

IN SEARCH OF THE MIRACULOUS

Marlborough

In Search of the Miraculous
January 24 – March 11, 2023

Marlborough New York
545 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001

Works by:

Etel Adnan
José Benítez Sánchez
James Biederman
Charles Burchfield
Gisela Colón
Beauford Delaney
Arthur Dove
Jacob El Hanani
Olafur Eliasson
Roland Flexner
Adolph Gottlieb
Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe
Nancy Haynes
Carmen Herrera
Denzil Hurley
Yayoi Kusama
Ernest Mancoba
Agnes Martin
Piet Mondrian
Giorgio Morandi
Gerard Mossé
Yulia Pinkusevich
Richard Pousette-Dart
Ad Reinhardt
Dorothea Rockburne
Tomás Sánchez
Bob Thompson

Curated by
Gerard Mossé and
Sebastian Sarmiento

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In Search of the Miraculous

Gerard Mossé

While the title brings to mind P.D. Ouspensky's influential book of 1949, my intention in evoking the miraculous was rather to address the elusive nature of the creative process and the vague sense many share with Dylan Thomas's expressed thought that "you might never have been born, never been born at all." What were the odds?

The show was initially meant to be a gathering of artists whose work could be loosely defined as abstraction with a spiritual bent, albeit of the secular kind. It quickly became apparent that this would mean leaving out such greats as Arthur Dove, Bob Thompson, Charles Burchfield, Morandi, early Mondrian, and others now part of this exhibition whose works were made available, artists who used representation as a springboard for their imagination.

Many who have chosen a creative life have aspired towards the transcendent esthetic experience, one that evokes elemental awe.

Where historically, it was powerful patrons who dictated, for their own ends, the narratives of their day, it was artists who found the harmonies, surfaces, and compositions to evoke the sacred on their terms.

In time they created their own more subjective narratives and ultimately arrived at abstraction but the longing to breathe life in the materials at their disposal towards evoking a sense of wonder did not disappear along with what were once unquestionably and commonly held religious beliefs.

Harold Bloom put it best: "A desire for the consolations of a spiritual life transcends institutional, historical, and dogmatic structures, and belongs to human nature itself. No need for religion there."

With the early abstractionists came “no need for representation there.”

But then closer to us we see De Kooning defying tenets of Abstract Expressionism with his “Women” series. There is Morandi who, after experimenting with avant-garde movements of his early days, focused on his beloved bottles as a vehicle for the way light enters our world; they were among many who found their greatest form of expression with “no need for not-representation there.”

Abstract, figurative, expressionist, minimalist...I believe artists are more likely to embrace labels early on in their career, when looking to make a name for themselves, but as their practice matures, discard them. They realize that these designations get in the way of apprehending what is most important in the act of seeing, burdening it with preconceived ideas.

The same guiding principle applies when gathering beloved works for viewing, works one wishes one could live with for the nurturing they provide, as much as it does to the decisions artists make while finding their way towards their fully developed selves. In many cases, the choice to live a creative life was made *because* they sensed it would help them become so, not just in their work but as human beings.

Beyond their obvious stylistic differences what the present works have in common is their being made, over long periods of time, with skill, imagination and depth of feeling. It is a process which relies on intuition for pointing the way and intellect and sensitivity to materials to reach, if not an ideal, something which might come close.

It has been my experience that the awareness of our mortality is never far from the creative act. It is present in the viewing act as well, as when we

are moved to tears by the immense beauty offered by particular works of art, any of the arts.

I suspect those tears, though tears of joy, may be linked to the awareness that moments of such immeasurable beauty will someday be taken away. It will all be taken away.

Nature can also provide such moments, but the difference is that the art experience was caused by something made by one of us, like ourselves flawed, vulnerable and temporal.

In 1921, Walter Benjamin purchased a drawing by Paul Klee titled “Angelus Novus.” Now in the Israel museum in Jerusalem, it held a particular fascination for him and followed him everywhere he went until he fled Germany in 1933 and was forced to part with it. But the drawing remained in his consciousness and kept surfacing in his writings. It was on his mind when he stated that there are times when facing a great work of art, music, literature, it makes it possible “To understand a humanity that proves itself by destruction,” a statement as true today as it was then.

Daily life disrupts and fragments our connection to our soul. Regardless of style, art reminds us of its essential, miraculous presence.

Piet Mondrian

Three Chrysanthemums, c. 1899–1900
oil on canvas laid down on board
9 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. / 24.4 × 34 cm
© 2023 Mondrian/Holtzman Trust



Charles Burchfield

September Sun, 1946

watercolor on paper

41½ × 27¾ in. / 105.4 × 70.5 cm

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Burchfield Foundation



Arthur Dove

Brickyard Shed, 1934
watercolor on paper
5 × 7 in. / 12.7 × 17.8 cm



Brickyard Shed, 1934
oil on canvas
20¼ × 28 in. / 51.4 × 71.1 cm



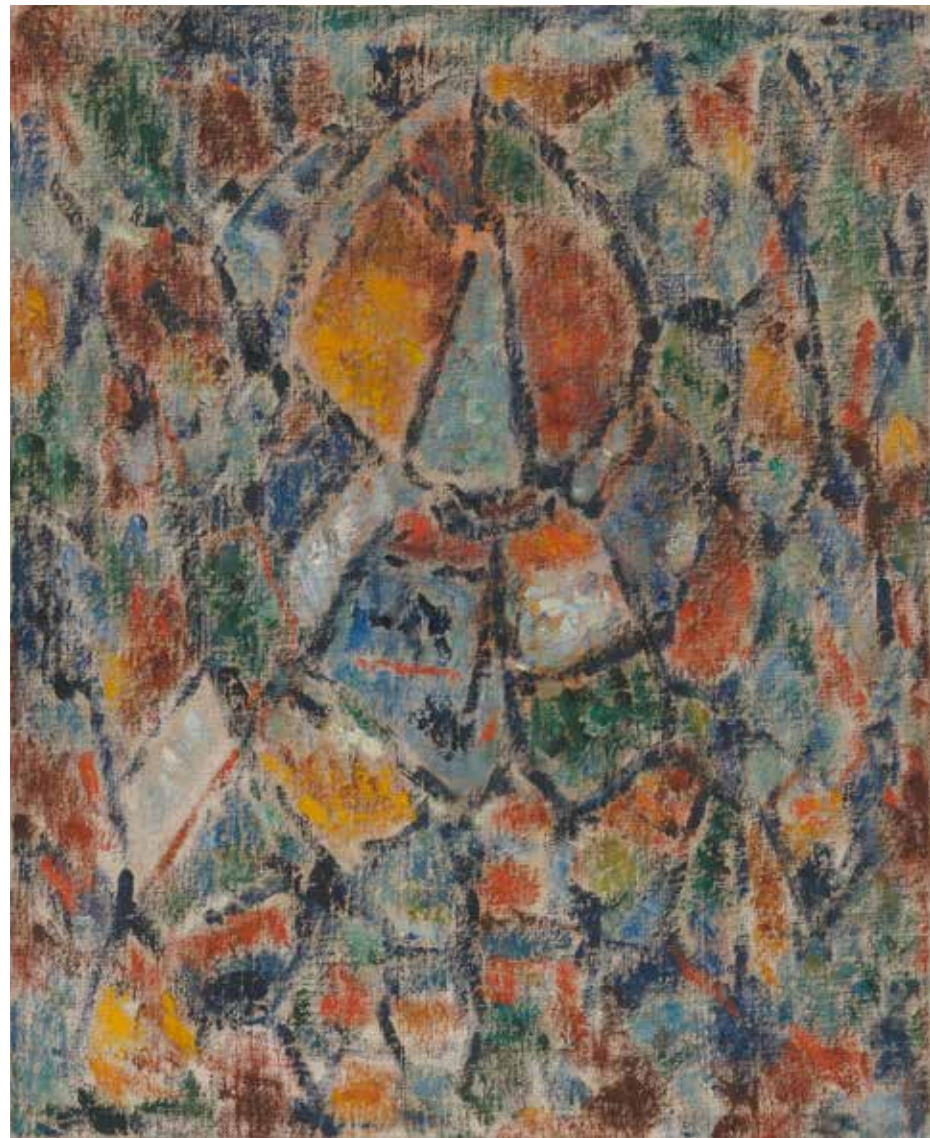
Ernest Mancoba

Untitled, 1955

oil on canvas

16¼ × 13½ in. / 41.3 × 33.3 cm

© The Estate of Ernest Mancoba



Composition, 1940

oil on canvas

23¼ × 19¾ in. / 59 × 50.2 cm

© The Estate of Ernest Mancoba



Richard Pousette-Dart

Window, Cathedral, c. 1941–42

oil on canvas

52½ × 36½ in / 133.3 × 92.7 cm

© 2023 Estate of Richard Pousette-Dart / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Giorgio Morandi

Natura Morta (Still Life), 1950

oil on canvas

10 1/8 x 14 in. / 25.7 x 35.7 cm

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SIAE, Rome



Carmen Herrera

Flight of Colors #16, 1949

acrylic on canvas

29 × 42¾ in. / 73.7 × 108.6 cm

© The Estate of Carmen Herrera



Beauford Delaney

Untitled (Street Scene, New York City), 1947
oil on canvas

54 × 48¼ in. / 137.2 × 122.6 cm

© Estate of Beauford Delaney by permission of Derek
L. Spratley, Esquire, Court Appointed Administrator
Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery



Adolph Gottlieb

Scale, 1964
oil on canvas
61 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 49 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. / 156.5 × 125.7 cm
© 2023 Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation /
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Ad Reinhardt

Abstract Painting, 1963

oil on canvas

60 × 60 in. / 152.4 × 152.4 cm

© 2023 Estate of Ad Reinhardt / Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York



Agnes Martin

Untitled #11, 1985
acrylic on canvas
72¾ × 72¾ in. / 184.8 × 184.8 cm
© Agnes Martin Foundation, New York /
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Dorothea Rockburne

Egyptian Painting: Scribe, 1979

conté, pencil, oil, and gesso on linen

93 × 56½ in. / 236.2 × 143.5 cm

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Yayoi Kusama

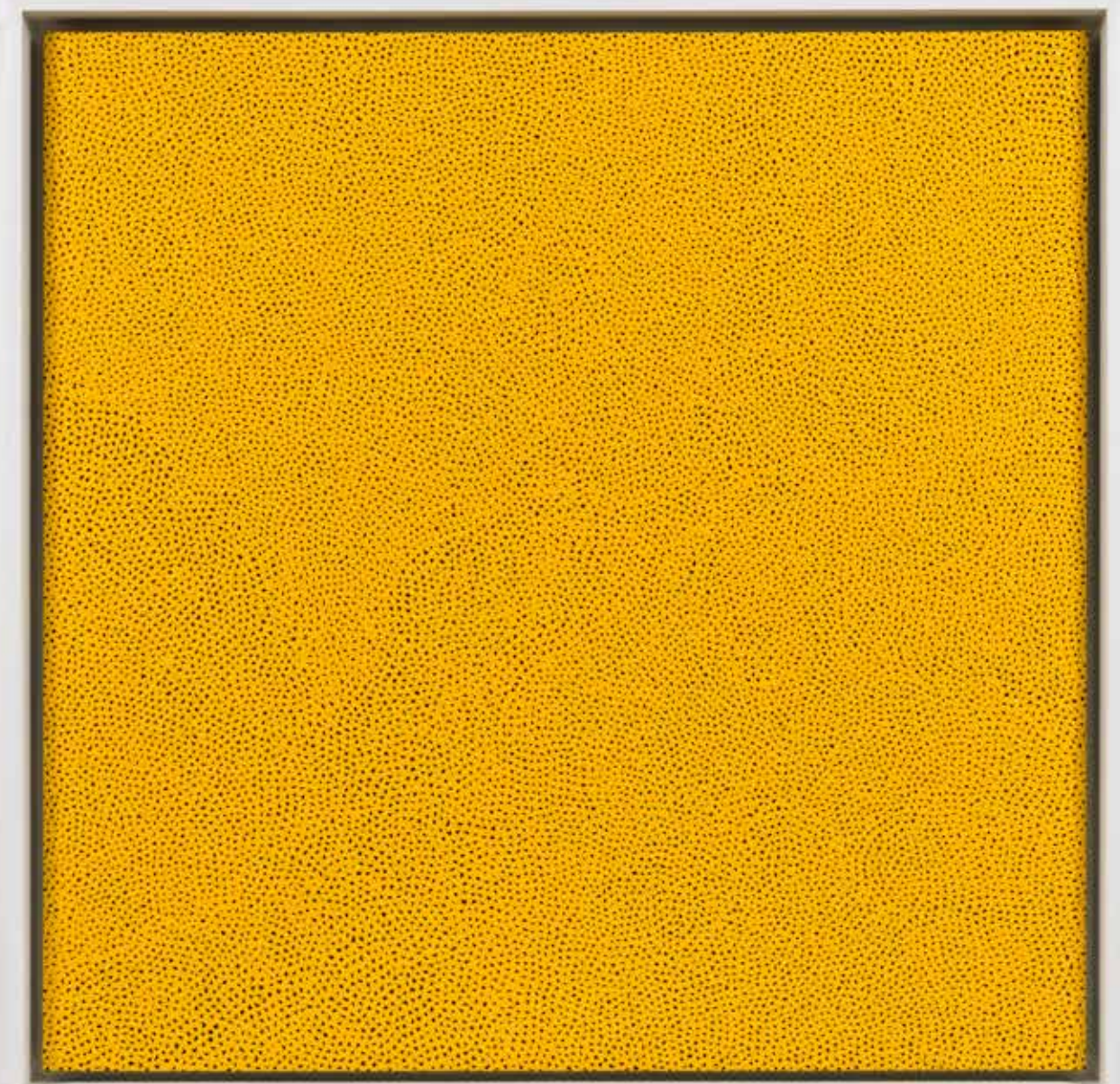
INFINITY-NETS EBP, 2011

Acrylic on canvas

63¾ × 63¾ in. / 162 × 162 cm

© Yayoi Kusama

Courtesy of the artist, Ota Fine Arts and Victoria Miro



Jacob El Hanani

Between Dot and Linescape, 2020

ink on gessoed canvas

24 × 48 in / 61 × 121.9 cm

© Jacob El Hanani

Courtesy of the Artist and Acquavella Galleries



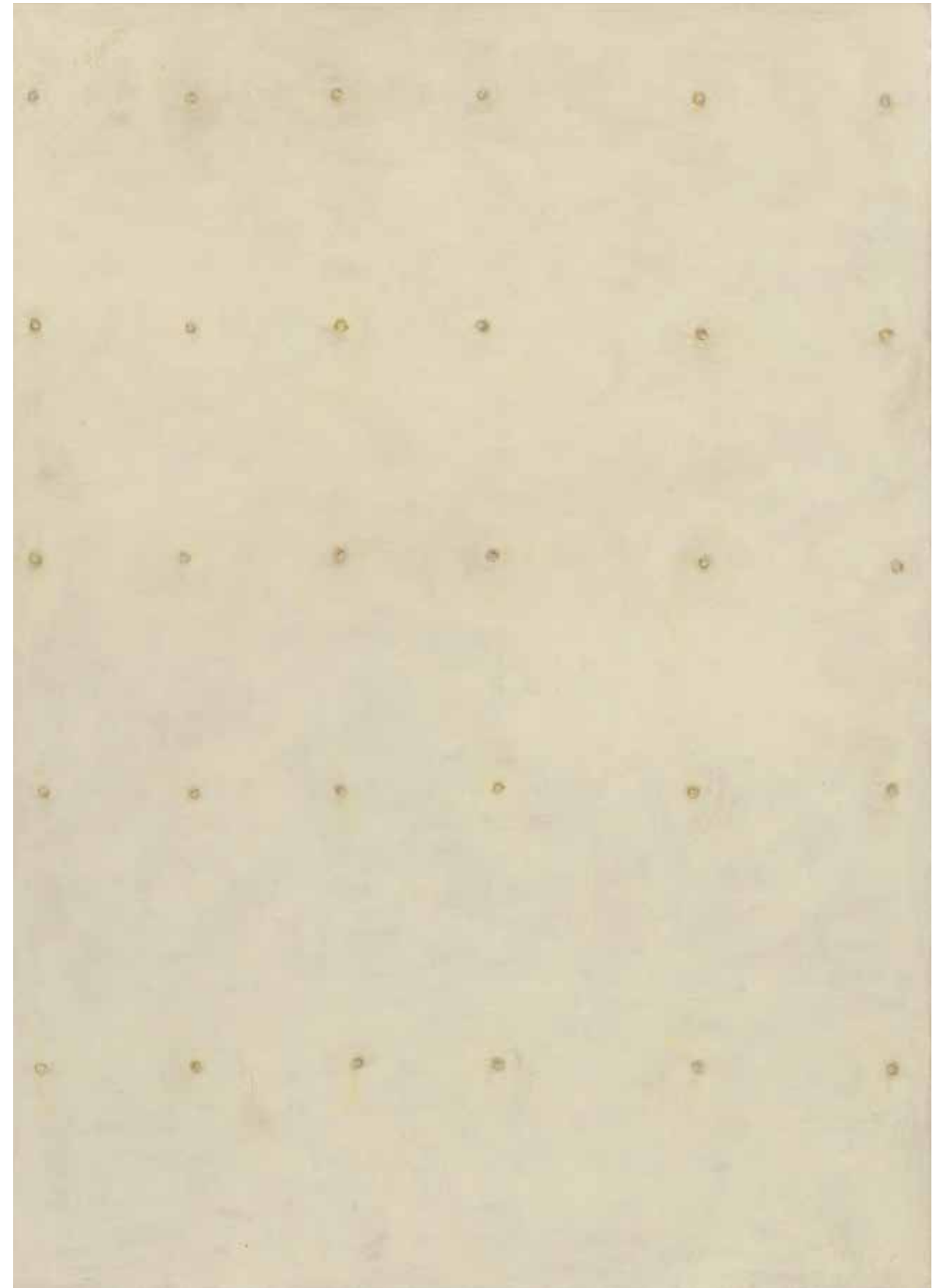
Denzil Hurley

Variant-A, 2002–04

oil on canvas

70 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 50 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. / 178.1 × 127.3 cm

© The Estate of Denzil Hurley



Etel Adnan

Satellites 27, 2020

oil on canvas

13 × 9½ in. / 33 × 24.1 cm

© The Estate of Etel Adnan

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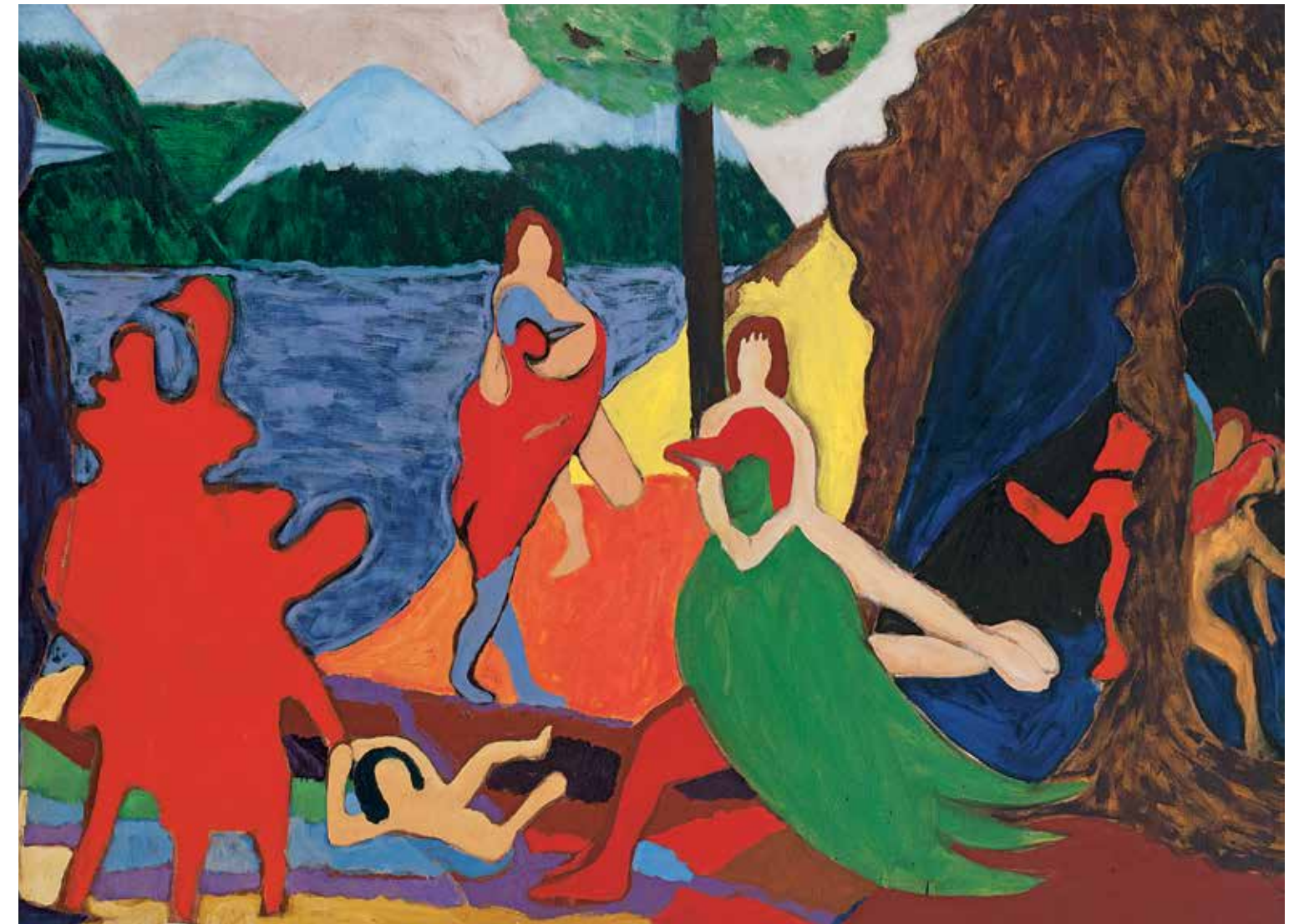
Bob Thompson

Bird Party, 1961

oil on canvas

53¾ × 74¼ in. / 138.1 × 188.6 cm

© Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY



Nancy Haynes

this painting, 2015
oil on linen
21½ x 26 in. / 54.9 x 66 cm
© Nancy Haynes



sixth arrondissement, 2015
oil on linen
21⅝ x 26 in. / 54.9 x 66 cm
© Nancy Haynes



Roland Flexner

Untitled, 2010/2011
liquid graphite on paper
ensemble of 9 drawings
each 5½ × 7 in. / 14 × 17.8 cm
© Roland Flexner

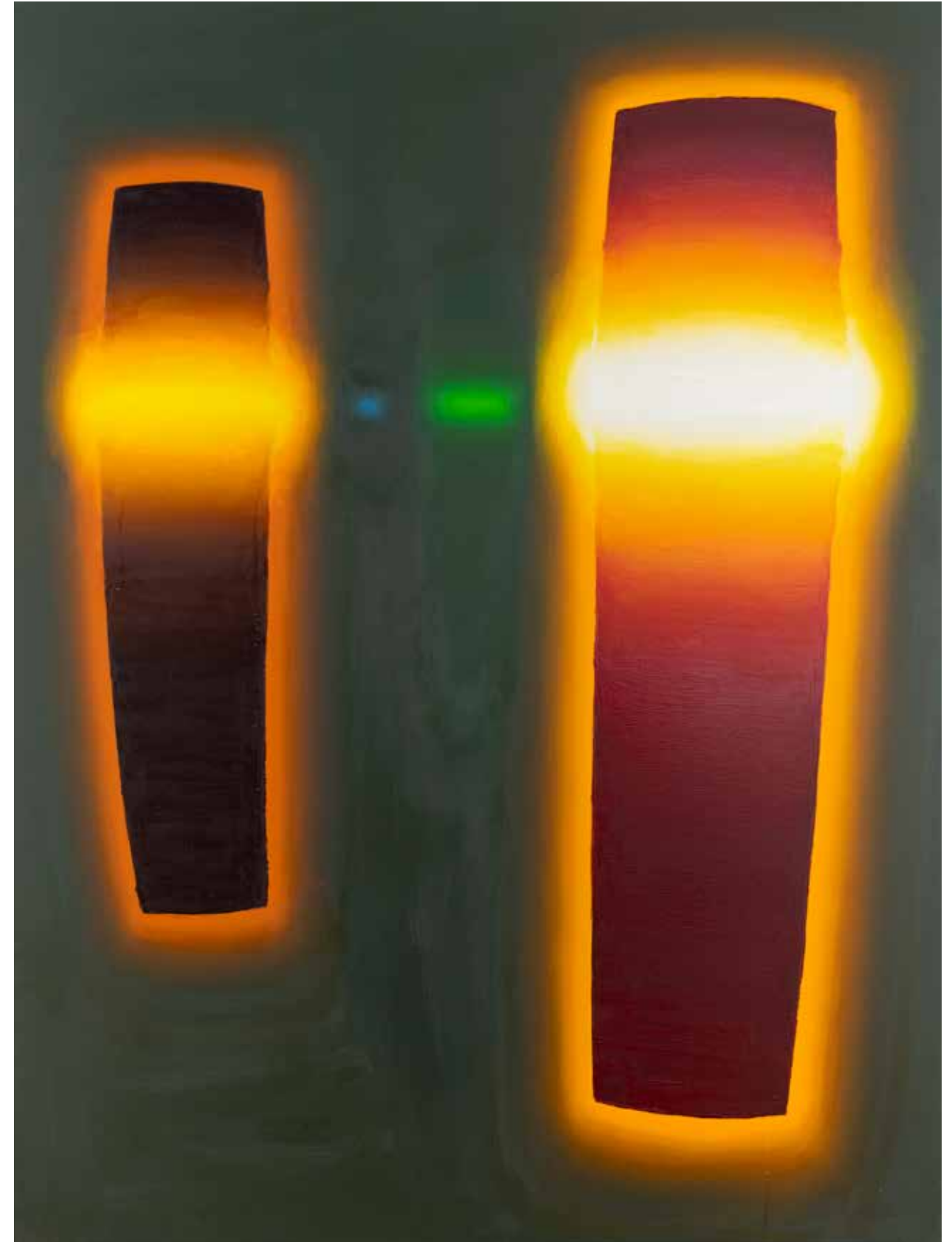


Gerard Mossé

Untitled, 2020–21
charcoal, graphite, and pastel on paper
17 × 17½ in. / 43.2 × 20 cm
© Gerard Mossé



From My Head Down To My Shoes, 2019–21
oil on linen
56 × 42 in. / 142.2 × 106.7 cm
© Gerard Mossé



James Biederman

Mississippi, 2022

oil on linen, diptych

each: 36 × 34 in. / 91.4 × 87 cm

overall: 36 × 68 in. / 91.4 × 172.7 cm

© James Biederman



Tomás Sánchez

De la luz a la luz, 2022

acrylic on linen

47½ × 38¾ in. / 120.7 × 98.4 cm

© Tomás Sánchez



Gisela Colón

Parabolic Monolith (Perseus), 2022

aurora particles, stardust, cosmic radiation, intergalactic matter, ionic waves, organic carbamate, gravity and time
cosmic radiation, intergalactic matter, ionic waves, organic carbamate, gravity and time

98½ × 23½ × 12 in. / 250.2 × 59.7 × 30.5 cm

© Gisela Colon

Courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles / Palm Beach



Yulia Pinkusevich

Sakha Air Spirit, 2021
pastel and charcoal on Fabriano Artistico paper
over birch ply panel
74 × 44¼ in. / 188 × 112.4 cm
© Yulia Pinkusevich



Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe

Yamira II/Lightning, 2021

acrylic on canvas

32¾ × 31½ in. / 83.2 × 80 cm

© Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe

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José Benítez Sánchez

Yarn Tablas Untitled 2-7 (cat), 1974–75
mixed media
23½ × 23½ in / 59.7 × 59.7 cm
© The Estate of José Benítez Sánchez



Olafur Eliasson

Colour experiment in no. 29 (light spectrum), 2010

oil on canvas

78¾ x 79 in. / 199.7 x 200.7 cm

© Olafur Eliasson



Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the artists and lenders who have dedicated their time, expertise, and beautiful works to this ambitious project. I am deeply grateful to Gerard Mossé. This wondrous exhibition began as a conversation between us some time ago—we were both unrelenting in our search and followed our intuition without compromise.

Lastly, I would like to thank Nicole Sisti, who helped us organize every detail of the show, and Douglas Walla, who supported the collaboration from the very beginning.

– Sebastian Sarmiento, Director

Marlborough New York

Douglas Kent Walla
CEO
dkwalla@marlboroughgallery.com

Sebastian Sarmiento
Director
sarmiento@marlboroughgallery.com

Nicole Sisti
Assistant to Sebastian Sarmiento
sisti@marlboroughgallery.com

Alexa Burzinski
Director
burzinski@marlboroughgallery.com

Bianca Clark
Head of Graphics
clark@marlboroughgallery.com

Parks Busby
Graphics Assistant
busby@marlboroughgallery.com

Meghan Boyle Kirtley
Administrator
boyle@marlboroughgallery.com

Greg O'Connor
Comptroller
greg@marlboroughgallery.com

DiBomba Jean Marie Kazadi
Bookkeeper
kazadi@marlboroughgallery.com

Amy Caulfield
Head Registrar
caulfield@marlboroughgallery.com

Sarah Gichan
Assistant Registrar
gichan@marlboroughgallery.com

Mariah Tarvainen
Graphic Designer
tarvainen@marlboroughgallery.com

Lukas Hall
Archivist
hall@marlboroughgallery.com

Marissa Moxley
Archivist
moxley@marlboroughgallery.com

Rita Peters
Gallery Assistant
peters@marlboroughgallery.com

John Willis
Warehouse Manager
willis@marlboroughgallery.com

Anthony Nici
Master Crater
nici@marlboroughgallery.com

Peter Park
Exhibition Coordinator
park@marlboroughgallery.com

Jeff Serino
Preparator
serino@marlboroughgallery.com

Brian Burke
Preparator
burke@marlboroughgallery.com

Matt Castillo
Preparator
castillo@marlboroughgallery.com

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