



SAM GILLIAM
1967-1973

SAM GILLIAM: 1967-1973

MNUCHIN GALLERY

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1967-1973

CURATED BY SUKANYA RAJARATNAM

MNUCHIN GALLERY

Sam Gilliam. The name began to come up in conversation in 2011 when we debuted David Hammons's now-iconic series of Tarp paintings. As contemporary and radical as these works felt, they also demonstrated a powerful historical pull toward Sam's Drape paintings. Curators and critics mentioned his work to us, as did David himself.

Sam's name came up again in 2014, when we presented our exhibition of Morris Louis Veil paintings. A resurgence of interest in the Washington School inspired a reexamination of a second generation of Washington artists, including Sam, who took the group's advancements several leaps forward with his introduction of the Beveled-edge paintings in 1967 and the Drape paintings in 1968. Sam broke through the medium of painting by taking it off the traditional stretcher.

This year we decided that something must be done to present these paintings in New York, and we began the journey of bringing together a group of seminal examples from 1967 to 1973.

Of course, we are first and foremost grateful to Sam for creating these extraordinary works, and to him and his family, including Annie Gawlak, for giving us their blessing to organize this exhibition. We are also indebted to the counsel and encouragement of Horace Brockington, along with the invaluable studio assistance of Stephen Frietch and Joseph Everett. This exhibition would not have been possible without the museums and private collections that have so generously entrusted us with their works. In particular, we would like to thank our institutional lenders, the FLAG Art Foundation, the Luther W. Brady Art Gallery of George Washington University, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, as well as Darryl Atwell, Alitash Kebede Arts, the Joyner/Giuffrida Collection, the Rennie Collection, and those private collectors who wish to remain anonymous. A special thanks goes to the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture for its support of our exhibition.

With regard to this catalogue, we are grateful to Adrienne Edwards for her insightful text, and to Jonathan Binstock and Tatem Webb Read for generously granting us permission to reprint their chronology. We would like to thank David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles for their cooperation and archival support, especially David Kordansky, Mike Homer, Kurt Mueller, and Maisey Cox, for their unwavering commitment to Sam. We commend David Zaza and Logan Myers of McCall Associates for their catalogue design. And we thank our in-house exhibitions team, Liana Gorman, David McClelland, and Beatriz Palacios, for their efforts and dedication.

ROBERT MNUCHIN SUKANYA RAJARATNAM MICHAEL MCGINNIS

SAM GILLIAM: BETWIXT

ADRIENNE EDWARDS

7

WORKS

15

CHECKLIST

57

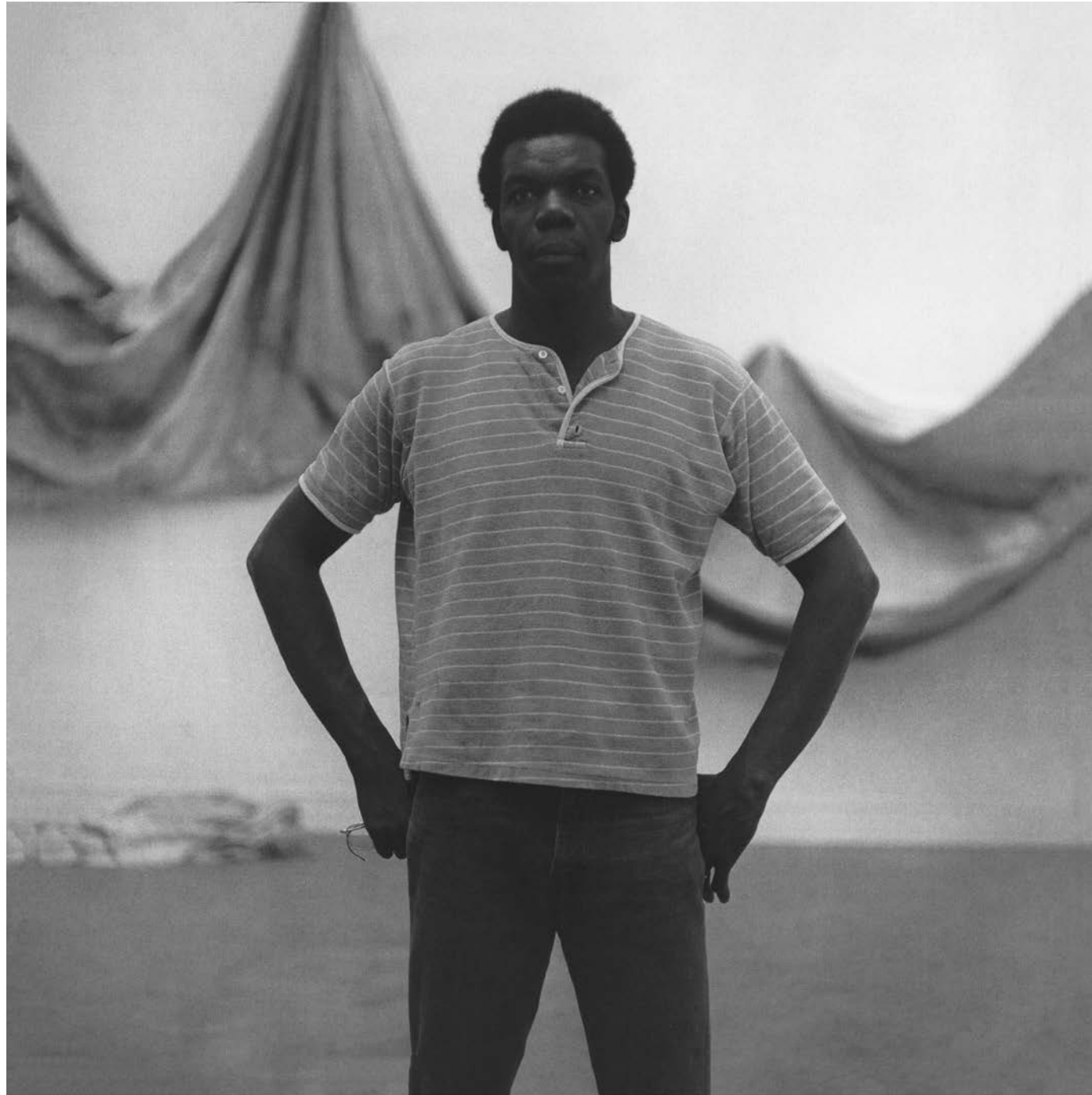
ANNOTATED CHRONOLOGY

JONATHAN P. BINSTOCK AND TATEM WEBB READ

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SAM GILLIAM: BETWIXT

ADRIENNE EDWARDS



If there is one prescient quality that is central to Sam Gilliam's art and life, it is his predilection for the liminal. The artist's work interpolates painting, installation, and sculpture (though he is clear about its stature as painting), is decidedly suspended amongst important modernist schools and the experimental aesthetics that follow them from the latter part of the twentieth century to today, and portends a shift in abstraction that looms betwixt a dedication to formalism and an acknowledgment of abstraction's force in the world. We might originate his proclivity for the in-between in geography, as Gilliam was born halfway between Memphis, Tennessee, and Birmingham, Alabama, in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1933. He moved with his family to Louisville, Kentucky, in 1942, and eventually to Washington, DC, in 1962.¹ Trained in graduate school in a more academic style of painting, it was his simultaneous introduction to Bay Area artists in California, particularly Nathan Oliveira, that put his work on a trajectory more inclined toward being in and as abstraction.

Though typically historicized in the genealogical lineage of the Washington Color School, Gilliam's aesthetic innovations would go well beyond it. The Washington Color School was a loose network of color-field painters, including Thomas "Tom" Downing, Morris Lewis, and Kenneth Noland, among others, who showed in the United States capital from the late 1950s to the 1970s and gave the city its singular modern visual art movement, reaching its height in the mid-1960s. Arising in the aftermath of New York's Abstract Expressionism, Washington Color School artists were known for canvases featuring hard-edge lines of color, chromatic washes, or single areas of color.

In the early years of abstract art, artists were predominately concerned with a work's formal appearance, as opposed to its content. As curator Jonathan P. Binstock has noted,

Gilliam's work as it relates to structure and supports is uniquely situated between modernists of the New York School and the Washington Color School, as well as experimentalists such as Lynda Benglis, minimalists like Robert Morris and Eva Hesse, who both used draping,² the textile works of Richard Tuttle, and the deconstructionist tendencies of Tuttle and French Supports/Surfaces artists such as Claude Viallat.³

Gilliam's paintings demonstrate a kind of fearless versatility with his idiom that makes known abstraction's boundless possibilities. His *Slice* (alternatively described as *Beveled-edge*) and *Draped* works are explorations in formal innovation; most notable are their qualities of monumentality, even when intimate in proportions. For the monumental effect of Gilliam's paintings exceeds a mere reference to their imposing, all-encompassing, enveloping size and scale. While these qualities are a hallmark of his experimentations, the paintings' monumental assets equally illumine their historical and enduring significance and exceptional resonance within and away from the arc of modernism.

Gilliam's first pivotal advance occurred in 1967, occasioned by the emergence of his *Beveled-edge* paintings. Gilliam got the idea for the *Slice* works from Ron Davis, who was using Plexiglas on his canvases, placing it on beveled edges.⁴ Gilliam achieved these all-over compositions by applying diluted acrylic (achieved with the application of a water-tension breaker)⁵ to raw canvas, then quickly imparting intense, improvisational manipulations of the material while it was still wet, resulting in a distinct polychromatic luminosity. Chromatic tones were applied with the lightest first, overlaid with darker hues. After Gilliam acted upon the canvases, allowing the pigments to leak among one another, he would then fold and crease the canvases,

resting them in piles upon themselves, either hanging from a wall or mounded on top of furniture or studio tools. Gilliam's interactivity with his materials, pressing color and canvas, imbued the works with lines that deliver to the viewer a kind of geometry of attention. With such a visual guideline, the eye wavers between the structure created by anxious, agitated, and precarious lines that are the result of folds and creases, and the painting's sensual dimensions—tactile, lush, volumetric. The works' sensuality is enabled by Gilliam's reliance on chance and improvisation, on the easy and sublime amalgamation of colors, one upon the other. The works were then stretched on a beveled frame, the slanting edge angled into the wall such that they seem to levitate, in absolute suspension, apart from it.

Gilliam once again changed the game of American abstraction a year later, in 1968, with his indelible Draped compositions, for which he discarded the typical framing apparatus of wooden stretcher supports that give paintings their geometric shapes, in favor of scenes of billowing, swooning, and swinging color. For these works, Gilliam poured paint with the help of a tool or directly from a can, allowing it to saturate the canvas or polypropylene. The artist extended this contingent operation by rolling or folding the material like a fan, bounding it in varying parts, dangling it from the wall or studio props like a sawhorse or ladder, and allowing it to dry.⁶ Such a protean shift rendered arcane aesthetic distinctions between painting and sculpture, painting and architecture, theatricality and repose, between one who observes and one who activates a work of art.

By removing the conventional structure with which painting is so identified and eliminating its reliance upon the wall, Gilliam actually disavows convention itself, as it relates to the qualities we historically assign to two-dimensional artworks and our experience of them. We behold Gilliam's draped works not solely through our optical absorption of them but also through being enveloped by and entangled in them. At the moment of encounter, the drape atmosphere binds us up and embraces us, while also intervening in its surroundings, whether by sloping against the side of a building, looming overhead in a museum gallery, or siphoning the corner of a church or home.

Gilliam's treatment of canvas and color is a proposition for considering the timing of the event that ultimately results in a painting. Each work is a durational singularity, making temporal experience not merely an element of contingency but rather a distinct, specific medium in and of itself, mobilized through its interrelationship with the specifics of matter that we recognize as color and canvas, but going far beyond them.

In the inseparable intermingling of pigment and cloth, that which is unrepresentable comes to the fore, and that which is unique to the occasion of their having been commingled enters a force field that we come to recognize as a painting. The painting is always already an inflection point, a place of fusion and cohesion where Gilliam makes allegiances in deference to material capacities. Gilliam's process-driven approach relies upon several layers of chance and improvisation built towards and aimed at unleashing the vitality of the art object. From the time required to apply layers of color, to the unwieldy mutability of the method of folding, to the submission to chance in having to wait for the painting to dry, to the unknown result not revealed until it is unraveled from its bounded form, Gilliam evolves a process reliant on the extreme mutability and bold immediacy reflected in the final work itself.

It is as if his very process is far beyond abstraction as form and aesthetic. Rather, Gilliam's work is a mechanism for feeling abstractly, thinking abstractly, an invitation to lean into the abstract—which is to say, the works are beings towards and for an abstract state. Through such a pivot in our understanding of these works, the significance of volume, freedom, and improvisation and the ways they are inseparably intertwined attain a heightened significance in the stakes of Gilliam's art. For example, the fact that the Drape paintings are reimagined with every reinstallation shifts not only the location of the work but substantially alters the spirit of the work. Gilliam creates sense-scapes, fields of projection, engagement, self-reflexive harnessing that trigger the viewer's active engagement, necessitated by a demand for total immersion. As Gilliam himself has said, "I wanted to deal with the possibility of 'there's a painting,' 'there is not a painting,' or sort of being a little bit more into the theater of what was actually going on."⁷ For him painting is "all theater or performance."⁸

Gilliam's concern for painting as performance, and for the affective resonance that imbues it with—and thereby conveys—a sense of liveness, is related, at least in part, to his interest in jazz. As art historian and curator Mary Schmidt Campbell remarked, "Gilliam's cascades of color are not unlike Coltrane's sheets of sound."⁹ I understand this as concerning less a desire for a visual representation of jazz but rather a committed effort to materialize, to give a physical manifestation to the sensual dimensions of musical abstraction, transposing its sonic qualities to canvas and paint for a fleshy embodiment. For example, Gilliam has remarked that "Coltrane worked the whole sheet: he didn't bother to stop at bars and notes and clefs and various



Morris Louis, *Untitled*, 1959–60, acrylic on canvas, 99 × 143 1/2 inches (251.5 × 364.5 cm). Private collection

things, he just played the whole sheet at once."¹⁰ As art historian Kellie Jones notes, artists like Gilliam, David Hammons, William T. Williams, and Jack Whitten were in search of an abstract voice akin to jazz, "something that could be non-objective in form and coded with (self-) reference, without relying on representation."¹¹

Gilliam's radicality extends beyond his formal advances to the social, historical, and political context of the 1960s and '70s, in which he was working on the Slice and Draped works. It illuminates the stakes of his commitment to being towards abstraction at a time and in a historical arc when figuration was the expected mode of expression in the visual arts by black artists. As I have written elsewhere, black representation has been formulated by W. E. B. Du Bois, Amiri Baraka, and Alain LeRoy Locke in different ways, though always as an important constituent of a much larger agenda toward black racial advancement.¹² The philosopher Locke, Du Bois's contemporary, marshaled a group of artists, patrons, scholars, and writers in the '20s, and is best known for editing the 1925 anthology

The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance. Du Bois, an early architect of black racial advancement, believed art to be useful propaganda, famously remarking:

All art is propaganda, and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda.¹³

For Du Bois, the emphasis was on the creation of black art for black audiences, which aesthetically necessitated turning to Africa for inspiration, dramatizing black life, portraying so-called black features and characteristics, and leveraging suffering for expressive purposes. A similar agenda was advocated in the Black Arts Movement, which was founded by Baraka in the 1960s and '70s in Harlem, fueled by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.



David Hammons, *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, tarp, 64 × 46 inches (162.6 × 116.8 cm) (canvas size). Private collection, courtesy Mnuchin Gallery

In all instances, black representation has involved the confluence of an artist's individual perspective or desire for personal agency with the discourse of these movements circumscribing the parameters of blackness in art. There has been a tendency toward figuration and realism in these movements, which have operated on principles of transparency, immediacy, authority, and authenticity. These well-meaning efforts ultimately reinforced a reductive notion of "black art" or the idea of an essence locatable in works of art by black artists. Gilliam's art, along with the work of Barbara Chase-Riboud, Ed Clark, Mel Edwards, Virginia Jaramillo, Al Loving, Howardena Pindell, and William T. Williams, among others, elides such essentializing inclinations that necessitated a giving of one's account to lived blackness that were evident in the social realism of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and '70s.

The work of Gilliam and others was emblematic of the possibilities for abstraction, not only to serve as a platform to consider the context in which it is shown but also to vitally, yet subtly and opaquely, convey the social, historical, and political environment through which it arises. Therefore it can be no surprise that Gilliam's approach to painting has proven to be a staging ground from which subsequent developments in abstraction would depart. Abstraction over time encompasses a thickening and density of materials mimetic of and proven able to deploy a range of complex concepts that enter the scene of abstraction in later generations. While Gilliam portends the theatricality of the art object so bemoaned by art critic Michael Fried in his critique of minimalism, he does so differently by stridently attending to the formal capacities of his materials in order to see what they do in the world, allowing

them to make a claim, express their will, and unleash their character with a complexity that emerges gradually and individually. Critic Emily Wasserman, writing for *Artforum* in 1968, explains, "It is obvious that with his unpleasantly caked and smeared surfaces he aims to challenge the all-too-tasteful ends to which stain painting has been carried by some of its less inspired practitioners."¹⁴ While beautiful, Gilliam's works are more than merely textured; they are rough, gritty, thick, encrusted physical responses to the genre of painting and, I would add, perhaps to life itself.

While it has often been remarked that Gilliam avoided expressions of blackness in his art (with some exceptions), I would argue that Gilliam's selection and handling of matter rely upon and conjure opacity, resisting illustration and legibility as not only an aesthetic imperative but a personal, social, and historical one as well. The Draped paintings, given their architecture and general omission of support, and the levitating Beveled-edge works enact a desire for freedom from constraints—hovering is flight from the bounds of a range of expectations and confining issues, aesthetic and otherwise. His position is evocative of Adrian Piper's claim:

Abstraction is flying. Abstracting is ascending to higher and higher levels of conceptual generalization; soaring back and forth, reflectively circling around above the specificity and immediacy of things and events in space and time. . . . Abstraction is also flight. It is freedom from the immediate spatiotemporal constraints of the moment; freedom to plan the future, recall the past, comprehend the present from a perspective that incorporates all three; freedom from the immediate boundaries of concrete subjectivity, freedom to imagine the possible and transport oneself into it; freedom to survey the real as a resource for embodying the possible; freedom to detach the realized object from oneself more and more fully as a self-contained entity. . . . Abstraction is a solitary journey through the conceptual universe, with no anchors, no cues, no sign posts, no maps, no foundations to cling to.¹⁵

Commenting on his work and the imperative of representations of blackness, Gilliam remarked, "One looks at my art in terms of a different aesthetic. Underneath, what's important to me is to do what I want to do. . . . You feel less afraid when someone

says, 'I can't believe these paintings express your blackness.'"¹⁶ In determining to "do what I want to do," Gilliam points to the expectation of having to negotiate and exhaust the paradigm of black representation in visual art. As if in response, Gilliam's work resists a precise legibility, leveraging abstraction through seemingly infinite manifestations of it for its profound capaciousness. The paintings are specific instances in which this desire is expressed, and their influence and trace on varying approaches (and not only those given to blackness but to a range of concepts and systems that delimit individual agency) to abstraction cannot be underestimated.

For instance, Hammons, who was born nearly a decade after Gilliam, was part of a generation of artists who more directly addressed themes of blackness in intermingling materials and concepts. In Hammons's case, this included the use of black people's hair, symbols of basketball from sculptural hoops to drawings, and his own body as a printmaking device. There is a relation between Hammons's tarp paintings, begun in 2008, and Gilliam's more metaphoric draped works, which preceded them by fifty years. Both depend upon a certain kind of provisional quality similar to jazz's seemingly paradoxical reliance upon improvisation and some modicum of structure. They also share a commitment to the power of illusion, which imbues these works with a particular energetic force. Hammons's plastic-covered tarp paintings have a more ready-made sensibility than Gilliam's works; Hammons uses ripped, torn, frayed, and slashed ruptures in his plastic, waterproof canvas, and fabric the way Gilliam employs pigment and folds. In all instances, their aesthetic choices concern a visual resistance towards the expected and a proclivity for the enigmatic. Some of Hammons's tarp paintings belie more chromatic, expressionistic stretched works on canvas, which form their foundations, while others are simply (but not simple) cascades of plastic. Though in differing ways, Gilliam, more optimistically, and Hammons, more cynically, wager the stakes between specificity and ambiguity, meaning and worth, the real and its reference.

Rodney McMillian's works, particularly his textile, carpet, and plastic paintings, certainly have the same ambition of scale and sophistication of material as Gilliam's. His Landscape paintings are abstractions composed from latex, acrylic, and ink, as well as bed sheets sourced from thrift stores, marked with paint, and imbued with the patina that comes from having served essential functions in a life. They summon the body but never deliver it. As in Gilliam's and Hammons's paintings,

McMillian asks that we imagine that at the moment of encounter with the work, you contemplate not only your relationship to what is at hand but also to the work's materials and artist's process and beyond, all that is not immediately apparent. McMillian's paintings also point to the tradition of landscape painting and its relationship to abstraction as never pure, objective, or solely formal terrains but rather topographies thick with history, events, and the multitude of subjective interpretations of them.

Gilliam's influence can also be traced to Colombian artist Oscar Murillo's unstretched, deconstructed, patchwork, monochromatic black paintings, which Murillo has created since 2015. These works dance on their diagonal lines, sway from copper wire, lean against mortuary tables, or are inconsequentially folded and stacked on the floor. Saturated with ebony—some with flourishes of indigo or earth tones—they appear as casually installed "banners" and "flags;" they are elegantly frayed, scrappy, dangling paintings imbued with an anti-spectacularity of controlled chaos.

Moroccan-French artist Yto Barrada's textile paintings combine the approaches of modernist painting (the works resonate particularly with those of Frank Stella, in addition to Gilliam's) with traditional dying techniques in which she bundles flowers, fruit, rusted metal, and eccentric natural dyes to realize visually lush yet subtly organic abstractions. Like McMillian,

Barrada has turned to carpets—though for her they are loomed by Berber women in Morocco, where she lives part of the time—in vibrant, jewel-toned colors, arranged on the floor in massive, dramatic installations that correspond to abstract painting, and yet lie somewhere between two-dimensionality, sculpture, and quotidian object.

Gilliam's demonstrated tendency toward the in-betweenness of things resounds distinctly in the ways he works within the limits of painting in order to get beyond them, and ultimately to reveal the capacity of painting to expand. The contradistinction between the Slice paintings and the Draped works namely has to do with the extent of their performativity. The Beveled-edge works are autonomous and self-contained objects, while the Draped works are unwieldy portals; together they are themselves examples of important liminal moments in the arc of Gilliam's career, shifting from more traditional engagement with color-field aesthetics and reliance on the stretcher to the radical and sensual possibilities of abstraction as atmosphere. Gilliam works in a kind of circuitous mode navigated through repetition and seriality, a constant return that is nevertheless different every time. Material provides the framework, a modicum of structure that is the basis for experimentation with a painting event initiated by the alchemical possibilities of pigment and cloth.

NOTES

1. Jonathan P. Binstock, *Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2005), 10.
2. *Ibid.*, 62.
3. *Ibid.*, 33.
4. *Ibid.*, 40.
5. *Ibid.*, 29.
6. *Ibid.*, 46.
7. *Ibid.*, 44.
8. Charmaine Picard, "In the Studio: Sam Gilliam," *Blouin Art + Auction*, December 17, 2015, 66.
9. Henry Geldzahler, "Jack Whitten: Ten Years, 1970–1980," in *Jack Whitten: Ten Years, 1970–1980* (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1983), 9.
10. Jim Lewis, "Red Orange Yellow Green and Blue Period," *W Art*, December 2014–January 2015, 88.
11. Kellie Jones, *EyeMinded: Living and Writing Contemporary Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 300.
12. See Adrienne Edwards, "Blackness in Abstraction," *Art in America*, January 2015, 62–69.
13. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria for Negro Art," *The Crisis* 32, October 1926, 290–297.
14. Emily Wasserman, "New York," *Artforum* 7.1, September 1968, 61–62.
15. Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight, Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968–1992* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 224.
16. Elsa Honig Fine, *The Afro-American Artist: A Search for Identity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 225–226.

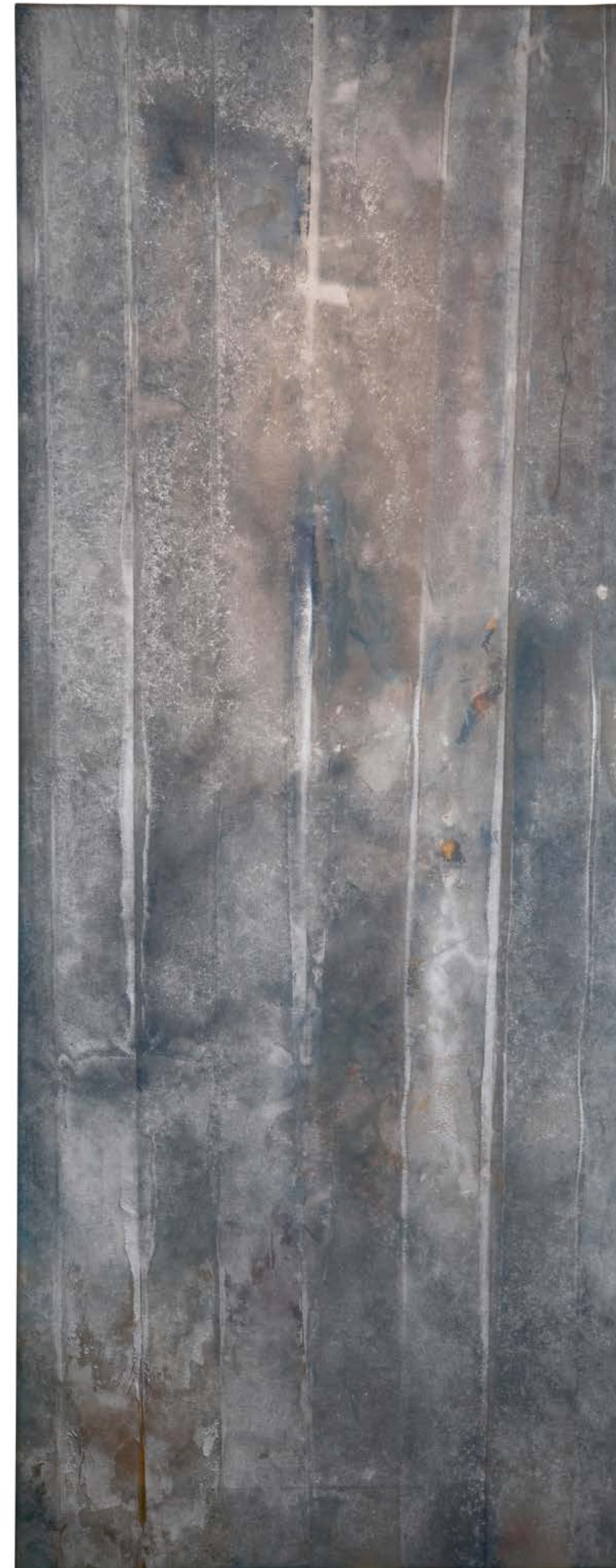
WORKS

WITH BLUE

1967

aluminum powder and acrylic on
canvas with beveled edge

104 ½ x 40 inches (265.4 x 101.6 cm)

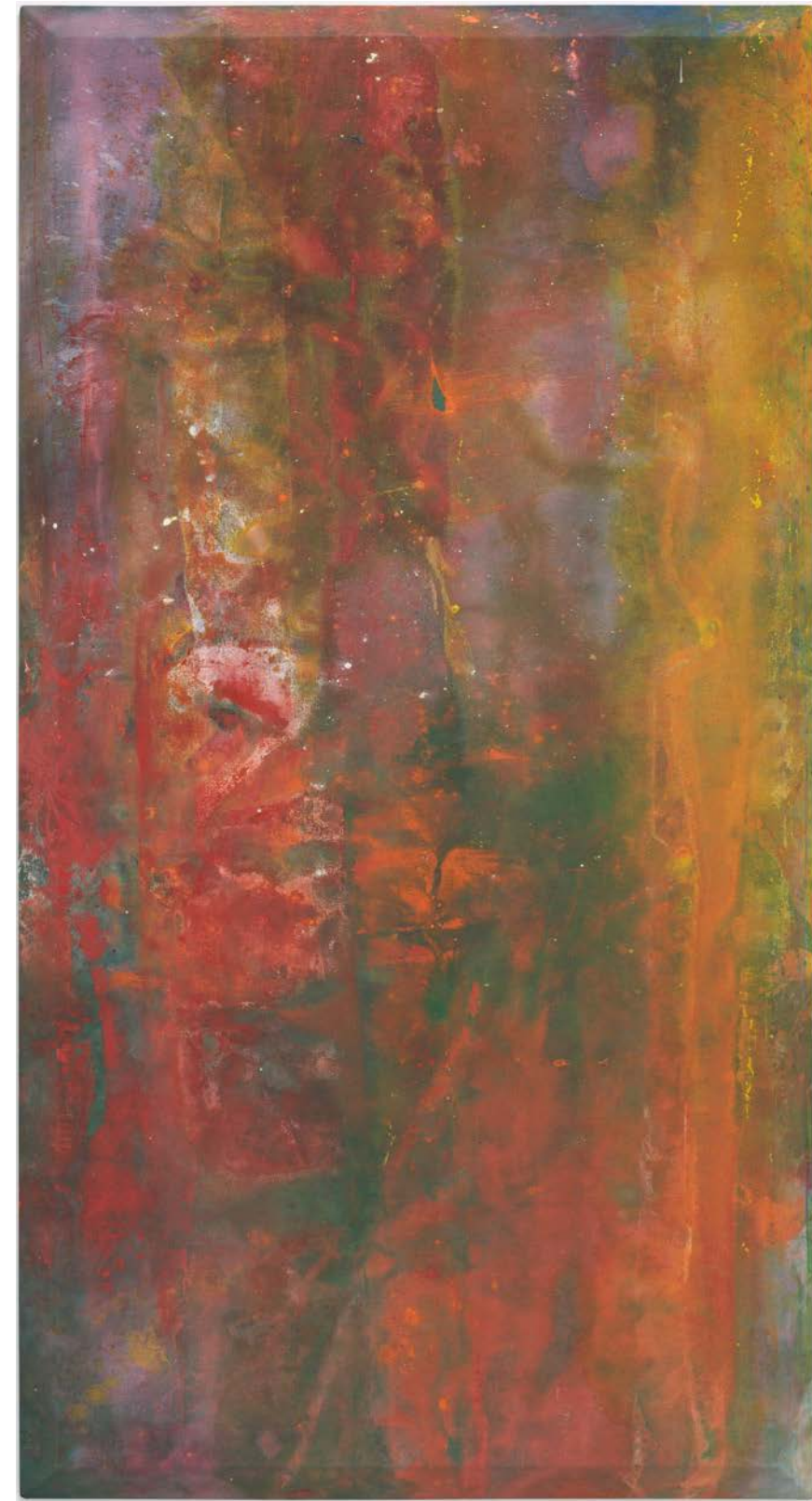


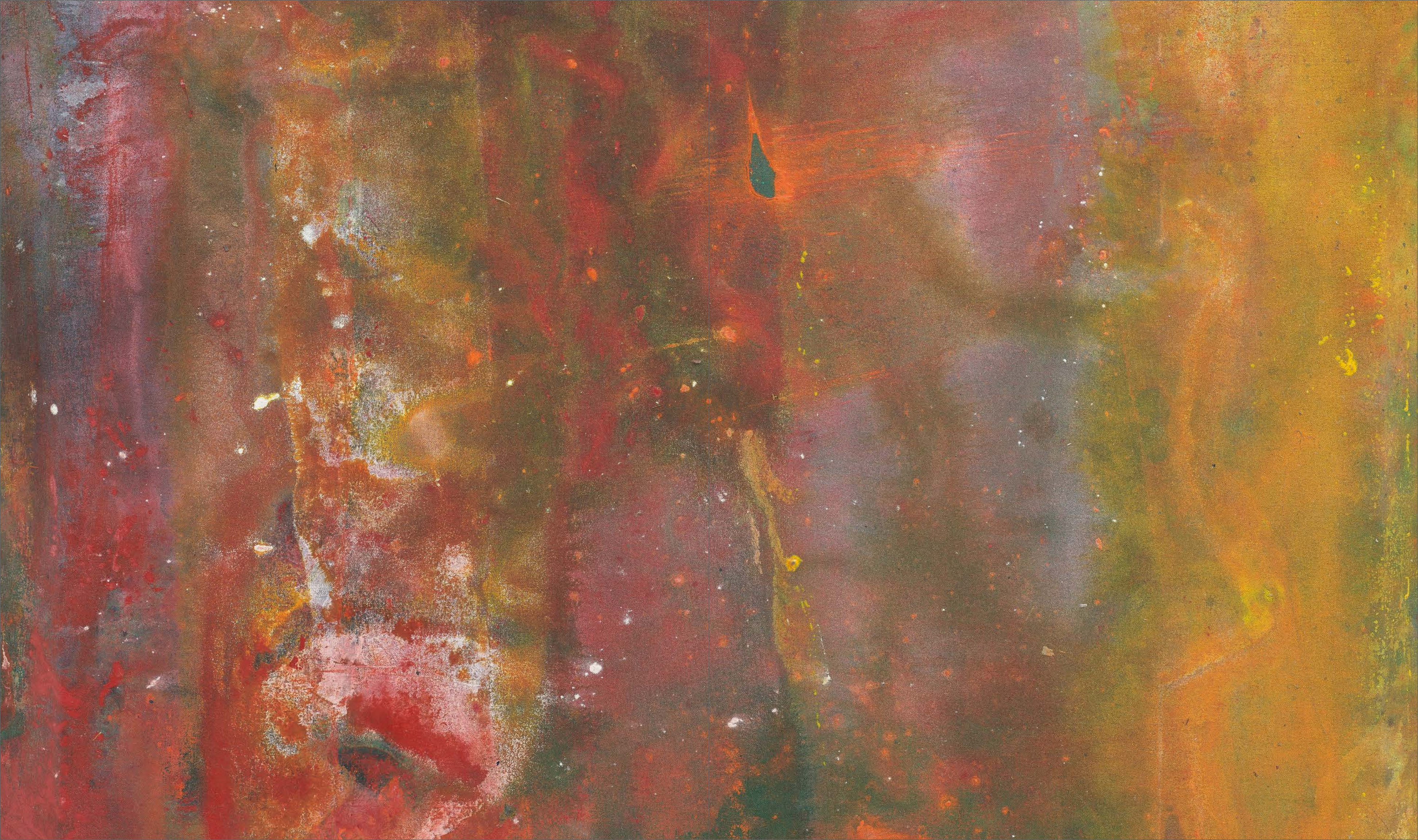
THRUST

1967

acrylic on canvas with beveled edge

83 x 44 inches (210.8 x 111.8 cm)





BOW FORM CONSTRUCTION

1968

acrylic and enamel on draped canvas

canvas: 119 $\frac{7}{16}$ × 332 $\frac{5}{16}$ inches (303.4 × 844.1 cm)



MISTY

1969

acrylic and dye pigments on canvas with beveled edge

53 ¼ x 66 ½ inches (135.3 x 168.9 cm)





CAROUSEL CHANGE

1970

acrylic on draped cotton canvas

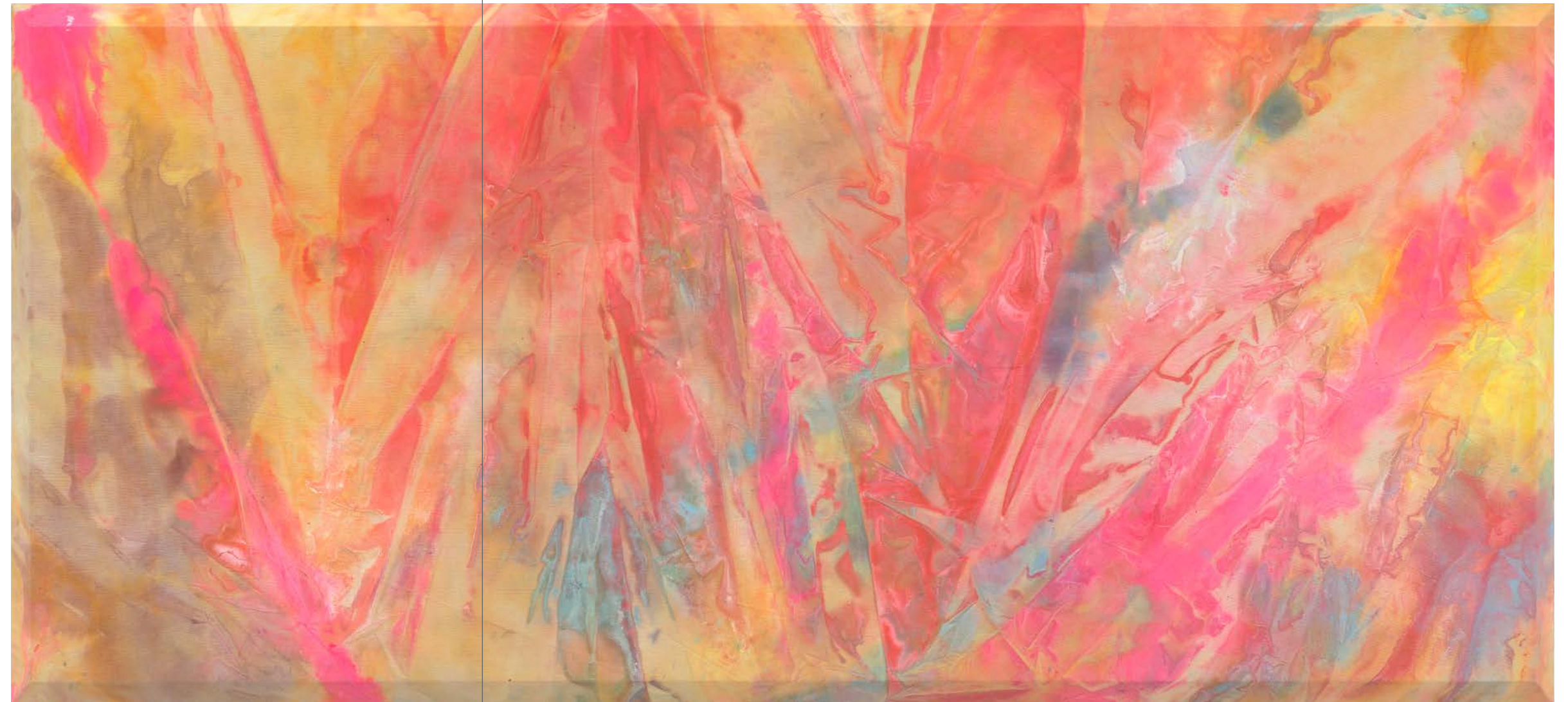
118 1/8 x 920 1/8 inches (300 x 2337.1 cm)



TEMPLE FIRE

1970

acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
50 x 110 inches (127 x 279.4 cm)



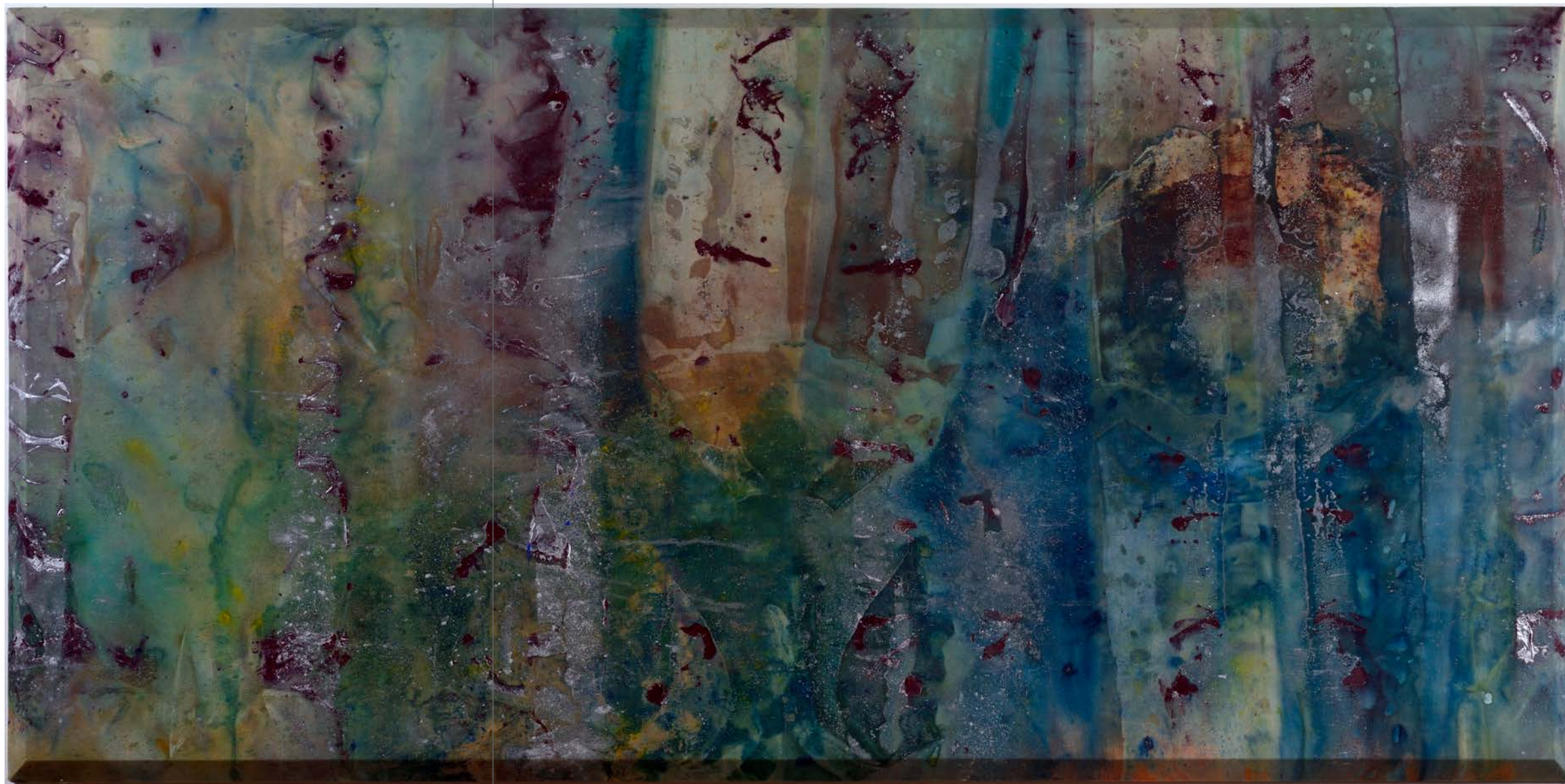


UNTITLED

1970

acrylic on canvas with beveled edge

55 x 110 inches (139.7 x 279.4 cm)



IDLE TWIST

1972

acrylic on draped canvas

canvas: 64 ¼ × 65 ¾ inches (163 × 167 cm)

installed (variable): 60 ½ × 60 inches (153.7 × 152.4 cm)





SPRING THAW

1972

acrylic on canvas with beveled edge

72 x 72 inches (182.9 x 182.9 cm)



DUDE

1972

acrylic on draped canvas

canvas: 66 × 66 inches (167.6 × 167.6 cm)

installed (variable): 57 × 55 inches (144.5 × 139.7 cm)





FROST I

1973

acrylic on canvas with beveled edge

48 3/4 x 51 inches (123.8 x 129.5 cm)





RED COWL

1973

acrylic on draped canvas

canvas: 103 ¾ × 43 inches (263.5 × 109.2 cm)

installed (variable): 96 × 43 inches (243.8 × 109.2 cm)





SPREAD

1973

acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
69 × 113½ inches (175.3 × 288.3 cm)



CHECKLIST

WITH BLUE

1967
aluminum powder and acrylic on
canvas with beveled edge
104 ½ × 40 inches (265.4 × 101.6 cm)
George Washington University Collection,
courtesy the Luther W. Brady Art Gallery

THRUST

1967
acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
83 × 44 inches (210.8 × 111.8 cm)
Private collection

BOW FORM CONSTRUCTION

1968
acrylic and enamel on draped canvas
canvas: 119 ⅞ × 332 ⅝ inches (303.4 × 844.1 cm)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase,
with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum
of American Art and the Howard W. Lipman Foundation,
and gift of the Ford Foundation Purchase Program and
an anonymous donor, by exchange

MISTY

1969
acrylic and dye pigments on canvas with beveled edge
53 ¼ × 66 ½ inches (135.3 × 168.9 cm)
Private collection

CAROUSEL CHANGE

1970
acrylic on draped cotton canvas
118 ⅞ × 920 ⅞ inches (300 × 2337.1 cm)
The Joyner / Giuffrida Collection

TEMPLE FIRE

1970
acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
50 × 110 inches (127 × 279.4 cm)
Private collection

UNTITLED

1970
acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
55 × 110 inches (139.7 × 279.4 cm)
Darryl Atwell

IDLE TWIST

1972
acrylic on draped canvas
canvas: 64 ¼ × 65 ¾ inches (163 × 167 cm)
installed (variable): 60 ½ × 60 inches (153.7 × 152.4 cm)
Private collection

SPRING THAW

1972
acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
72 × 72 inches (182.9 × 182.9 cm)
Private collection

DUDE

1972
acrylic on draped canvas
canvas: 66 × 66 inches (167.6 × 167.6 cm)
installed (variable): 57 × 55 inches (144.5 × 139.7 cm)
Alitash Kebede Arts, Los Angeles

FROST I

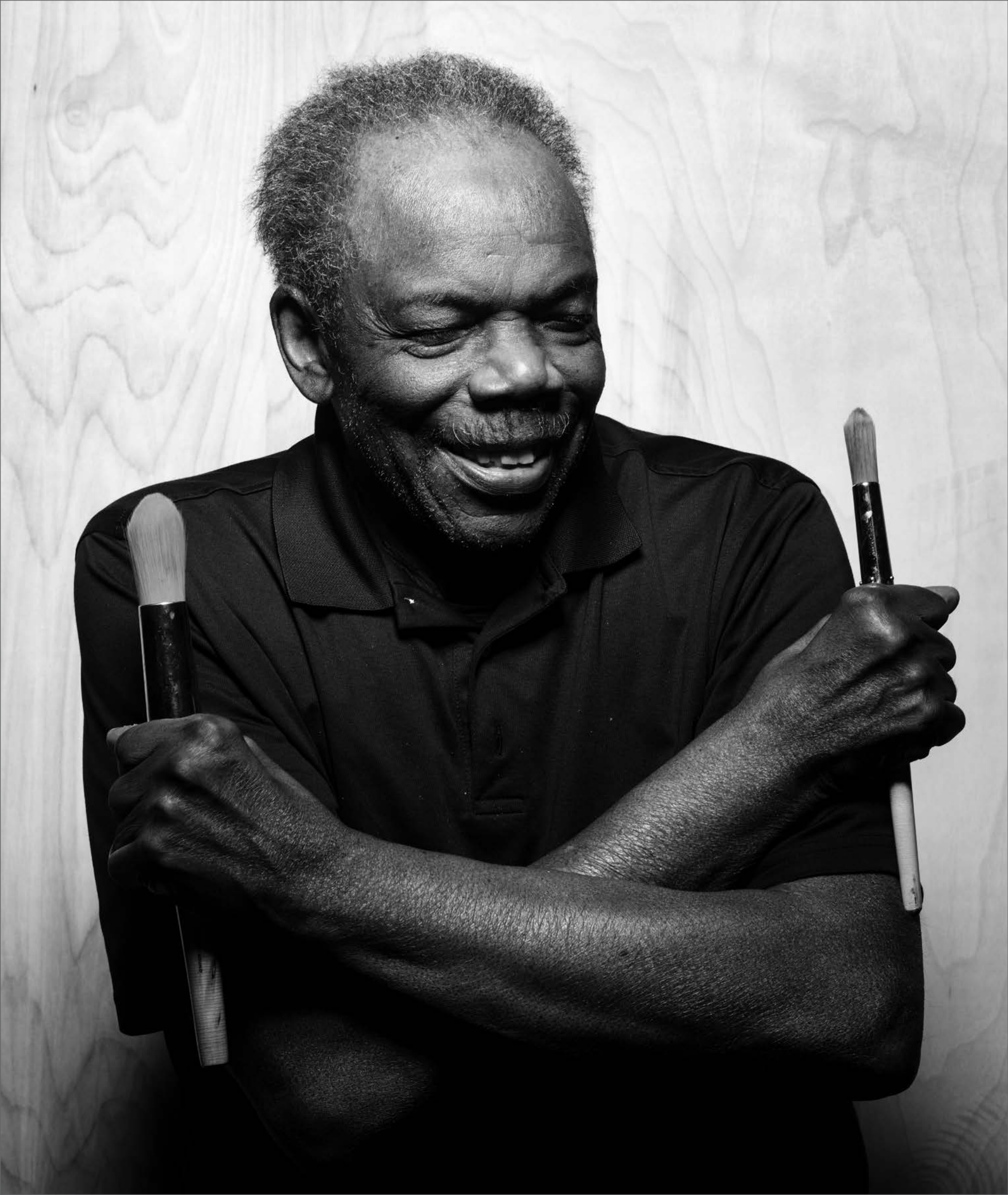
1973
acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
48 ¾ × 51 inches (123.8 × 129.5 cm)
Rennie Collection, Vancouver

RED COWL

1973
acrylic on draped canvas
canvas: 103 ¾ × 43 inches (263.5 × 109.2 cm)
installed (variable): 96 × 43 inches (243.8 × 109.2 cm)
Private collection

SPREAD

1973
acrylic on canvas with beveled edge
69 × 113 ½ inches (175.3 × 288.3 cm)
Collection Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman, NY,
courtesy the FLAG Art Foundation



ANNOTATED CHRONOLOGY AND SELECTED EXHIBITION HISTORY, COMMISSIONS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS *

JONATHAN P. BINSTOCK AND TATEM WEBB READ

1933

On November 30 Sam Gilliam Jr. is born in Tupelo, Mississippi, to Estery and Sam Gilliam Sr. He is the seventh of eight children. Attends George Washington Carver Elementary School in Tupelo.

1942

At seven years old, moves to Louisville, Kentucky, with his family. Attends Virginia Avenue Elementary School and is encouraged to pursue his talent in art by fifth-grade art teacher Mrs. McQuinney. At Madison Junior High School this interest is nurtured by art teachers Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Jones.

1951

Graduates from Central High School in Louisville.

1951–55

Attends the University of Louisville, earning a bachelor of arts degree in 1955, with a major in creative art; counts Mary Spencer Nay, Eugene Leake, and Ulfert Wilke, his art instructors, among his influences.

Forms a group with his contemporaries to discuss art and politics. The group meets in Louisville's West End at Joe's Palm Room and the Brown Derby. While working as a studio assistant for Wilke, Gilliam develops an interest in German woodcut prints, African sculpture, and Paul Klee, all of which Wilke collected.

1954

Asks a friend to set him up with Dorothy Butler, age seventeen, for the Thoroughbred Ball at the University of Louisville; he had previously seen her on the bus.

1956

SOLO EXHIBITION
University of Louisville.

1956–58

Serves in the US Army, stationed in Yokohama, Japan, and is named soldier of the month three times. Visits the Bridgestone Gallery in Yokohama to see a Picasso exhibition. Receives honorable discharge with rank of specialist third class. Deepens his love of jazz music.

1958–61

Attends the University of Louisville and earns a master of arts degree in fine arts in 1961. Completes his thesis under Charles Crodel and credits Ted Hewett, Dario Covi, Joe Fitzpatrick, Edgard Pillet, and Don Fiene (the latter introduced him to the writings of J. D. Salinger) as influential figures in his graduate education.

Teaches at Jackson Junior High School during his master's studies and thereafter. Continues to date Butler, who is living in New York and working toward a master's degree in journalism at Columbia University.

Joins the executive board of the NAACP as a youth council advisor. Helps coordinate sit-ins and pickets in conjunction with the Unitarian Church.

Butler earns her master's degree in May 1961 and later accepts a job in Washington, DC, as a reporter for the city desk of the *Washington Post*.

Gilliam works on the Great Northern Railroad between Minneapolis and Seattle as a dining car waiter during the summer of 1961.

1962

On September 1 Gilliam and Butler marry and move to Washington, DC. Gilliam immediately begins teaching at McKinley High School, where he works for five years. The two live in an apartment on Summit Place, NW, in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of the District.

Continues painting expressive figural abstractions in a style inspired by the work of Nathan Oliveira and David Park.

Completes his first major series, Park Invention, comprising impressions in oil and watercolor of Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC.

Begins talking regularly with Dr. James Porter.

Takes students to the Barnett Aden Gallery, which is African American-owned and operated and plays a key role in bringing modern art to Washington.

Begins regular trips to New York to keep abreast of the contemporary art scene. Develops a fascination for the work of Hans Hofmann, Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko.

1963

SOLO EXHIBITION

Adams Morgan Gallery, Washington, DC, where he exhibits Park Invention series.

Meets Tom Downing, a Washington Color School painter, at the opening of Gilliam's Adams Morgan Gallery show. Downing later visits Gilliam's studio. Gilliam also meets other Color School painters, Howard Mehring and Paul Reed.

First daughter, Stephanie Jessica, is born.

Moves to a small house on North Dakota Avenue, NW, in the Manor Park neighborhood of the District, where he has a basement in which he paints.

With no summer job, Gilliam spends all of his time painting and extends work in watercolor into abstraction, exploring postcubist space, structure, and color. His images are mainly geometrical and hard-edged. He moves quickly through a variety of styles for the next few years, also working with paint on canvas.

Participates with Butler and other reporters and artists in the March on Washington, organized by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1964–67

Teaches during the summers at the Corcoran School of Art.

1964

SOLO EXHIBITION

Adams Morgan Gallery, where he shows his abstract art for the first time.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Nine Contemporary Painters, USA, Pan American Union, Washington, DC, organized by Dr. Rafael Squirru.

Tom Downing introduces him to sculptor and fellow District artist Rockne Krebs.

1965

SOLO EXHIBITION

Jefferson Place Gallery, Washington, DC.

Begins painting without a stretcher.

Second daughter, Melissa Lynne, is born.

1966

SOLO EXHIBITION

Jefferson Place Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITION

The Negro in American Art, University of California, Los Angeles.

Begins staining raw canvas by pouring paint.

1967–82

Teaches at Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore.

1967

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; and Jefferson Place Gallery, which includes *Member* (1967).

Makes first folded or creased Slice watercolors.

Phillips Collection purchases *Red Petals*.

Receives an individual artist grant, National Endowment for the Arts, enabling him to take a leave of absence from teaching.

Moves to the row house at 1752 Lamont Street, NW, in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood of the District. Paints for a brief time in a studio on the third floor.

Third daughter, Leah Kathryn, is born.

Meets Kenneth Noland, a first-generation Washington Color School painter, who invites Gilliam to his home and studio in South Shaftsbury, Vermont.

1968

SOLO EXHIBITION

Byron Gallery, New York.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Inaugural Show, Studio Museum in Harlem; *30 Contemporary Black Artists*, Minneapolis Institute of Arts; and Jefferson Place Gallery (tenth-anniversary celebration), where he shows publicly for the first time his suspended painting style. The exhibition includes *Swing* (1968), now in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Jettisons wood stretcher supports and creates suspended paintings.

Receives a fellowship from the Washington Gallery of Modern Art and establishes a studio with Rockne Krebs at 1737 Johnson Avenue, NW. The Johnson Avenue workshop provides working space for other artists as well.

Travels to Paris and Nice, France, where he sees water lily paintings by Monet and is struck by their large scale.



Installation view, *Gilliam, Krebs, McGowin*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1969

1969

SOLO EXHIBITION

Jefferson Place Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Gilliam, Krebs, McGowin, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; *X to the Fourth Power*, Studio Museum in Harlem; *The Washington Painters*, Ringling Museum, Sarasota; and *Other Ideas*, Detroit Institute of Arts, which features *Relative* (1969).

1970

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Jefferson Place Gallery; and Galerie Darthea Speyer, Paris (which will become his longest-standing continuous relationship with an art dealer).

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

69th American Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago; and *Washington: Twenty Years*, Baltimore Museum of Art.

Works on the Ray series and the Cows; explores cutting canvas and collage techniques.

Receives the Norman W. Harris Prize at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Artist-in-residence, Oberlin College, Ohio.

1971

SOLO EXHIBITION

Projects: Sam Gilliam, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Works for New Spaces, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; *The Deluxe Show*, Deluxe Theater, Menil Foundation, Houston; *Eight Washington Artists*, Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina; *Washington Art*, Madison Art Center; *Eight Artists*, Milwaukee Art Center; and the American exhibition, 2nd Indian Triennale, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, which features *Relative* (1969).

Withdraws from the exhibition *Contemporary Black Artists in America* at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Receives John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship.

Travels to Rome, Beirut, India, Greece, and Kassel, Germany.



Installation view, *Seahorses*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1975

1972

SOLO EXHIBITION

Jefferson Place Gallery, featuring Ray series and "fan" paintings from 1965–70.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Edwards, Gilliam, Williams: Interconnections, Wabash Transit Gallery, School of Art, Art Institute of Chicago; and the American pavilion at the 36th Venice Biennale, which includes *Light Depth* (1969) and *Genghis I* (1969).

Travels to Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Venice.

Begins making prints with the artist and master printer Lou Stovall in Washington, DC.

1973

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

University of California, Irvine; Maison de la Culture, Rennes, France; Galerie Darthea Speyer; Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis; Howard University Art Gallery, Washington, DC; Jefferson Place Gallery; and at Fendrick Gallery, Washington, DC, an exhibition of prints.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Works In Spaces, San Francisco Museum of Art (now San Francisco Museum of Modern Art).

Works on the Ahab series, including *Rubiyat* (1973), and the Jail Jungle series, which includes *Composed* (formerly *Dark As I Am*) (1968–74).

Receives workshop activities grant, National Endowment for the Arts (through 1975).

Creates first prints at William Weege's Jones Road Print Shop and Stable in Barneveld, Wisconsin.

1974

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Fendrick Gallery; Linda Ferris Gallery, Seattle; Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati; and Phoenix Gallery, San Francisco.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Gilliam/Edwards/Williams: Extensions, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.

Begins series of collage paintings, including *For Day One* (1974–75).

1975

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Linda Ferris Gallery; Fendrick Gallery, which becomes his exclusive dealer in Washington following the closure of Jefferson Place Gallery; and *Seahorses*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, his first public commission.

GROUP EXHIBITION

34th Corcoran Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting, Corcoran Gallery of Art, which features *Three Panels for Mr. Robeson*.

Receives distinguished alumni award, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Louisville.

1976

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: Paintings and Works on Paper, J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, a ten-year survey organized by Walter Hopps; Fendrick Gallery, a five-year survey; Rutgers University Art Gallery, New Brunswick; Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo; and Galerie Darthea Speyer.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

72nd American Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago; *Resonance—Williams/Edwards/Gilliam*, Morgan State University, Baltimore; and *30 Years of American Printmaking*, Brooklyn Museum.

Begins the White paintings.

1977

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Oliver Dowling Gallery, Dublin; *Custom Road Slide*, Artpark, Lewiston, New York; Dart Gallery, Chicago; and Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

GROUP EXHIBITION

12th International Biennial of Graphic Art, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

Begins the Black paintings.

1978

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: Indoor & Outdoor Paintings, 1967–1978, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a midcareer survey organized by Hugh M. Davies; Carl Solway Gallery, New York (relocated); Fendrick Gallery; Galerie Darthea Speyer; Phoenix Gallery; University of Kentucky, Lexington; and Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond.

Begins relationship with the Middendorf/Lane Gallery, Washington, DC.

1979

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Hamilton Gallery, New York; Middendorf/Lane Gallery; Dart Gallery; Montgomery College Art Gallery, Rockville, Maryland; and Nina Freudenheim Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITION

American Painting: The Eighties, Grey Art Gallery, New York University, organized by Barbara Rose.

Purchases a building at 14th and U Streets, NW, with Rockne Krebs, to which he moves his studio.

Completes the public commission *Triple Variants* for the Richard B. Russell Federal Building, Atlanta, sponsored by the General Services Administration.

Completes *Coffee Thyme*, a series of prints named after the Black painting now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, with master printer Steve Andersen at Vermillion Editions, Ltd., Minneapolis.

1980

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Edna Carlston Gallery, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point; Miami-Dade Public Library; and Middendorf/Lane Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Afro-American Abstraction, P.S. 1, Queens, organized by April Kingsley (travels).

Stephen Frietch begins working as a studio assistant.

Works on the Chaser series.

Begins work on the public commission *Sculpture with a D* for the Davis Square Subway Station, Somerville, Massachusetts, the first of his works to incorporate metal supports.

Installs *Dupont Circle Grand* at the Dupont Circle Metro Plaza in Washington, DC, on the occasion of the 1980 International Sculpture Conference.

Completes the public commission *Wave Composition* for the newly constructed Detroit Receiving Hospital.

Receives honorary doctorate, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Louisville.

Named Visiting Distinguished Louis D. Beaumont Professor of Art, School of Fine Arts, Washington University, St. Louis.

1981

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Hamilton Gallery; Art Gallery, Washington University; Middendorf/Lane Gallery; Nina Freudenheim Gallery; and Nexus Art Gallery, Atlanta, which features paintings from the Red and Black series.

Works on the Red and Black paintings.

A new terminal opens at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, installed with the public commission *Delta Wave*. Also completes the public commission *Tholos Across* for the San Francisco Arts Commission, installed at the Moscone Center, San Francisco.

1982–85

Teaches painting at the University of Maryland, College Park.

1982

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Red and Black to "D," Studio Museum in Harlem, organized by Mary Schmidt Campbell; Dart Gallery; Artspace Gallery, Coral Gables, Florida; Richard Barry Gallery, Minneapolis; and Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

10 + 10 + 10: Washington Painting, Corcoran Gallery of Art; *Painterly Abstraction: Four Views for the 1980s*, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Indiana; and *American Abstraction*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.



Installation view, *Autumn Surf*, Edna Carlston Gallery, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, 1980

Works on the D paintings.

Receives the mayor's art award, District of Columbia.

University of the District of Columbia acquires major private collection of works by Gilliam, a gift of Donald and Ann Brown.

Begins making prints with Helen Frederick at Pyramid Atlantic, Silver Spring, Maryland.

In October Gilliam and his wife, Dorothy, separate.

1983

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Modern Painters at the Corcoran: Sam Gilliam, Corcoran Gallery of Art, organized by John Beardsley; Galerie Darthea Speyer; Middendorf/Lane Gallery; and McIntosh/Drysdale Gallery, Houston.

Works on Pantheon series, inspired by the shape of a Roman helmet, and Z series.

Completes public commissions for the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Trenton, New Jersey; and *Sculpture with a D*, Davis Square Subway Station.

Organizes exhibition of prints made at Brandywine Workshop, Philadelphia, for Nyangoma's Gallery, Washington, DC.

1984

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Middendorf Gallery (renamed); Herter Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and Monique Knowlton Gallery, New York.

Receives the Distinguished Award for Pioneering in the Arts from American Black Artists, Inc.

Completes a public commission for Delavan College Subway Station, Buffalo.

1985–89

Professor of art at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.

1985

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Monique Knowlton Gallery; Seufferer/Chosy Gallery, Madison.

Joseph Everett begins working as studio assistant.

Works on the Slate series.

Works on a commission for the Union Labor Life Insurance Company, Washington, DC, and completes a commission for Washington Convention Center, District of Columbia.

1986

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Davis/McClain Gallery, Houston; Alice Simsar Gallery, Ann Arbor; G. H. Dalsheimer Gallery, Baltimore; and Middendorf Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Abstraction/Abstraction, Carnegie Mellon University Art Gallery.

Receives honorary doctorate, Memphis College of Art.

Meets companion Annie Gawlak.

1987

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Klein Gallery, Chicago; Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati; and Robert Kidd Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Contemporary Visual Expressions, Anacostia Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, organized by David C. Driskell.

Receives president's award, Maryland College of Art and Design, Silver Spring; order of merit award, Alumni Association, University of Louisville; and honorary doctorate, Atlanta College of Art.

Works on the public commission *A New River Rising* for the Broward County Government Center, Fort Lauderdale.

Begins making prints at Tandem Press, Madison, continuing to work with master printer Bill Weege.

1988

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Iannetti-Lanzone Gallery, Inc., San Francisco; Klein Gallery; and Middendorf Gallery.

Works on the public commission *Solar Canopy* for York College, Queens.

1989

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Middendorf Gallery; and Barbara Fendrick Gallery, which is relocated to New York.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Traditions and Transformations: Contemporary Afro-American Sculpture, Bronx Museum of the Arts.

A fire at Klein Gallery destroys all of Gilliam's work stored there.

Completes the public commission *CAAM Hues* for the California Afro-American Museum, Los Angeles (now California African American Museum).

Begins making prints with Paula Kirkeby at Smith Andersen Press in Palo Alto.

Receives individual artist fellowship grant, National Endowment for the Arts.

1990

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Koplin Gallery, Santa Monica; Middendorf Gallery; and Klein Art Works, Chicago (renamed and relocated).

Receives honorary doctorate of arts, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Works on the commission *Circles, Circuits, Squares* for Contel Federal Systems, Chantilly, Virginia.

1991

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Barbara Fenway Gallery, New York; Barbara Fendrick Gallery; Galerie Simonne Stern, New Orleans; Galerie Darthea Speyer; de Andino Fine Arts, Washington, DC; Klein Art Works; Walker Hill Art Center, Seoul, Korea; and the American Craft Museum, New York.

Completes the public commission *Blue Riders* for the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority's Parsons/Archer Station, Jamaica Center, Queens.

1992

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Michael H. Lord Gallery, Milwaukee; and Smith Andersen Gallery, Palo Alto.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Free Within Ourselves, National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC (now Smithsonian American Art Museum; travels).



Installation view, *Golden Element Inside Gold*, Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York, 1994

Alex Mayer begins working regularly as a studio assistant. He had been assisting occasionally since 1982.

Begins working regularly with birch plywood construction supports.

Receives alumni fellows award, University of Louisville.

1993

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Nancy Drysdale Gallery, Washington, DC; Klein Art Works; and *Recent Monoprints*, Brandywine Workshop (travels).

Receives honorary doctorate, Corcoran College of Art + Design.

1994

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Golden Element Inside Gold, Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York; Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey; Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, DC; Galerie Simonne Stern; and Galerie Darthea Speyer.

1995

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Robert Kidd Gallery; and Imago Galleries, Palm Desert, California.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

The 44th Biennial Exhibition: Painting Outside Painting, Corcoran Gallery of Art; and *African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks, II*, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York.

1996

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

J. B. Speed Art Museum; and Baumgartner Galleries.

GROUP EXHIBITION

African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks, III, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery.

Made honorary doctor of fine arts, American University, Washington, DC.

Completes the public commission *Helix* for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, installed in the newly renovated main terminal at LaGuardia Airport.



Installation view, *Of Fireflies and Ferris Wheels: Monastery Parallel*, Kunstmuseum Kloster Unser Lieben Frauen, Magdeburg, Germany, 1997

1997

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Of Fireflies and Ferris Wheels: Monastery Parallel, Kunstmuseum Kloster Unser Lieben Frauen, Magdeburg, Germany; Klein Art Works; Galerie Simonne Stern; Jaffe Baker Gallery, Boca Raton; and Baumgartner Galleries.

Completes the public commission *Construction Aviation Potomac* for the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, installed at Ronald Reagan National Airport.

Made honorary doctor of fine arts, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

1998

SOLO EXHIBITION

Gilliam in 3-D, Kreeger Museum, Washington, DC, organized by John Beardsley.

GROUP EXHIBITION

African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks, V, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery.

Completes the public commissions *Color of Medals* for the US General Services Administration, installed at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Philadelphia; *The Real Blue* for the School of Social Work Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and *Norfolk Keels* for the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.

Receives honorary doctorate, University of Tampa.

1999

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Marsha Mateyka Gallery, Washington, DC; and Klein Art Works.

GROUP EXHIBITION

African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks, VI, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery.

Completes the public commissions *The Three Muses* for the College of Conservatory Music, University of Cincinnati; and *Beyond the Blue Door* for the El Paso Museum of Art.

2000

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Galerie Simonne Stern; Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky.

Works on commissions for the Juanita Thornton Public Library, Washington, DC; and Bank of America, Charlotte, North Carolina.

2001

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Imago Galleries; and Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

Makes a series of monochromatic prints at the Ohio University, Athens, which leads to the Slatt paintings.

2002

SOLO EXHIBITION

Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITION

Jack Tilton/Anna Kustera Gallery, New York.

Designs stage set and costumes for *Journey Home*, an original work by the Washington Ballet, with Septime Webre as artistic director and music by Sweet Honey in the Rock.

Creates first group of Slatt paintings, which for later groups Gilliam renames Slatt.

2003

SOLO EXHIBITION

Klein Art Works.

Completes the public commission *Many Things* for the Washington Convention Center, District of Columbia.

2004

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: Folded & Hinged, Louisiana Art & Science Museum, Baton Rouge, and the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, Mississippi, organized by Elizabeth Chubbuck Weinstein and Jill Chancey; and Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

Completes the public commission *The Illustrious Kites Made in Boxing Styles* for the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina.

2005

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective, Corcoran Gallery of Art, organized by Jonathan P. Binstock (travels to Speed Art Museum, the Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston); and *Sunlight*, Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

The Chemistry of Color: The Harold A. and Ann R. Sorgenti Collection of Contemporary African-American Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; *The Shape of Color*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; and *Resurfaced*, Boston University Art Gallery.

2006

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: Prints from the Artist's Collection, Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, Virginia (traveled to Luther W. Brady Art Gallery, George Washington University, Washington, DC).

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction, 1964–1980, Studio Museum in Harlem, organized by Kellie Jones; and *Generations*, Contemporary Art Center of Virginia, Virginia Beach.

Completes public commission for the American Embassy in Bamako, Mali.

2007

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: New Paintings and Prints, Marsha Mateyka Gallery; *Sam Gilliam*, Scarfone/Hartley Gallery, University of Tampa; *Sam Gilliam*, Imago Gallery; and Galerie Darthea Speyer.

GROUP EXHIBITION

5 x 5: Five Artists choose Five Artists to Watch, Ann Loeb Bronfman Gallery, Washington District of Columbia Jewish Community Center.

Receives Mississippi Governor's Award for Excellence in the Visual Arts.

2008

GROUP EXHIBITION

Three American Masters: Gene Davis, Sam Gilliam, Nathan Oliveira, Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

2009

SOLO EXHIBITION

Sam Gilliam: New Paintings, Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

2010

GROUP EXHIBITION

Colorscape: Abstract Painting, 1960–1979, Santa Barbara Museum of Art.



Installation view, *Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2005. *Idle Twist*, pictured far right, is included in the present exhibition (page 37).

2011

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Sam Gilliam: Recent Drapes, Marsha Mateyka Gallery; *Close to Trees*, Katzen Arts Center, American University; *Sam Gilliam: Flour Mill*, Phillips Collection; and *Sam Gilliam, New Paintings*, Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Washington Color and Light, Corcoran Gallery of Art; and *The 100th Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Art: The Vision Endures*, Maier Museum of Art, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Completes mural *From a Model to a Rainbow*, a public commission for the DC Metro Commission for the Arts and Humanities in the Takoma Park Metrorail station.

2012

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

African American Art: Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Era, and Beyond, Smithsonian American Art Museum, curated by Virginia Mecklenburg (travels); *African American Art Since 1950: Perspectives from the David C. Driskell Center*, David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, College Park (travels); *A Bigger Splash: Painting after Performance*, Tate Modern, London;

Drip, Drape, Draft, South London Gallery, curated by Rashid Johnson; *The Spirit Level*, Gladstone Gallery, New York, curated by Ugo Rondinone; and *The Constant Artist*, Katzen Arts Center, American University.

2013

SOLO EXHIBITION

Hard-Edge Paintings 1963–1966, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, curated by Rashid Johnson.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Black in the Abstract, Part 1: Epistrophe, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver; *Assembly Required: Selections from the Permanent Collection*, Studio Museum in Harlem, curated by Naima J. Keith; *The Force of Color*, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art.

2014

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Sense of Place II: Selections from the Permanent Collection, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans; Marsha Mateyka Gallery; *Witness: Art and Civil Rights in the Sixties*, Brooklyn Museum (travels).

2015

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Black: Color, Material, Concept, Studio Museum in Harlem, organized by Lauren Haynes; *Surface Matters*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, organized by Jen Mergel; *Art in the Making: A New Adaptation*, Luther W. Brady Art Gallery, George Washington University; *Surface Tension*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York; *Affecting Presence and the Pursuit of Delicious Experiences*, Menil Collection, organized by Paul R. Davis; *Represent: 200 Years of African American Art*, Philadelphia Museum of Art; *Pretty Raw: After and Around Helen Frankenthaler*, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, curated by Katy Siegel; *Make It New: Abstract Painting from the National Gallery of Art, 1950–1975*, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, organized by the National Gallery of Art.

Receives US Department of State's first-ever Medal of Arts Lifetime Achievement Award.

2016

SOLO EXHIBITION

Green April, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Not New Now, Marrakech Biennale 6, Morocco, curated by Reem Fadda; *Circa 1970*, Studio Museum in Harlem, organized by Lauren Haynes; *Dimensions of Black: A Collaboration with the San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; *Visual Art and the American Experience*, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC; *Passages in Modern Art: 1946–1996*, Dallas Museum of Art; *Complex Uncertainties: Artists in Postwar America*, Jepson Center, Telfair Museums, Savannah; *Approaching American Abstraction: The Fisher Collection*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; *Modern Heroics: 75 Years of African-American Expressionism*, Newark Museum; *A Celebration of the Speed Collection*, Speed Art Museum.

2017

SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Spirit of Collaboration: Sam Gilliam and Lou Stovall, Griots' Art Gallery, Center for Haitian Studies, Miami; *Sam Gilliam*, Seattle Art Museum.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

VIVA ARTE VIVA, 57th Venice Biennale, Italy, curated by Christine Macel; *Dimensions of Black*, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, University of California, Davis, organized by Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in collaboration with San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art; *Art of Rebellion: Black Art of the Civil Rights Movement*, Detroit Institute of Arts; *Experiments in Form: Sam Gilliam, Alan Shields, Frank Stella*, Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, organized by Janet Dees; *The Evolution of Mark-Making*, Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville; *Solidary and Solitary: The Pamela J. Joyner and Alfred J. Giuffrida Collection*, presented by the Helis Foundation, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, curated by Christopher Bedford and Katy Siegel; *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, Tate Modern, London, organized by Mark Godfrey and Zoe Whitley; *Revelations: Masterworks by African American Artists*, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio.

2018

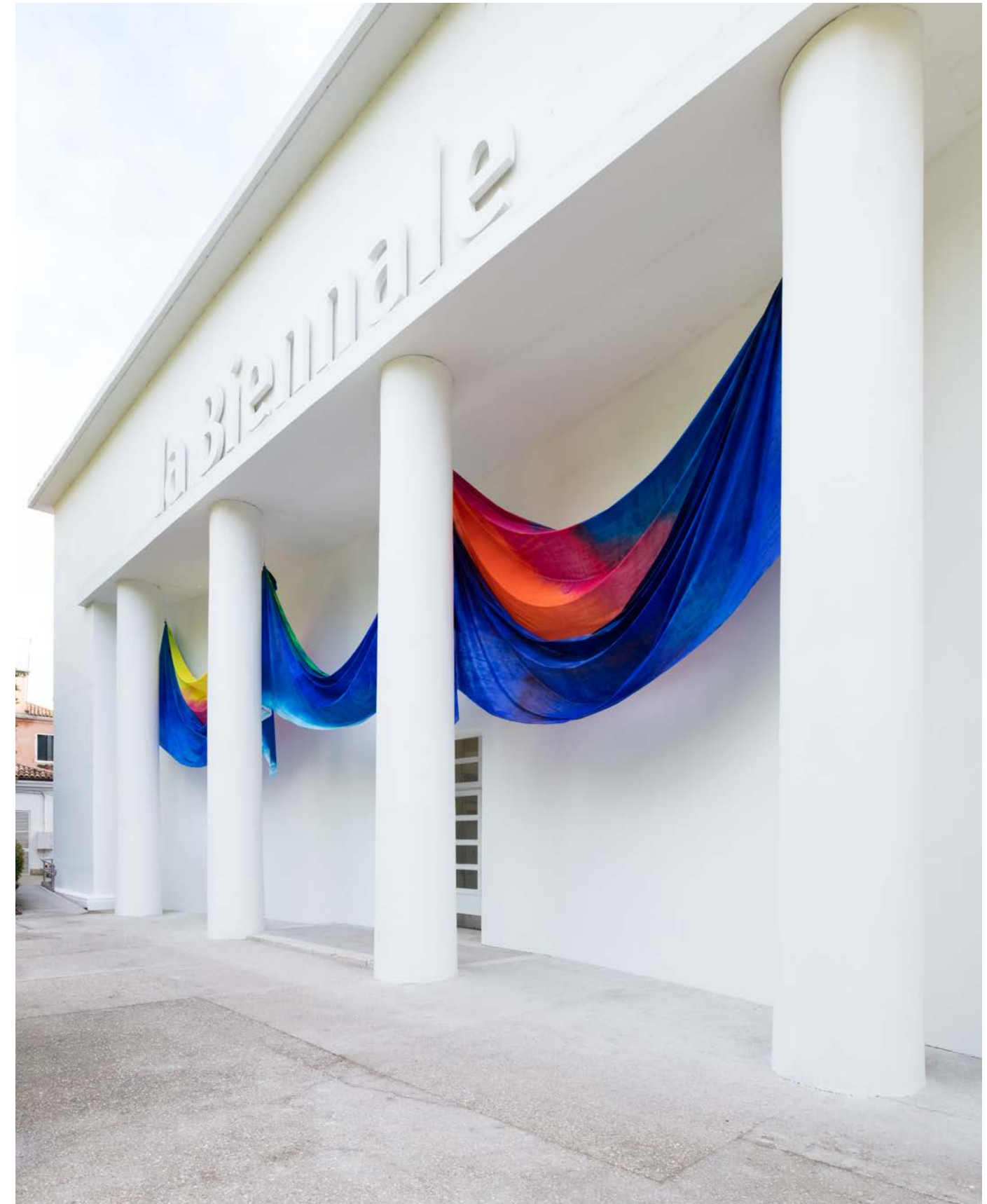
SOLO EXHIBITION

The Music of Color. Sam Gilliam, 1967–1973, Kunstmuseum Basel, co-curated by Jonathan P. Binstock and Josef Helfenstein.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

A Passion for Art, The Collection of Eugene M. and Judith F. Kramer, Kamen Gallery, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia; *The New Art: A Controversial Collection Fifty Years Later*, Oklahoma City Museum of Art.

* This chronology is a reprint of the chronology written by Dr. Binstock and Ms. Read in *Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 157–69. The years 2005–18 were augmented and documented here by Mnuchin Gallery.



Installation view, *Yves Klein Blue*, 2017, acrylic on Cerex nylon, installation dimensions variable, *VIVA ARTE VIVA*, curated by Christine Macel, 57th Venice Biennale, 2017

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

SAM GILLIAM

1967–1973

CURATED BY SUKANYA RAJARATNAM

November 2–December 16, 2017

Mnuchin Gallery
45 East 78 Street, New York, NY 10075

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Exhibitions Director: Liana Gorman
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Captions:

p. 6: Sam Gilliam at the Corcoran Gallery of Art
in front of *Light Depth*, 1969
p. 58: Sam Gilliam, 2016

Credits:

p. 6: Photography John Gossage
p. 9: Photography Tom Powel Imaging. Artwork © 2017 Maryland
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p. 10: Photography Tom Powel Imaging. Artwork © David Hammons
p. 17: Photography courtesy the Luther W. Brady Art Gallery,
George Washington University
pp. 19–21, 25–27, 31–33, 37–39, 39, 43–45, 47–49, 51–53:
Photography Tom Powel Imaging
p. 23: Photography Jerry L. Thompson
p. 29: Photography Mark Blower, courtesy the artist and
David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles
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