FALL 2013

HOLLIS TAGGART GALLERIES
ART MARKET REPORT

Louis Lozowick (1892–1973)
Untitled, circa 1923–24
Oil on artist's board
18 x 14¾ inches
Signed verso:
"Louis Lozowick"

FROM HOLLIS TAGGART

Auction Houses and the Art Market

The increasing role and influence of auction houses in molding the direction of the international art market are important subjects for collectors and dealers to carefully consider. Never before have the two largest auction firms, Sotheby's and Christie's, had more marketing prowess and penetration into the normal workings of the market than at the current time. Auction houses have aggressively asserted themselves into almost every facet of the buying and selling of art, and in the process, have blurred the distinctions between themselves and the art galleries.

When our gallery opened in 1979, auctions were the "wholesale" source for acquiring inventory. There was a clear division: auctions sold to dealers, and dealers sold to collectors and museums. With the advent of the Internet and price transparency, auctions began to market to the general public, and as a result, buying has transitioned from being reserved for professionals and savvy insiders to becoming a routine source for buying art worldwide. Anyone, anywhere, can buy at auction, either in person or on the Internet. The democratization of auction buying has led to a dramatic shift in traditional art dealing. Unfortunately, connoisseurship, thoughtful reflection, and art appreciation have largely given way to commoditization and focus on purchasing and owning "trophies." It is no surprise in today's art market that auctions are relying more and more on private treaty sales, aligning themselves more and more with the function formerly reserved for art galleries and dealers. The newest auction development is to simply mount art exhibitions and sell directly to the public—a total abandonment of their traditional role of auctioning to the highest bidder. Auctions are duplicating the normal role of art galleries. As we go to press, Sotheby's has a show of twenty-three Alexander Calder gouaches for sale on their walls, with prices—cash and carry! This follows a Sam Francis show of works for sale and many others will undoubtedly follow. Christie's is doing the same, selling contemporary Chinese art during the spring Asia Week, and mounting selling exhibitions of Andrew and Jamie Wyeth, among others.

Our concern is that acquiring art is more than pushing a button online or following the herd. It was recently reported that a 30-year-old woman who heads the Qatar Museum Authority is spending $1 billion annually in amassing art with Qatari oil riches, making her the world's most influential art buyer, despite having no formal art history background. Acquiring trophy pictures at record prices in an attempt to create instant "culture" is symptomatic of today's market: too much attention to name recognition, branding, and what's "hot," and not enough careful study, research, and planning. These world-record prices also have an adverse effect on the market by creating confusion as to the real worth of art in various sectors, prohibiting museums from acquiring needed art works and widening the gap between the top tier of the market (the "haves") and the rest of the market (the "have nots").

Our gallery is responding to this commoditization of the art market by rededicating ourselves to our long-standing commitment: to mount scholarly exhibitions on artists who have been wrongfully overlooked, or addressing art historical subjects that have not been fully developed. We feel that the role of art dealer and gallery is to educate, elucidate, and contribute to the field. We plan to mount many more exhibitions in the coming years featuring fresh subjects and a new way of looking at art, whether it be contemporary or historical. This is our advantage—auctions may have won the marketing and merchandising battle for the moment, but they can never compete with the service and educational components that galleries have always provided. For this reason, we shall endure.

Sam Francis (1923–1994)

Untitled, circa 1947
Oil on canvas, 39½ x 29½ inches
Signed and dated lower right: "Sam Francis 47"

Sam Francis painted this untitled composition in 1947, while still under the mentorship of David Park at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. Richard Diebenkorn was also at the California School of Fine Arts, studying along with Francis. Clyfford Still was traveling back and forth between the Bay Area and New York City, a veritable bridge of ideas between the two coasts. Jackson Pollock and Still, whose work Francis saw in reproduction, were important influences in Francis's artistic development as he began to explore new directions and ideas.[1] Francis flourished in this environment, which provided him with fertile ground from which to grow. *Untitled*, with its pictographic-like characters, directly reflects contemporary interest in primordial abstraction and archaic subjects, highlighting the revitalized interest in such visual iconography for artists such as Francis. It reflects the important convergence of influences of the day, as well as marking the emergence of Francis's unique mature style that would fully develop in the next decade. The expansive white ground in this work frames a distilled, symbolic, and primordial abstraction.

Despite several attempts by art critics to classify his oeuvre, Francis's art has essentially defied categorization. Considered by some to be a second generation Abstract Expressionist due to the drips, gestures, and splatters of paint in his work, Francis has also been compared to Color Field artists due to the large, fluid sections of paint that seem to extend beyond the confines of the pictorial surface. In 1964, the prominent art critic Clement Greenberg included Francis in his celebrated exhibition *Post-Painterly Abstraction* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In the catalogue, Greenberg described "Post-Painterly Abstraction" as both being related to and distinct from Abstract Expressionism. According to Greenberg, "Post-Painterly Abstraction" rejected the gestural, painterly quality of Abstract Expressionism for a more defined compositional structure. Greenberg wrote, "By contrast with the interweaving of light and dark gradations in the typical Abstract Expressionist picture, all the artists in this show move towards a physical openness of design, or towards linear clarity, or towards both."

Francis was born in San Mateo, California, in 1923. He originally studied medicine and psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, before serving in the U.S. Air Force. Francis took up painting while confined to a hospital for several months, and continued his studies after his release, first at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco and then later at U.C. Berkeley. In the 1950s, Francis studied briefly in Paris at the Académie Fernand Léger, where he became friendly with the Canadian artist Jean-Paul Riopelle and several American artists, including Joan Mitchell, as well as more established European artists including Alberto Giacometti. He also became associated with the *tâchistes* (named after the French word *tâche*, meaning a splash or stain), who created a style based on gestural action painting that combined the expressive, painterly aesthetic that so characterized the movement with a desire to highlight the beauty of the materials, as opposed to portraying psychological or philosophical concerns. While Francis was initially influenced by the work of the New York artists of the period his work was more in dialogue with these modern and contemporary French artists. In his paintings made after the mid-1950s, Francis increasingly employed large areas of white, which in relation to the glowing jewel tones seem to represent an optical investigation into the perception of light and color, a concern that in many ways guided Francis from the very beginning of his career.

1. "Sam Francis." Accessed 15 May 2013. http://www.samfrancis.com/

Paul Burlin (1886–1969)

Happy, Happy, Carlee Ho, 1964
Oil on canvas, 54 x 60 inches
Signed and dated lower left: "Paul Burlin 64"

Paul Burlin was born in New York City in 1886. He received his early education in England, but returned to the United States soon after completing his studies, and in the early 1900s, worked as an editor and illustrator for *Delineator*, a women's fashion magazine, along with Theodore Dreiser. Burlin was strongly involved with the Progressive movement and associated with its artistic counterpart, the Ashcan School, amongst whom he made his artistic debut at the 1913 Armory Show at the age of twenty-seven.

Shortly after the Armory Show, Burlin took a trip to the Southwest (long before the Taos and other art colonies were established there.) The region's dramatic landscapes of vast, open spaces had a profound effect on the artist, and he remained there until 1920. During this time, like many of his New York counterparts (with whom he continued to keep in contact despite the long distance, showing periodically at the Daniel Gallery), he became deeply involved with primitive, particularly Native American art, an interest that his wife Natalie Curtis, ethnologist of native desert populations and author of *Indian Book* (1907), encouraged further.

Burlin had an intense and bitter reaction towards the art created immediately after World War I, prompting him to suddenly move to Paris in 1921. While this move was first an escape from what he believed to be a "palsy of the [American] spirit,"[1] it soon became a twelve year pilgrimage during which he participated in the city's exciting and experimental art scene. He shared a studio with cubist Albert Gleizes and befriended Leo Stein. However, Burlin never felt truly accepted in this milieu and returned to America in 1932, right at the height of the Great Depression and its accompanying propagandistic Social Realist art.

Upon his return, Burlin participated in the Social Realist scene, but was soon frustrated with what he believed to be its narrowness and false sense of social responsibility. He completely abandoned the style in the late 1930s, and by the mid-1940s, Burlin began to pay less attention to subject matter, turning instead to themes from mythology, drawing inspiration from Kandinsky's early improvisations and Picasso's abstracted explorations of the human figure.

By the 1950s, Burlin's expression found its full resonance in abstraction, and he became aligned with the prevalent Abstract Expressionist movement. Although he was much older than the artists of the New York School, his work remained youthful, a reflection of his constant forward-thinking spirit, free of any artistic constraints. The bright reds and oranges of *Happy, Happy, Carlee Ho* reflect this frivolity, an atmosphere which the painting's title emphasizes further. The work lacks a narrative, but suggests a celebration, perhaps a reference to a large birthday cake with candles. Burlin continued to work in this innovative and exploratory manner until his death in 1969.

1. Irving Sandler, *Paul Burlin* (New York: The American Federation of Arts New York, 1962): 7.

Friedel Dzubas (1915–1994)

SUNGOD, 1973
Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72 inches
Signed, dated, and titled verso: "Dzubas / 1973 / 'SUNGOD'"

German-born American abstract painter Friedel Dzubas was a pioneer in the stain painting technique that emerged in the 1960s. He was one of the first to use water-based acrylics, and unlike the other artists associated with this method like Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland who left their canvases raw, Dzubas continued to prime his canvases with gesso. Because of this, he did not pour his paints and allow them to soak into the porous fabric, the typical mechanics of stain painting. Instead Dzubas applied them with a brush. In *SUNGOD*, there are remnants of bristles embedded in the brown passages and clearly defined brushstrokes in the blue area in the upper right corner. The acrylics were so diluted and applied so thinly the gesso immediately absorbed them, making it impossible for the artist to revise his compositions. This technique gives rise to an exquisite tension between the deliberate control and the spontaneous improvisation found in his work. The fact that Dzubas painted in thin washes, not outright staining, is a small but crucial difference to understanding his unique place amongst his contemporaries.

The work of Dzubas bridges the gap between European tradition and American abstraction, continuing with Old Master conventions through the lens of modernism. His broad, gestural brushstrokes invoke the romantic landscapes of his German predecessors, like a Caspar David Friedrich painting translated into the visual language of the New York School with his blocks of color substituting for figuration and nature-based scenery. In *SUNGOD*, the horizontal bars of sienna, umber, and gray tones build upon each other towards the top blue of the work, like a mountain reaching towards the sky.

Something of a wanderer, the artist life would be characterized by frequent moves. Dzubas was born in 1915 in Berlin, went to Chicago to work as a designer in 1940, and returned to New York in 1945 after a short stint as an advertising art director in Ohio. Setting into an apartment on West Tenth Street, Dzubas worked as a book designer and became involved in avant-garde artistic and literary circles. He lived with the influential art critic Clement Greenberg in the summer of 1948, through whom he met Jackson Pollock and Katherine Dreier. That same year he participated in his first group exhibition at Weyhe Gallery. The following year he became a member of the Eighth Street Club, an Abstract Expressionist group that included Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, and Ad Reinhardt among others. While Dzubas' early paintings evoked Paul Klee and the Surrealist works of William Baziotes, by 1949 he was experimenting with soaking paint into sheets of canvas. This radical approach was partly inspired by Pollock breaking the boundaries of conventional painting techniques. As Dzubas recalled, "what [Pollock] provided you with, if you were sensitive, was an image of unheard of freedom."[1]

In 1951 Greenberg introduced Dzubas to Helen Frankenthaler, with whom he would share a studio space the following year. In 1952 he received his first solo exhibition at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, which was positively received. Dzubas did not create his next major series until 1960, when he began working on large canvases in a black and white calligraphic style. In 1963 he reincorporated color into his compositions employing softer, deeper, hues from mustard to rouge and placing these forms within expanses of white canvas. Around 1968 Dzubas began employing an extreme horizontal format, with canvases several inches high and as much as twenty feet long.

Throughout the sixties and seventies Dzubas was honored with several prestigious teaching appointments and grants, including two Guggenheim fellowships, a National Endowment for the Arts Painting Fellowship, and Artist-in-Residence appointments at the Institute for Humanistic Studies in Aspen, Dartmouth College, and Cornell University. He moved to Ithaca, New York in 1969 and would continue to teach at Cornell intermittently through 1974. He had his first museum exhibition that same year at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and received a retrospective exhibition from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. in 1983. From 1976 to 1993 he taught at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Dzubas died in Auburndale, Massachusetts on December 10, 1994.

1. Charles Millard, Friedel Dzubas, "Interview with Friedel Dzubas." (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 22.

William Baziotes (1912–1963)

Figures Against Sun, 1947
Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper, 12 x 18 inches
Signed lower right: "Baziotes"

One of The New York School's infamous Irascibles, William Baziotes holds a well-respected place in the history of Postwar American art and is known for his works of Surrealist-inspired, biomorphic shapes. His images of dwarf-like, contorted creatures complexly reflect the creative and intellectual imagination of the postwar period, a time when artists and their literary counterparts were enmeshed in the psychoanalytic theories of Jung and the mythic, primordial images of the primitive and the insane.

Baziotes remained loyal to these biomorphic explorations, unlike his contemporaries Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and others who abandoned the figure during the 1950s. As a result, Baziotes' mature style consists of a cast of characters that seem ahead of their time: exaggerated figures of acrobats and bulls, amorphous biomorphic creatures, all depicted in electric colors and looping lines. He painted *Figures Against Sun* in 1947, at the peak of his creative energies. Mysterious pictographic figures are rendered in a Cubistic manner, thus revealing the importance of the Cubist idiom on Baziotes. The artist's aggressively articulated figural subject artfully morphs between the organic, geological, and architectural. It is framed within a patchwork of blue and green-lined passages, which underscore the intricate collaboration between the automatic, instinctual creation of form and its controlled mediation in the final composition.

Figures Against Sun was painted the same year that the Museum of Modern Art in New York City purchased Baziotes' *Dwarf* (1947), a work which distinctly shares a similar iconography as *Figures Against Sun*, most notably the Cyclops-like eye and primitivistic crocodile-like teeth, which were inspired by the crocodiles he encountered on trips to the Bronx Zoo. The watershed year of 1947 saw Baziotes exhibiting alongside the Cubist artists Byron Brown and Carl Holty at the Galerie Maeght in Paris while he showed seventeen new paintings at the Kootz Gallery in New York.

Born to Greek parents and raised in Pittsburgh, Baziotes studied art at the National Academy of Design in New York City from 1933 to 1936. He began shifting away from the traditional realist style of his early work while employed by the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the late 1930s.

The 1940s brought close relationships with many artists in the emerging Abstract Expressionist group. Although Baziotes shared their interest in primitive art and automatism, and his work often displayed stronger affinities with European Surrealism. He met Chilean-born Surrealist Roberto Matta in May 1940, the same year he exhibited with the Surrealists in a group show organized for the New School.

Baziotes was actively experimenting with abstraction by 1941. He and his wife began meeting regularly with Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, and Lee Krasner to play Surrealist games and write poetry. This spirit of openness and collaboration shaped Baziotes's artistic sensibilities and hastened the incorporation of Surrealist elements in his work. Using many layers of translucent glaze, Baziotes created compositions suffused with spiritual intensity and references to cultures of the past. His iconography, usually biomorphic, is abstracted and evocative, never explicit.

In 1942 Baziotes exhibited in the *First Papers of Surrealism* along with Motherwell and David Hare. He was honored with his first one-man show in New York in 1944 at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery. His next solo showing was in 1946 at the Kootz Gallery, which represented Baziotes through 1958. In 1962, he was one of the celebrated artists included in Sydney Janis's important exhibition, *Ten American Painters*.

Frank Stella (b. 1936)

Kozangrodek (II-2) from *"The Paper Relief Project,"* 1975
Mixed media on handmade paper relief (trial proof), 24¼ x 21 inches
Inscribed, signed, and dated verso: "T.P., F. Stella, '76"
Trial Proofs 1 of 9

Frank Stella's contribution to postwar American art is unassailable. One of the most cerebral artists of the past five decades, from the very beginnings of his career, Stella's work anticipates what is coming next. His early Black Paintings from the 1950s hinted at the burgeoning Minimalism movement, whose tenets he so pithily summarized in his now-famous quip, "What you see is what you see." For decades afterwards, in series after series, Stella grappled with new media, tools, and technique—entirely new visual vocabularies—creating a diverse body of work propelled by his endless desire to "make it better."[1]

According to Stella, his *Polish Village* series from the early 1970s began as an experiment in "form-building," or bringing the third dimension into his two-dimensional paintings. His inspiration for these many works (approximately 130 in total, divided into three sections) came from the book *Wooden Synagogues*, a compilation of photographs of wooden Polish synagogues from the seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-centuries that were destroyed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Stella responded to these images of bold and innovative architecture. His engagement with them was not one of memorial, but rather focused on the creative use of architectural space and advanced carpentry. He interpreted the synagogues—many of which were considered to be architectural masterpieces—as abstract shapes and irregular polygons, not as commemorations of loss.

Stella devised a unique, multi-step process to create the *Polish Village* series that resulted in three separate stages of works: flat collages, collaged bas-reliefs, and collaged constructions forming interlocking forms in high relief. *Kozangrodek (II-2)* is part of the second, bas-relief phase (the Roman numeral in the title refers to this stage and the cardinal numeral indicates that it is the second version.) Each of these works is unique, done directly and individually. They are Stella's first experiments with the infusion of real space into painting, a response to his observations of Cubism, and even more profoundly, Russian Constructivism. In the third phase of this project, Stella stretches this concept even further in his constructions, made largely of wood, with geometric forms shooting out at viewers at various levels.

Jewish history and the Holocaust are recurring themes throughout Stella's work, beginning with the titles of his early Black Paintings like *Die Fahne Hoch* (1959) and *Arbeit Mach Frei* (1967). However, Stella (who is a Catholic) maintains that these titles and references are incidental. His supposed indifference towards this history, his single-minded focus on the Jewish builder's creativity untainted by their trauma, makes these works more respectful and genuine in their appreciation—an homage to the creativity and skill of fellow artists from centuries ago. He related to the synagogues' architects, stating once when asked about the *Polish Village* series, "I am building a painting. These are constructions that come from the buildings themselves. I wanted to take them from two-dimensional to three-dimensional—to build a painting."[2]

1. William Rubin, *Frank Stella: 1970–1987* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1987).
2. Carol Salus, "Frank Stella's Polish Village Series and Related Works: Heritage and Alliance," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 28, no. 2 (2010): 139–156.

Giorgio Cavallon (1904–1989)

Untitled, 1978
Oil on canvas, 60 x 50 inches
Signed and dated lower right: "GIORGIO CAVALLON 78"
Signed and dated verso: "GIORGIO / CAVALLON / 1978"

Often considered a "painter's painter," Giorgio Cavallon drew praise from leading American poets Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery. In 1977 the Neuberger Museum of Art held an exhibition celebrating forty years of the artist's career. In the catalogue, Ashbery observed that the painter's turn "toward readable forms and clear, purist colors, is apparent, yet the forms won't stay put; the colors . . . go wandering off too, to celebrate areas which don't quite accept or reject them, having meanwhile left traces of their passage on the moving floors and walls of white."

The "wandering" described by Ashbery identifies a significant aspect of Cavallon's oeuvre. He introduced white, as he said, "to cancel things out." The brightly colored underpainting revealed beneath the white pigment often creates multiple layers on the canvas, reinforcing this sense of wandering and differentiating his work from that of his contemporaries, such as Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still. Variously described as "veiled," "fog-bound," and "atmospheric," the artist's weaving of intense colors with white washes evokes a subtle, dense light. The white in *Untitled* (1978), the dominant color, acts in this vein. It serves as a catalyst for the other pigments—blue, yellow, brown, and red—both throwing them forward against its opacity as well as drawing them in when veiling them as overpainting, imitating the vagaries of light. Robert Hughes attributes the artist's sensitivity to the properties of light to his northern Italian origins and memories of misty Adriatic marshes and mysterious Venetian glow. These richly saturated hues, often made from pigments ground and mixed by the artist, are hallmarks of Cavallon's work.

Born in Sorio, Italy, in 1904, Cavallon immigrated to the United States in 1920 after the death of his mother four years prior. In the early 1920s the teenage artist received private art instruction in Worcester, Massachusetts, and following these initial studies, in 1926 he enrolled in the National Academy of Design in New York. The next summer he traveled to Provincetown, where he thrived in its rich artistic community, studying with Charles Hawthorne and even cooking meals alongside Hans Hofmann.

Cavallon's experiences in Provincetown led him to fully appreciate a sense of shared artistic goals and communal spirit that he in turn carried throughout his career. In 1936 he joined other like-minded artists in founding the American Abstract Artists group, with whom he exhibited yearly until 1957. A charter member of The Club, in 1949 he participated in the Ninth Street Show, and the following year Leo Castelli selected his work to appear in the exhibition *Young Painters in the U.S. and France* at Sidney Janis Gallery. As part of Roosevelt's New Deal program, Cavallon participated in the Easel and Mural Division of the WPA Federal Art Project, serving as Arshile Gorky's assistant.

In the 1930s, the artist's work received public attention and critical acclaim: in Venice in 1932 Cavallon had his first solo exhibition, and two years later he received another one-man show, at ACA Gallery, New York. In the 1940s and 1950s, the artist continued to refine his signature style. Represented by the venerable Egan Gallery and later by the Kootz Gallery, both in New York, Cavallon mounted numerous solo exhibitions, and participated in several group shows, including *Documenta II*, the 1959 Whitney Annual, and the Museum of Modern Art's 1951 exhibition, *Abstract Art in America*. In 1988 the artist was inducted into the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Theodoros Stamos (1922–1997)

Edge of Burning Bush (A), 1986
Acrylic on canvas, 62 x 50 inches
Signed, titled and dated verso: "Stamos, 'EDGE OF BURNING BUSH' A, 1986"

Theodoros Stamos was fascinated with prehistory and religious thought and created a visual lexicon that explored these subjects as exemplified in his *Jerusalem series*, a group of paintings that grew out of his trip to the city in 1983. As a site of religious and ritual significance for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Jerusalem served as a place of ancient and contemporary ritual, a crucible for the actions of man across time. The ancient city, with its myriad synagogues, churches, and mosques all steeped in history, had made a profound influence on the artist. It spoke to his deep interest in religion, not as a particular faith, but as an expression of the mystery of life.

The *Jerusalem series* is a direct response to what Stamos felt and thought while in the city. Markings in his work appear to be almost carved from darker, rock-like forms, creating a palimpsest that hints of an ancient civilization. These calligraphic symbols resemble the Hebrew alphabet, and Stamos's occasional use of red in these paintings, as in *Edge of Burning Bush (A)*, can be understood as a nod to the symbolic importance of the color. Through this particular painting series, Stamos realized his quest for a universal imagery that would speak to age-old human emotions; the works touch on faith, suffering, persecution, doubt, and redemption.

Stamos had a long and fruitful career and worked with numerous key dealers. His work caught the eye of noted dealer Betty Parsons, who organized his first solo exhibition at her Wakefield Gallery and Bookstore in 1943 when the artist was just twenty-one. Other commercial and critical success followed, and from 1943 to 1947, Stamos received three one-man shows and participated in several important group exhibitions, including the Whitney Museum of American Art's annual and the important early show of Abstract Expressionist painting, *The Ideographic Picture*, which was curated by Barnett Newman at Betty Parsons Gallery. Stamos's art also attracted museums and private collectors, among them the Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim, and Edward R. Root. Stamos also established lasting friendships with several of his colleagues, in particular Newman and Rothko, who shared with the younger artist an interest in primitive and mythological imagery.

Stamos was a dedicated teacher and held numerous teaching positions over the course of his career. He taught at Hartley Settlement House for four years in the early 1950s, and he also taught at the progressive Black Mountain College, where he met Clement Greenberg and had Kenneth Noland as one of his students. In 1951, Stamos moved to East Marion, New York, where he developed an expressive color-field technique. In 1955, he began teaching at the Art Students League in New York, a position he would hold for twenty-two years.[1]

1. Robert S. Mattison, *Theodoros Stamos: A Communion with Nature*, exh. catalogue (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries: 2010).

Paul Jenkins (1923–2012)

Phenomena Cadmium Ore Lode, 1971
Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 48 inches
Signed lower left: "Paul Jenkins"
Signed, titled, and dated on stretcher verso: "Paul Jenkins 'Phenomena Cadmium Ore Load' 1971"

Paul Jenkins was an American painter who came to maturity during the reign of the Abstract Expressionists. Born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1923, he studied at the Art Institute in his hometown from 1938 to 1941, and then served as an apprentice at a ceramics factory. Afterwards, he moved to New York City to attend the Art Students League under the G.I. Bill. He remained there until 1952, befriending fellow artists Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, but chose to move to Paris after a year to escape the domineering influence of Abstract Expressionism. While abroad, he discovered the effects of staining a canvas as opposed to painting on it—color by flow instead of application. This interest was sparked by his earlier work in ceramics, translating the effects of glazing to the canvas.

Upon his return to the United States in 1956, he encountered the works of the prevalent American color-field painters, Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis, after which he fully took to the technique of staining. Jenkins applied oil paint or thinned acrylic to primed white canvas, typically starting at the corners, and manipulated its flow by adjusting the canvas's position, sometimes also using blade-like devices to direct the paint further. Beginning in the 1960s, he used bright, bold colors in most of his works, all of which he gave titles that began with the word "phenomena."

Phenomena Cadmium Ore Lode from 1971 is a classic example of Jenkins' masterful manipulations of color on canvas. Starting from the top corners, layers of thinned acrylic run towards the canvas's center, with cadmium, the white pigment, serving a starring role in the composition. Other colors include yellow, blue-gray, orange, and beige, all intermingled layer upon layer. The artist's intent is clear in this work; we can see where he manipulated the flow with both his instruments and by simply tilting the canvas front to back, or side to side. The "action" of this painting was not done on the canvas, but to the canvas, creating a harmonious blend of colors and directionalities that pulls the eye in and out of its many streaks and streams.

Jenkins was the subject of two major retrospectives, one at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the other at the San Francisco Museum of Art, both in 1971, but he received the most amount of critical attention in 1978 when his work was featured in the movie "An Unmarried Woman." Starring Alan Bates, the movie chronicled the life of a Manhattan artist; the works supposedly done by Bates' character were actually those of Jenkins, who reportedly spent weeks coaching the actor in the finer points of his working process. Jenkins died in New York City in 2012 after a short illness.[1]

1. Randy Kennedy, "Paul Jenkins, Painter of Abstract Artwork, dies at 88," *The New York Times*, 12 June 2012.

Norman Bluhm (1921–1999)

Untitled, 1948
Watercolor on paper, 8 x 6½ inches
Signed and dated lower left: "Bluhm 48"

Untitled (Blue, Black, and Ochre), circa 1952
Mixed media on paper, 8⅝ x 10⅝ inches
Signed verso: "Norman Bluhm"

Norman Bluhm created these two works on paper while living in Paris. He was among other American artists in Paris at the time forming a small community, including Paul Jenkins, from whose collection these particular works originate. Possibly gifts to a friend, or a purchase by an admiring fellow expatriate artist, these compositions are restrained yet playful, with the colors bouncing off the white ground, joyfully capturing the palpable energy of the work.

Bluhm came of age during the rise of the second generation of abstract expressionist painters in America, and as he understood it, art did not have to imitate or represent life; it was life unto itself. Accordingly, he sought to rid his work of any narrative content and do away with recognizable images from the known world. Paintings became arenas in which to act—hence the term "action painters." The physical act of painting was of paramount importance to Bluhm, whose paintings display his physical, psychological, and emotional responses to the world around them.

Born in Chicago in 1921, Bluhm took a somewhat circuitous route to becoming an artist. He studied architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology (now the Illinois Institute of Technology) under Mies van der Rohe for three years before he enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in 1941. Most scholars agree that his experience as a B-26 pilot during the war, flying missions over North Africa and Europe, had a profound effect upon his later career as a painter, in which he would incorporate a sense of space and the feeling of speed. After the war ended, Bluhm briefly returned to Chicago, and in 1947 decided to devote himself entirely to art. For a short time he studied at the Accademia di Belle Arte in Florence, but then settled in Paris from 1947 to 1956. There he attended both the Académie de la Grand Chaumière and the Ecole des Beaux Arts and came to know the sculptor Alberto Giacometti and other modern painters. In 1956, he moved to New York City and soon began showing his works at such renowned galleries as Leo Castelli and Martha Jackson in Manhattan and Galerie Stadler in Paris. From the late 1950s until his death in 1999, Bluhm exhibited regularly in group and solo shows throughout America and abroad.

As James Harithas wrote, "the 1950s and 1960s gave rise to a powerful new generation of Abstract Expressionists. It consisted of artists such as Norman Bluhm, John Chamberlain, Al Leslie, Joan Mitchell, and Mark Di Suvero who approached the style with a profound commitment to take it to the next level. A sophisticated and sympathetic grasp of their European cultural roots and a greater emphasis on basics—composition, drawing, color, surface quality and structure—distinguish their approach."[1]

1. James Harithas, "Norman Bluhm," on www.normanbluhm.com.

Richard Pousette-Dart (1916–1992)

Untitled, 1976–77
Acrylic, oil, and watercolor on paper, 22¼ x 29½ inches
Dated and signed verso: "76–77 / Pousette-Dart"

A founding member of the New York School, Richard Pousette-Dart's paintings—rich, profound and substantive—reflect an impassioned commitment to probing questions concerning mysticism, spiritualism, mythology, meditative realms, the cosmos, the soul, and the universal truths of nature. In the mid-1960s and into the 1970s, Pousette-Dart painted with a clear focus on allover abstraction and direct paint application. Rather than finding the hard edge or soft edge in painting, at this time he sought to achieve what has been referred to as the "living edge" or the trembling edge. This was a constant theme throughout Pousette-Dart's career, resulting in a body of work that is both visually and texturally exciting.

These sentiments are clearly expressed in *Untitled* from 1976–77, where Pousette-Dart has created a cosmic atmosphere replete with colorful swirls of bright blue, orange, yellow, and red acrylic dots layered on top of a wavy watercolor background. The bright colors insert an inner radiance into the impasto acrylic paint, while the thinner watercolor background gives the work a subtle sense of transparency, similar to the effect achieved when light travels through stained glass. The warmer tones of the yellows, reds, and oranges serve as a foil against the cooler blues, creating a dynamic composition that spreads to the edges of the paper—Pousette-Dart's "living edge." Images emerge from these passages of color—the blue form on the bottom is somewhat architectural, while the blue shape above is more organic—but remain undefined. Powerful dualities—light and substance, spirit and body—are central to his work. He explained in a 1947 artist statement, "I strive to express the spiritual nature of the Universe. Painting for me is a dynamic balance and wholeness of life; it is mysterious and transcending, yet solid and real."[1]

During the 1940s, Pousette-Dart was active in the avant-garde New York art world; he became one of the youngest members of the emerging group of Abstract Expressionists. He had his first solo show at the Artist's Gallery in 1941 and subsequently exhibited at Willard Gallery along with Mark Tobey in 1943, at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery in 1944, and at the Betty Parsons Gallery (regularly from 1948 to 1967), where Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko also showed their work. Pousette-Dart also participated in discussions about abstraction at the legendary Studio 35, a meeting place for Abstract Expressionist artists, including William Baziotes, David Hare, Robert Motherwell, and Rothko, and in the activities of the Eighth Street Club, founded by Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, and Ad Reinhardt among others. He also socialized with Abstract Expressionist painters at the Cedar Street Tavern on University Place and at the 59th Street Automat.

In 1951, Pousette-Dart moved to Rockland County, New York, where he lived with his wife, the poet Evelyn Gracey, until his death in 1992. This self-imposed isolation from the New York art world enabled him to distance himself from the Abstract Expressionist movement and helped him to develop the unique character of his imagery. However, he maintained a connection with the next generation of artists by teaching at a variety of schools in and around New York City, including the New School for Social Research, the School of Visual Arts, Columbia University, the Arts Students League, Bard College, and Sarah Lawrence College.

1. Richard Pousette-Dart, artist statement for Art of This Century exhibition in 1947, quoted in John Gordon, *Richard Pousette-Dart* (New York: Praeger in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1963): 9.

In Arcadia: Paintings by Bill Scott

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Bill Scott will be in conversation at the gallery on Saturday, 19 October, 11 am to 5 pm

Bill Scott (b. 1956), *Sitting in a Park*, 2012. Oil on canvas, 51 x 41 inches. Signed and dated lower right: "Bill Scott 12"

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Untitled, 2008
Pink Portuguese marble
27¼ x 10¼ x 9¼ inches
Signed at base: "ATCHUGARRY"

Luciano Ventrone (b. 1942)

Le Rosse, 2011
Oil on linen, 19 11/16 x 19 11/16 inches
Signed lower left: "L. Ventrone"

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