



**Gene Davis**

b. 1920, Washington, D.C.

d. 1985, Washington, D.C.

**Wheelbarrow**

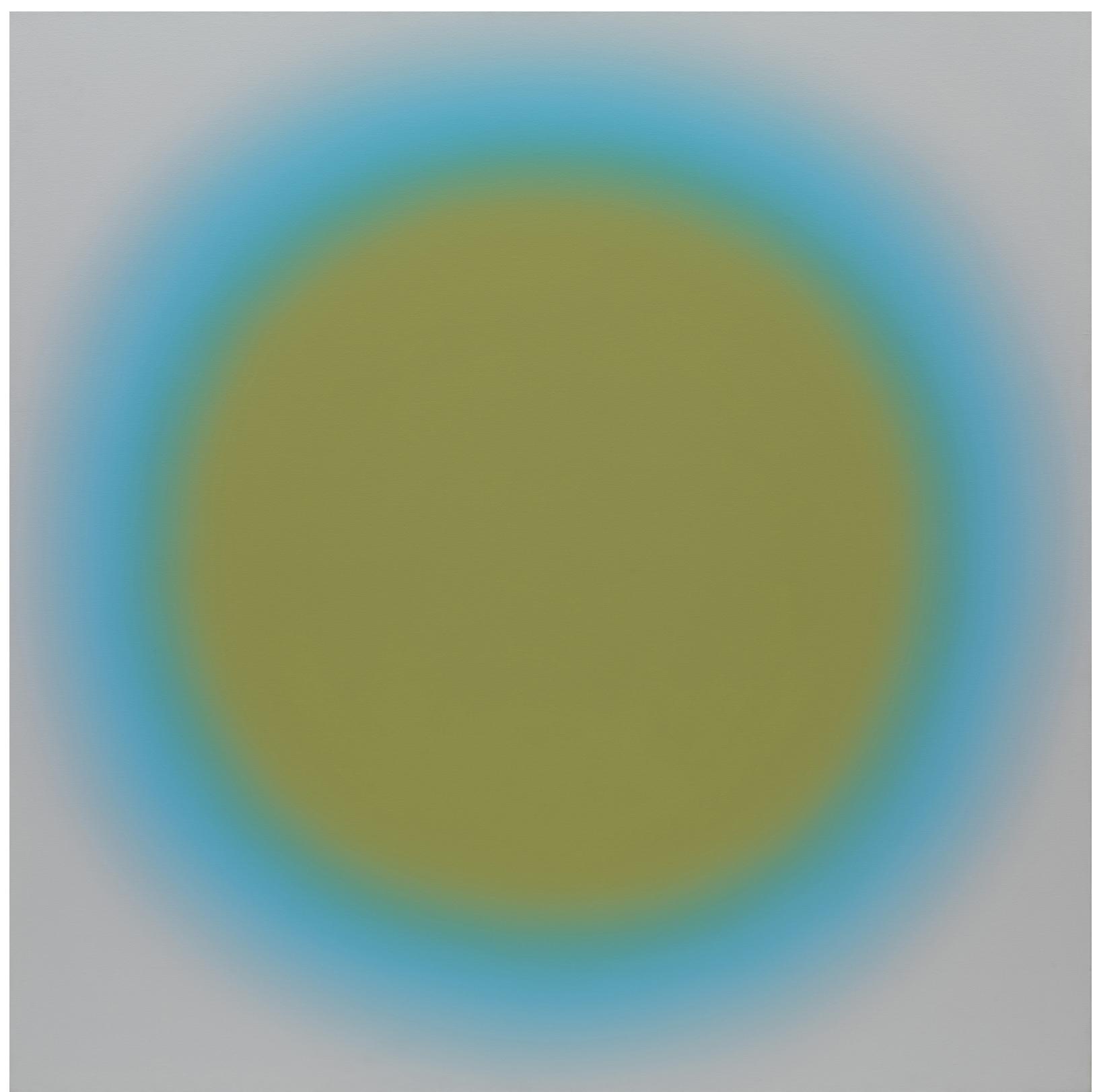
1971

Acrylic on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Anonymous gift 72.1993

In the late 1950s, Gene Davis began producing the striped paintings that would almost exclusively occupy him for the remainder of his career. Some of these works—which range in size from mural-scale canvases to what he termed “micro-paintings”—feature hard-edge, broad bands of color, while others, as with *Wheelbarrow*, are composed of thin pinstripes that span the height of the composition. Balancing intuition with intention, Davis applied these narrow strips freehand, usually one hue at a time, at deliberate intervals with their colors carefully varied. The colors almost blend when viewed at a distance, the clarity of each line becoming apparent only as one nears the canvas.



## **Wojciech Fangor**

b. 1922, Warsaw

d. 2015, Warsaw

**M 37**

1969

Oil on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,  
Gift, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Lejwa 69.1922

When Wojciech Fangor visited Washington, D.C., in 1962, he found kindred spirits in several of the local Color Field painters, who similarly embraced sumptuous, saturated hues in their work. By this time, Fangor had already begun to create pulsing abstractions that explore the appearance of movement through optical illusion and that bridge the Color Field and Op art movements. In terms of materials, he favored oil paint on a primed surface, rather than acrylics on raw canvas. The long drying time of oils allowed Fangor to blur the edges of shapes before the medium dried, and the dense concentration of pigment permitted him to build layers of thinned paint without sacrificing opacity. As seen in *M 37*, the result is a textureless surface from which color radiates.



**Paul Feeley**

b. 1910, Des Moines, Iowa  
d. 1966, New York

**Formal Haut**

1965

Acrylic on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 66.1832

Paul Feeley has often been associated with the Color Field painters, but his most recognized works, largely made between 1962 and 1965, stand apart from those of his peers for their economy of color and spare compositions. *Formal Haut*, produced the year before Feeley's death, features his signature forms, namely a single jack (inspired by the game of jacks) and repeated baluster shapes. Their convex and concave contours interlock in a symmetrical arrangement, centered within the square frame. The simple geometric design is highlighted by an equally uncomplicated palette, limited to just two contrasting colors on unprimed canvas.



## Helen Frankenthaler

b. 1928, New York

d. 2011, Darien, Connecticut

### Canal

1963

Acrylic on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Purchased with the aid of funds from the National

Endowment for the Arts, in Washington, D.C.,

a federal agency; matching funds contributed by

Evelyn Sharp 76.2225

A significant figure in the Color Field movement, Helen Frankenthaler devised a gestural technique of pouring diluted paint directly onto canvases that had been placed on the ground. Through her practice, she revealed a subtle balance between elements of chance and human deliberation. In *Canal*, blotches of thin yet vivid blue, amber, orange, and green elegantly blur into flat planes, while portions of the canvas are left bare. Frankenthaler influenced painters such as Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland, who together visited her studio in 1953 with famed art critic Clement Greenberg, one of the previous owners of *Canal*. Louis later characterized Frankenthaler as “the bridge between Pollock and what was possible.”



**Morris Louis**

b. 1912, Baltimore

d. 1962, Washington, D.C.

## Saraband

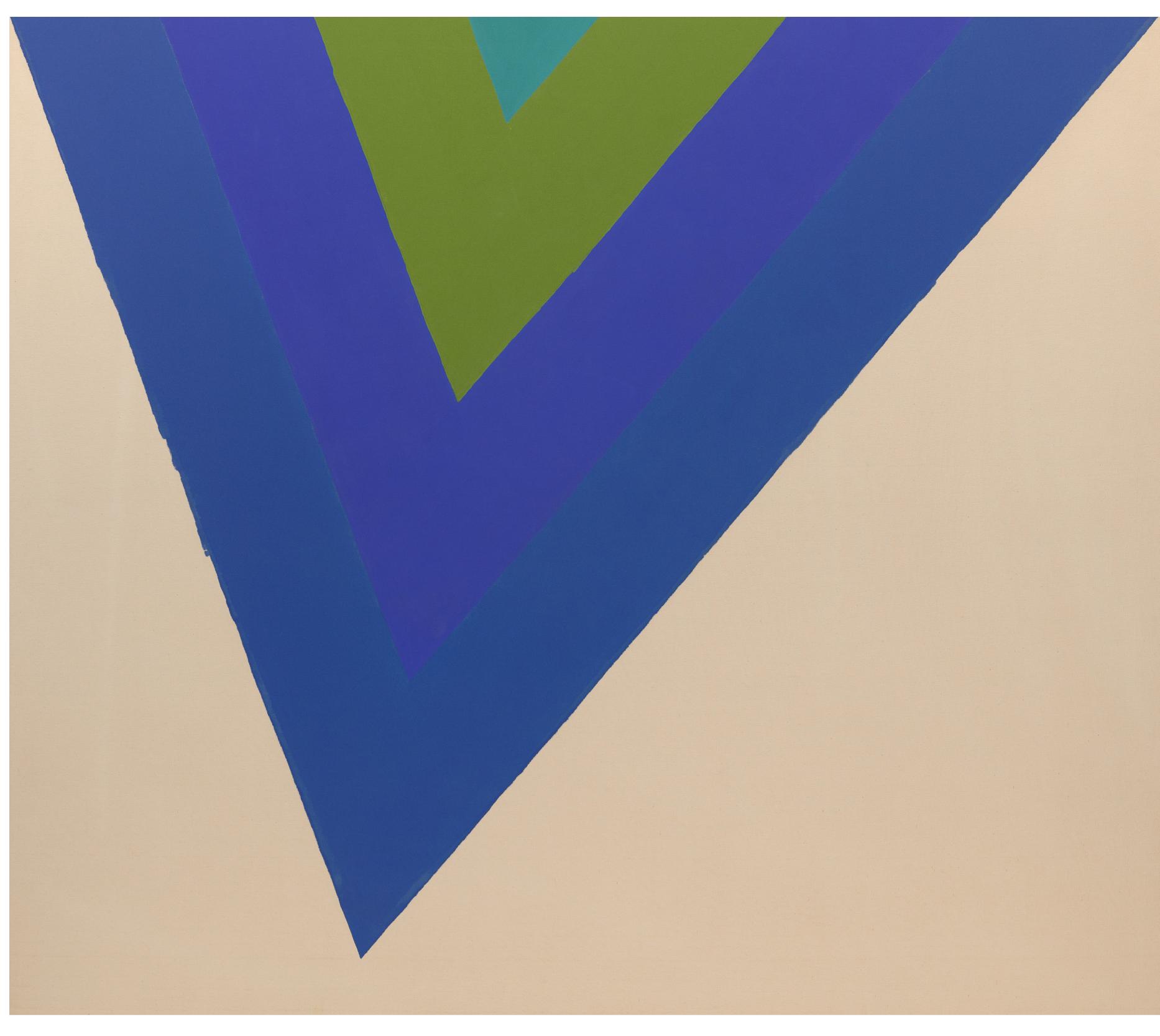
1959

Acrylic resin on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 64.1685

In 1953 Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland visited the studio of Helen Frankenthaler and saw *Mountains and Sea* (1952), the first painting made with her signature “soak-stain” technique. Louis would translate this method into his own idiom in a series of poured paintings created by gravity-pulled streams of luminescent color. Works in the *Veils* series (1954/1958–59), including *Saraband*, are entirely abstract, and this removal of any concrete figural references enabled Louis to concentrate solely on the visual. The velvety, saturated canvas radiates color in uninflected expanses paced only by the rhythm of vertical bands.

Though a faint, tentative signature in the upper-right corner long led to *Saraband* being shown with the pools of collected pigment at the top (reversing the gravitational flow), it is now hung following Louis’s preference, with a blank margin above where the thinned acrylic resin began its course down the canvas.



**Kenneth Noland**

b. 1924, Asheville, North Carolina

d. 2010, Port Clyde, Maine

**Trans Shift**

1964

Acrylic on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Purchased with funds contributed by Elaine and Werner Dannheisser and The Dannheisser Foundation 81.2812

Among the artists based in Washington, D.C., who have been historically linked as Color Field painters, Kenneth Noland experimented with thinned, acrylic-based paints that soaked into unprimed canvas. In 1963 Noland began a series focused on the chevron, or V shape, and in some works, he left areas surrounding the chevrons untouched, juxtaposing painted and unpainted surfaces to draw attention to the fusion of color and material. With works such as *Trans Shift*, he decentered the chevron, creating an asymmetrical image but maintaining the painting's top edge as the "base" of the shape. This movement away from the center emphasizes the relationship of bounded and unbounded space, while the use of a bright green band and small blue-green triangle to disrupt the areas of blue produces a tension between wholeness and fragmentation, flatness and recession.



## Jules Olitski

b. 1922, Snovsk, Russia (now Ukraine)

d. 2007, New York

### Lysander-1

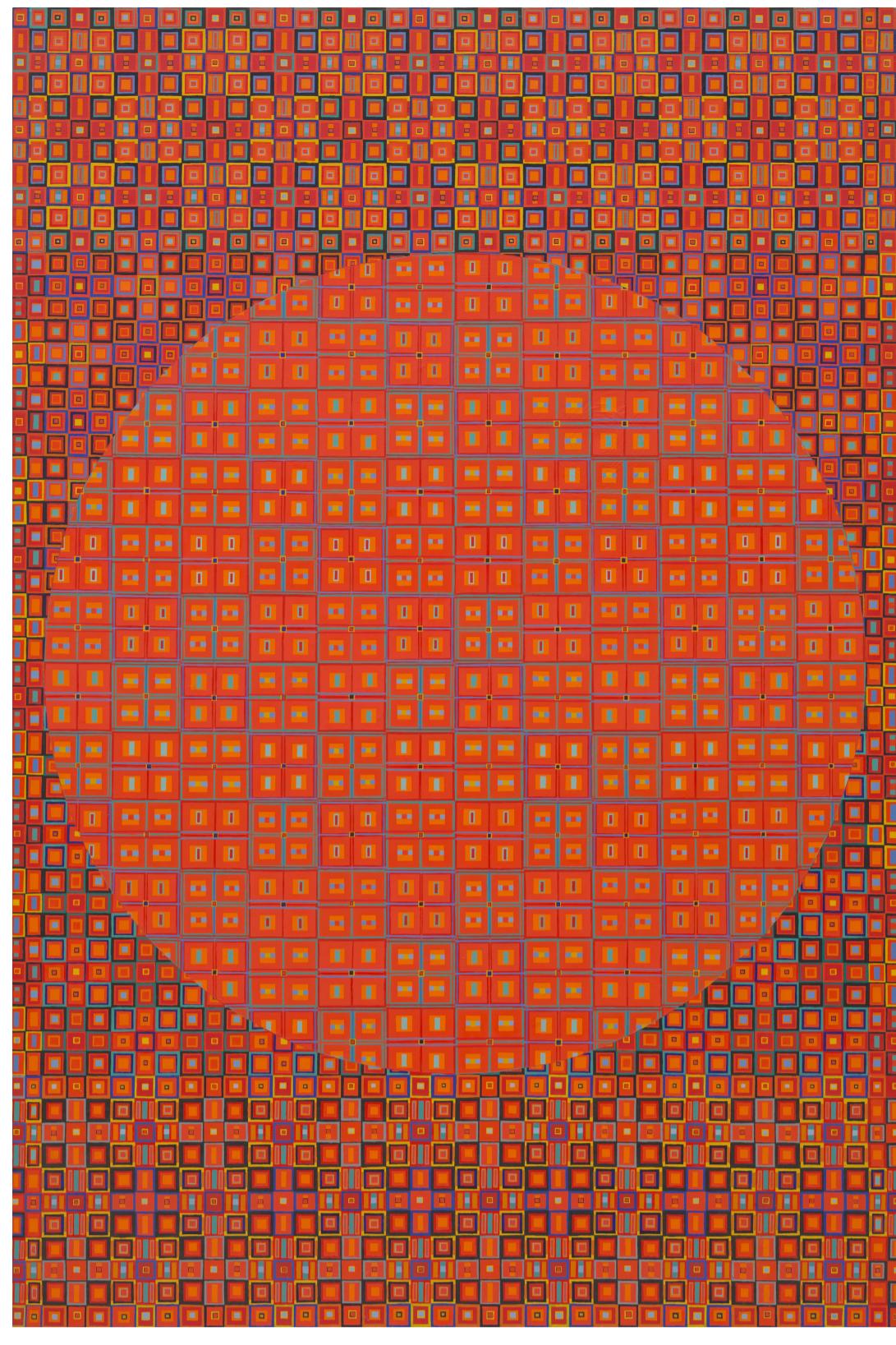
1970

Acrylic on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Anonymous gift 86.3484

Jules Olitski devoted his career to experimenting with color, surface, and paint application, producing allover chromatic fields through various methods, including gestural strokes, paint staining, and, most significantly, spraying. *Lysander-1* distills many of the central themes of Olitski's most mature spray-gun paintings: the tactile, grainy surface; the gradual, seamless transition between hues and areas of light and dark; and the elimination of linear drawing from the interior of the picture plane. The work features nonprimary, synthetic colors, which, because of varying densities of spray, appear rough and grainy. Using this technique to create a cloudlike field in which colors overlap and flow through each other, Olitski effectively banished drawing to the edges of the canvas.



## Toshinobu Onosato

b. 1912, Iida, Japan

d. 1986, Kiryū, Japan

## Painting A

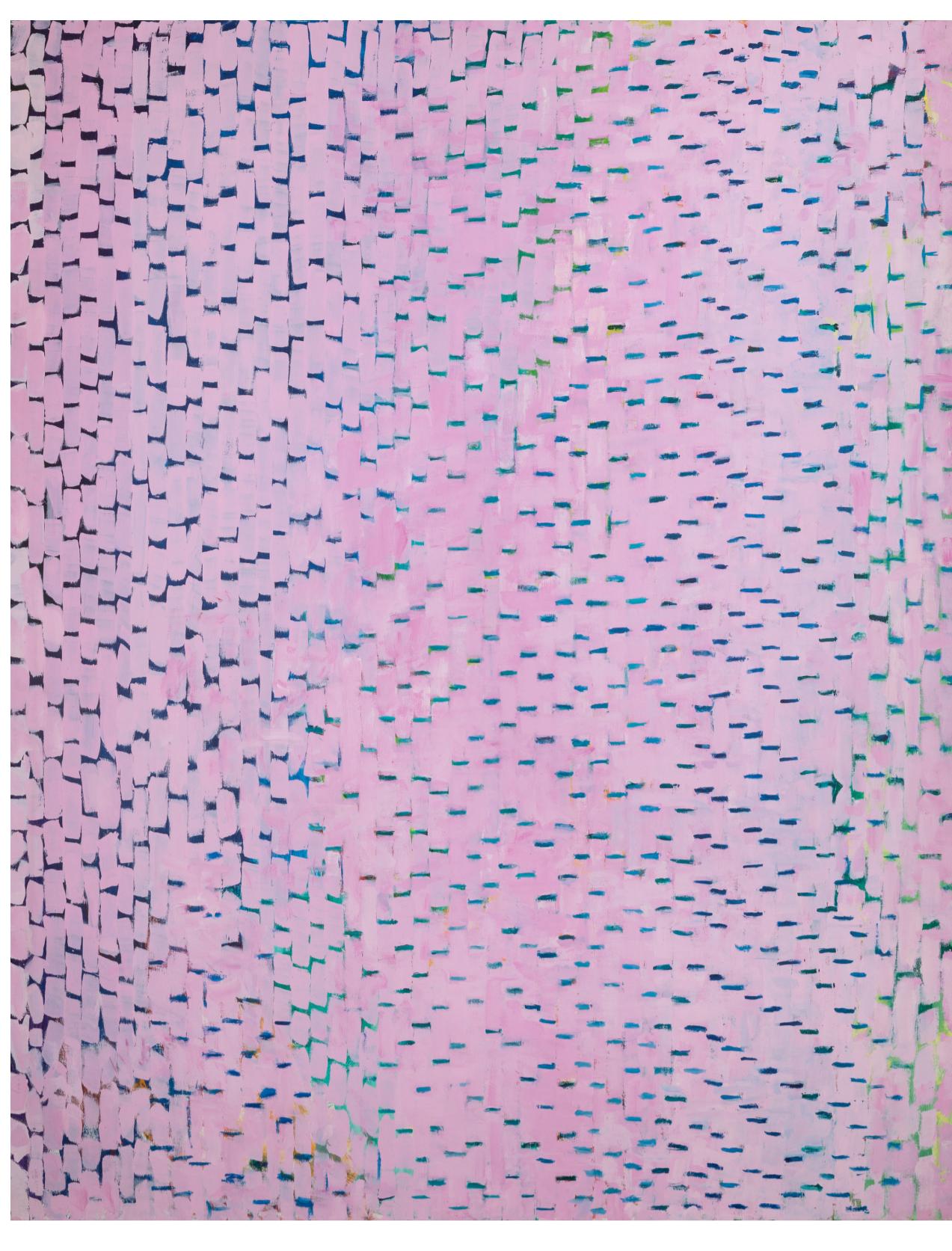
1961–62

Oil on canvas

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 66.1789

In 1960 Toshinobu Onosato reevaluated his approach to the circle, a form that for much of the previous decade he had presented as monochromatic surfaces whose simplicity was emphasized by surrounding webs of intersecting lines. Onosato instead began to fill his circles with rows of minuscule, variegated squares. According to the artist, dividing the circle through “the piling up of colour planes” allows for better understanding of the shape’s true dimensions.

Born from a desire to capture brightness and harmony, works such as *Painting A* vibrate with an energy that relates to—but remains distinct from—the illusory effects sought by Op artists.



## Alma Thomas

b. 1891, Columbus, Georgia

d. 1978, Washington, D.C.

## Cherry Blossom Symphony

1972

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of halley k harrisburg and

Michael Rosenfeld, New York

Alma Thomas was integral to the Color Field movement that emerged in Washington, D.C., during the 1960s, but her unmistakable compositions, often described as “musical,” indicate a path separate from those of her contemporaries. Whereas others produced flat, precise compositions and soaked paint into raw canvas, Thomas laid short and uneven—though controlled—brushstrokes on primed surfaces. Her works of the 1960s focus on primary and intermediate colors, applied in a dense, gestural style, while those she produced early in the 1970s, including *Cherry Blossom Symphony*, display a more muted palette, with gradual shifts in color peeking from behind a monochrome veil. Thomas also was unique among her peers in her attention to nature. She drew inspiration from her surroundings, with particular attention to the play of light on trees and flowers, such as the springtime bloom of cherry blossoms.