

Chryssa

b. 1933, Athens

d. 2013, Athens

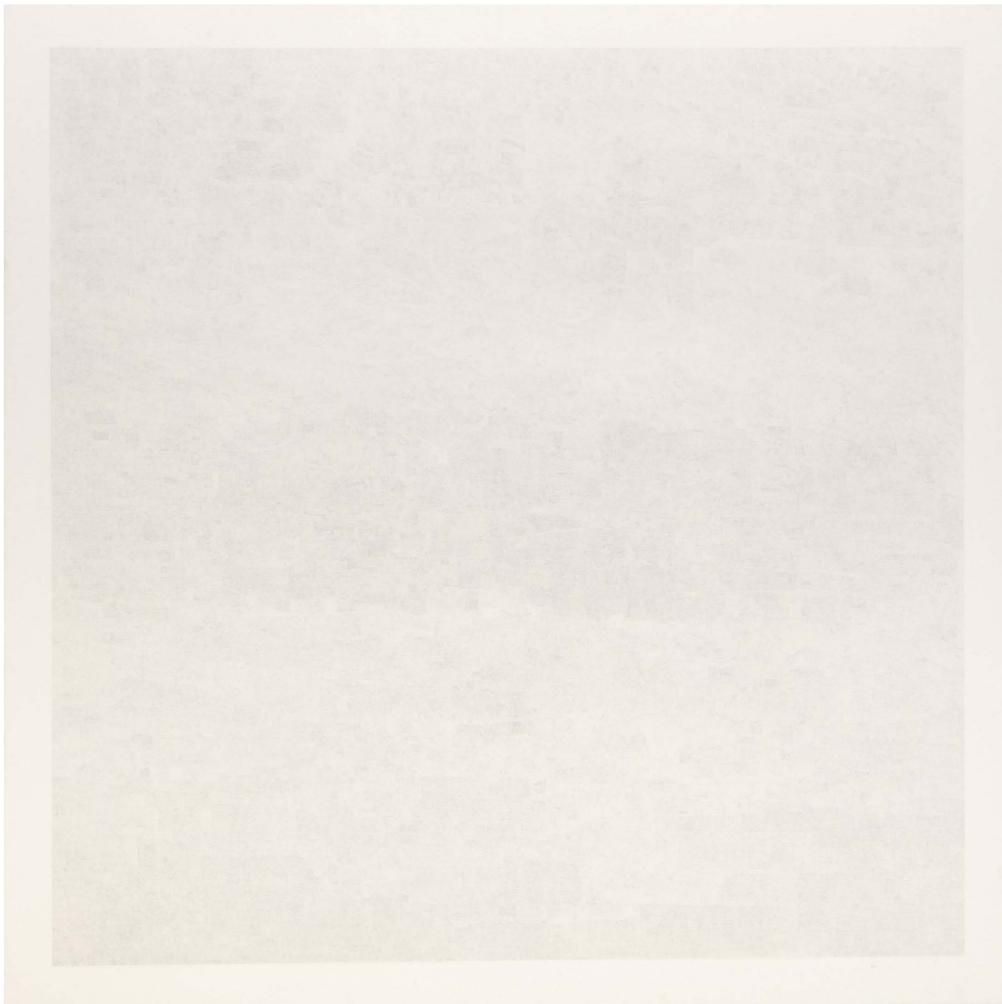
New York Times

1975–78

Oil and graphite on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Gift, Michael Bennett 80.2717

Chryssa began making stamped paintings based on the *New York Times* in 1958 and continued to do so into the 1970s. To create these works, she had rubber stamps produced based on portions of the newspaper before, as she described it, covering “the entire area [of a canvas] with a fragment repeated precisely.” Over time Chryssa’s treatment of the motif became increasingly abstract, as she more strictly adhered to a gridded composition and selected sections of newsprint with type too small to be legibly rendered in rubber. By deemphasizing the content and format of the newspaper, she redirected focus to the tension between mechanized reproduction and her careful process of stamping by hand.



Jacob El Hanani

b. 1947, Casablanca

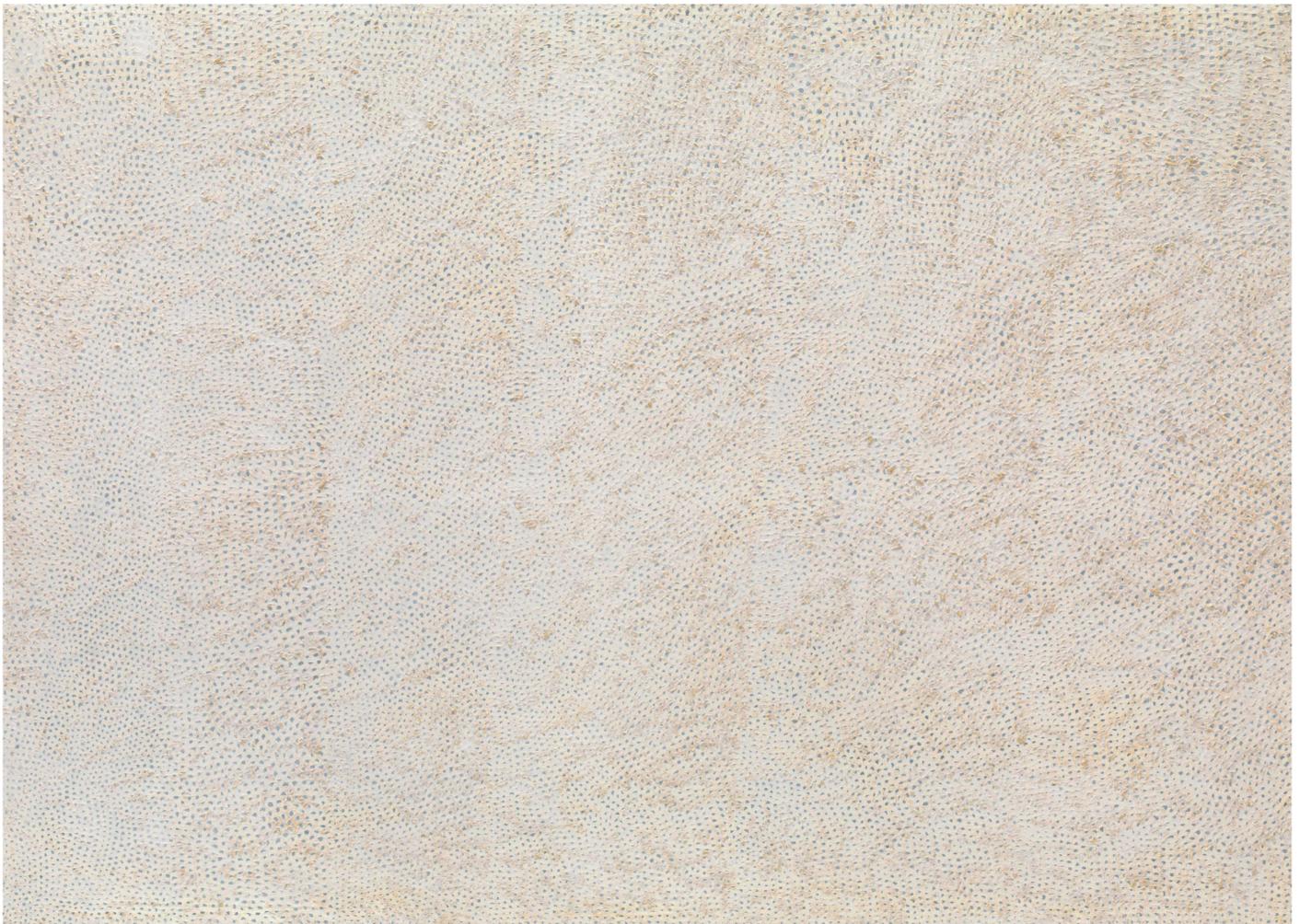
Untitled #171

1976–77

Ink and acrylic on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Gift, Mr. and Mrs. George M. Jaffin 77.2291

With its dense profusion of finely drawn lines, Jacob El Hanani's *Untitled #171* is a feat of physical endurance, patience, and precision. As the artist said, "It is a personal challenge to bring drawing to the extreme and see how far my eyes and fingers can go." Rather than approach this effort as an end unto itself, El Hanani has often related it to Jewish traditions of handwriting religious texts—a parallel suggesting a desire to transcend the self through a devotional level of discipline. This aspiration is given form in the way the short, variously weighted lines lose their discreteness from afar and blend into a vaporous whole.



Yayoi Kusama

b. 1929, Matsumoto, Japan

No. 2. J.B.

1960

Oil and rice blossoms on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Gift, Paula Cooper 2012.117

Yayoi Kusama has often discussed her *Infinity Net* paintings as a way to express and contain the overwhelming difficulties of the psyche while also conveying reality's limitless nature. In *No. 2. J.B.*, the desire for coherence and control is manifest in the methodical application of the tight, overlapping arcs of white paint. The compact scale of these marks suggests how close the artist was to the canvas as she painted. From this vantage, the loops would seem to go on indefinitely in every direction, and “their hypnotic serenity,” in Kusama’s words, draws “the spirit into a vertigo of nothingness.”



Brice Marden

b. 1938, Bronxville, New York

D'après la Marquise de la Solana

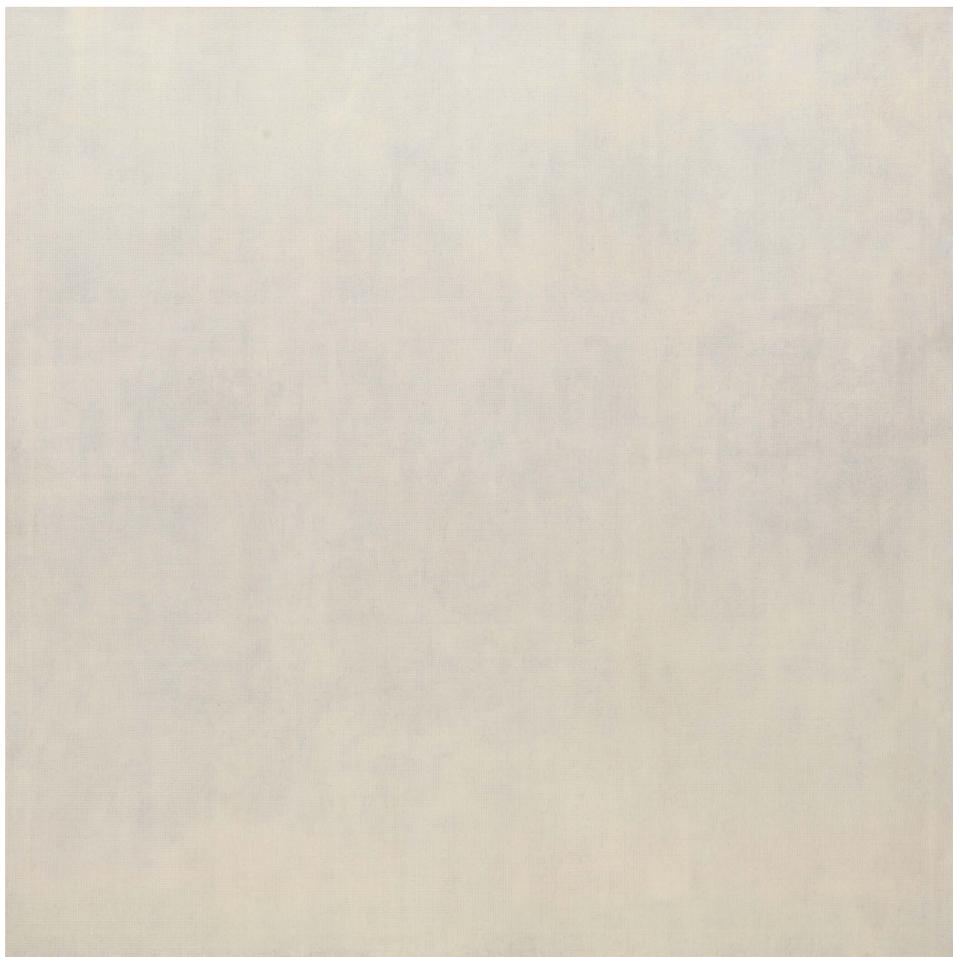
1969

Oil and wax on canvas, three panels

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Panza Collection 91.3784

Brice Marden has extolled paintings that accentuate “the actual act of painting, the physicality of the thing.” In works like *D'après la Marquise de la Solana*, Marden achieved this effect by creating subtly layered surfaces. After applying a mixture of oil paint and wax, a combination that yields a tactilely sensuous, softly hued finish, he used a kitchen spatula to distribute the material. This eliminated brushstrokes while producing marks that reveal earlier strata, often of a different shade or color. By not drawing the spatula all the way to the bottom edge, however, he allowed incidental drips to accumulate there, serving as a visible record of how the painting came into being.



Agnes Martin

b. 1912, Macklin, Saskatchewan, Canada

d. 2004, Taos, New Mexico

White Stone

1964

Oil and graphite on linen

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Gift, Mr. Robert Elkon 69.1911

Agnes Martin's paintings of the 1960s are distinguished by delicately drawn grids of rectangles laid over muted, monochromatic surfaces. Undergirding Martin's commitment to this format was a belief in art's ability to conjure what she called "abstract emotions": happiness, love, and experiences of innocence, freedom, beauty, and perfection. Martin believed these feelings could be conveyed by encouraging quiet, focused contemplation—the same mind-set that was required to make her work's carefully executed, unbroken lines. Though produced with the aid of a straightedge, her paintings reveal humanizing irregularities, a quality paralleling what she valued in experience: "In nature there is no sameness anywhere. There are no two rocks alike, no days alike, no moments alike even forever."



Roman Opałka

b. 1931, Hocquincourt, France

d. 2011, Rome

OPALKA 1965/1–∞ Détail 1520432–1537871

ca. 1975 (from a continuous project, 1965–2011)

Acrylic on canvas, with audio recording, 65 min., 46 sec.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 76.2220

In 1965 Roman Opałka painted the number one on the top-left corner of a canvas and then carried on the numerical sequence until he had filled the picture plane. From that moment until his death in 2011, his work adhered to this same logic, each painting beginning where the previous one ended. Opałka claimed, “My procedure manifests nothing apart from the duration of a lifetime.” In 1972 he introduced a new facet to this long view of temporal experience by recording himself counting aloud, in Polish, as he painted. The audio, with its consistency broken only by the pauses when Opałka reloaded his brush, concretizes his uninflected, deliberate pace.



Park Seo-Bo

b. 1931, Yecheon, Korea

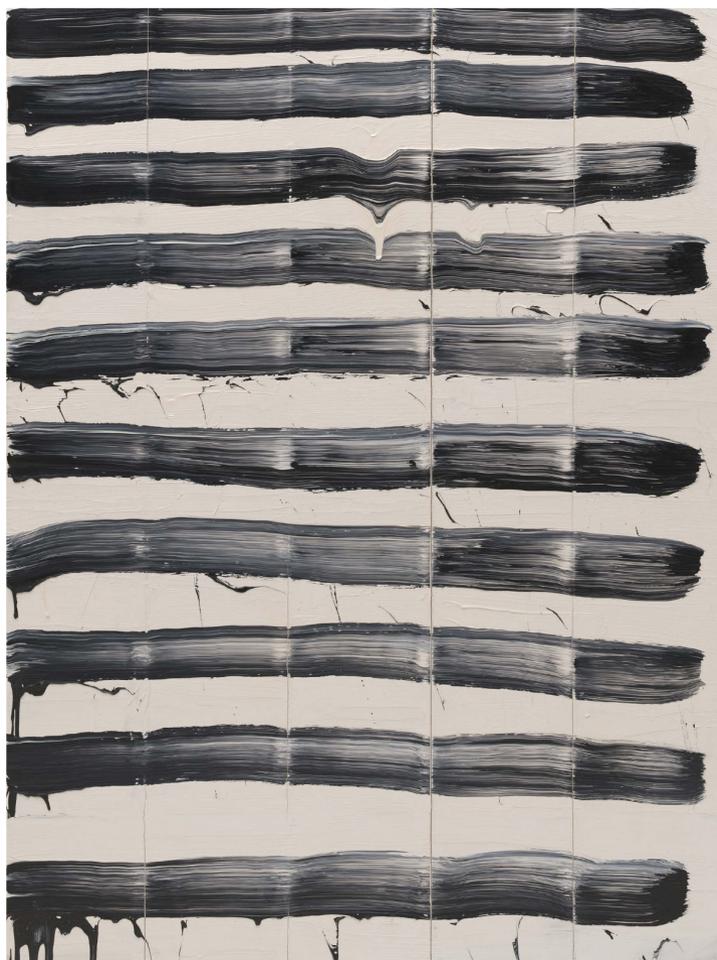
Ecriture No. 55-73

1973

Graphite and oil on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Gift, the Samsung Foundation of Culture 2015.50

According to Park Seo-Bo, before he began his *Ecriture* series in 1967, he came to the belief that “I needed to empty myself completely and not make any expressions on the canvas that would suggest my thoughts or feelings.” The intense, painstaking execution of *Ecriture No. 55-73* reflects this effort. To make the work, Park applied a thin layer of oil paint to the canvas and then, holding a pencil in his fist and maintaining as much pressure as possible, drew repeated, angular marks. The painting’s combination of speed, regularity, and continuity suggests a complete absorption in the task and the minimization of any external concerns.



David Reed

b. 1946, San Diego

#90

1975

Oil on five joined canvases

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Gift, Elizabeth Richebourg Rea, in memory of
Michael M. Rea 2006.61

Each brushstroke that runs across the five joined canvases of David Reed's *#90* presents itself with singular physicality. These bands were added while the white background was still wet, causing the material to be displaced by and intermix with the dark-gray paint. Painting wet into wet meant that the artist had to work quickly and assuredly; a passage could not be adjusted without losing its immediacy. Reed described a similar piece as "a painting made by a body in motion and a body remembered." The repetition of bands in *#90* emphasizes the role of kinesthetic memory, demonstrating how the links between gesture and subjectivity extend far beyond psychological expression.



Robert Ryman

b. 1930, Nashville, Tennessee

d. 2019, New York

Capitol

1973

Gripz on unprimed linen

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Panza Collection 91.3860

Robert Ryman taught himself how to paint after becoming a guard at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1953. The curiosity and pragmatic experimentation of his initial learning process influenced his practice throughout his career. In order to understand “how the paint works,” as he once put it, he consistently avoided imagery, figurative or abstract, and restricted himself to the use of white paint. This allowed him to hone in on the possibilities offered by specific types of paints, supports, and applications. The experimental character of Ryman’s work is visible in *Capitol*, with its investigation of how the multidirectional, overlapping brushstrokes of the relatively translucent Gripz paint form varying relationships with the unprimed linen.



Zarina

b. 1937, Aligarh, India

d. 2020, London

Untitled

1977

20 needle-pierced sheets of laminated paper

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council and through prior gift of

Solomon R. Guggenheim 2010.32

To make *Untitled*, Zarina laminated sheets of paper together and pierced them with variously sized needles. Though from a distance the work seems muted and serene, once closer, the dense rhythms of punctures, varying from sheet to sheet, evoke a fraught gravity. In her art, Zarina often engages themes of political violence and displacement, most foundationally the partition of India and Pakistan. She has also often described paper, her preferred medium, in personal, human terms, claiming, "It is like working on your own skin." In this context, the piece's combination of painstaking care and distressed intensity speaks simultaneously to the memories of lives once lived and their subsequent ruination.