

An abstract painting with a textured, layered appearance. The background is a mix of light pink, beige, and off-white tones. In the center, there are darker, more complex textures in shades of brown, tan, and black, suggesting a landscape or a close-up of a natural surface. The brushstrokes are visible, giving it a tactile quality.

ABSTRACT MASTERS

OPERA GALLERY

ABSTRACT MASTERS

24 June - 11 July 2021

OPERA GALLERY
SINGAPORE

FOREWORD

In line with its long-standing tradition, Opera Gallery Singapore is delighted to present the 2021 exhibition of *Abstract Masters*, featuring a curated selection of works by legendary artists who revolutionised the art world during the 20th and 21st century.

The works on view display the intense originality of a diverse group of artists, including Asian artists Chu Teh-Chun and Zao Wou-Ki, European artists Pierre Soulages, Georges Mathieu, Serge Poliakoff and Hermann Nitsch, North American artists Sam Francis and Jean Paul Riopelle.

Eschewing the traditional standards of art, these artists challenged and transformed conventional art forms to communicate their innermost thoughts and emotions, developing their own distinct visual languages. There is no one style that they all share, the range goes from works that are incredibly gestural, aggressive and high-energy to works that are very silent and contemplative. They do not follow a set formula.

If Chu Teh-Chun's formless landscapes are filled with the energy of life, the 2002 painting by Zao Wou-Ki on view here is light and gauzy and exudes the aura of serenity that characterized the artist's persona. Both Georges Mathieu's and Hermann Nitsch's works are the result of performances and exult the zeal ensued from action painting. On the other hand, there is a palpable silence emanating from the geometric vocabulary of bold colours within the non-representational painting by Serge Poliakoff. In Jean Paul Riopelle's compositions, texture plays an essential role while a gentle cadence seems to guide the overall flow of colour. Pierre Soulages' thick black near calligraphic brushstrokes against a light background creates the effect of night engulfing day and Sam Francis' primary colours radiate a sense of barely contained energy, vivacity and joy.

This exhibition offers visitors the opportunity to experience firsthand the creative ingenuity that made these artists true Abstract Masters.

Gilles Dyan

Founder & Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Stéphane Le Pelletier

Director Asia Pacific
Opera Gallery



Portrait of the artist on his boat, 1955 © Fondation Chu Teh-Chun

CHU TEH-CHUN

1920 - 2014

Chu Teh-Chun was a French-Chinese artist whose work was at the forefront of the integration of traditional Chinese painting styles with Western abstraction in the 20th century. Born in 1920 in Hangzhou, China, he studied at the National School of Fine Arts, now known as China Academy of Art. In 1949, he moved to Taipei and taught at the National University before moving to Paris in 1955. In 1980, Chu Teh-Chun became a French citizen and in 1997 he became the first ethnic member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. He died in Paris in 2014.

When Chu settled in Paris, he visited a Nicolas de Stäel retrospective which had a profound effect on him. He quickly moved away from figurative painting and started focusing on abstract landscapes. This led him to form a style that would become synonymous, melding his training as a calligrapher and a painter to create works which intricately coalesce both mediums. His paintings, which are vibrant and full of movement, are heavily influenced by the strong brushstrokes of the calligraphic line and have a profound sense of depth, poetry and musicality. Although his work demonstrates the stylistic freedom of mid-century movements such as art informel and abstract expressionism, Chu always retained the rigorous technical brushwork he learned as a student in mainland China.

In 1964, an exhibition of Chu Teh-Chun's works at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburg, USA, brought him international fame and since then he has had several major exhibitions throughout his career, most notably at the Shanghai Art Museum and at Beijing's National Art Museum of China. Today, his works are held in over 50 institutions worldwide including Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Direction du Centre hospitalier de Brunet, Toulon; Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China; Maison de la Culture de la Société des Eaux, Marseille; Musée des beaux-arts André Malraux, Le Havre, France; Musée Cernuschi, Paris; National Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh; National Library, Bogotá; Shanghai Museum of Art, Shanghai; and Shanghai Opera House, Shanghai. In 2017, three years after he passed away, the Chu Teh-Chun Foundation was established in Geneva, Switzerland by his wife and their son to promote his work across the globe, starting with a major retrospective at the National Museum of China, Beijing planned in 2021.

Langage
1995

Signed in chinese and pinyin and dated on the lower right
Oil on canvas
60 x 73 cm | 23.6 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Asia
Shanghai Dowmin Auctions, Shanghai, 25 October 2012, lot 522
Private collection

LITERATURE
This work will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue raisonné being prepared by
the Fondation Chu Teh-Chun

CERTIFICATE
Chu Ching-Chao, the artist's wife, has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Untitled

1995

Signed and dated on the lower right
Oil on canvas
60 x 73 cm | 23.6 x 28.7 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France
Declerck-Beghin, Douai, 7 November 1999, lot 92
Private collection, France
Declerck, Douai, 26 March 2006, lot 174
Private collection, France

LITERATURE

This work will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue raisonné being prepared by the Fondation Chu Teh-Chun

CERTIFICATE

Chu Ching-Chao, the artist's wife, has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Composition

Novembre 1989

Signed and dated «89» lower right, titled, countersigned and dated on the back
Oil on canvas
100 x 81 cm | 39.4 x 31.9 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Sylvie Lanel, Honfleur
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Galerie Sylvie Lanel, Honfleur, 2 December 1989 – 2 January 1990

LITERATURE

The Chu Teh-Chun Foundation will include this work in their archives.



Composition n°62

1960

Signed on the lower right, numbered, countersigned and dated on the back

Oil on canvas

65 x 100 cm | 25.6 x 39.4 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Private collection

Private collection, France

CERTIFICATE

Chu Ching-Chao, the artist's wife, has confirmed the authenticity of this work



SAM FRANCIS

1923 - 1994

Born in San Mateo, Northern California in 1923, Sam Francis studied both painting and art history, earning bachelor's and master's degrees at UC Berkeley. He lived and worked in California, Paris and Tokyo and he died in Santa Monica in 1994.

Moving to Paris in the 1950s, Francis encountered Monet's Waterlilies, which proved lastingly influential to his art's scale and sensitivity to light and colour. The artist also travelled extensively – to Tokyo, Mexico City and New York, among others – and became familiar with non-Western philosophy. His work evolved from monochromatic abstractions to rich chromatic murals to his iconic "open" paintings, in which vividly hued splashes and drips of colour are punctuated by expanses of white. Through his travels he was exposed to many styles, techniques and cultural influences, which informed the development of his own dialogue and style of painting. Francis possessed a lyrical and gestural hand, enabling him to capture and record the brilliance, energy and intensity of colour at different moments of time and periods of his life. His paintings embody his love of literature, music and science, while reflecting his deep range of emotions and personal turmoil.

During the course of his career, Sam Francis was commissioned to paint a number of important murals, including those at the Louvre Museum in Paris, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco International Airport, Seattle's First National Bank and the Kunsthalle in Basel, Switzerland. The list of the artist's solo exhibitions and museum collections is extensive. His first solo exhibition was in Paris in 1952. Retrospectives of his work have been held by Houston's Museum of Fine Arts, the Kunsthalle in Basel, and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. Additional shows have been held at the Pompidou Centre in Paris, the Galerie Kornfeld und Klipstein in Bern, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, the Museum of Modern Art in Toyama, Japan, Tokyo's Idemitsu Art Gallery, and the Hong Kong Art Centre. Most recently, shows have been held at the prestigious Konsthall in Malmo, Sweden, the Museo Nacional in Madrid, and the Galleria Comunale in Rome, as well as the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art.



Sam Francis in his studio, Palo Alto, California. Photo © Nico Delaive

Untitled
1974

Signed on the reverse
Acrylic on paper
31.8 x 23.8 cm | 12.5 x 9.4 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Japan
Private collection
Christie's, London, 2 April 2008, lot 646
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Tokyo, Minami Gallery, *Sam Francis 36 KAOs (Faces) 1973 - 1977*, July 1977, cat. no. 13, ill.

LITERATURE

This work is identified with the interim identification number of SF74-339 in consideration for the forthcoming *Sam Francis: Catalogue raisonné of Unique Works on Paper*.

CERTIFICATE

The Sam Francis Archives have confirmed the authenticity of this work under interim no. SF74-339



Untitled

1987

Unsigned and undated
Acrylic on canvas
183.2 x 183.2 cm | 72.1 x 72.1 in

PROVENANCE

Yayoi Gallery, Tokyo
Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Japan (July 1993)

EXHIBITED

Nagoya City Art Museum; Shiga, Museum of Modern Art; and Gunma, Hara Museum ARC, *Abstraction 5: John Altoon, Sam Francis, Craig Kauffman, John McLaughlin, and Ed Moses*, March - August 1990 (Nagoya City Art Museum, Nagoya: 17 March - 22 April 1990; Museum of Modern Art, Shiga: 19 May - 24 June 1990; Hara Museum ARC, Gunma: 30 June - 5 August 1990) cat. no. 8, p. 44, ill. in colour

Bonn, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Sam Francis*, February - April 1993, pp. 222-23, ill. in colour

Tokyo, Idemitsu Museum of Arts; Osaka, Idemitsu Museum, *Sam Francis: From the Idemitsu Collection*, June 2000 - April 2001 (Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo: 27 June - 6 August 2000; Idemitsu Museum, Osaka: 9 January - 12 February 2001 (part I); 20 February - 1 April 2001 (part II), cat. no. 55, p. 55, ill. in colour

Toyama, Museum of Modern Art; Chiba, Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art; Ehime, Museum of Art Ehime; Tokyo, Museum of Contemporary Art; Fukushima, Iwaki City Art Museum; Oita, Oita City Art Museum, *Sam Francis: From the Idemitsu Collection*, August 2002 - October 2003 (Museum of Modern Art, Toyama: 10 August - 16 September 2002; Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art, Chiba: 28 September - 10 November 2002; Museum of Art Ehime, Ehime: 16 November - 23 December 2002; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo: 5 April - 25 May 2003; Iwaki City Art Museum, Fukushima: 3 June - 6 July 2003; Oita City Art Museum, Oita: 13 September - 26 October 2003), cat. no. 54, p. 82, ill. in colour, ill. on the cover

LITERATURE

Debra Burchett-Lere, Ed., *Sam Francis: Catalogue raisonné of Canvas and Panel Paintings 1946-1994*, Berkeley 2011, DVD, cat. no. SFF.1404 (ill.)

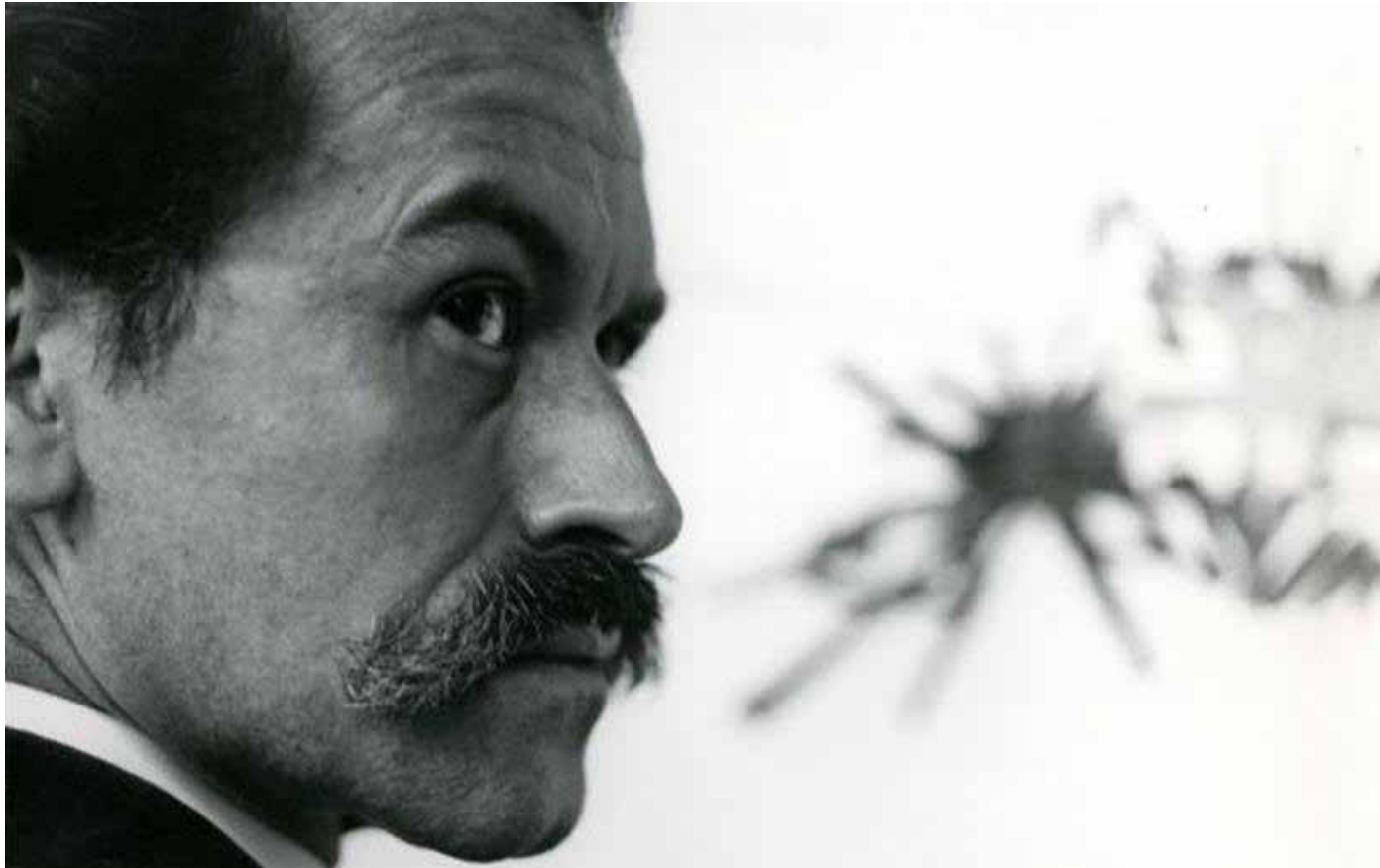
CERTIFICATE

The Sam Francis Archives have confirmed the authenticity of this work under no. SFP87-54



GEORGES MATHIEU

1921 - 2012



Georges Mathieu in 1960. Photo © Gaston Xhardez

Georges Mathieu was born in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, in 1921. A self-taught painter and a theorist, he began his artistic career in 1942. He travelled and painted in Japan, in the USA, in Brazil, Argentina and Middle-East but mostly lived and worked in the Paris region, France where he died in 2012.

Georges Mathieu is credited with launching the Lyrical Abstraction movement and the greater trend of Informalism in post-World War II Paris. Pioneering a form of gestural abstraction that was close to performance, Georges Mathieu, famed-provocateur, with his dazzling brilliance, developed a form of painting which prioritized the primacy of speed, denial of references, and ecstatic state of mind. Sometimes working in front of the cameras, his work exhibited throughout the world, he was famed for his large-scale formats, which he achieved by using long brushes and applying paint directly from tubes onto the canvas. The immediacy and rapid execution of these distinct methods guaranteed the freedom with which he defined his work. He brought a new brand of freedom to the creative gesture and gave birth to a brand new style, somewhere between esoteric sign, calligraphy and raw energy. The titles of his works, often steeped in historical, musical and geographical references, add a poetic quality, both sophisticated and offbeat.

Mathieu's work has been the subject of numerous retrospectives, and is in more than eighty museums and public permanent collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Kunstmuseum Basel; Kunsthaus Zürich; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Tate, London.

Dyana
1958

Signed and dated on the lower right; signed, titled and dated on the reverse
Oil on canvas
92.3 x 60.5 cm | 36.3 x 23.8 in

PROVENANCE

Sam and Ayala Zacks, Toronto
Ayala Zacks Abramov, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Toronto, York University, York Hall, *A Decade of Art*, no. 26
Tel Aviv, Museum of Art, 1988
Tel Aviv, Museum of Art, 1990 - 1991

CERTIFICATE

The Comité Georges Mathieu has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Potentille

1964

Oil on canvas
89 x 146 cm | 35 x 57.5 in

PROVENANCE
Gimpel Fils Gallery, London
Galerie de Seine, Paris
Galerie Jean Krugier, Geneva
Private Collection
Christie's, London, 30 November 1989, Lot 762
Private Collection
Christie's, London, 25 March 1993, Lot 20
Private collection

EXHIBITED
Zurich, Gimpel & Hanover Galerie, *Georges Mathieu*, 1965
London, Gimpel Fils Gallery; Paris, Galerie Charpentier, *Georges Mathieu*, 1965

LITERATURE
Georges Mathieu, *Mathieu*, Milan 1969, p. 46, no. 198, illustrated in colour
Georges Mathieu, *Mathieu: 50 Ans de Creation*, Paris, 2003, p. 138, illustrated
François Mathey, *Mathieu*, Paris, Hachette-Fabbri, 1969, p. 189, n° 198

CERTIFICATE
The comité Georges Mathieu has confirmed the authenticity of this work



HERMANN NITSCH

b. 1938



Image courtesy of the artist

Born in Vienna, Austria in 1938, Hermann Nitsch studied graphics at the Institute of Graphic Arts in his hometown. As a painter, performer, composer, photographer and scenographer, he is one of the most influential artists of his generation. He currently lives and works at the Prinzendorf castle in Austria.

Considered a key figure in Viennese Action Painting of the 1960s, Hermann Nitsch continues to use this radical method of painting, essentially through his creation of the *Orgien Mysterien Theater*, a concept of ceremonial performance art comparable to Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk (total art work). This total art form calls to all five human senses and advocates for a profound existentialist reflection. Hermann Nitsch creates his paintings using his entire body. Therefore, they are simultaneously the origin and the result of his performances. Combining oil and acrylic paint of a certain hue, he spreads it on canvas using unconventional tools as well as his hands, feet and whole body movements. Through these actions, Nitsch demonstrates his energetic, spiritual, sensual and passionate persona. Chaos and violence, which accompany his work, are in fact a celebration of life and mirror the human soul.

His artworks are permanently exhibited in the two Nitsch Museums located in Mistelbach, Austria and Naples, Italy as well as in the Nitsch Foundation in Vienna. His paintings are displayed in many major art galleries and museums in the world and are included in the permanent collections of the MOMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, in the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, in the Tate Gallery, London and in the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam as well as in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, just to name a few.

S_VII_001_00A
2000

Acrylic on canvas
200 x 300 cm | 78.7 x 118.1 in

PROVENANCE
Artist's studio



SK_05_19, 2019
2019

Acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 cm | 39.4 x 39.4 in

PROVENANCE
Artist's studio





Serges Poliakoff in 1965. Photo © Yousuf Karsh, MET Museum

SERGE POLIAKOFF

1900 - 1969

Serge Poliakoff was a Russian artist born in 1900 in Moscow, Russia. He took drawing lessons at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture but fled during the Russian Revolution in 1917, later settling in Paris in 1923 after living in Constantinople. He studied painting at the Académie Forchot and Académie de la Grande Chaumière, and later in 1935 attended the Grosvenor School of Art and the Slade School of Art in London.

Poliakoff is best known for his devoted exploration of abstraction and colour, creating works focussed on superimposed colours that live within spontaneous shapes. Drawing inspiration from his immense love for music, Poliakoff's canvases invest in the expressive qualities associated with the Nouvelle Ecole de Paris (Tachisme), Lyrical Abstraction, Art Informel and sometimes Cubism.

Poliakoff received the Kandinsky Prize in 1947. Today, his works are in many public collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Gallery in London, the Musée du Luxembourg in Luxembourg, the Malmö Konsthall in Sweden, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., among others.

Composition murale

1966

Signed on the lower right
Tempera on paper laid on canvas
100 x 80.4 cm | 39.4 x 31.7 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie de France, Paris
Galerie im Erker, St. Gallen
Private collection, Switzerland
Galerie Kornfeld, Bern, 17 June 2011, lot 155
Private collection

EXHIBITED

Reims, Maison de la Culture André Malraux, *Serge Poliakoff*, May - July 1971, n.p., no. 20, ill. in colour (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)
Milano, Centro Rizzoli, *Serge Poliakoff*, February - March 1972 (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)
Lisbon, Galeria S. Mamède, *Poliakoff*, November - December 1972, n.p., no. 1-9, ill. (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)
Rome, Galleria Editalia, *Serge Poliakoff*, October - November 1973 (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)
Tehran, Centre International des Arts, *1er Salon International des Arts AFAA*, March 1975 (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)
Hovikodden, Sonja Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, *Poliakoff*, February - March 1976, n.p., no. 59-67, ill. (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)
St. Gallen, Galerie im Erker, *Serge Poliakoff*, June - October 1996

LITERATURE

Giuseppe Marchiori, *Serge Poliakoff*, Les Presses de La Connaissance, 1976, p. 7, ill. (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*, in installation with the artist and Giuseppe Marchiori)
Paris, Galerie Pixi, *Serge Poliakoff Intime*, May - July 1994, p. 13, ill. in colour (in installation in the the artist's apartment)
Marie Victoire Poliakoff, *Serge Poliakoff mon Grand-Père*, Editions du Chêne, Paris 2011, p. 212, ill.
Alexis Poliakoff, *Serge Poliakoff, Catalogue raisonné, Volume V, 1966-1969*, Galerie Française Publishing, Paris 2016, p. 90, no. 66-34, ill. in colour and p. 103, ill. in colour (as part of *Le Mur de Reims*)



JEAN PAUL RIOPELLE

1923 - 2002



Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio, 1952. Photo © John Craven

Painter Jean Paul Riopelle was among the first Canadian artists to achieve international fame and recognition. Born in Montreal, Canada in 1923, he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts and the École du Meuble during the 1940s. During his studies, he became associated with the group of Canadian painters known as *Les Automatistes*, a group adjacent to the Surrealists that rebuked establishment, tradition and religious authority, favoring instead the subconscious as the driving force behind nonfigurative painting. He traveled to France after the end of World War II, where he lived with the American painter Joan Mitchell. Their work from the 1960s especially, shows their mutual influence on each other. Riopelle returned to Quebec in the 1970s. He died in 2002 at l'Isle-aux-Grues, Canada.

Known for his expressive works of thick impasto and chromatic intensity, Riopelle was a key member of the Art Informel movement (the European variant of Abstract Expressionism). He was associated initially with the Lyrical Abstraction wing, before becoming more calligraphic in style. By the early 1950s, Riopelle developed his signature style of applying paint directly to the canvas by smearing it with a palette knife. His artistic gesture created an intriguing myriad of geometric volumes and kaleidoscopic surfaces of color and brilliance. This improvisatory form of abstraction was closely associated with an emphasis on the spontaneous and automatic.

Riopelle enjoyed widespread international fame before his death; he participated in three Venice Biennales and the São Paulo Biennial. The Kölischer Kunstverein, Cologne; the National Gallery of Canada, Ontario; the Musée du Québec; and the Galerie Maeght, Paris, have held major retrospectives of his work beginning in the 1950s. The Musée des beaux-arts du Québec held a major retrospective of Riopelle's work in 2006 that was shown at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, and at the Musée Cantini, Marseille. Riopelle's works are in the public collections of The Art Institute Chicago; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; the Brooklyn Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art among others.

22 décembre, 1959
1959

Signed and dated on the lower right
Oil on canvas
130 x 195 cm | 51.2 x 76.8 in

PROVENANCE
Lucien Lefebvre-Foinet, Paris
Private collection, France



St. Paul
1966

Signed and dated on the lower right. Signed, titled and dated on the reverse
Oil on canvas
97 x 146 cm | 38.2 x 57.5 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Maeght, Paris
Sotheby's, London, 3 December 1987, lot 643
Private collection, United States

LITERATURE
Yseult Riopelle, Ed., *Catalogue raisonné de Jean Paul Riopelle Tome 4, 1966-1971*, Montréal, 2004, p. 101

CERTIFICATE
Yseult Riopelle has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Two Shinnelock Whalers
1960

Signed and dated on the lower right
Oil on canvas
101.6 x 114.3 cm | 40 x 45 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Jacques Dubourg, Paris
Dominion Gallery, Montreal
Christie's London
Private collection Italy
Jerôme Zodo
Opera Gallery
Private Collection

EXHIBITED

Spoletto, Palazzo Collicola, *La Peinture moderne, 25 années de peinture au Canada-français*, 5ième festival des 2 mondes, 1962, no. 6.

LITERATURE

Revue *Vie des Arts*, Vol. 19, Num. 76, Autumn 1974, p. 4.
Poster for the *Biennale de Venise* Art fair, *5ième festival dei due mondi*, Spoleto, 1962
This work will be included in the forthcoming Riopelle Catalogue raisonné being prepared by Yseult Riopelle under temporary no. 1960.052H.

CERTIFICATE

Yseult Riopelle has confirmed the authenticity of this work





PIERRE SOULAGES

b. 1919

Known as the painter of "black and light", Pierre Soulages was born in 1919 in Rodez, in the South of France. As a child, he was fascinated by the Celtic carvings, prehistoric cave art, and Romanesque architecture and sculpture of his native region and these early impressions continue to surface throughout his career. In 1938, he enrolled in the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, but he was disappointed by the traditional instruction and soon moved back to his hometown. After World War II, Soulages returned to Paris, where he was able to fully concentrate on painting, and soon became one of the pioneers of post-war abstract painting. Today, he is considered as one of the most innovative painters of the 20th century. He lives and works between Sète and Paris, France.

Soulages' first groundbreaking work was the *Broux de noix* series (Walnut Stains) (1947–1959), made using walnut stain—commonly reserved for furniture—instead of paint. These paintings attracted attention not only for their use of an unconventional and inexpensive material but also for the bold and restrained energy embedded in them. Black progressively conquered the surface of Soulages' calligraphic abstract paintings, which also incorporated subtle hints of color (mainly ochre and blue). His aesthetics radically shifted toward monochrome in 1979, when he initiated his lifelong series *Outrenoir*. Literally translating as "beyond black," *Outrenoir* opens onto a new realm that transcends purely gestural and monochromatic abstraction. Systematically applied in thick layers on canvas, black paint is meticulously scraped, striated, and overall sculpted to create smooth or rough areas that reflect light in various ways. By masterfully turning black into a luminous colour, Soulages powerfully evokes the genesis of the world, which came out of darkness.

For more than seven decades, Soulages has exhibited internationally and regularly. He has been honored with two retrospectives in France, at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1996, and at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in 2009. In 2001, he was the first living artist to be given a full-scale survey at the Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, and in 2014, the Musée Soulages opened in the artist's hometown of Rodez, housing five hundred paintings spanning Soulages' career. More than 150 of his paintings are in public collections around the world, including the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Tate Modern, London; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. On the occasion of Soulages' centennial birthday in December 2019, the Musée du Louvre paid homage to the artist—who continues to paint today—with a survey of his seven-decade career, concurrent with an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou.

Gouache sur papier 76 x 57.5 cm, 1977
1977

Signed, dated and dedicated on the lower right
Gouache on paper laid on canvas
76 x 57.5 cm | 29.9 x 22.6 in

PROVENANCE

Gift of the artist to the current owner
Christie's, Paris, 8 June 2017, lot 162
Opera Gallery
Private collection, Singapore
Opera Gallery
Private Collection

CERTIFICATE

The artist has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Peinture 81 x 122 cm, 20 mars 2019
2019

Signed, titled and dated on the reverse
Oil on canvas
81 x 122 cm | 31.9 x 48 in

PROVENANCE
Artist's studio

CERTIFICATE
The artist has confirmed the authenticity of this work



ZAO WOU-KI

1920 - 2013



Zao Wou-ki in his studio, Paris, 2003. Photo © François Guillot

Zao Wou-Ki was born in Beijing, China in 1920. He studied calligraphy and painting at the School of Fine Arts in Hangzhou. He moved to Paris in 1948 where he lived most of his life. He died in Nyon, Switzerland in 2013.

Zao Wou-Ki was lauded throughout his career for his ability to unite multiple artistic traditions within a single work, marrying Eastern and Western approaches to art-making through his abstract compositions that retained hints of his training as a landscape painter. When Zao arrived in France, associated with the École de Paris, he began to paint boldly, combining expressive lines with deeply saturated color. In the mid-1950s, he incorporated Chinese influences more directly, sometimes using actual calligraphy instead of loose and winding brushstrokes. During this period, Zao frequently travelled to New York, where he met Abstract Expressionists. Later in the 1970s, Zao's paintings became less focused on line and gesture, striving instead toward an ambient and dreamlike atmosphere in which foreground and background are entirely blurred. Taken in its entirety, Zao's oeuvre reflects a continual struggle—the artist's gesture versus the painter's canvas.

Zao's paintings are part of the permanent collections of leading international museums including the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Tate Gallery London; the Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; the National Institute of Fine Arts, Beijing; the Hong Kong Museum of Art; the Kaohsiung Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan; The Museum of Tel Aviv; the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan; the Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka; and the National Museum of Art, Osaka amongst others.

17.02.2002
2002

Signed and dated on the lower right
Signed in Chinese; signed Zao on the lower right; signed and titled on the reverse
with wrong dimensions: «29 cm x 36 cm» (they are the correct dimensions in in-
ches not centimeters)
73 x 92 cm | 28.7 x 36.2 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Bastien, Belgium
Private collection, Europe

LITERATURE
The work will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue raisonné currently being
prepared by Françoise Marquet and Yann Hendgen

CERTIFICATE
The artist has confirmed the authenticity of this work





SINGAPORE

First opened in 1994, Opera Gallery Singapore was the first gallery to be born in Opera Gallery Group. The gallery's rapid growth on the Asian market is testament to the burgeoning demand for high quality art by the collectors of the region.

A space and a location in constant evolution, Opera Gallery Singapore is now located on Orchard Road, a world-famous avenue for the luxury industry, on top of being a prominent upscale tourism destination. This unique venue is ideal and has already hosted some of the most successful world-class art exhibitions from Masterpiece collections, to the best growing Contemporary artists.



NEW YORK
791 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10065
T. +1 646 707 3299
nyc@operagallery.com

MIAMI
151 NE 41st Street, Suite 131,
Paradise Plaza
Miami Design District
Miami, FL 33137
T. +1 305 868 3337
miami@operagallery.com

BAL HARBOUR
The St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort
9703 Collins Avenue, Lobby Floor
Miami Beach, FL 33154
T. +1 305 861 9022
balharbour@operagallery.com

ASPEN
501 E Dean Street
Residences at the Little Nell
Aspen, CO 81611
T. +1 970 710 7289
aspens@operagallery.com

LONDON
134 New Bond Street
London W1S 2TF
T. +44 (0)20 7491 2999
london@operagallery.com

PARIS
62 rue du faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris
T. +33 (0)1 42 96 39 00
paris@operagallery.com

MONACO
1 avenue Henri Dunant
Palais de la Scala
98000 Monaco
T. +377 9797 5424
monaco@operagallery.com

GENEVA
Place de Longemalle 10-12
1204 Geneva
T. +41 (0)22 318 57 70
geneve@operagallery.com

DUBAI
Gate Village Building 3
Dubai International Financial Centre
Dubai
T. +971 (0)4 323 0909
dubai@operagallery.com

BEIRUT
Foch 94, Foch Avenue
Beirut Central District
T. +961 (0)1 971 471
beirut@operagallery.com

HONG KONG
W Place, 52 Wyndham Street
Central, Hong Kong
T. +852 2810 1208
hkg@operagallery.com

SINGAPORE
2 Orchard Turn
#02-16 Ion Orchard
Singapore 238801
T. +65 6735 2618
spore@operagallery.com

SEOUL
18 Eonju-ro 154 gil
Gangnam-gu
Seoul 06021
T. +82 (0)2 3446 0070
seoul@operagallery.com

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