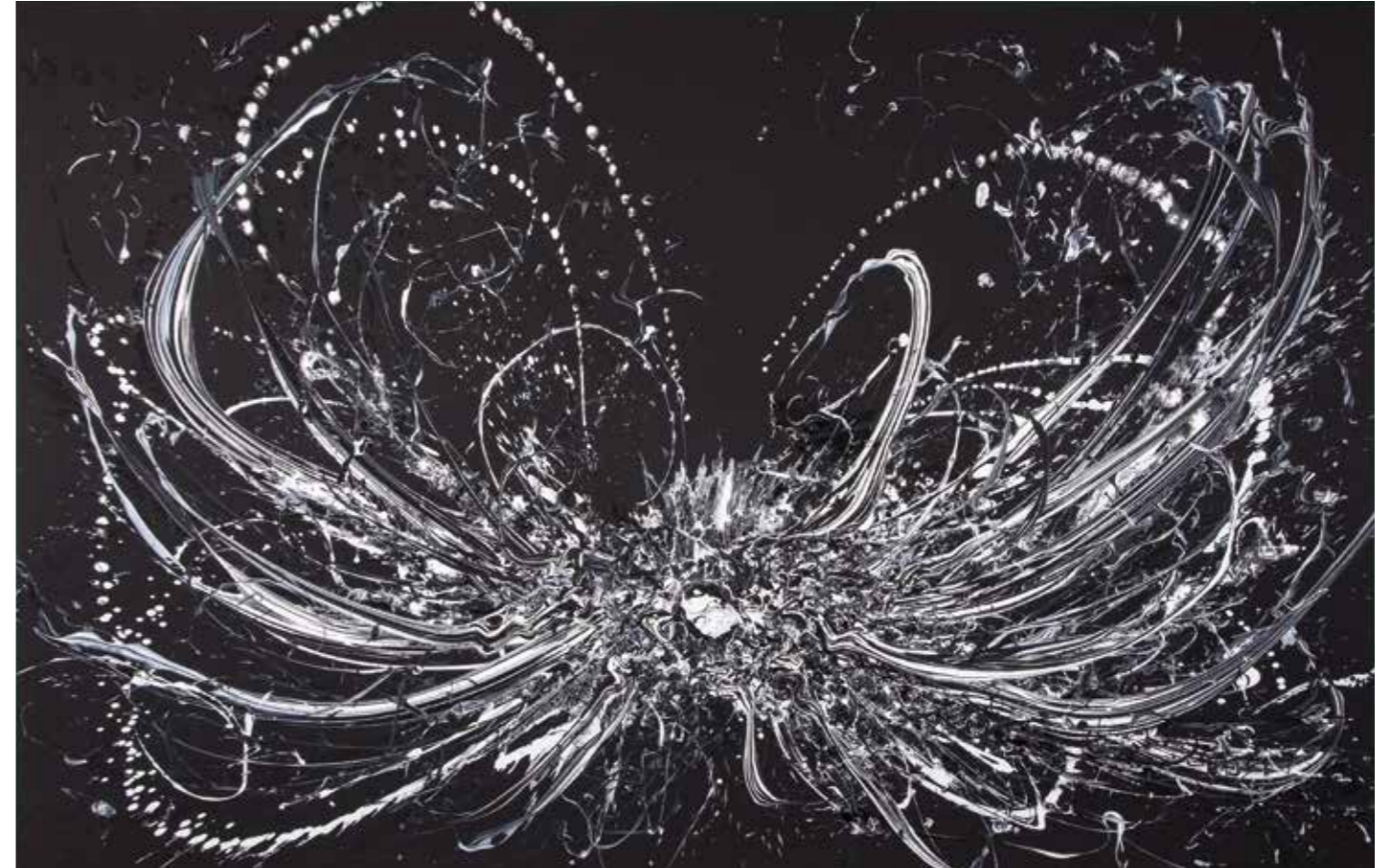




**I Gene&Ethics - Masters, 2014/15**

Acrylic on canvas

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











**I DreamLiners, 2015**

Acrylic on canvas

120 x 120 x 10 cm - 47.2 x 47.2 x 3.9 in.



**I Silver Awareness - Magic Tiger,  
2015**

Acrylic on canvas

120 x 120 x 10 cm - 47.2 x 47.2 x 3.9 in.









**I Silver Awareness - Magic Dragon,  
2015**

Acrylic on canvas  
80 x 80 x 8 cm - 31.5 x 31.5 x 3.1 in.





**I Silver Awareness - Magic Nature,  
2015**

Acrylic on canvas

130 x 130 x 10 cm - 51.2 x 51.2 x 3.9 in.







**I Pure Lollipop n1, 2014**

Acrylic on canvas with plexiglas stick  
150 x 70 x 9.5 cm - 59.1 x 27.6 x 3.7 in.



**I Lollipop n1, 2015**

Acrylic on canvas

D: 80 x 8 cm - 31.5 x 3.1 in.









# VISUAL SYSTEM

## I VS 150, 2015

Aluminium and LED

150 x 150 x 10 cm - 59.1 x 59.1 x 3.9 in.



### BIOGRAPHY

Visual System is an art and design collective from Paris, created in 2007, whose works revolve around the medium of light. Their multi-faceted team of programmers, sound artists, architects, etc., usually combines all their talents to completely transform a natural setting into an immersive and glowing futuristic environment. This experimental way to do is being part of the new interactive technologies and of the future LED using, from human scale to urban one.





**I VS 170, 2015**

Aluminium and LED

170 x 170 x 10 cm - 66.9 x 66.9 x 3.9 in.



# OPERA GALLERY

W Place, 52 Wyndham Street, Central, Hong Kong  
T. + (852) 2810 1208 • [hkg@operagallery.com](mailto:hkg@operagallery.com)

[www.operagallery.com](http://www.operagallery.com)



