Robert Moskowitz

Ned Rifkin

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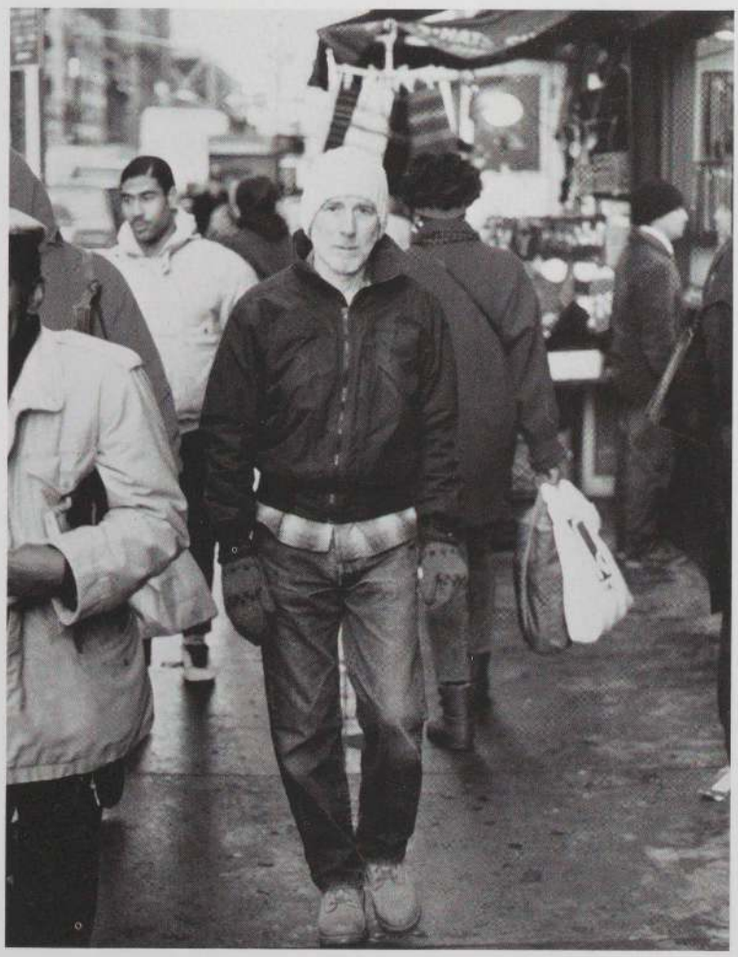
Over the last thirty years, Robert Moskowitz has emerged as one of the most important painters on the American scene. His collages, paintings, and drawings form a significant link between the Abstract Expressionism of the New York School and the "New Image Abstraction" painters of the mid-1970s.

Since the 1960s, Moskowitz has pursued a strongly reductive style, seeking to infuse recognizable imagery with emotive content. At first it was possible to draw parallels between his paintings and those of Johns, Rauschenberg, and Dine, with whom he sometimes exhibited, but more recently he has developed a personal style that is entirely his own. In the words of Michael Kimmelman of the *New York Times,* he "works and reworks a narrow repertory of images, inventing through mysterious scenes of icebergs, howling dogs, crosses, and skyscrapers, a world in which distinctions blur between past and present, solid and ephemeral. . . . Strange, affecting images, they describe a narrow path separating reality from the imagination."

Based on a major retrospective exhibition, this is the first book to survey the whole range of Moskowitz's career to date, reproducing over sixty of his works in color. Ned Rifkin, Chief Curator for Exhibitions at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, provides a full biographical and critical commentary, and the book also contains an illuminating interview with the artist by Linda Shearer, Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

With 95 illustrations, 67 in color

ROBERT MOSKOWITZ



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THAMES AND HUDSON
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This book is published on the occasion of the
exhibition "Robert Moskowitz," 1989–1990.

EXHIBITION DATES

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
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FOREWORD

Living as we do at a time when young art "stars" are celebrated with solo exhibitions by American and European institutions while they are still in their thirties—or even twenties—one is puzzled, almost to the point of disbelief, to learn that the present exhibition marks the first retrospective of the career of Robert Moskowitz, an artist who is nearly halfway through his sixth decade.

Our puzzlement stems from the fact that the artist's work has always been there to pique and stimulate our interest, from the simple collages of window shades of the early 1960s to the painted silhouettes of architectural and art-historical monuments of the past fifteen years. Despite its presence and our awareness of it, his work has tended to be a step ahead of everyone else's—and, therefore, elusive and out of step—and only in the mid-1970s did history, in the form of other artists, pull alongside.

These deceptively simple yet elegant paintings and drawings, with their seductive images, which appear to shift in meaning or assume other guises even as we study them, have always had their loyal followers and admirers, especially among other artists but also among knowledgeable curators and collectors. But for too long and for whatever reason—perhaps the very ambiguity that the artist

believes to reside "in all good work"—his art has seemed to hover on the periphery of our vision and thoughts. At long last, through this exhibition, we are able to focus our attention on the work of this artist of substance.

Although the courtesies, assistance, and contributions of numerous persons are acknowledged elsewhere in this catalog, I wish also to express my warm gratitude to the individual and institutional lenders to the exhibition; to Robert Moskowitz for his most helpful advice and full cooperation; and to the museum's Chief Curator for Exhibitions, Ned Rifkin, who brought this project to fruition despite his many other duties and responsibilities.

James T. Demetrion
Director
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Organizing this exhibition and publication has involved the intensive efforts and creative energies of numerous people for whom I feel profound gratitude. The initial conversation that became the seed for a Robert Moskowitz retrospective took place in 1985 at the Corcoran Gallery of Art with my former colleague Associate Director/Chief Curator Jane Livingston. It was her encouragement that led to my first contact with the artist. When I joined the staff of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in late 1986, Director James T. Demetrion's enthusiasm for the project was instrumental in its evolution and realization. For this, and his continuing support, I am truly grateful.

Over these four years my able and affable assistants, Starr Figura at the Corcoran and Jennifer Loviglio at the Hirshhorn, have shown the wit and perseverance necessary to address the relentless details attendant to this enterprise. I am particularly indebted to Francie Woltz here at the Hirshhorn, who took on this project in midstream, and thank her for her unstinting dedication and competent collation of the many elements presented her. The Hirshhorn's editor, Barbara J. Bradley, has been exceedingly understanding and patient with me throughout the period of assembling the manuscript for

this publication. My sincere thanks go to Kathleen Preciado who rigorously edited the text and whose perceptive suggestions enabled me to express my thoughts more clearly.

In addition, I extend my warm thanks to Hermine Ford whose discerning and timely comments on the manuscript were instructive and helpful. Linda Shearer, curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, has been a good friend and peer throughout these years, and I am grateful to her for the perceptive interview with Bob Moskowitz that she has contributed to this volume. I am obliged to Susan Dwyer of Thames and Hudson Inc. for shepherding the catalog through its production. My thanks go to Hirshhorn librarian Anna Brooke for overseeing the bibliographical research. Her staff, notably Maureen Turman and Farar Elliott, offered timely assistance in obtaining reference material. I am indebted to Doug Robinson, registrar, and Ed Schiesser, head of exhibits and design, and members of their staffs for their expert tracking of all loans; for arranging the crating, shipping, and handling of works of art; and for efficiently installing the exhibition. I also thank Deputy Director Stephen E. Weil for his inimitable good humor and sound advice. Executive Officer Nancy Kirkpatrick and her staff capably managed the myriad financial and administrative details.

Joe Helman of Blum Helman Gallery in New York was extremely helpful in providing me with detailed information, prudent counsel, and moral support. I would also like to thank Peter Freeman, director of Blum Helman, Margo Leavin of Margo Leavin Gallery, and Daniel Weinberg of Daniel Weinberg Gallery for their assistance.

I salute all the lenders whose generosity in sharing their works of art allows this exhibition to tour for ten months. In addition to private individuals, many museums have willingly lent their paintings and drawings to the exhibition. I wish to thank Christina Orr-Cahall, director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Henry Robert, director of the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Hugh Davies, director of La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California, Richard Koshalek, director of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Richard Oldenburg, director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Thomas Armstrong, director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In addition, I am

grateful to Riva Castleman, Linda Shearer, and Kirk Varnedoe of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Hugh Davies of La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art for their participation in the tour of this exhibition to their respective institutions.

I feel it is appropriate to recognize the sacrifice and dedication of my family during the last four years. My wife, Diann, and my sons, Moses and Amos, have endured many long hours of my preoccupation and absence from our home. Without their support and understanding I would not have been able to realize this project fully.

Finally, it has been my privilege to work closely over the past few years with Bob Moskowitz, an artist of extraordinary vision and talent. More than his artistic achievement, however, I thank him for allowing me to enter his life and to discover the depth of his kindness, his gentle spirit, and graceful way. I have learned much from this experience, indeed, from this man.

Ned Rifkin
Chief Curator for Exhibitions
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

ROBERT MOSKOWITZ

Ned Rifkin

Robert Moskowitz was born in 1935 into a lower middle-class Jewish family living in Brooklyn. His father, Louis, owned a dry-cleaning business. In 1948 Louis abandoned his wife, Lily, and their two teenage children, Robert and Elaine, and three-year-old daughter, Karen. Unable—and to some extent unwilling—to support herself and her family in New York and also preoccupied with her health, Mrs. Moskowitz periodically moved to Florida to work, leaving her eighteen-year-old son to look after his younger sister.

As a child Moskowitz fantasied about becoming an artist, although he exhibited no particular facility for art. In 1953, the first year his mother began to work in Florida, Moskowitz completed school and held various jobs while living at home and caring for his sister Karen. Searching for a way to combine his love of drawing with a skill that might provide him with a livelihood, he enrolled in a three-year night-school program in engineering drafting at the Mechanics Institute of Manhattan. As a result of this training, he was hired as a technical illustrator by Sperry Gyroscope Company. Later, a friend from work, Tom Russell, convinced Moskowitz to attend night classes at Pratt Institute of Art in Brooklyn.

In September 1956, when he began his studies at Pratt, Moskowitz aspired to become a graphic designer. His first teacher

was Robert Richenburg, "a dedicated artist who was very enthusiastic about my work."[1] The encouragement Moskowitz received in this class prompted him to enroll in an advanced painting course. There his instructor was Adolph Gottlieb, a first generation Abstract Expressionist, whose class "blew away commercial art."

Gottlieb impressed the younger man as a teacher and a model of what an artist might be. He comported himself with dignity and expressed himself clearly. Gottlieb allowed the students to work independently and offered candid and concise criticism. Typically, he expressed romantic notions about painting's emotional and spiritual potential: "I am . . . concerned with the problem of projecting intangible and elusive images that seem to me to have meaning in terms of feeling."[2] Gottlieb would challenge his students, often responding to a painting, "That's very nice—now try something else, something different."

By 1957 Moskowitz was making respectable, if small-scale, Abstract Expressionist paintings [1] reminiscent of those of his teacher and Bradley Walker Tomlin, another contemporary painter he admired. During the day he rendered precise illustrations for engineering proposals and technical publications while at night he continued to study at Pratt through February 1959.

By the end of the 1950s—an important time in the history of the New York School—Moskowitz had become conversant with the look of New York painting. Two young artists in particular, Jasper Johns, twenty-eight, and Robert Rauschenberg, thirty-three, had made their mark with the art dealer Leo Castelli in 1958,[3] with what were then called "Neo-Dada" works[4]—combine paintings, as Rauschenberg dubbed them, and image-based encaustic paintings of flags, targets, and numbers—found imagery that was frontal, flat, coolly abstracted yet representational.

These and other artists were preoccupied with introducing a new, less-romanticized vocabulary into contemporary painting. As curator Barbara Haskell has written of the time:

> By the late 1950s, a crisis clearly had arisen. In the hands of second- and third-generation followers, Abstract Expressionism seemed to have lost its authenticity and conviction. To the

younger generation of artists who began their careers in the late fifties, Abstract Expressionism's original practitioners were heroic, mythical figures. . . . By 1958 . . . the initial power of Abstract Expressionism had become diluted. For a younger generation, Abstract Expressionism seemed "like a fire that had burned itself into cold embers," as Walter De Maria later observed.[5]

Moskowitz's point of entry into the tempestuous New York art world would follow in a year or so while he traveled to Europe in June 1959.

Soon after his arrival in London Moskowitz visited the Institute of Contemporary Arts where he saw an exhibition of Gottlieb's paintings. While there he engaged a gallery attendant in conversation, which led to his meeting Gwyther Irwin, a noted young British assemblagist. Through this encounter, Moskowitz learned about an artists' community in Bushey, a small urban district twelve miles northwest of London, where he was able to buy an inexpensive studio in an abandoned nineteenth-century school.[6] The residents of this cooperative were "fringe people" living in rather primitive circumstances, without electricity or plumbing, using a single spigot for water and a potbellied stove for heat. Nevertheless, his residence there enabled Moskowitz, for virtually the first time in his life, to establish the independence he sought.

After setting up his studio, he would periodically travel by train to London to see exhibitions and collections. Through his friendship with Irwin he became keenly interested in the work of Marcel Duchamp. Irwin was quite knowledgeable about the Dadaist artist and, like Duchamp, an excellent chess player. During their frequent chess games Irwin discussed Duchamp's importance with the younger American artist. "I [became] fascinated with [Duchamp's] ideas—his broader treatment of art—its relationship to the world and to life."

Duchamp's legacy had had a major impact in England earlier in the decade, most notably on Richard Hamilton, a primary player in the development of British Pop. By 1959 the movement had fully bloomed, several years in advance of its American counterpart.[7] While in England Moskowitz was fully aware of Pop art and was

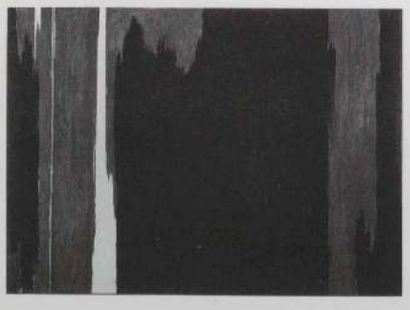

Fig. 1 Clyfford Still (1904–1980). *1954*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 113½ x 156 in. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, gift of Seymour H. Knox.

particularly impressed with the work of Peter Blake, a key artist in the movement's first phase (1953–58).

This was a vital time for new art on both sides of the Atlantic. In the exhibition "Sixteen Americans" the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented the work of Johns and Rauschenberg while introducing the cooler, hard-edge abstractions of Ellsworth Kelly and the black paintings of Frank Stella. Simultaneously, an obscure young illustrator named Andy Warhol was having his first solo gallery show featuring drawings of food. Moreover, in a wholly divergent phenomenon related to the assemblage and art/life issues essential to Duchampian concerns, Jim Dine, Red Grooms, Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, and Robert Whitman were staging happenings, three-dimensional multimedia constructions, environments, and performances.

In response to the influences of Duchamp and Irwin, Moskowitz began creating collages. *Untitled*, 1959 [2], a vertical collage of black-stained canvas torn and glued flat on to lighter canvas, is curiously reminiscent of works by Clyfford Still (fig. 1) in its graphic interlocking of positive and negative space and by Mark Rothko in its subtle handling of nebulous forms within darker areas.

Some time later while in his studio Moskowitz noticed a large window shade covering a skylight some thirty feet above the floor. Carefully removing it from its lofty position, he examined it at close range. "I thought it had a lot of character and history. . . . It had weathered fifty or sixty years. I wanted to show that in some way." He devised a method for using it as an element in a collage by removing the shade from its roller, affixing it to a canvas with rabbit-skin glue, and then painting over it. Thus, his first body of work commenced.

Although this was a beginning for Moskowitz, he was aware that the integration of elements from one's studio into works of art had been recently employed by Johns and Rauschenberg (among many) with dramatic results, the latter using the quilt from his bed as a ground for *Bed*, 1955 (fig. 2). In the catalog for "Sixteen Americans" Rauschenberg stated, "Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two.)"[8] In many ways this remark summarizes the direction several artists, Moskowitz included, would pursue.

Fig. 2 Robert Rauschenberg (born 1925). *Bed*, 1955. Combine painting: oil and pencil on pillows, quilt, sheet, on wood supports, 75¼ x 31½ x 6½ in. Leo Castelli, New York.

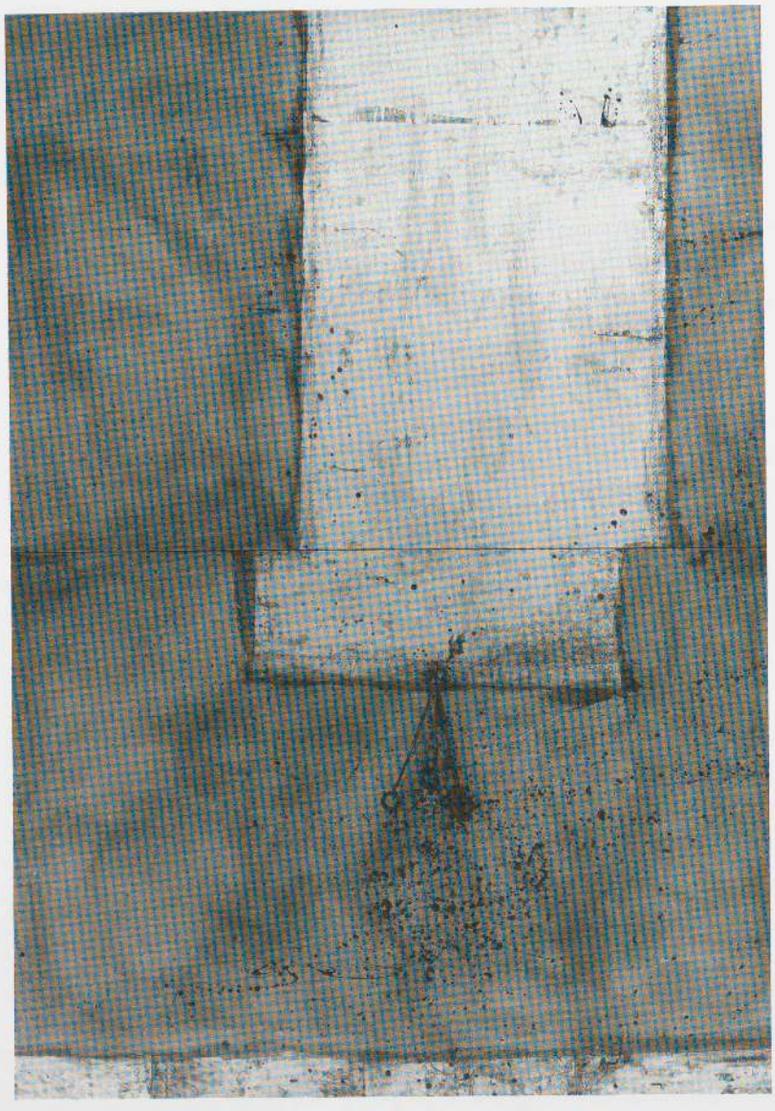

Fig. 3 Robert Moskowitz. *Untitled*, 1960. Oil and collage on canvas, 79 x 54 in. Private collection.

After returning to New York in 1960, he found free-lance work doing technical illustrations and an inexpensive apartment in Brooklyn, which he shared with Lynn Leland, an artist he had met in Gottlieb's class at Pratt. This arrangement proved fortuitous since it was owing to his roommate that he gained the attention of Ivan Karp, director of Castelli Gallery, and later Henry Geldzahler, then a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

When they visited his studio they saw a group of collages of window shades on canvas (fig. 3) related to the one he had done in England. These were, however, much more refined, and their range was considerable. For Moskowitz, the window-shade collages "are very full statements in themselves." Years later the art historian Robert Rosenblum would write, "They seemed to push both the basic language of painting and the fundamentals of image-making to a rock-bottom economy, where suddenly the two worlds were forever fused—a flat painting equalling a flat window shade."[9]

For Moskowitz, the window shades had a definite formal meaning, but now, looking back at the entirety of his work, one sees more clearly several levels of content as well. The selected object brings with it as subject matter its function, as an unrolled screen providing privacy from the world outside the window. At times, the hanging pull cord additionally evokes associations with genitalia while, in some cases, creating a pendulum-like rhythm [3]. Moskowitz agrees that these works have a clear physical quality.

Another element of his later paintings apparent in this first sustained body of work is a preoccupation with surface and incident. Although the natural color of the stained canvas and the beige of the window shade are predominant in these works, sensuous brushwork is also apparent. The creamy yet thin paint is especially visible on the shade. It is significant that the artist has generated a pictorial situation from a common object, which becomes not only worthy of metaphorical meaning but, additionally, the central player in defining the scene. By its place on the canvas it implies a space beyond itself, which it necessarily masks. Thus, a feeling of mystery and closing out of the external world is created. In one deft act the artist emphatically denies an outward sphere, the world through the unseen window covered by the shade, while directly activating the formal dialogue that painting has

Fig. 4 Jasper Johns (born 1930). *Shade*, 1959. Encaustic on canvas with objects, 52 x 39 in. Collection Ludwig, Aachen, West Germany.

engaged since the advent of Renaissance one-point perspective simulating three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane.

It is instructive to compare a work by Jasper Johns done when Moskowitz was in England. In *Shade*, 1959 (fig. 4), Johns characteristically asserts the physicality of the window shade by leaving the roller apparatus intact and attaching the entire object to the canvas. He retains the object's functional identity, activating its previous use to become an aesthetic consideration for the viewer. By contrast, Moskowitz detached this device, thereby maintaining the pictorial integrity of the picture plane. Moskowitz eschews the dimensional reality, dislocating and abstracting it in an overtly formal manner.

In a work of 1962 [4], Moskowitz cut an opening in the canvas so that the wall on which the collaged canvas hangs is exposed within the picture and the reality of that wall behind the object participates on another level of illusion to be read as a space within the pictorial space. The collaged shade, with its fringe-edged bottom (sans cord), appears to cover about two-thirds of the "window." Of course, the opening is no more a window than a painting of a window might be deemed actual, but within the conventions activated by the artist it begs additional questions. Also at hand is the disquieting association with a guillotine.

While this last interpretation may sound altogether too dramatic or pessimistic, consider another collage of 1963 [8]. Whereas some animation was visible in the earlier window-shade collages, owing to the artist's active brushwork and the implied, but frozen, motion of the pull cord, in *Untitled* the stillness and finality of a crumpled paper bag suspended from a projecting wood strip clearly resonates as a hanged figure. "I think of it as a suicide—doing away with what I'd done before." Whether referring to a suicide or lynching, the work is haunted by a depressing and macabre feeling, reinforced by the diagonal brushstrokes placed against the grain, as it were, of the tendency to scan the picture from upper left to lower right. Even to the artist the collage has become "very scary."

A closely related work but different in effect, *Untitled*, 1963 [9], features a large manila envelope, sealed and glued down, hovering above the center on a field of brownish stained canvas. Like the window-shade series, this collage evokes a sense of mystery

concerning containment. The paint drips and splashes around the envelope create a halo effect, and a decided spirituality, at which earlier pieces merely hint, pervades the work. Whereas the crumpled and hanging bag speaks of the body, the envelope alludes to the soul and the secreted part of the self. Earlier works with smaller envelopes seem to refer to the compositions of the Russian Suprematist Kazimir Malevich whose works were expressly conceived as nonobjective spiritual icons with one rectangle floating delicately within another.

Moskowitz's window-shade collages were enthusiastically received. Karp recommended that Castelli visit the artist's studio. In 1961 Castelli began to put single pieces of Moskowitz's work in group shows. At this time William Seitz, associate curator at the Museum of Modern Art, heard about Moskowitz's work and paid him a studio visit. In the fall Moskowitz was included in the important survey "The Art of Assemblage" (organized by Seitz) as one of 142 artists, including his English friend Gwyther Irwin as well as Johns and Rauschenberg. From the exhibition the Modern acquired a work by Moskowitz for their permanent collection, and other collectors viewed his collages in this showcase. His solo exhibition the following year at Castelli's (fig. 5), on the gallery's schedule between Roy Lichtenstein and Frank Stella solo shows, sold out.

Fig. 5 Installation view of Robert Moskowitz's 1962 solo exhibition at Leo Castelli Gallery.

In the spring of 1959 a *Time* magazine article commented:

> Jasper Johns, 29, is the brand-new darling of the art world's bright, brittle avant-garde. A year ago he was practically unknown; since then he has had a sellout show in Manhattan, . . . and has seen three of his paintings bought for Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art.[10]

But for the fact that Moskowitz had sold one work (not three) to the Modern, this description could have been applied to him less than three years later. Moskowitz, however, would not follow Johns's phenomenal pattern and pace of success.

In 1961, while out looking at gallery and museum shows in uptown Manhattan, Moskowitz ran into Henry Geldzahler with Hermine Ford, a young painter studying at Antioch College who was home in New York during a work study quarter. Three years later, Moskowitz and Ford were married. As a result, Moskowitz became part of a new family, one involved in the arts. Ford is the daughter of Jack Tworkov, a prominent first-generation Abstract Expressionist, founding member of the Tenth Street Club, and supporter of younger painters.[11] He, like Moskowitz, was represented by Castelli. Tworkov, who that year began a long-standing association with the Yale University School of Art and Architecture,[12] would begin to play an increasing role in Moskowitz's life, not merely as a loving father-in-law but as an advocate-critic of his work as well as a veteran of the New York art scene.

Around 1963 Moskowitz began to realize that he needed to explore painting in some way that his early success had somehow pre-empted.

> There was something organic—having to do with the body—required to make the window-shade pieces, but I couldn't go further with this method. I was becoming more aware of and involved with psychology and moving away from the physical. I decided to . . . start learning to use paint in another way. . . . I had to go back and learn to discover other things. . . . I don't think [the window-shade pieces] could keep me going without a lot

more experimentation. . . . I was trying to hold on to something of the past but trying to get into something else.

For an artist in his late twenties the welcome response to his work must have been encouraging but difficult. It meant that he could quit his job and rely on sales of his art for an income. It certainly also served to make him more self-conscious, so that he was forced to consider what his new work would mean aesthetically and, perhaps more problematical, how it might affect the texture of his life.

A telling work of 1963 is a small untitled painting of an air-mail envelope [6]. No longer is a collage element present [5]. The artist has instead hand-rendered the motif, integrating the object with its surrounding atmospheric ground. That Moskowitz had considerably reduced his working scale indicates that he either desired a more intimate result or was less certain of his goal. Arguably, the works beginning in 1963 embody his expressed need to develop as a painter.

While pursuing his growing interest in painting as painting, he was also examining European Surrealism and American Modernism. His move toward illusionistic, representational painting did not impress Castelli. He and Moskowitz parted company in 1964.

I don't think that Castelli Gallery was the place for me. . . . Pop art came on the scene and kind of took over. There was no room at that point for me to do what I had to do. So I left—it was a mutual understanding that it was probably better if I wasn't there. It was difficult—it had been kind of a secure position in a way—but I was opening up a lot of doors by leaving.

The years 1963 and 1964 were clearly transitional for Moskowitz, an artist not thirty years old. It was then that he made generic, biomorphic abstract paintings set in interiors.

In one [7], Moskowitz's ideal abstract painting appears tastefully installed over an illusionistically painted couch. In another [10], a diptych, the same painting (or its clone) is located over a fireplace—the left panel vertically disposed, the right panel hanging horizontally. These two small paintings disclose the cynicism and

frustration he felt toward abstract painting or modern art in general.[13]

In a pencil drawing of 1964 [13] Moskowitz's alienation is tangible as he positions the viewer literally on the outside (of a schematically depicted house) looking in. Visible in the window is the upper part of an Empire-style chaise longue. The image dispenses with satire and evokes a haunted sense of emptiness and isolation, not dissimilar to that found in a Giorgio de Chirico painting.

The hold Surrealist art had on his imagination is manifestly clear in a small untitled painting completed in 1964 [11]. The viewer is now placed inside a room. Blue drapes hang vertically from a curved valance. Between the opened curtains is a window through which the nose of a darker blue airplane is faintly visible in the gradient blue sky. Rather than placing an actual window shade in a painterly field, Moskowitz uses the paint to create the illusion of a window, by now a recurrent motif. Revealing something that does not exist but which is imagined is diametrically opposite from creating a mysterious presence with something as banal as a window shade.

This airplane motif reappears in other small works of 1964. While an airplane crashed [15] or cast in ghostly white plaster and entombed [14] may well be associated with the escalating American involvement in Southeast Asia at the time, it can also be regarded as a metaphor for Moskowitz's Icarian fall from success.[14] It might also be construed in Freudian terms as a sexual cognate. Certainly, a deadpan manner describes these works, which reflect, quite literally, a tragedy made small.

At the end of 1963 an event occurred that would profoundly affect the American collective psyche in general and Moskowitz in particular. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, abruptly extinguishing the pervasive optimism kindled in the first few years of the new decade. Deeply moved, Moskowitz created an homage to the vigorous and youthful leader, a small canvas of gradient blues with a diminutive black rocking chair placed sideways on a narrow shelf projecting from the bottom of the canvas [12]. As overtly sentimental as this piece may now appear, it is important as a unique example of Moskowitz incorporating into a work something topical from the world of current events. Moreover, the size of the chair

would prove significant for another body of work Moskowitz was to generate ten years later.

After his move out of the fast track of New York's art world Moskowitz continued to struggle with his need to become a painter. He no longer received a monthly stipend from a gallery and began teaching one day a week in Baltimore as a visiting lecturer at the Maryland Institute of Art. He was troubled, daunted, and undoubtedly bewildered by the events that had transpired since his return from England less than four years earlier.

> I really didn't know that much about painting the way I wanted to paint. Abstract painting . . . taught me a lot about a very organic way of working and letting the paint go its own way. But somehow I needed this other structure in the work. I didn't know how to do that. . . . A good painter might have a good idea, but he knows that the idea is not enough and you know that the paint has a life of its own. The way it goes down and what it's doing can influence what the idea is too.

By 1964 Pop art had fully engaged New York's collectors and curators, if not entirely the critics. Emerging at precisely the same time, however, largely in response to similar sources, was an austere style of art that is today generally referred to as Minimalism. Rather than react to the brilliant syntheses of gestural abstract painting and assemblage of found objects by Johns and Rauschenberg, the Minimalists took their cues from Johns's repeated motifs, Kelly's hard-edge forms (fig. 6), and Stella's logically structured and shaped paintings (fig. 7). There were important precursors to be certain. Both Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt, actively working as painters and polemicists, had mined deeper the spheres pioneered by earlier twentieth-century European practitioners of geometric abstraction as widely varying as Josef Albers, Kazimir Malevich, and Piet Mondrian.

For Moskowitz, the reductive tendency of Minimal art struck a chord, but one that would set him apart from Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Kelly, Stella, and other artists associated with Minimalism. Having worked illusionistically with interiors and windows, in 1965 Moskowitz painted a corner in a room with a window. The composition of the corner itself, the simple conjunction of floor,

Fig. 6 Ellsworth Kelly (born 1923). *New York, N.Y.*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 73¾ x 90 in. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, gift of Seymour H. Knox.

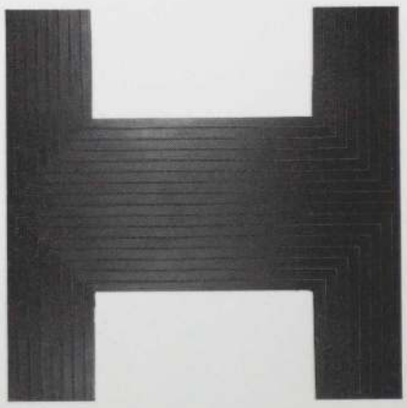

Fig. 7 Frank Stella (born 1936). *Pagosa Springs*, 1960. Copper paint on canvas, 99¼ x 99¼ in. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn.

walls, and ceiling, now riveted his attention. He gradually removed extraneous pictorial information, preferring to "put just enough in so you could see that there was something there. [These paintings] are a description of what isn't—no activity. . . . I was trying to eliminate everything . . . make it something recognizable at the same time." Beginning with a small watercolor [17] and increasing the scale while maintaining the corner with its spare architectural elements, Moskowitz proceeded to make paintings of this motif for the next five years.

In 1964 many of his small paintings had been monochromatic blue, an "optimistic, dream-like color." At first, the range of values in these corner paintings was wide, so that by 1965 the distinction between lights and darks defined the planes rather dramatically [16]. By 1966 the colors were closer in value, effectively disintegrating the scene [18–19]. The model for these works was a series of geometric paintings in monochromatic reds, blues, and blacks begun in the early 1950s by Ad Reinhardt. The architectural nature of the corner had evolved by 1970 to a symmetrical composition so that one could turn the painting upside down and see the same space depicted [22]. The hermetic quality of these paintings was offset by the effect of a suffused, palpable light attained by Moskowitz through his masterful control of relational chromatic and tonal values [21]. The claustrophobic tightness of the space was balanced by the expansive effect of perceiving depth in something that initially presented itself as emphatically flat and devoid of imagery. What could be more fundamental than articulating four principal planes to create the minimal illusion of three dimensions? As curator Judith Wechsler wrote in 1971, "Like minimal artists, Moskowitz does not want to symbolize. He wants to describe—as explicitly as possible—the precarious omnipresence of a space."[15] When viewing a painting by Rothko, for example, one must linger long enough to allow the quiet perceptual shift to transact. To witness "scenes of intimate enclosure"[16] one need commit the requisite amount of time to permit the painting to "warm up" and engage the optical mechanisms that have been consciously used by the artist.

It is tempting to compare the compositions of these paintings with the earlier works made after Moskowitz's first series of

collages. Following the window shades came a number of envelope paintings [6]. The envelope, like the interior of a house and the corner space that was to preoccupy him, is three-dimensional. It is also flat, yet it nevertheless functions as a container and vehicle for a message. It would be difficult to ignore the congruent, but more abstracted, formal relationship of the envelope to the corner, especially considering how Moskowitz progressively flattens the depicted architectural space. The opacity of the space, its windowless, untouched emptiness, keyed to the scale of the human body, makes one realize that these paintings were intuitively conceived as receptacles for the viewer's meditative energy. The paradoxical and ambivalent nature of these works has been described as a "visual *koan*."[17]

Moskowitz has said, "I had been interested in Zen from that period, but I find it difficult to talk about it because I don't feel I know enough about it. The only thing that is clear to me about Zen is sitting to look at yourself—looking inward." In fact, the artist has studied with a Zen master since the late 1960s. "I practiced because I thought it would help me. I became an artist for the same reason I wanted to practice Zen. . . . It's my way of surviving."

The corner paintings represent Moskowitz's attempt to gather himself and his creative energies, to pull in and reorient himself spiritually. He was thus carrying forward an aspect of painting that had been integral to first-generation Abstract Expressionists, in particular the Color Field painters Gottlieb (in his late work), Newman, Reinhardt, Rothko, and Still: the aspiration toward the sublime. Moskowitz would acknowledge Reinhardt's influence saying that he was "building on Reinhardt" in these corner paintings. "I was on a long run and had to slow down. I was pacing myself. . . . I became conscious of what these things mean. I kind of stopped—put it on hold—and listened. Information was starting to come in now." Thus, in 1966 at age thirty Moskowitz was consciously working his way out of the final stages of a catharsis. Making these paintings was for him calming and therapeutic.

Two important factors in his maturation and deepening conviction determined his continuance of this painting series. One was the birth of his son Erik at the end of 1966. Moskowitz was in a position for which he had no positive childhood role model and

therefore was forced to look within himself for the strength and confidence necessary to father successfully. He would also need to earn a greater income to contribute to the support of his family. Fortunately, in addition to his teaching in Maryland, the previous spring he had been hired as an assistant to Walker Evans, who had been contracted by Time-Life Books to photograph a project for their Library of America series. Evans had been friendly with Tworkov, who had asked the noted photographer to teach at Yale.

Moskowitz loaded film, made appointments, and carried lenses and cameras while Evans photographed the architecture, landscape, and people of the Hudson River Valley.[18] Moskowitz studied Evans's way of seeing, what attracted his attention, and his methods of working. "I think he influenced me in his purity . . . . his directness about working; he knew what he wanted to do. We talked a lot about painting and light. . . . Walker was a good teacher. I learned a lot being with him. I learned not to waste time, to put elements together, and to wait for things to be right—patience." Through this experience Moskowitz gained a greater awareness of

Fig. 8 Walker Evans (1903–1975). *Vanderbilt Mansion*, 1967. Photograph. From Seymour Freedgood, *The Gateway States: New Jersey, New York* (New York: Time, 1967), p. 51.

architecture. "Walker was obsessed, almost painfully involved, with columns. He was aware of the column as a psychological metaphor" (fig. 8). This acquired sensitivity would appear with great frequency in Moskowitz's later paintings.

The artist's relationship with his father-in-law must have been particularly close at this time. In 1964 an important retrospective of Tworkov's work was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Tworkov was open-minded, articulate, kind, and generous with his advice. In the mid-1960s a major change is visible in his style, away from the bravura gesture toward a repeated, shorter brushstroke, almost as if he were beating the canvas rhythmically like a drum. Tworkov was willing to assimilate new ideas, resulting in a move toward a more geometric substructure in his painting. At least one work, *Situation L,* 1967–68 (fig. 9), reflects his use of the corner motif, a preoccupation he shared with his son-in-law.

Fig. 9 Jack Tworkov (1900–1982). *Situation L*, 1967–68. Oil on linen, 80 x 70 in. Courtesy Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York.

By 1967–68 Moskowitz, still committed to his corner paintings, had begun to realize the hold the color blue had on him and began using lavender [20]. At this time Moskowitz was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, which carried with it a stipend of several thousand dollars. The prestige of the grant represented a crucial boost of confidence for Moskowitz at a time when few were interested in looking at or buying his work. In 1970 French & Co. gave the artist his first solo gallery exhibition in eight years. Critical response to the corner paintings was disappointing, however, especially after such a sustained hiatus, and sales were few. Reviewers noted that "the application of paint is immaculate and cold"[19] and that the paintings were "creations possessing a powerful luminosity,"[20] turning "ghostliness into dimness."[21]

Moskowitz's first solo museum exhibition was held in 1971 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Hayden Gallery in Cambridge. He used the opportunity to review his work. He continued to shift his palette, now to a blue-gray while maintaining compositional structure [22]. He would eventually weary of the sanctity of the illusionistic corner and begin to permit accidental drips to occur on the paintings. This change was in part motivated by his observation that repeated handling had marred the pristine surfaces of earlier works. Moskowitz chose to embrace the

inevitable and allow incidental marks to remain as a record of his hand [23]. This decision paralleled the emergence of Process Art, a sensibility that held that a work of art should disclose the act of its creation. Anything that did not was considered illusory and deceptive.

The effect of this new aspect of the corner paintings was to polarize the two operative pictorial spaces, contrasting the deeper illusionistic one with the actual flatness of the picture plane, into what one writer would later characterize as "a schizoid situation. . . combining the quiet, unassertive solidity of the basic composition with the acute, eye-catching, surface antics."[22]

For the next year or two Moskowitz explored the spectrum of possibilities for these "violations," as he called them, while moving the blue-gray palette toward black [24]. By 1973 a veil of activity emerges on the surface, with intense daubs of bright colors, intentional smudging, and other deliberate pentimenti, spontaneously generated gestures counterpointed with silkscreen-reproduced marks and forms.

While listening to music one day in 1973, Moskowitz began a doodle that gradually coalesced in the form of a linear chair, like a tubular "modern designer" chair. Recognizing the image's genesis as an organic process, he decided to include it in a painting on which he was working. In the center of a circle inscribed in the upper area of a canvas he carefully painted the spontaneous doodle. His close friend the artist Michael Hurson responded enthusiastically to the work [25], commenting "That's the perfect painting!" Moskowitz was so pleased that his friend liked it that he used the comment as the title, included a parenthetical dedication to Hurson, and presented him with the crucial drawing [28] that had yielded the chair image.

The painting engendered a series of works using the same general format: a taut black corner space, made from latex paint, with a tiny white image in acrylic superimposed at eye level. In this group was one painting featuring a minute image of a duck's head and neck that, by contrast to the pretzel-like chair, is clearly and precisely drawn in a schematic manner. Moskowitz discussed *Untitled,* 1974 [31], as "an image of vulnerability," which inspired him to

"protect" it by painting horizontal white lines at the top and bottom edges of the canvas.

Other paintings from the series include images of a horse, a hat, a hand holding cards, and a generic "happy face," the only image centered in the lower third of the canvas. As the title *Smile in the Lotus Position,* 1974 [30], implies, the artist determined the proper placement for the smiling face while he was seated on the floor. Moskowitz is especially fond of the painting, explaining that for him its concerns are "persistence and energy," which are particularly necessary for the survival of an artist.

At the same time Moskowitz was seeking to create work with greater psychological content via imagery while maintaining a spare and abstract sensibility, another artist was using diminutively scaled imagery. Joel Shapiro's tiny untitled cast-iron chair of 1974 (fig. 10), which was to be placed within a large area on the floor, is analogous to Moskowitz's diminutive tubular chair floating in a black volume in space. Moreover, in 1973, when Moskowitz's imagery evolved out of abstract gesture and hand-drawn lines, which when painted would frequently produce incidental drips that showed their "process," Shapiro had spray-painted over a small wall relief of a roughly constructed horse with a human rider mounted backward (fig. 11). Shapiro said of the work, "When I made [it], it seemed embarrassing. . . . I used paint and color to camouflage the piece, to deny it."[23] In Moskowitz's *Self-Portrait,* 1973 (fig. 12), the minuscule outline of a horse (facing left as does Shapiro's) is enveloped by a cloudy, whitish form that is barely discernible as a human figure. Both works are reluctant self-portraits, disclosing a touching vulnerability in an uncannily similar manner.

Moskowitz's series of black paintings introduced the conjunction of two representational conventions: the illusionistic and the schematic. The series ended when, in 1974, he included in a painting the image of a falling leaf (fig. 13). Later, while looking at that leaf suspended between an unseen tree above and an unseen ground below, defying gravity as only possible in art, Moskowitz realized that this painting was about letting go of the memory of his father and thereafter attached a parenthetical dedication to Louis Moskowitz. The entire series of black paintings from these two

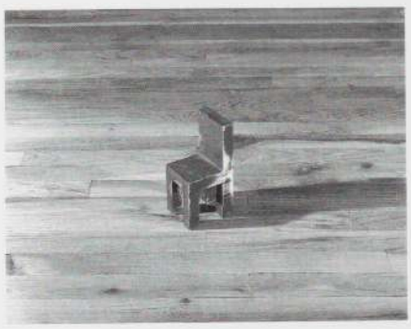

Fig. 10 Joel Shapiro (born 1941). *Untitled (Chair),* 1974. Cast iron, 3 in. high. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Fig. 11 Joel Shapiro (born 1941). *Untitled,* 1973. Enamel on wood, 6½ x 6½ x 1⅛ in. Michael and Nadia Goedhius, London.

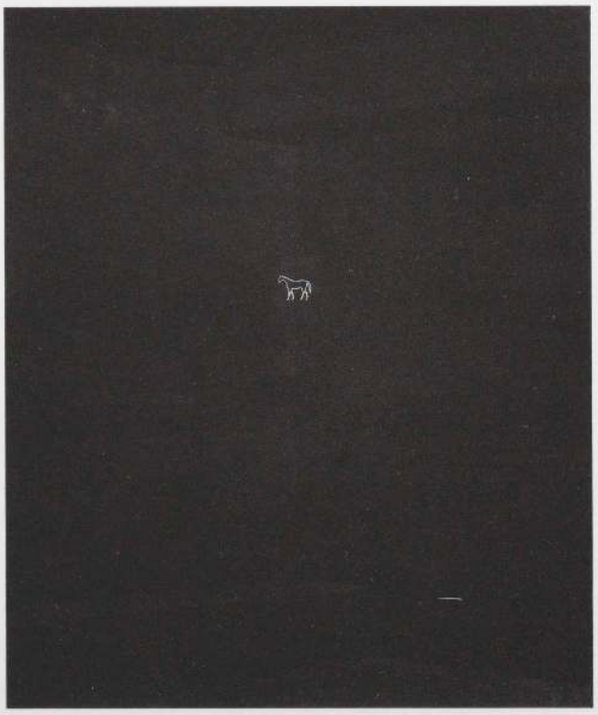

Fig. 12 Robert Moskowitz. *Self-Portrait*, 1973. Latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in. Levi Strauss & Co. Art Collection, San Francisco.

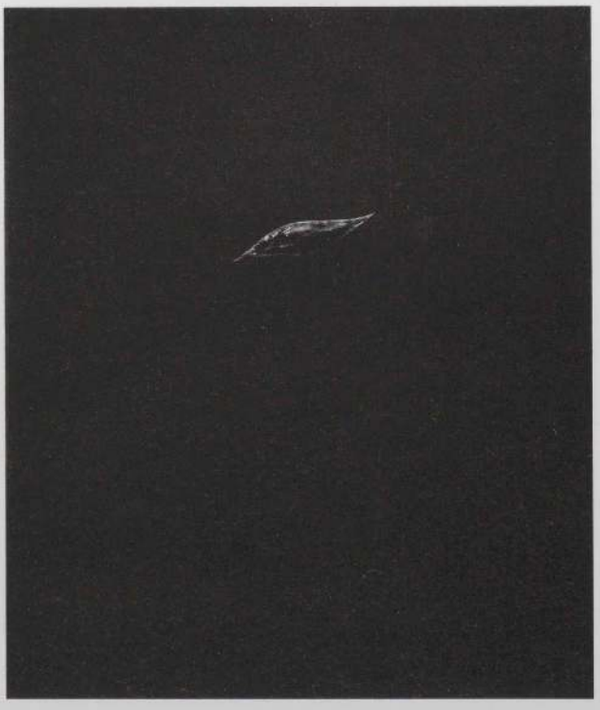

Fig. 13 Robert Moskowitz. *Falling Leaf (for Louis Moskowitz)*, 1974. Latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in. Private collection.

important transitional years was shown by Nancy Hoffman in two solo exhibitions in 1973 and 1974.[24]

In the mid-1970s Moskowitz undertook a new direction that retained elements of his earlier work while introducing an additional dimension. Since about 1967 the artist had been painting on a nearly uniform canvas of ninety by seventy-five inches. While this size and his use of the by now familiar corner motif as a ground on to which schematic imagery would be painted were consistent, a change occurred beginning in late 1974. A key transitional painting is *Skyline*, 1974 [29], which like the earlier *Smile in the Lotus Position*, uses the lowest area of the painting, thereby conscripting the black space above (and behind) it to participate in the illusion as a night sky. Significant for several reasons, the painting combines internal and external architectural spaces and conventions.

Skyline departs from its predecessors because of its flat, silhouetted image. With this painting Moskowitz embarked on a less-staged presentation of the clearly pictographic and opened his art to a grander scope of less overtly personal, more universal, emblematic representation.

This tendency is evident in three paintings made in 1975. As with previous works, Moskowitz's penchant for the abbreviated and generic image continues but now with considerably greater freedom, flair, and even quirkiness. *Cadillac/Chopsticks*, 1975 [32], began because the artist "had always been attracted to Cadillacs," long a symbol of American wealth. By modifying the identifying aspect of a 1960 Cadillac (its exaggerated tail fins) and cropping the image to ensure a sense of movement out of the pictorial space, the artist distilled and defined "an aggressive image."[25] Moskowitz used black not as a field but as a figure and lightened the background to a neutral beige, somewhat reminiscent of his window-shade collages. The black automobile has been referred to as "the Cadillac hearse that ferries American souls to the underworld."[26] For Moskowitz, the car represents "a kind of moving power."[27] A few years after he finished the painting the artist revealed that the Cadillac might represent Hollywood glamour and the car culture of the West Coast, while the chopsticks could allude to a New Yorker's love of Chinese food.

Retirement Painting, 1975 [33], is allied with the black paintings in many respects, with the notable exception of its dominant orange color. As Moskowitz has written, "The references . . . are very specific. The cane is related to the body and the hat is related to the head or spirit. These are two things that I might use when I am very old." Rather than simply use local color, he acknowledges that it "is important in some kind of metaphorical way" and encodes each color with a correspondent meaning: orange is "like a sunset" (presumably a reference to the twilight of one's life), brown "relates to an earth color," yellow is "kind of an energy color."[28]

A third painting of 1975 is *Wrigley Building (Chicago)* [34]. Moskowitz wanted to make a picture reflecting his experiences as a visiting artist teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Michael Hurson recounts:

> I took Bob to the Wrigley Building Restaurant for dinner. Knowing Bob's delight in luxury, I was sure he would find to his liking the restaurant's ambience—the 50's decor in the sparkling Pullman club style of Alfred Hitchcock. . . . I reach over and hand Bob the restaurant's stylish match folder (a tiny white Wrigley Building set at rest on a cherry red background).
>
> "Here." I say, "Welcome to Chicago."[29]

Moskowitz's transposition of a matchbook logo from a restaurant inside a landmark building is sufficiently remote from the actual source as to be witty and perhaps even sardonic. Yet there is another element, centered in that familiar upper eye-level area of the canvas. While most of his paintings from this time do not depict human figures, one critic noted that in this work "we sense an implicit human presence in the pure yellow cross [*sic*] placed at eye level."[30] Moreover, considering the insights he had gleaned about architecture from Walker Evans ten years earlier, one cannot take lightly a remark attributed to Moskowitz: "Chicago is a facade."[31] The relationship of architectural facade to the silhouetted image is important. This concept would later become integral to his approach to pull apart representation and abstraction and then rejoin them.

In *Teapot* and *Sword*, both 1976, and *Piano (for Duke Ellington)*, 1977, Moskowitz further explores the relationships between double

images within a single painting. "*Teapot* [36] is about people, about relationships . . . within yourself and relationships with another person. It is a very idealistic painting."[32] The artist is alluding to how the yellow beam of light connects the brown and blue teapot, signifying "a fifty-fifty relationship in terms of giving and taking." The metallic gold field recalls his earlier silver-aluminum paintings of flying window shades and envelopes.

According to Moskowitz, *Sword* [35] is a painting "about the hero and the home." Characteristically, he had initiated this work rather instinctively. "I just wanted to make a picture of a sword. It didn't work, so I added another sword. After that, I saw it needed the two blue lines on the right, which are the home and have the stability of a Mondrian." His expressed goal was to present two things at once, placed in such a way that it would be difficult for a viewer to take it all in simultaneously. One is forced to look back and forth at one thing and then the other, moving your eyes "like a pendulum," not unlike the implied motion of the pull cord in some of the window-shade collages. The heroic image of the samurai sword appears both rendered and in silhouette, while the blue vertical lines echo each other as formal abstractions of these image-based compositional elements.

Deriving from Moskowitz's recollection of frequenting piano bars as a teenager, *Piano (for Duke Ellington)* [37] reveals an overt sensuality generated by the grace and flow of the large white abstract shape representing the instrument itself while recalling Ellsworth Kelly's hard-edge paintings of 1956 (fig. 14). The attenuated diamond shapes, one inside the other, elicit the image of parting stage curtains or allude to a sexual awakening.

In 1977, while Moskowitz was buying art supplies, he noticed a jar of Prussian blue pigment and was so struck by the beauty of the material that he impulsively bought it. He had no intention of using it—it was simply something he wished to have in his studio because he took pleasure in looking at it.

Months later, in a moment of desperation while working on a new painting, he came across the pigment and decided to use it. The result was *Swimmer*, 1977 [38], a pivotal work that masterfully summarizes his earlier formal experimentation while profoundly

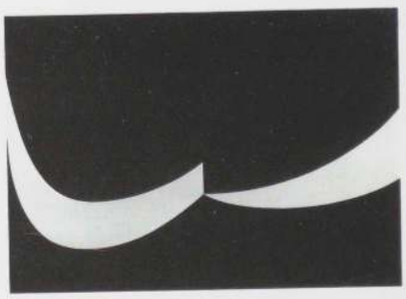

Fig. 14 Ellsworth Kelly (born 1923). *Atlantic*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 80 x 114 in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

advancing the content level of his art. Almost twenty years earlier, Jack Tworkov had written, "The task of painting is to discover and squeeze out, from all the forces streaming through it, all that is not necessary."[33] It is as if following his corner paintings Moskowitz had fully learned this dictum.

Like the untitled black painting with the duck's head and neck, this work creates a sense of a whole with minimal descriptive information. Moskowitz manages to suggest the invisible part of the figure and activate the flat pictorial field as a depth that is no longer illusory. Both the duck painting and *Swimmer* involve water and the figure's submersion therein, but the surface quality represents a marked change.

As his teacher Gottlieb once wrote, "Paint quality is meaningless if it does not express quality of feeling."[34] This work is significant for Moskowitz because of the way he painted it and how it departed from his previous endeavors. It was made "with my hands and with pure pigment, and after three-quarters of the canvas was covered I realized it was like rubbing your hands on sandpaper and it was painful. I decided to go on and finish it." The result of his efforts is remarkably beautiful. The surface is physically and visually charged. The artist expresses his need to persevere while attempting to sustain a direction by motivating and mobilizing himself through an arena of resistance and difficulty. More than any other painting, *Swimmer* conveys a feeling of the many currents and dangers that place an individual at risk. Like the duck painting, this work is particularly concerned with vulnerability, with the will an artist requires for the challenges he faces. "I think of the *Swimmer* as like being in New York City—trying to survive."[35] The painting both depicts and embodies the difficulties of keeping one's head above water and staying afloat.

One technique that had developed during the three years since 1974, when he painted *Skyline*, is his use of the silhouetted image. The swimmer is not identifiable as either male or female and, because of Moskowitz's extensive examination of photographs of swimmers, is equivocal. "There is an ambiguity in the image," he wrote, "a balance between swimming and drowning, and a balance between a realistic thing and an abstract thing. It has double elements, which I find interesting."[36]

Others apparently began to think Moskowitz's work was interesting as well, for in 1975 he was awarded an artist's fellowship by a peer review panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant not only lifted his spirits but enabled him to spend less time driving a taxi and more hours working in his studio. Another equally important opportunity that presented itself was a solo show at the Clocktower, an alternative exhibition space run by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, located a block from his studio and home.

While he managed to sell a couple of paintings, the most fortuitous result of the exhibition was that at the opening Richard Marshall, a young curator from the Whitney, approached Moskowitz to convey his enthusiasm for his work. During a studio visit soon thereafter Marshall invited Moskowitz to participate in "New Image Painting," an exhibition that would feature ten young artists who, in widely varying styles and methods, combined a strong feeling for the image with a healthy respect for abstraction.[37] Although Moskowitz was not among the artists who fared especially well financially from the show's critical acclaim, he nevertheless held the distinction of being senior among the artists represented and had the clearest link to first-generation Abstract Expressionist painters.

Included in "New Image Painting" was Moskowitz's most recent painting, completed after Marshall had selected him for the show and, coincidentally, the one that broke with earlier work in an important way. *Skyscraper II*, 1978 [40], is a vertical diptych representing the World Trade Center's twin towers. Not only were the slender dimensions of the painting a departure from what had become his standard size (each panel measures 120 x 28¾ inches), but the image was not mysterious, or idiosyncratic, or a small figure immersed in a consuming field. The minimal tower forms echo the tight proportions of the two canvases and occupy most of the pictorial space. Like the earlier corner paintings, it is representational while maintaining an austere minimalist illusion. The spare planar abstraction depicts a world-famous architectural monument. Having watched the construction of these towers from the roof of his building in lower Manhattan, Moskowitz decided to paint them with an attitude not dissimilar from Georges Seurat and

Fig. 15 View from Moskowitz's studio window (looking north).

other pioneers of modern art in Paris who adopted the Eiffel Tower as an icon of modernity and a suitable motif for painting.

Moskowitz turned to the Empire State Building for his next painting [39]. Perhaps it was his feeling that the old had been superseded by the new that prompted him to treat the older building as a subject and would compel him to continue to do so periodically over the next decade [45–46 and 62]. A comment he made about his participation in the "New Image Painting" exhibition may yield greater insight into Moskowitz's commitment to this subject. He remarked that "['New Image Painting'] took me out into the world." While this statement most obviously refers to the wider public exposure the exhibition gave to his recent paintings, it also implies a new attitude toward subject matter. Not only did the painting of buildings address a greater legibility and, therefore, increased accessibility to his work, but for the first time his art also directly engaged the exterior world. Only *Skyline* had done this in a similar way, but now a more singular representation and identification occurs. Moskowitz may have associated the completion of the Empire State Building in the mid-1930s with his own entry into the world at about the same time. Further, he can regard the external world and its now-eclipsed emblem of progress and modernity from the insulation of his inner sanctuary, the artist's studio (fig. 15). Hence, his going "out into the world" must be assessed with regard to his newly defined subject matter and, most important, the nature of how it is treated.

In *Empire State* the profile of the building is cropped and the space is extremely flattened, as if it were conceived while being viewed through a telescope or high-magnification lens. This photographic reference recalls Moskowitz's tutorial experience while working with Walker Evans as he photographed buildings in upstate New York. The stylization of an already stylized building enables Moskowitz to push the representational aspects of his painting toward an abstract rendering. He virtually reconstructs the planar patterns of the skyscraper. He thus creates a formal composition that is clear yet, because of his subtle handling of paint, introduces both mystery and beauty, so enhancing the graphic syncopation of red and white punctuating the pervasive slate gray night sky.

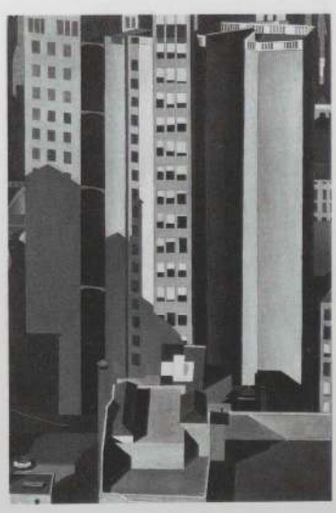

Fig. 16 Charles Sheeler (1883–1965). *Skyscrapers*, 1922. Oil on canvas, 20 x 13 in. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

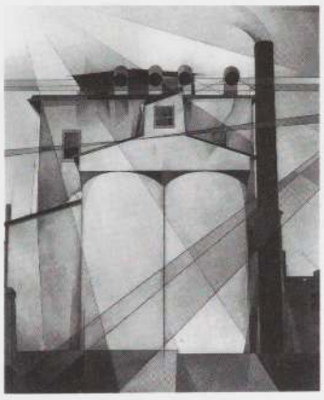

Fig. 17 Charles Demuth (1883–1935). *My Egypt*, 1927. Oil on composition board, 35¾ x 30 in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase with funds from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.

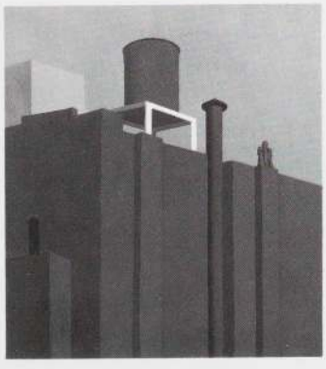

Fig. 18 Ralston Crawford (1906–1978). *Vertical Building*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 40⅛ x 34⅛ in. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Arthur W. Barney Bequest Fund Purchase.

With these two paintings Moskowitz, in his early forties, begins his mature oeuvre. Assimilating works of the American Modernists Ralston Crawford, Charles Demuth, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Charles Sheeler (fig. 16), Moskowitz was now preoccupied with vertical architectural elements. *Stack*, 1979 [43], like *Skyscraper II*, is a starkly simple painting with a long, dark, vertical column enclosed within a narrowly confined field. The black smokestack dramatically contrasts with the sensually brushed, painterly blue background. This image carries an undeniably phallic thrust, which was merely suggested in earlier works. Moskowitz may have been inspired by similar smokestacks in Demuth's *My Egypt*, 1927 (fig. 17), or various works by Crawford (fig. 18), or perhaps he was recalling Evans's obsession with columns. Regardless of its actual source, the black smokestack is ominous; the composition connotes violation, perhaps alluding to the corrosive effects of air pollution. Moskowitz has also described this painting as "an homage to the workers of the world." In either case *Stack* began a related sequence of dark vertical paintings.

Eddystone, 1979 [41], is one of Moskowitz's most profound later paintings. Like *Stack*, it is overtly phallic and probably influenced by the work of a pioneer of American Modernism, in this instance Georgia O'Keeffe's *Radiator Building—Night, New York*, 1927 (fig. 19). It is considerably more complex, however. On first encounter, only the window-like grid of six white rectangles near the top of the uniformly black vertical painting is seen. Gradually, the faint outline of a lighthouse—the beacon of which provides a distant light, not only for ships at sea but also for viewers in a gallery—is perceived. As in Reinhardt's black-on-black paintings, this effect is the result of two closely valued areas of black in direct proximity to each other. Because of this distinctly delayed perceptual shift, the painting achieves a fusion that is significant for Moskowitz.

Initially, the identification of the window effectively places the viewer (and, by extension, the artist) inside an undefined black void. If one could peer through the small window of light at the top, the external world of appearance and the light source might be discernible. After our eyes have adjusted to the surrounding darkness and reassessed it as an exterior nocturnal scene, we realize that the artist has placed us outside in the world and the beacon

becomes a guiding light emanating from the distant lighthouse. In one painting Moskowitz has employed the window metaphor to conflate and sequentially activate the separation between interior and exterior realms of perception, an idea he had used in his early window-shade collages. Moreover, by formally rendering the cylindrical tower of the lighthouse as schematically flat and reinforcing this effect through the clearly two-dimensional gesso white windows, exposing the painting's undersurface, he has managed to find a formal equivalent to the perceptual flip-flop just described.[38]

The third work in this important series of dark architectural paintings of 1979 is *Flatiron (for Lily)* [42], dedicated to Moskowitz's mother after her death. The painting depicts an architectural landmark located at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.[39] The cropping of the canvas creates an optical torque. The top of the building is shown at an angle, while the lower edge appears frontal. Even more engaging, however, is the surface treatment of the painted area within the outline of the building.

The inspiration for this work is undoubtedly Edward Steichen's well-known print originally photographed in 1904 (fig. 20). Moskowitz's sensibility has affinities with Steichen's romanticized sfumato. The atmospheric mist achieved by Steichen in the darkroom is painterly in effect, so that an artist preoccupied by surface and interested in abstract photographic depictions of architecture could not have found a better source. Moskowitz would again find Steichen an inspiration for one of his later paintings, *Thinker*, 1982 [53].

Following these three key works, Moskowitz sought to move away from the vertical orientation as well as his involvement with visible reality as a motif for his work. Late in 1979 he began preparing a monumental (96 x 228¾ inches) horizontal triptych of a tidal wave. Try as he might, he was unable to find a photograph of a tidal wave that was neither so remote that its visual impact was dissipated nor taken with such a powerful telephoto lens that all definition was lost. Despite his inability to locate a suitable image, he pursued the concept to the point of drawing and painting the outline of a wave on a giant tripartite canvas. His goal was to make a

Fig. 19 Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986). *Radiator Building—Night, New York*, 1927. Oil on canvas, 48 x 30 in. The Carl Van Vechten Gallery of Fine Art, Fisk University, Nashville, Alfred Stieglitz Collection.

Fig. 20 Edward J. Steichen (1879–1973). *The Flatiron*, 1909 print from 1904 negative. Gum-bichromate over gelatine silver print, 18 13/16 x 15 1/8 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Alfred Stieglitz Collection.

painting of what one might see just before being overwhelmed by the wave. After struggling many months to get the painting moving in a promising direction, he abandoned it.

Moskowitz's desire to capture a feeling of immensity, the sublime, led him back to a concept first explored several years earlier in a fairly cursory manner in *Cadillac/Chopsticks*. He had never made a painting so emphatically horizontal before, and because he had rejected the tidal-wave idea he was left with the peculiar challenge of finding an appropriate image for an unusually large format. He began on the right of the canvas, painting an abbreviated close-up of *Empire State*. Intrigued by the convention of a map on a page having the cardinal directions ascribed to the top, bottom, and sides, he then realized that this tremendous canvas was large enough to convey the expanse of the United States.

Big Picture, 1979–80 [44], was done "looking at America and is like my flag in a way." Black dominates the canvas, perhaps summarizing his previous ventures into the shadowy, seductive sphere of darkness. From the lower left emanates one of two crisscrossing flat planes of white, with the second coming from the center lower edge. For Moskowitz, the "eastern part of *Big Picture* is heavy with European roots and is abstract like a Mondrian." For "the West" he began with a swimming pool, which did not quite work. "The picture kept getting darker and darker. The right side looked like a war zone. I remember the klieg lights from World War II blackouts, and then I realized that they also had to do with Hollywood." Moskowitz considers *Big Picture* "the most abstract of my works of this time."

The artist's experience with this painting left him undaunted by the recently adopted large horizontal format. *The Mittens*, 1980–81 [47], is significantly smaller than *Big Picture*, but a twelve-foot canvas is by no means little. The title refers to two craggy buttes in Monument Valley, which Moskowitz had recently visited. The artist, in treating the American landscape for the first time as a painter, hoped to convey his newly acquired feeling for the heroic scope of the great southwestern topography with all its mystical overtones. He wanted at the same time, however, to retain an intimacy about the painting and did so by alluding to the peculiar natural formation as two hands "reaching for each other across this

vast space." As in many of his previous paintings, Moskowitz deliberately obfuscates the figurative reference. His instructions for hanging the painting only inches from the floor further enhance the work's mystery.

Returning to a predominantly vertical orientation, Moskowitz completed a series of large-scale pastel drawings of an isolated windmill. Early versions employ multiple sheets of paper. As he refined the visual motif the proportions condensed. Clearly reminiscent of some of Mondrian's early representational work (fig. 21), the windmill is a succinct metaphor for the artist who acts to convert the invisible forces that propel him into a visible, if not tangible, product.

Fig. 21 Piet Mondrian (1872–1944). *Mill in Evening*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 40½ x 33⅞ in. Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Netherlands.

At about this time Moskowitz's drawing style evolved into a painted treatment of the same motif with a distinctly different tactile effect. Whereas the painting *Black Mill*, 1981 [49], has an opacity and weight that is uniquely transmuted by pigment, the drawing *Red Mill*, 1981 [50], is altogether different. The artist's hand is repeatedly visible as traces of fingerprints and smudges, which, like the drips and marks in his earlier black corner paintings, reveal the process by which they were generated. The greater legibility of the drawing creates a clearer and more immediate figurative association. The painting, however, partakes of what has become Moskowitz's masterful and elegant surfaces, which assert their content to a maximum degree.

The artist has made a practice of repeating motifs from paintings by drawing similarly scaled versions. Like Claude Monet's repeated treatment of Rouen Cathedral at different times of the day to capture the same motif under varying light conditions, Moskowitz attempts to re-examine a particular image by using different media and psychological perspectives, as in the vertical landscape *The Seventh Sister*, 1981 [51]. The black and white pastel drawing exhibits a similar conflation of up and down apparent in some of Moskowitz's corner paintings. Perhaps more significant, this drawing is clearly connected to the artist's abstract collage of 1959 in his penchant for a high-contrast, negative-positive spatial interlocking, now fully grounded in the world of nature and landscape.

An important development in Moskowitz's art begins to appear around 1982 with a series of paintings and drawings as simplified,

Fig. 22 Edward J. Steichen (1879–1973). *Rodin—The Thinker*, 1905. Plate 10 from *Special Supplement* to *Camera Work* (April 1906). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Alfred Stieglitz Collection.

flat, schematic silhouettes. The subject for this group is well-known sculpture by artists he greatly admires. In each instance Moskowitz has selected sculptors to honor and not in any way belittle or diminish their achievements. One of the first is Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker*, 1879–89. A miniature plaster replica of the famous bronze prompted Moskowitz to consider that most people become familiar with works of art through facsimiles or photographic reproductions. He found that we naturally misconstrue and thereby abstract sculpture because its three dimensions are unavoidably distorted and misrepresented on a flat surface. Discovering that Rodin had his friend Steichen portray him in silhouette with *The Thinker* (fig. 22), Moskowitz began a series of imaginative variations on the theme.

He made large and small drawings as well as a painting of the subject [53–54]. Moskowitz reduced the barely recognizable image to a hard-edge outline. By the progressive elimination of dimension and detail, the sculptural form has been permutated from Rodin's massive hulking figure to Steichen's dramatically enshrouded image to Moskowitz's iconic emblem. It becomes, rather than a work of art, its vestigial shadow and reads not as an experience of form in space but as a sign. "It is like someone might see this and come screeching to a halt. 'Think about it, will you?' the sign says. Or perhaps the opposite: 'Don't think!' Like a *koan*, the figure is thinking so hard that it is beyond thinking." Certainly, the artist is making a statement about self-consciousness while also "reinventing the form. It definitely uses that known image and says, 'What does it mean now?'"

Other sculptors whose work Moskowitz has treated include Constantin Brancusi, whose *Bird in Space*, 1923–40, itself was executed in a variety of materials [52]; Myron, where the iconic Discus Thrower is relegated from heroic Olympian athlete to working-class bowler [55 and 59], a witty play on the dimensional shift from the sculpture's flat discus in three dimensions transformed to the spherical bowling ball on the plane of the canvas or paper; and Alberto Giacometti [56 and 60]. In this last pair the irony Moskowitz attaches to his works is that Giacometti himself agonized over sculptures like *Elongated Figure*, 1949 (fig. 23), subjecting them to a ruthless attrition comparable to what he believed human beings had to endure. In the white pastel drawing

on black paper Moskowitz appears to have run over the attenuated, wraith-like figure with a steamroller, violently flattening it out to become a cartoon. As the Giacometti scholar Michael Brenson wrote in reviewing Moskowitz's show at Blum Helman Gallery in 1986:

> One of [Moskowitz's] goals is to reach a level of obsession, association and dream that can reveal why these objects are so loaded with meaning.
>
> The "Giacometti Pieces" suggest how Moskowitz's idiosyncratic approach can lead to a merging of subject and object. . . . One effect of making both the figurine and the space around it black is to identify the absoluteness of Giacometti with the absoluteness of Ad Reinhardt. The thin zip of the figurine in space reminds us of the link between Giacometti and another artist Moskowitz admires, Barnett Newman.
>
> The black on black also gives the Giacometti a sense more of absence than of presence, which is appropriate to an artist concerned with the relation between being and nothingness. In the pastel, the white figurine becomes, in effect, a hole in space. This, too, is appropriate to a sculptor who sometimes seems to have modeled not the human figure but the space around it.[40]

Perhaps because of the thin, vertical, restricted figurative aspect that Giacometti presents, Moskowitz again took up the subject of the World Trade Center's twin towers in *Skyscraper III*, 1984 [58]. By comparison with the earlier versions, he now heats up the background to almost apocalyptic temperatures. Indeed, whereas in each of these diptychs the tendency to regard a figurative element is reinforced by the artist (he thinks of these buildings as a human couple), now they have a clearly totemic registration, their constructed blackness all the more visible in contrast to the scraped and worn red background. Whatever minimal austerity had been important in *Skyscraper II* is here more than compensated for with Moskowitz's purposeful collision of color and intensely worked surface textures.

If the Giacometti pieces concern human existential questions by "a merging of subject and object," then *Iceberg*, 1984 [57],

Fig. 23 Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966). *Elongated Figure*, 1949. Bronze, 65 in. high. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of Robert Sarnoff.

Fig. 24 Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840). *The Sea of Ice (The Failed North Pole Expedition; The Wrecked "Hope")*, 1823–24. Oil on canvas, 38⅛ x 50 in. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

Fig. 25 Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900). *The Icebergs*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 64½ x 112⅜ in. Dallas Museum of Art, given anonymously.

Moskowitz's third major horizontal landscape painting, is an epic essay on the topic in conscious relation to the grand Romantic tradition of the sublime. This painting is related to works of the same subject by two important nineteenth-century painters: Caspar David Friedrich of Germany (fig. 24) and the American Frederic Edwin Church (fig. 25). While no human figures are clearly visible in Moskowitz's version, the artist has acknowledged the iceberg's figurative evocation.[41] The stark white, flat craggy form awkwardly sitting off-center somehow embodies the human presence and, like the iceberg it represents, is deceptively deep and imperceptibly prodigious. Its cartoon-like character, primarily attributable to its "feet," disarms the viewer into responding warmly to an otherwise chilling subject. Like so many of Moskowitz's works, this is a slow painting to activate. After a few minutes of hypnotic staring, the viewer sees the space demarcated by the thin silver line of latex paint separating the sky from the water at the horizon and begins to read it atmospherically.

For Moskowitz, a chance to work with large areas of black paint would normally be a welcome opportunity to create a sensuous traction of ineffable elegance and subtle, matte-textured mystery. In this instance, however, unlike any of his other paintings, the artist has laid down a hard black sheen, slippery, obdurate, and remote. The unmodulated quality of the expanse is absolute and silent. The white personage of the iceberg tip sits forever still, animated only by its reluctantly friendly disposition, and somehow appears, by strange contrast to the impervious veneer of the black "water," as a warm source of light. With this black-and-white dialectic, *Iceberg* represents the artist's ultimate expression about the individual's place in the world as a jagged and often lonely island embedded in the consuming solidity of the sea of death. The hidden dimensions of life are, however, potentially great and presumably deep. One need only delve inside oneself to discover the shape of things unseen.

One night Moskowitz went to see a film based on W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*, a novel about personal heroism amid the devastation of World War I. Moskowitz was so impressed with the dramatic performance of the young comedian Bill Murray that he dedicated his next painting to him and used Maugham's title

[61]. At the lower edge of the horizontal canvas a ravaged landscape is barely discernible. Broken and charred branches are set against a blazing red field that has an almost leaden underpainting. The color becomes a rich, viscous fluid oozing down over the landscape, like congealing hot lava. Yet the tactile allure of the paint and its brilliant chroma attract the viewer's attention.

Obliquely related to this painting is *Red Cross*, 1986 [63], a pastel drawing about three feet square. One's first response might be that Moskowitz is again relating a found image from the world of logos to the dialectic concerning representation and abstraction. Indeed, this is the case, but for reasons one could never extrapolate. In the film *The Razor's Edge* the central character portrayed by Murray drives a Red Cross truck to France. Because of the impact the film had on Moskowitz, the image of the red cross lingered deeply. So, while future art historians might work to evaluate whether Moskowitz was appropriating Ilya Chashnik, Malevich, or Reinhardt, in this particular instance the influence is actually Murray-esque.

That drawing yielded a series of works based on the cross motif.[42] Subsequently, Moskowitz made a similarly sized painting and then moved on to delete color, creating *Red Cross (White on Black)*, 1987 [67]. It is difficult to discern in a reproduction how Moskowitz has worked over the white area of the cross, rubbing and abrading its toothy weave so that the red underpainting pushes through the surface ever so slightly, creating the effect of a dirtied and bruised plaster cast. The removal of color from the original motif adds a sense of memory, as if this is a painting of a photographic negative.

That same year Moskowitz painted three works that attest to his continued restlessness as an artist and need to move on and grow into new areas. *The Red and the Black* [66] is one of his most enigmatic works. Its episodic nature is suggested by the presence of three birds—a red cardinal in the lower left and a pair of black birds in the lower right—perched on a branch as if something is about to happen. This curiously contrived composition, however, creates a sense of stasis, as if these are decoys symbolizing the elusive, the very personal. A picture of birds would conjure up springtime, but this is a bleak and barren non-place, existing only in the sphere of meaning. A rapport between the black bird at the right and the

cardinal is established because they face each other in profile, while the other black bird appears distracted and unaware of this connection. The painting is like an illustration of a moral tale but with no text. It is strangely quiet, almost mute. Clearly, the artist is again interested in the intricate and delicate balances that exist in interpersonal relationships. The impact of Moskowitz's two visits to Japan over the previous few years begins to disclose itself.

Two paintings begun at approximately the same time and related most obviously in their use of white circles, *Moon Dog (for Helen)* [65] and *Landscape* [64], show Moskowitz's two sides: beguilingly enigmatic, yet simple and direct, and overtly romantic, while masterfully in command of his medium. *Moon Dog (for Helen)* was completed while the old family dog was dying.[43] Like the white cross in the painting of 1987, the dog's presence is mediated by its ghostly white-and-black form. It appears almost photographic in the screen-dot-like surface treatment. By contrast, the moon is pristine and crisp, painted as the ideal celestial orb. The incantation this painting intones manifestly revolves around the transience of life, its white-gray dissolving into the inviting quietude of the luscious black night, while the luminous moon in its circular perfection hovers above, safely locked in its distant orbit. Moskowitz has again realized another way to define, and thereby celebrate, the inevitable cycle of life and death.

Landscape, like *The Seventh Sister*, defies the convention of its genre by its vertical orientation. But because of its other disjunctive aspects (most notably, an orange palette that is cool, not warm), the painting is as hallucinatory as it is depictive. The sinewy branch emanating from the center of the canvas's left edge and meandering tortuously toward the upper right has a Japanese feeling, disregarding gravitational rules and Western pictorial traditions. Although the brushy canvas surface is not thickly painted, it nevertheless exploits the same sensual and tactile appeal as in the earlier work *Stack*. The disk, like a hole punched through the canvas, is singed with orange traces and emits a white heat seemingly from behind (or inside) the painting, like a furnace fully stoked or the earth's molten core. It would be difficult to read this painting as a sunset, but it is confoundingly close to that. Perhaps it is an inversion of one of Gottlieb's bursts from thirty years earlier (fig.

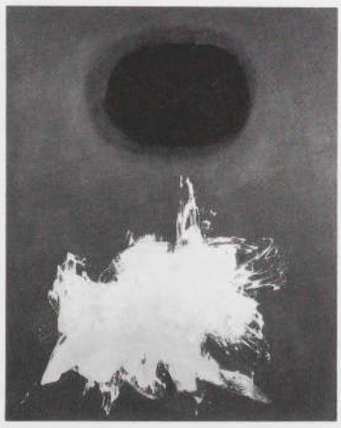

Fig. 26 Adolph Gottlieb (1903–1974). *Spray*, 1959. Oil on canvas, 90¼ x 72⅜ in. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation.

26). Moskowitz has recently said of his old teacher, "Even to this day he is part of my involvement with severe horizons."

Over a period of thirty years the work of few painters has evolved in a way that persuades us that the artist has increasingly grown in depth of vision. Robert Moskowitz has learned to rely only on his understanding of how he, as an artist, must connect with his intuitive self while taking the risks necessary to his endeavor. Because of his self-effacing character, love of adventure, and remarkably generous spirit, Moskowitz has earned a reputation among his peers as a "painter's painter."

While his achievements will be measured across time and place, Moskowitz tenaciously pursues one issue fundamental to painting in this century—the perennial relation between abstraction and representation. In his unique way, Moskowitz has polarized these ideas, pulling them sufficiently apart so that each has overlapped the other, fused again in an original visual language that he has successfully employed to express his inner-most feelings and define his insights about creativity, vitality, and the ever-unknown realm of the imagination.

NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from a series of tape-recorded conversations between the artist and author.

2. Adolph Gottlieb, artist's statement in *The New American Painting* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), p. 36.

3. Robert Rauschenberg had shown in solo exhibitions at the Betty Parsons Gallery (1951), Stable Gallery (1953), and Egon Gallery (1955). Jasper Johns's first solo exhibition was with Castelli (1958).

4. Irving Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 292.

5. Barbara Haskell, *Blam! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance, 1958–1963* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984), p. 13.

6. Moskowitz originally planned to fly to London and then spend most of his time on the Continent visiting Rome, Florence, and Paris. He elected to stay in London largely

because he was able to purchase his studio for a mere eighty dollars.

7. "This Is Tomorrow," an exhibition usually cited as announcing Pop art in England, occurred in 1956 at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, although the Independent Group (an informal organization of artists, architects, and writers who fostered British Pop) began meeting in 1952 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The important "Collages and Objects" exhibition was held there in 1954. See Lawrence Alloway, "The Development of British Pop," in Lucy Lippard, *Pop Art* (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 27–67.

8. Rauschenberg, artist's statement in Dorothy C. Miller, ed., *Sixteen Americans* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), p. 58.

9. Robert Rosenblum, untitled essay in *Moskowitz* 1983, p. 5.

10. "His Heart Belongs to Dada," *Time* 73 (May 4, 1959): 58.

11. Jack Tworkov taught at Black Mountain College in 1952 and there became acquainted with Rauschenberg. During the 1950s Tworkov was supportive of both Rauschenberg and Johns.

12. Tworkov began teaching at Yale University in 1961 as a visiting artist. In 1963 he was appointed chairman of the art department and named William C. Leffingwell Professor of Painting.

13. Moskowitz has mentioned that the retrospective of Arp's work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1958 created a wider public consciousness of abstract painting, making Arp's biomorphic style the convention to the point of cliché.

14. In the second version of this work, a similar white plaster cast is contained in a clear, blue plastic box on a bed of cotton.

15. Judith Wechsler, untitled essay in *Moskowitz* 1971, unpaginated.

16. Ibid.

17. Carlson 1983, p. 144.

18. See Seymour Freedgood, *The Gateway States: New Jersey, New York* (New York: Time, 1967).

19. Pincus-Witten 1970, p. 84.

20. Fraser 1970, p. 61.

21. Ratcliff 1970, p. 141.

22. Lubell 1974, pp. 60–61.

23. Joel Shapiro, in Ned Rifkin, *Directions—Joel Shapiro: Painted Wood* (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1987), unpaginated.

24. Nancy Hoffman had shown his work in a solo exhibition in 1970 when she was director of French & Co.

25. Moskowitz, artist's statement in Marshall 1978, p. 50.

26. Bofferding 1981, p. 13.

27. Moskowitz, artist's statement in Marshall 1978, p. 50.

28. Ibid.

29. Hurson 1980, p. 6.

30. Adams 1981, p. 169.

31. Quoted in Hurson 1980, p. 6.

32. Moskowitz, artist's statement in Marshall 1978, p. 50.

33. Tworkov, artist's statement in *New American Painting*, p. 84

34. Gottlieb, artist's statement in *New American Painting*, p. 36.

35. Moskowitz, artist's statement in Marshall 1978, p. 50.

36. Ibid.

37. The other artists were Nicholas Africano, Jennifer Bartlett, Denise Green, Michael Hurson, Neil Jenney, Lois Lane, Susan Rothenberg, David True, and Joe Zucker.

38. See Silverthorne 1981, pp. 84–85.

39. Like the Flatiron Building, Lily Moskowitz came into the world in the first decade of the twentieth century. While working on *Flatiron*, Moskowitz did not associate the building with his mother. He was aware, however, that the black-on-black aspect of this work evoked a sense of death.

40. Brenson 1986, sec. C, p. 32.

41. See Katy Kline, untitled essay in *Moskowitz* 1985, unpaginated.

42. In *Red Cross* Moskowitz for the first time made a full-scale pastel drawing before the painting was completed. Until that point, he had preferred making the pastels after the paintings were finished.

43. The painting was also partially inspired by a Christmas card Moskowitz and his family received from Helen Tworkov, the artist's sister-in-law, which depicted a dog and the moon in a potato-cut she had printed by hand. While Moskowitz forgot about the card, the image clearly had made a deep impression.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT MOSKOWITZ

Linda Shearer

Robert Moskowitz was interviewed on several occasions by Linda Shearer, curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in the spring of 1988. The following is a compilation of those interviews.

Linda Shearer: The first of your paintings that I saw, in late 1969–early 1970, were the monochromatic, so-called corner paintings [18–22]. By then you had been working seriously as an artist for about ten years.

Robert Moskowitz: I began those paintings around 1965 when I was interested in images of furniture and architecture. I had gotten a little book on interior decorating—how to decorate your house—that I found fascinating. But what really intrigued me was the drawing of the room where you put the furniture. The room was incredibly pure because the furniture was what was important. And so I started drawing a room related to the room in the book. Then I began to refine it, taking out things like the columns. I ended up with an almost symmetrical room [22]; it was like looking at a corner, with nothing in it.

LS: What was the scale?

RM: At first, the paintings were different sizes, but all small [16–17], some eight by nine inches. I was working in oil; I decided they had to be bigger and more physical. I tried making paintings sixty-

nine by fifty inches, but the oil paint didn't work on that scale. So I used acrylic on the same size canvas, but that wasn't large enough. Then I went to ninety by seventy-five inches, and that became the size I worked with for a very long time. It's related to the body, with a little extra room. It was also the largest size painting I could get out of my studio without folding it. So I guess it's also related to a door, getting out of a door.

LS: How long did you work on the corner paintings?

RM: Nearly five years, up until around 1970. I would make a drawing first, a schematic of what I wanted to do, blow it up and transfer it on to the canvas. Those line drawings let me really work on the painting. The paintings themselves were just atmosphere with the paint laid on and built up closely. I worked mainly with blues and violets. I always thought the blue was physical and the violet more cerebral.

LS: I feel a special attachment to those paintings because they were the first of your work I had seen. But now I realize those five years were a key interval between your earlier work—the collages [2–5]—and the paintings with images with which you are now most closely identified.

RM: That period really was important because it was a time of transition. I wanted to restrict or keep some of the image, like the corner, but also concentrate on the painting process itself.

LS: I also remember being astounded when I heard about the class you were teaching then at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore.

RM: It was a painting class during which I'd show slides of paintings I liked. I didn't base it on dates or anything like that; it was based on the alphabet—the way things are listed in the library. I started with Albers and ended with Warhol.

LS: Well, I was impressed.

RM: You have to remember I had never really been to school, so that seemed the only logical approach. I mean, I had graduated from high school, but I wasn't a good student. As a painter, I had to find a way of teaching that made sense to me.

LS: Yes, and what struck me was that the literal approach to a survey seemed perhaps even more revealing than a conventional history. Tell me more about your early years.

RM: I come from an immigrant background in Brooklyn. All my friends' parents were hard working and wanted their kids to go to college and become accountants or doctors. But my family had split up by the time I was around twelve, and my mother didn't have those expectations of me, which in a way was lucky. Even though I took academic classes in high school, I was more inclined toward putting things together physically. So I had a hard time in school; it was difficult to concentrate. Because I didn't do well, I couldn't go to college. And because my father had left us, it was really up to me, as the oldest male child, to find a job and help support my family.

LS: What happened after high school?

RM: I went to trade school at night. I went for three years, taking mainly mechanical drafting and working at odd jobs during the day. Just before I graduated, friends from the school helped me get a job as a technical illustrator out on Long Island at the Sperry Gyroscope Company. I made three-dimensional diagrams using drafting tools—ship's curves, ellipse templates, triangles—things that I still use a lot in my work.

LS: Did this experience help you decide to become an artist?

RM: The main thing about working there was the friends I made. I'm still close to Tom Russell. He was involved with art, and we'd go to look at art together, like to the Museum of Modern Art. That was my entry into looking at art.

LS: Was there any work in particular that had an impact on you at that time?

RM: I remember a [Joan] Miró painting at the Modern. It had one little black dot and a line; it was very minimal. I was taken with it—with how you could make a painting with so little and still have it be so dense.

LS: When did you actually take studio courses?

RM: Tom and I both wanted to be graphic designers. Sperry would

help pay for night school if it was related to your work for the company, so we decided to go to Pratt [Institute of Art]. But in order to take graphic design you had to present a portfolio. So, I took a comprehensive class, mainly fine art, with Robert Richenburg, to put together my portfolio. He was very encouraging. Around then I started to think that maybe I could be an artist.

LS: Didn't you study with Adolph Gottlieb at Pratt?

RM: He was teaching an advanced painting class, and I really wanted to take it even though I wasn't actually eligible. But Gottlieb let me try it and I loved it. Twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday, three hours, seven to ten.

LS: So that was your first experience with painting?

RM: It was basically my first true, formal experience, but what was so amazing was that Gottlieb was there and he was a working artist.

LS: Did you know his work?

RM: He was pretty well known, but I hadn't actually seen his work. He had a show at the Jewish Museum while I was one of his students. He was a great teacher and also very supportive. But I remember he would get impatient if you talked about doing your work commercially or if you worked realistically. You had to work abstractly in his class. He really thought that contemporary artists should do abstract work. But, you know, I always thought of his work as realistic. His paintings were like landscapes to me.

LS: Were you aware of the other Abstract Expressionists?

RM: Sure, because Gottlieb used to speak about them frequently. And I was so hungry that I went to see shows all the time. But I was most involved with Gottlieb and [Willem] de Kooning's work at that time—in other words, more expressionistic work. It's odd because it's as if I started with Abstract Expressionism and then worked my way back. Gottlieb used to talk about the roots of Abstract Expressionism and how he felt there had been a big break with European tradition. He spent a lot of time in the Southwest, which, of course, is reflected in his early *Pictograph* paintings. I don't think of the images I paint as pictographs in that sense, but

perhaps there is a connection that I hadn't thought of between Gottlieb's early paintings and my later ones. I want my images to have a clear meaning, even a metaphoric one. Gottlieb said you could say his work relates to Miró, for example, but he didn't want to be compared or categorized. I remember that he pulled out of the "Nature in Abstraction" exhibition [1958–59] at the Whitney [Museum of American Art] because he didn't like the title. He got angry and felt they were misinterpreting his work.

LS: He felt his work was totally abstract, without any references?

RM: I think all those artists saw their work as having no illusion. But I don't think there is such a thing as totally abstract, totally pure. I don't think any Abstract Expressionist came close to it.

LS: What about Piet Mondrian?

RM: Not even Mondrian; I think of him as a Flemish landscape painter. I think someone like John McCracken comes closest, but even his work relates to surfboards and industrial materials.

Eventually, I started getting more involved with illusion and contradicting everything I was taught. Gottlieb thought everything should be flat on the picture plane and you should see paint as paint, not in spatial terms. I want some kind of figuration or something that is recognizable in the work and that can have symbolic meaning.

LS: Why do you think he was so adamant about it?

RM: I don't think he ever wanted to admit to any references or ties, mainly because I think it took so much for the Abstract Expressionists to break away from Europe. He'd get very uptight if you said his work related to nature.

LS: But nature is important to you, isn't it? What about Clyfford Still, for example?

RM: Still's work, for me, has a definite feeling of nature. It reminds me of the Southwest, like Canyon de Chelly with all those amazing shapes everywhere. The grandeur in his work is related to that landscape.

LS: And both [Barnett] Newman and [Jackson] Pollock had made references to nature in their early work, for example, Newman's Tundra *[1950] or Pollock's* Sounds in the Grass *series [1946].*

RM: Newman's work, for me, has a really strong sense of an interior or architectural space but still a space, a forceful space. A painting by Pollock makes me think of a grand space outside, a much more natural space. Space has an incredible presence in Pollock.

LS: And, of course, in a very personal way Jack Tworkov was important to you as you were evolving your own ideas about Abstract Expressionism as well as your own art. Had you met him while you were studying with Gottlieb?

RM: No, I met Jack after meeting Hermine [Tworkov's daughter and Moskowitz's wife], which was in 1961. But I knew his work, and he was somebody who was always interested in new work. And, of course, Jack became very important for me. He was like a father because I never really had one. He was a teacher, too, but different because I was married to his daughter and he was a well-known and respected artist. And when I did get to know him he had his own ideas about abstract art that were different from mine. Even though I was no longer working abstractly at that point, he helped me understand what I was doing.

LS: That's right, your work changed considerably after Pratt, when you spent a year in England.

RM: Yes, I lived outside London in an extraordinary studio—like a one-car garage—from mid-1959 to mid-1960. There were a number of studios; the whole complex had been a school. Each studio was about twenty by thirty feet with a huge skylight going up thirty feet. I spent most of my time doing collages, and then, toward the end of my stay, I took down the window shade from the skylight and started using it.

LS: What do you mean? Did you use the shade as a found object or as a material to paint on? Was it primarily the physical surface that attracted you to the shade?

RM: I literally used the shade, which was really old and had a fantastic surface, putting it on the canvas with rabbit-skin glue. It

was as if I was working abstractly but with something very real. I had been doing collages—gluing fabric down and painting on top of it. I think I saw the shade mostly in terms of a material to work with; it had an incredible quality.

LS: And when you returned to New York you continued to use window shades, right?

RM: Yes, but there was no way I could duplicate the fabric of the window shade from England. I found I was interested in different qualities of the material, how the sun changes it over time, for example. But objects in New York never have the sense of time or history that you find in England. I loved the atmosphere of history there and the feeling that art is part of the world.

A whole world opened up for me in England. But it was impossible to continue doing what I had been doing there. So back in New York I gradually began to focus on the image of the shade itself and that brought into play a whole sense of psychology.

LS: How?

RM: By my thinking about window shades—what they mean, what they are. The realization that I was focusing on an image was perhaps my real break with Abstract Expressionism. At first, here in New York, I used the shade alone, concentrating on its shape. Soon, I included the string and the pull, which made the image unmistakable [3].

LS: So, you were becoming conscious of the, let's say, metaphoric implications—such as a painting as a window.

RM: Yes, I realized that I was using an image. I didn't know exactly what the image meant or what its ramifications were, but I knew it was an image and I was attracted to it. I wasn't sure what I was getting into, but I knew it was something different. I was aware of what Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg were doing and interested that they were working with images, too.

LS: And with that play between the flat surface and the illusion?

RM: Definitely.

LS: Didn't you start showing around this time?

RM: Ivan Karp, who worked for Leo Castelli at that time, was the first dealer to see my work. He brought Bill Seitz [associate curator at the Museum of Modern Art] over to my studio, and Bill included my work in "The Art of Assemblage" at the Modern in 1961. Around the same time, Leo Castelli saw my work and asked me to send some pieces to the gallery. I remember seeing my window shades in the back room next to a Pollock, which was really exciting. Castelli started selling my work and put me in some group shows. I remember walking into the unemployment office and saying it was okay, that I no longer needed their money. They asked me if I'd gotten a job and I said not really, but I felt confident enough at that point to go off unemployment.

LS: You had a one-person show at Castelli in 1962. Did you know artists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, who were also starting to show there?

RM: I had become friendly with [curator] Henry Geldzahler, [art dealer] Dick Bellamy, and Ivan. They took me to see Lichtenstein in New Jersey, at Rutgers [University]. I liked his work a lot. And Henry took me to see Warhol's work. I was inspired by what they were doing, but I wasn't doing the same thing.

LS: Their work was more concerned with the media and popular culture, whereas yours was based on found and assembled objects.

RM: Right, and I also think my work is more rooted in traditional art, in Modernism, while theirs represents more of a break with the past, partly because it is directly related to a commercial process. I was attracted to what they were doing, but their work always had a kind of accessibility that mine has never really had, except perhaps only recently. Their frame of reference was always of a public nature, whereas mine has tended to be private.

You know, now I think perhaps Pop art did have an influence on me. Some of the images I use are Pop in a way. I mean Rodin's *Thinker* is almost a Pop image, not unlike Leonardo's *Mona Lisa.*

LS: What happened after your 1962 exhibition?

RM: I think Pop art really took center stage for a long time and that made it difficult for anyone else to get in at that point. In certain

ways that was good for me because basically I withdrew into the studio and concentrated on my work. By 1963 I had become interested in oil paint. I had been looking at American artists, Arthur Dove and Georgia O'Keeffe, for example, and found myself drawn to the kind of surface their paintings had as well as the kind of imagery. I decided I really wanted to learn how to paint with a brush. But, curiously, I started putting actual objects on small paintings, a little chair, for example—a miniature replica of [John F.] Kennedy's rocking chair, which I attached to a eight-by-nine-inch canvas [12].

LS: When was that?

RM: Around 1964. Two of those pieces were stolen from an exhibition, and I decided from then on to just paint. I wanted to work very flatly—another very important decision. Then I just evolved into the corner paintings.

LS: What about the envelopes? They were a logical extension of the window shades, don't you think?

RM: They were done in 1962 and 1963 [5–6], and you're right, they probably have to do with closing off or covering up, like the shades.

LS: Along with the potential or implication of opening something.

RM: That's true—something behind something, abstract and real at the same time. What was also interesting was that envelopes are flat—so flat I thought I could paint them. I never thought I could paint the shades. I could make drawings of them, but those drawings are like rubbings or impressions. That time—1963–66—was all about learning how to paint and working with images.

LS: What other images did you use?

RM: Besides the envelopes, paper bags [8] and airplanes going by windows [11], all of which led to the corner paintings.

LS: The corner paintings were made at a time when Minimal art was prominent. Did you see your work as part of the Minimalist aesthetic?

RM: I have always been attracted to empty spaces or minimal things. Maybe today you could say those paintings relate to

Minimalism, but I don't think they did at the time because I was working with an image and Minimalism was not associated with images then. The paintings do, however, have a definite purity, a kind of resolved quality, and they are monochromatic.

LS: I've always wondered if Ad Reinhardt's work figured in those paintings at all?

RM: I have known Reinhardt's work since I was a student with Gottlieb. But when I made the corner paintings I was thinking about how I could make them work logically. I think the surfaces and the close tonality were necessary for the paintings to work. It wasn't until I finished that I saw a relationship to Reinhardt.

LS: Reinhardt had a strong interest in oriental art, and I know you've had a long involvement with Zen Buddhism and meditation. Do you see a connection there? And can you articulate what role you think it's played in your work?

RM: You could say the paintings have a meditative, perhaps hypnotic effect. But I am reluctant to talk about it in relation to my work; it would be presumptuous, I think. I have studied with a Zen teacher and have sat for nearly ten years. I practice zazen, the form of Zen that concentrates on sitting or meditation; you discover things through yourself. Instead of looking out, you look in. It's been very healthy for me, almost a form of therapy.

LS: I tend to see all your work in terms of absence and presence, one always implying the other. Do you think that's related?

RM: Possibly so. Even though they are empty, I think of those corner paintings as needing things coming in. If you empty out, other things come in. There has always been contradiction in my work, I know that; there's inside and outside and positive forms turning into open spaces that look as if they should be filled but aren't. There's nothing there; you look through it. I think it may have something to do with my feelings for my father. While I was in therapy my father played an important role, but at one point I realized our relationship was gone and I gave him up. I think that might have something to do with the sense of having nothing there and something being there. Possibly becoming an artist had

something to do with filling this void. Becoming an artist was my way of going into myself, discovering and learning who I am. Art can be like nature, and as an artist you become part of nature and the world. Maybe that is in my work as well.

LS: It is safe to say that many contemporary artists, especially musicians, have been drawn to Eastern concepts—perhaps out of disillusionment with the West. Has that been true for you?

RM: Well, even though I think my art is rooted in Western traditions, much about Western culture has been disappointing for me—mainly the intensity and speed associated with the sense of time in the West, which is related to materialism and the pace of the world at this time. The idea of focusing on a single image becomes a form of meditation. But I think the space in my work is definitely a Western space, and perhaps most important, the psychology of my work—what it means—is totally Western. For me, many of my later pieces are figures trying to make emotional contact, *Skyscraper II* [40] and *III* [58] or even *The Mittens* [47], for example.

LS: In a strange way the corner paintings were meditative not only in their visual effect but also in that you kept repeating the same image for nearly five years—it was like a mantra.

RM: Exactly, the corner became like a tape—a tape that plays all the time in your head, repeating, like a loop. I began to realize I wanted to get away from that kind of purity. I really felt a need to loosen up, start dripping, start painting again in a different way.

LS: So, you could say those paintings were so resolved, and, therefore, restricted, that you had metaphorically painted yourself into a corner?

RM: Right. Two things actually happened: first, I needed to change and stir things up; and those pictures were so pristine that when they started going out for shows, they got marked up. I think it was a combination of the works getting damaged and my desire to do something else. Then I decided I might as well mark them up myself. I began by putting the architectural form on in a very mechanical way and then working on it spontaneously. I was interested in seeing what kind of images I'd come up with as well as in creating two kinds of spaces—the illusionistic space of the corner and another,

two-dimensional or nonillusionistic, space. It was as if I was violating the surface, and I thought to myself, that's not what you're supposed to do, but then I thought I really had to do it.

LS: What were the results?

RM: At first, the marks were very abstract, drips really, in Day-Glo colors, with the overall painting getting darker and darker [23–24]. I had seen a theater set that I know influenced my tendency to darker colors instead of the blues, grays, and lavenders I had been using. Around 1972 images started coming out. At first, they looked like interlocking rings, which made me think of Brancusi and his *Endless Column* [1937]. Soon, I started to isolate the image and began to feel I no longer needed the corner structure. In 1973, when I was sketching, I made a study of a chair [28], which worked into *The Perfect Painting (for Michael Hurson)* [25].

LS: Were you aware of other artists also using images at that time? Did you feel you were part of something that was larger than yourself?

RM: Michael Hurson and I have been friends since the early 1960s and have always been supportive of one another's work. I knew Joel Shapiro's sculpture, and it was around that time that he began working with images. Susan Rothenberg hadn't yet begun her horse paintings, and I wasn't really aware of Neil Jenney's work. I remember Richard Marshall first approaching me about "New Image Painting" [1978], the exhibition he was organizing for the Whitney, and it seemed an interesting idea since there weren't that many people working with imagery. But I also remember feeling compatible with Jon Borofsky. I felt he used his counting as a structure the same way I was using the corner.

LS: I'd never thought of that. That's interesting because he moved to actual objects and personal dream imagery at that same time, the early 1970s, but never dropped the counting.

RM: I remember talking to him about my untitled duck painting from 1974 [31]. He liked it a lot; he recognized and identified with the feeling of vulnerability that I had felt about it myself.

LS: By the mid-1970s you had clearly established your mature style. I'm interested in your process. Do you start with an image?

RM: I always have an image. I might not know exactly what it means, but you could say the image is the idea. First, it's intuitive—I'll want to paint a particular image. Later, I find out what the image means to me, usually after the painting is finished. I'm never quite sure why I realize one image or another.

LS: I remember you said that for a long time you had carried around in your head the chopstick image that went into Cadillac/Chopsticks *[32].*

RM: Yes, and the Cadillac, too. That's probably the case with most of the images I use. The painting becomes something believable and takes on a life of its own and goes beyond making a literal statement. A sort of transformation takes place. I don't think you can ever perceive the entire process of nature; it's too dense. You see one square inch of something. I don't think you can ever possibly perceive a person completely.

LS: Is that why you rarely paint people?

RM: The first blood creature—organic, that is—was that duck and I have painted people, like the swimmer [38]. But that figure is pretty anonymous, there are no details. I have never been interested in realistic representation. It would become too distracting; I don't want to lose my own sense of the image. I want to protect the image I have in my mind.

LS: You've used other works of art, Rodin's Thinker *[53–54], for example.*

RM: And Brancusi [52] and Giacometti [56 and 60]. What they have in common is that they are all sculpture. I'm really interested in taking sculpture and making it two-dimensional. When you think about it, all the images I have used since the corner paintings have been forms from buildings, nature, monuments, objects, and landscapes as well as other art. But I'm also interested in the psychological aspects of these images. It has to get beyond its initial meaning. For example, I've been working on an Academy Award picture, you know, the Oscar. But even though it's abstract, I can never get past the meaning of the Oscar itself. So, I just can't make it work; whereas I think some sort of transformation takes place in

paintings that work. And that transformation relates to all the art I'm attracted to—it changes constantly and goes beyond illustration, which for me always stays static.

LS: Let's go back to Cadillac/Chopsticks *and talk more about the origin and motivation for those images.*

RM: I put the Cadillac on first and I realized it needed something else. I began thinking about what was really far away from a Cadillac; the chopsticks that I had been carrying around in my head for ages seemed logical. I always wanted to do a painting with chopsticks; I especially liked the crossing of the chopsticks. If you are standing, you focus on the Cadillac—it is at eye level. Then, I thought, I'd like something if you are sitting on the floor—the chopsticks. Eventually, it became an East/West painting. So, you see, there was a situation where the images were chosen on a gut level and the meaning came from this very organic approach.

LS: What motivates you to repeat some images in different media? The image stays the same, but what changes most is the background.

RM: Yes, one might be pastel and another graphite, and the way I apply it makes a big difference. The image in relationship to the medium is what makes it compelling for me. The image also has to be strong enough for me to rework it.

LS: It seems as if you have become more involved with the physical act of painting or applying the medium in the background.

RM: When I'm working on the paintings I don't even know if I think of foreground and background. Basically, I work with two areas, trying to keep them separate. They can easily slip back and forth for me, and it isn't as simple as the image always occupying the foreground space. I use an image more than once because I want to put it in different contexts or light—change the mood or tone. Sometimes it has to do with scale. For example, the first version of *Skyscraper* [1978] wasn't large enough. The second version is larger [40], but for me they are both early-morning paintings. The third version [58] has a smokey-red background.

LS: How do the drawings differ from the paintings?

RM: The act of drawing itself is more obvious, more direct than the painting process. There's a greater spontaneity in the drawings; it just comes naturally. For example, *Eddystone* [41] is very subtle, especially the area of the light, which is raw canvas—I got it by letting the ground come through. It came about by working everything else on the painting.

LS: That goes back to our discussion of creating a presence by a form of absence.

RM: Well, yes. When people look at my work I want them just to discover it in a quiet way—not unlike when you're walking down the street and see something and then realize it's just there, in a very physical or literal way. I think what really first attracted me to art—and wanting to become an artist—was the pure physicality of it.

CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION

1 UNTITLED, 1957
oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
Collection of the artist

2 UNTITLED, 1959
collage on canvas, 50¼ x 40 in.
Collection of the artist

3 UNTITLED, 1961
rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, and collage on canvas,
four panels, 70 x 108 in. overall
Collection of the artist

4 UNTITLED, 1962
rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, and collage on canvas,
two panels, 80 x 54 in. overall
Collection of the artist

5 UNTITLED, 1962
oil and collage on canvas, 25 x 25 in.
Collection of the artist

6 UNTITLED, 1963
oil on canvas, 8 x 9 in.
Collection of the artist

7 UNTITLED, 1963
oil on canvas, 9 x 8 in.
Michael McClard, New York

8 UNTITLED, 1963
rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, wood, and collage on canvas,
two panels, 79⅜ x 54 in. overall
Collection of the artist

9 UNTITLED, 1963
rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, and collage on canvas, 79 x 54 in.
Collection of the artist

10 UNTITLED, 1963–64
oil on canvas, two panels, 9 x 16 in. overall
Jean-Christophe Ammann, Basel

11 UNTITLED, 1964
oil on canvas, 9 x 8 in.
Collection of the artist

12 UNTITLED (FOR JFK), 1964
oil on canvas with found object, 8 x 9 in.
Collection of the artist

13 UNTITLED, 1964
graphite on paper, 12 x 8½ in.
Collection of the artist

14 UNTITLED, 1964
plaster cast with cotton in wood and glass box, 3½ x 8½ x 5 in.
Collection of the artist

15 UNTITLED, 1964
watercolor on paper, 13⅞ x 10⅞ in.
Collection of the artist

16 UNTITLED, 1965
acrylic on canvas, 14 x 17 in.
Collection of the artist

17 UNTITLED, 1965
watercolor on paper, 10⅞ x 9⅞ in.
Collection of the artist

18 UNTITLED, 1966
oil on canvas, 71⅞ x 80⅞ in.
Collection of the artist

19 UNTITLED, 1967
acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist

20 UNTITLED, 1967–68
acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Lewis Zachary Cohen and Pamela Bicket,
Paris and Berkeley, California

21 UNTITLED, 1969
acrylic on canvas, 40 x 36 in.
Collection of the artist

22 UNTITLED, 1970
acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist

23 UNTITLED, 1971
acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist

24 UNTITLED, 1972
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist

25 THE PERFECT PAINTING (FOR MICHAEL HURSON), 1973
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
The Rivendell Collection

26 UNTITLED, 1973
latex and acrylic on canvas, 30 x 25 in.
Joan Thorne, New York

27 UNTITLED, 1973
latex and acrylic on canvas, 30 x 25 in.
Collection of the artist

28 DRAWING FOR "THE PERFECT PAINTING," 1973
graphite on paper, 16¾ x 10¾ in.
Michael Hurson, New York

29 SKYLINE, 1974
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles,
gift of Lewis Zachary Cohen

30 SMILE IN THE LOTUS POSITION, 1974
latex, acrylic, and graphite on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Anne and William J. Hokin, Chicago

31 UNTITLED, 1974
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Marne and Jim De Silva, Rancho Santa Fe, California

32 CADILLAC/CHOPSTICKS, 1975
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles,
Barry Lowen Collection

33 RETIREMENT PAINTING, 1975
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Edward R. Downe, Jr., New York

34 WRIGLEY BUILDING (CHICAGO), 1975
latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Philip Glass, New York

35 SWORD, 1976
oil and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Alanna Heiss and Fred Sherman, New York

36 TEAPOT, 1976
oil and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
First Bank System, Inc., Minneapolis

37 PIANO (FOR DUKE ELLINGTON), 1977
oil on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Mary and Jim Patton, Great Falls, Virginia

38 SWIMMER, 1977
oil and pure pigment on canvas, 90 x 75 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,
gift of Jennifer Bartlett

39 EMPIRE STATE, 1978
oil on canvas, 108 x 38¾ in.
Thomas Ammann, Zurich

40 SKYSCRAPER II, 1978
latex, acrylic, and oil on canvas, two panels, 120 x 57½ in. overall
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Greenwald, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

41 EDDYSTONE, 1979
oil on canvas, 108 x 48 in.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the Louis and
Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, president

42 FLATIRON (FOR LILY), 1979
oil on canvas, 108 x 52 in.
The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Collection, Los Angeles

43 STACK, 1979
oil on canvas, 108 x 34½ in.
Loretta and Robert K. Lifton Collection, New York

44 BIG PICTURE, 1979–80
oil on canvas, three panels, 96 x 228¾ in. overall
Blum Helman Gallery, New York

45 UNTITLED, 1980
graphite and pastel on paper, 53 x 31¼ in.
Jack E. Chachkes, New York

46 UNTITLED, 1980
graphite and pastel on paper, 106 x 31¼ in.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Hoffman, Dallas

47 THE MITTENS, 1980–81
oil on canvas, 39 x 144 in.
Lewis Zachary Cohen and Pamela Bicket,
Paris and Berkeley, California

48 EDDYSTONE, 1980–81
pastel on paper, 109½ x 47¾ in.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Hoffman, Dallas

49 BLACK MILL, 1981
oil on canvas, 108 x 63 in.
Susan and Lewis Manilow, Chicago

50 RED MILL, 1981
pastel on paper, 111 x 48¾ in.
La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California, museum purchase

51 THE SEVENTH SISTER, 1981
pastel on paper, 108 x 39 in.
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Greenwald, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

52 BLACK BIRD, 1982
oil on canvas, 63 x 20½ in.
Collection of the artist

53 THINKER, 1982
oil on canvas, 108 x 63 in.
Helman Collection, New York

54 THINKER, 1982
pastel on paper, 108 x 63 in.
Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha

55 BOWLER, 1982–84
oil on canvas, 108 x 44⅝ in.
John and Mary Pappajohn, Des Moines

56 GIACOMETTI PIECE, 1983–84
oil on canvas, 108 x 41¾ in.
Roger Davidson, Toronto

57 ICEBERG, 1984
latex and oil on canvas, 56 x 157⅜ in.
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.,
gift of the Friends of the Corcoran

58 SKYSCRAPER III, 1984
oil and latex on canvas, two panels, 120 x 57½ in. overall
Locksley Shea Gallery, Minneapolis

59 BOWLER, 1984
pastel on paper, 108 x 44⅝ in.
Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Anderson, San Francisco

60 GIACOMETTI PIECE (FOR BOB HOLMAN), 1984
pastel on paper, 108 x 34½ in.
Collection of the artist

61 THE RAZOR'S EDGE (FOR BILL MURRAY), 1985
oil on canvas, 30⅛ x 72 in.
Gerald S. Elliott, Chicago

62 EMPIRE STATE, 1985–86
oil on canvas, 96 x 32 in.
Gerald S. Elliott, Chicago

63 RED CROSS, 1986
pastel on paper, 38⅛ x 38⅛ in.
Sheldon and Joan Krasnow, River Forest, Illinois

64 LANDSCAPE, 1987
oil on canvas, 112 x 66 in.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.,
Joseph H. Hirshhorn Purchase Fund

65 MOON DOG (FOR HELEN), 1987
oil on canvas, 108 x 60 in.
Thomas Ammann, Zurich

66 THE RED AND THE BLACK, 1987
oil and latex on canvas, 30⅛ x 72 in.
Collection of the artist

67 RED CROSS (WHITE ON BLACK), 1987
oil on canvas, 39 x 39 in.
Private collection, courtesy Blum Helman Gallery, New York

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Collection of the artist

2 UNTITLED, 1959, collage on canvas, 50¼ x 40 in.
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3 UNTITLED, 1961, rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, and collage on canvas, four panels, 70 x 108 in. overall
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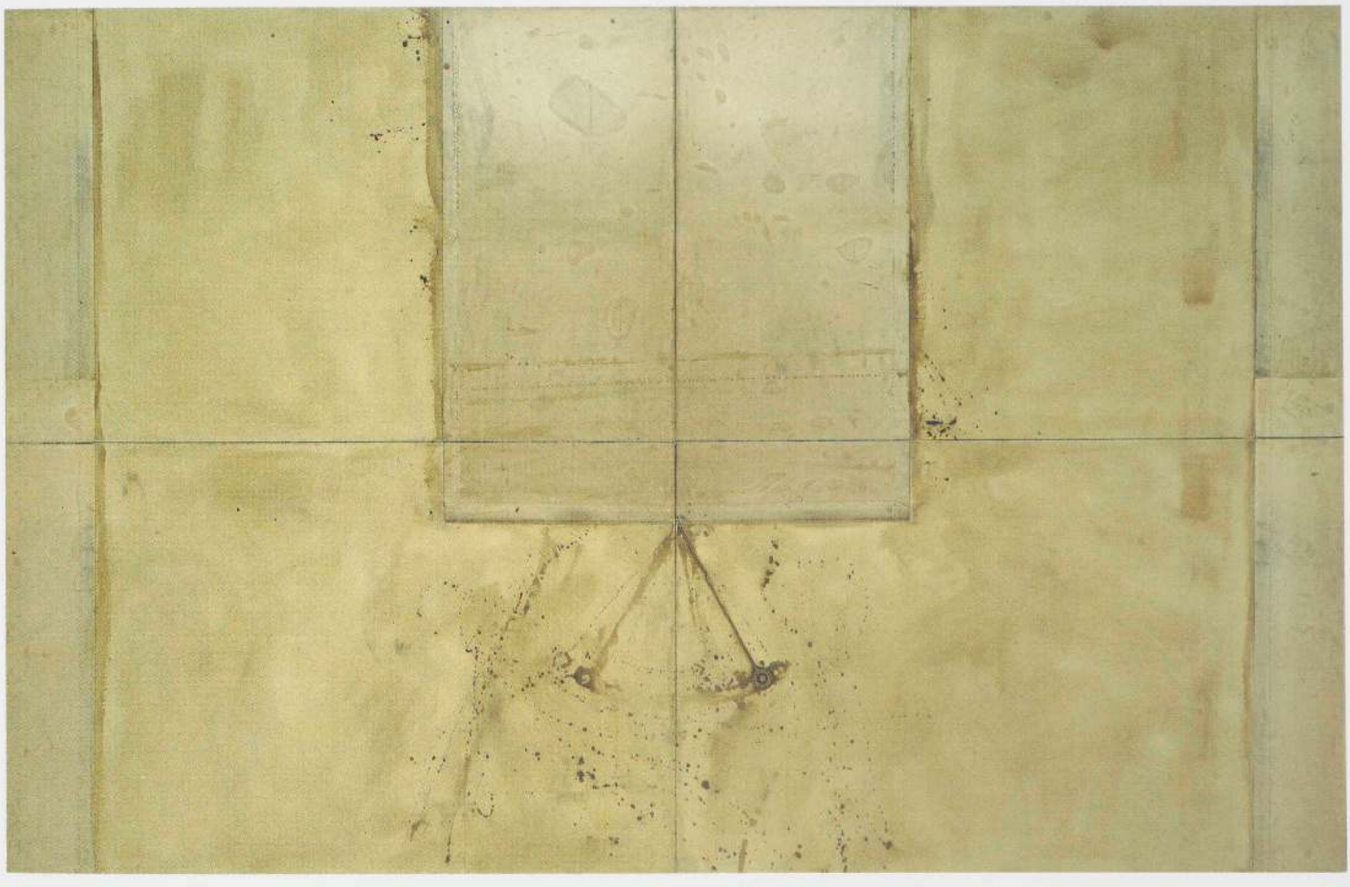
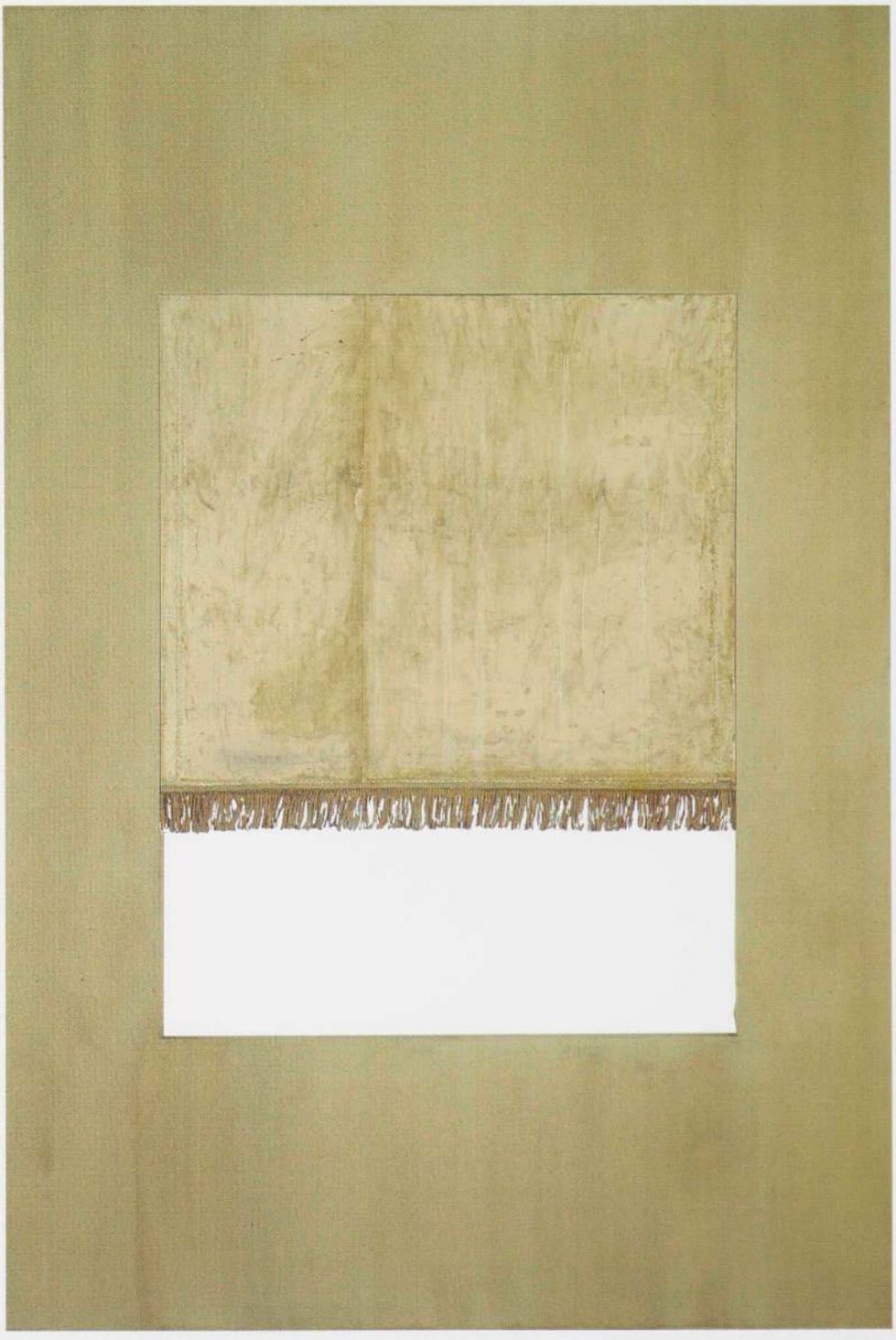
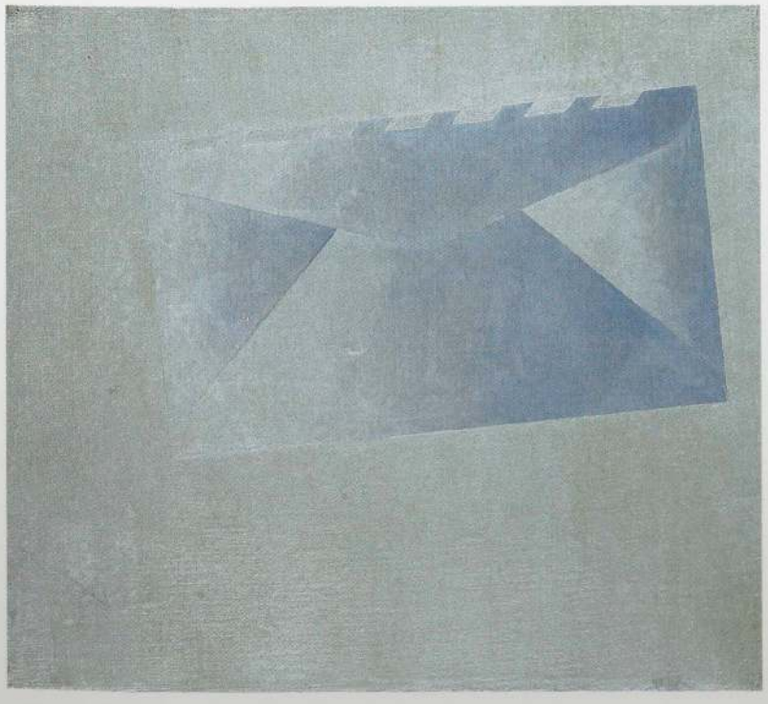


4 UNTITLED, 1962, rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, and collage on canvas, two panels, 80 x 54 in. overall
Collection of the artist



5 UNTITLED, 1962, oil and collagé on canvas, 25 x 25 in.
Collection of the artist

6 UNTITLED, 1963, oil on canvas, 8 x 9 in.
Collection of the artist



7 UNTITLED, 1963, oil on canvas, 9 x 8 in.
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8 UNTITLED, 1963, rabbit-skin glue, pure pigment, wood, and collage on canvas, two panels, 79⅜ x 54 in. overall
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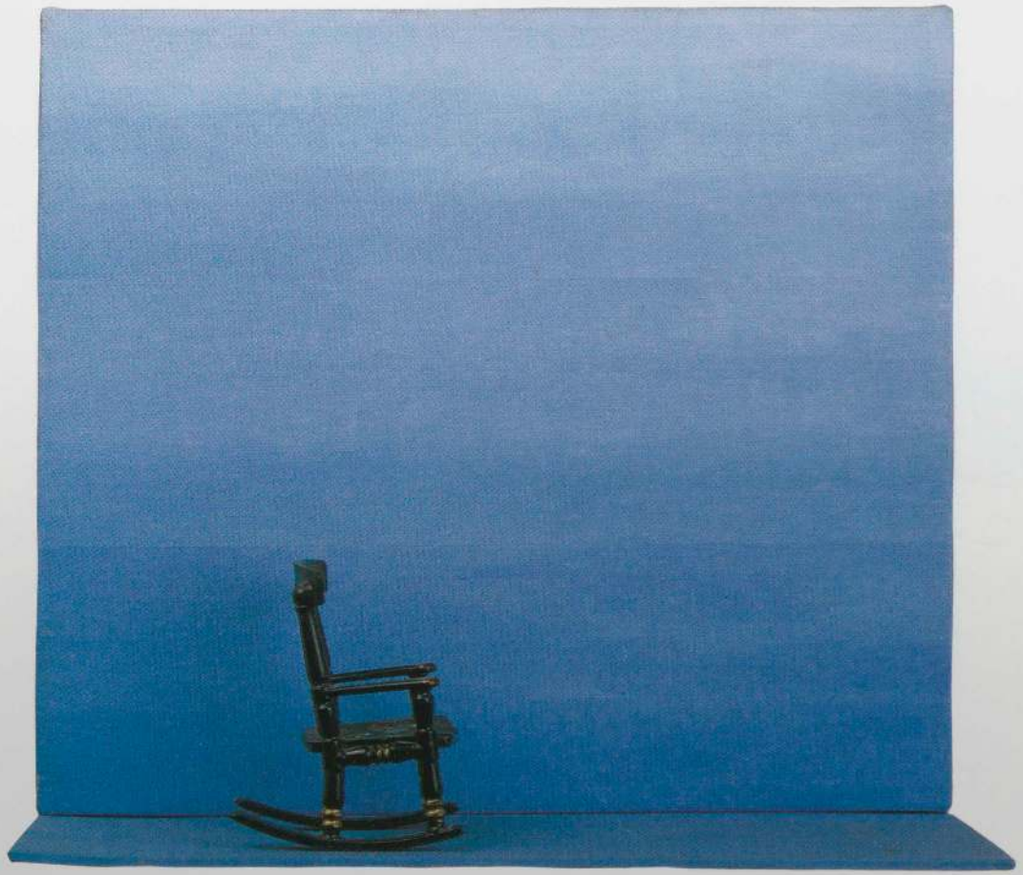
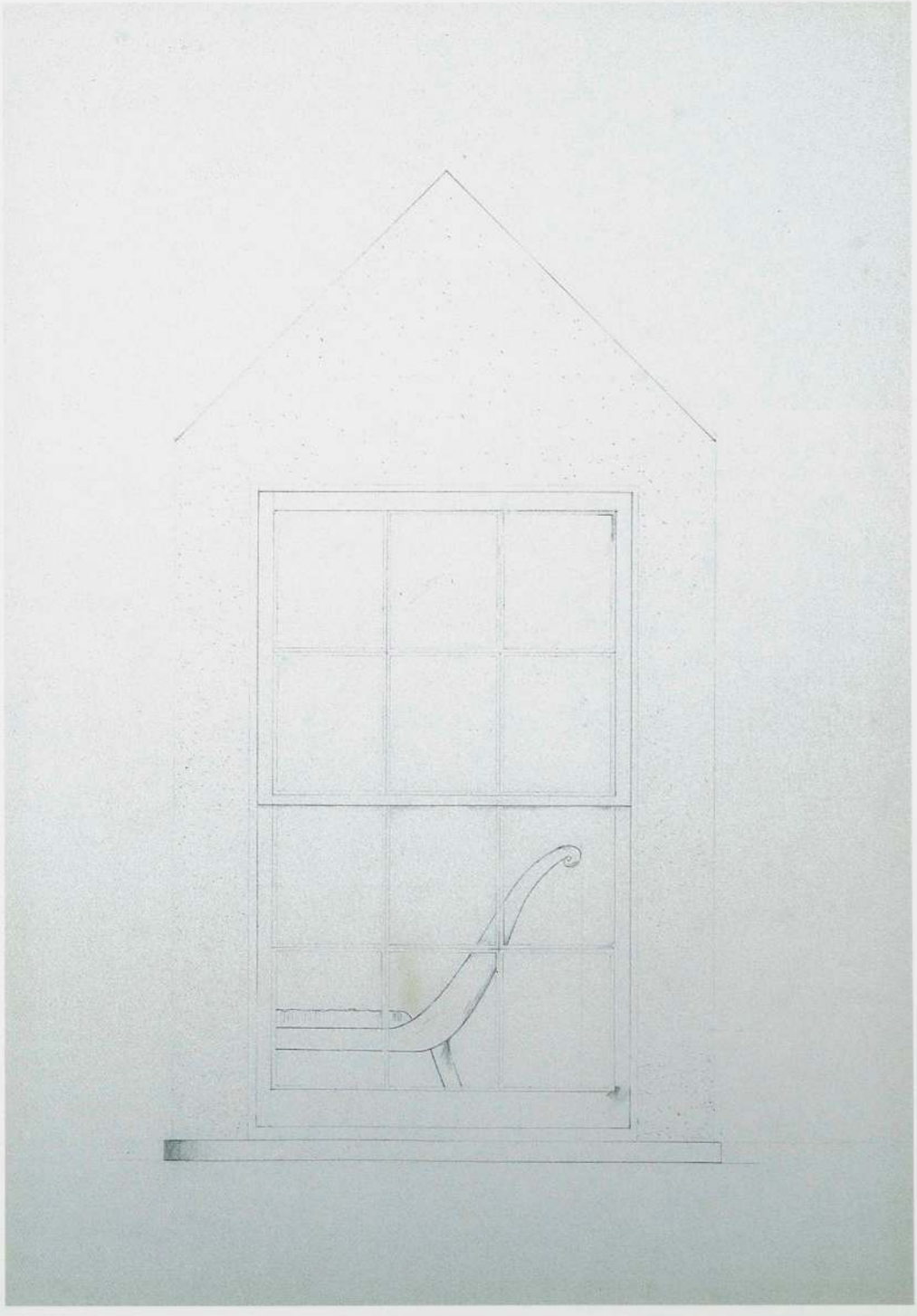
10 UNTITLED, 1963–64, oil on canvas, two panels, 9 x 16 in. overall
Jean-Christophe Ammann, Basel

11 UNTITLED, 1964, oil on canvas, 9 x 8 in.
Collection of the artist

12 UNTITLED (FOR JFK), 1964, oil on canvas with found object, 8 x 9 in.
Collection of the artist



13 UNTITLED, 1964, graphite on paper, 12 x 8½ in.
Collection of the artist

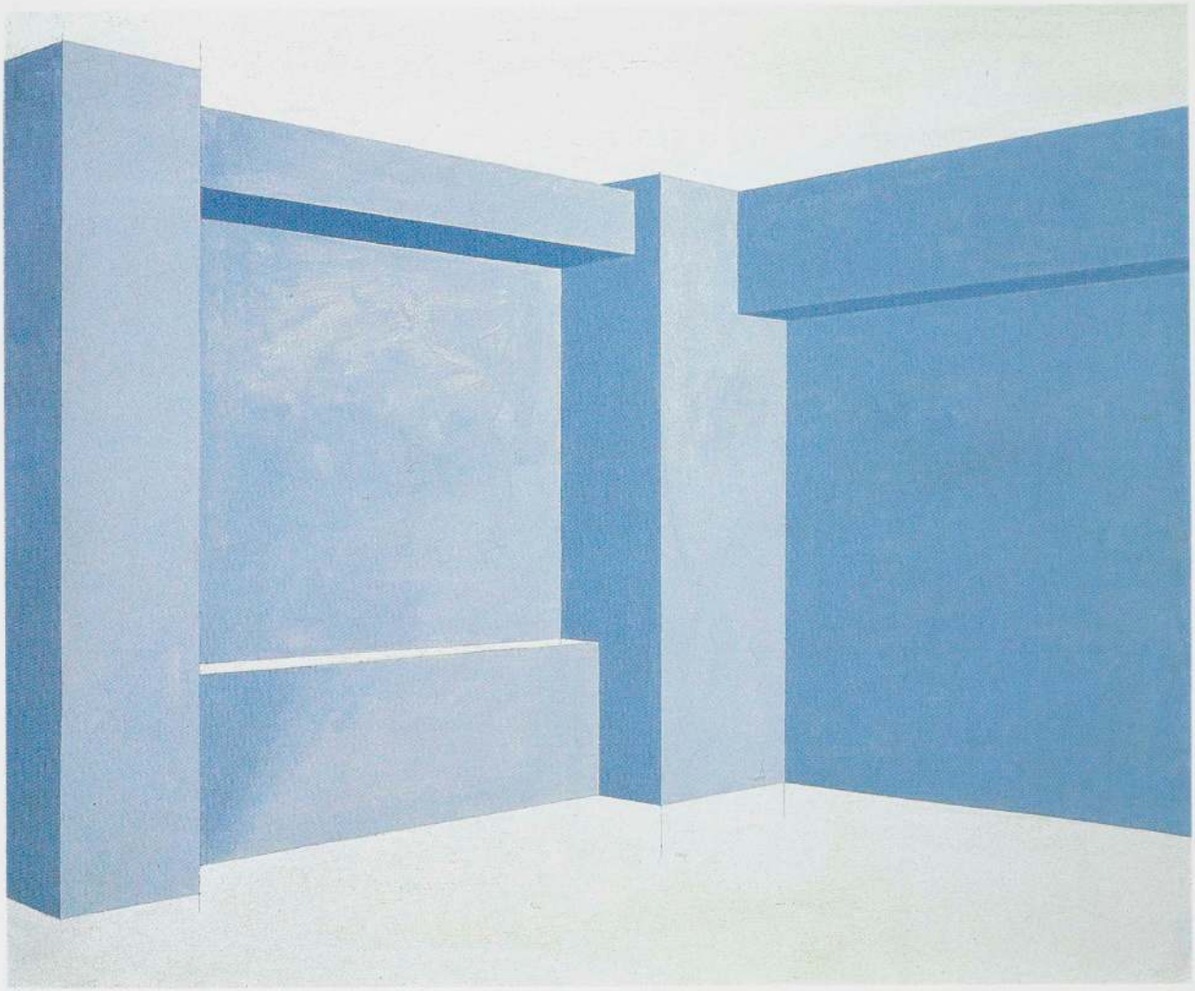


14 UNTITLED, 1964, plaster cast with cotton in wood and glass box, 3½ x 8½ x 5 in.
Collection of the artist

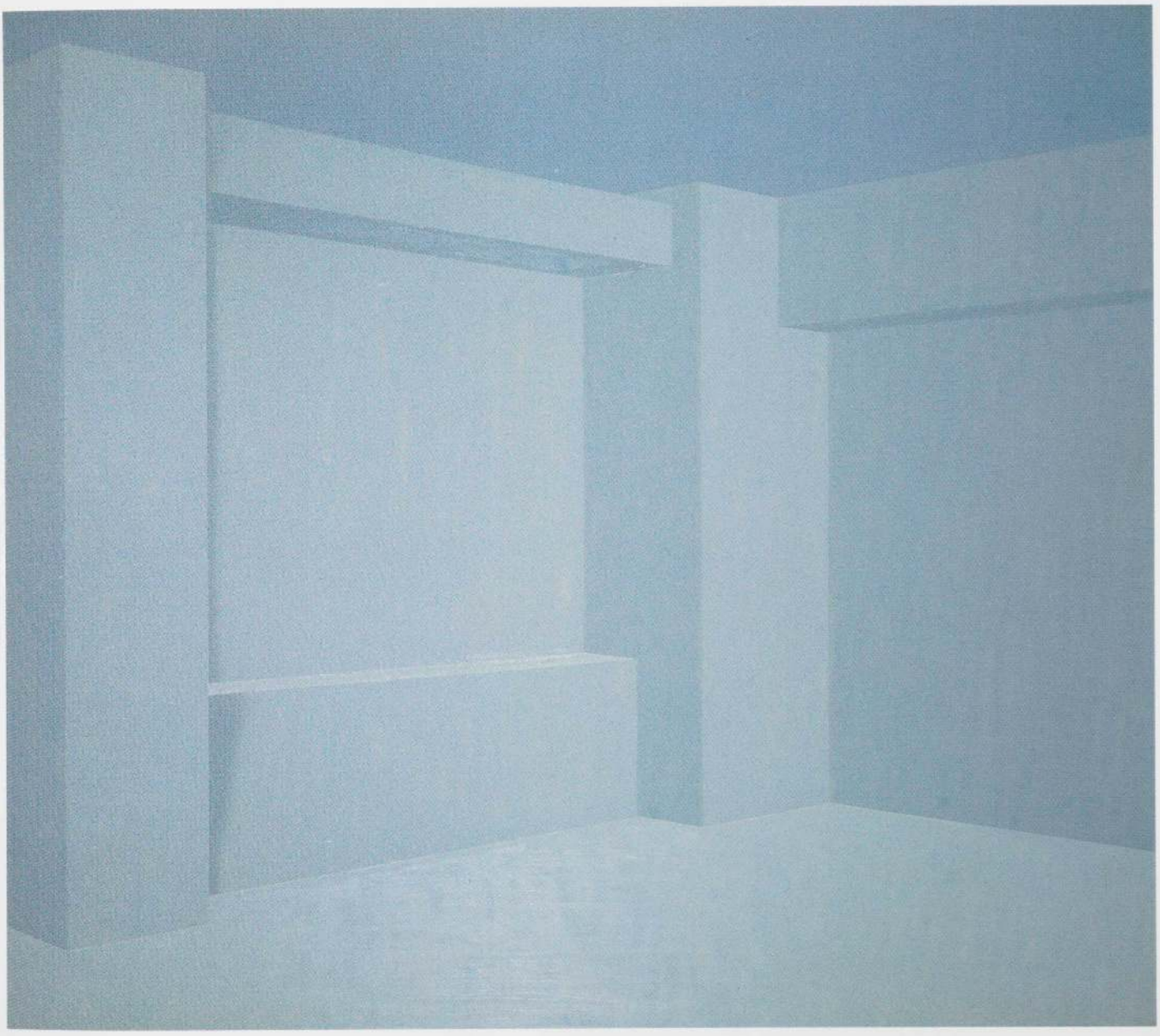
15 UNTITLED, 1964, watercolor on paper, 13⅞ x 10⅞ in.
Collection of the artist

16 UNTITLED, 1965, acrylic on canvas, 14 x 17 in.
Collection of the artist

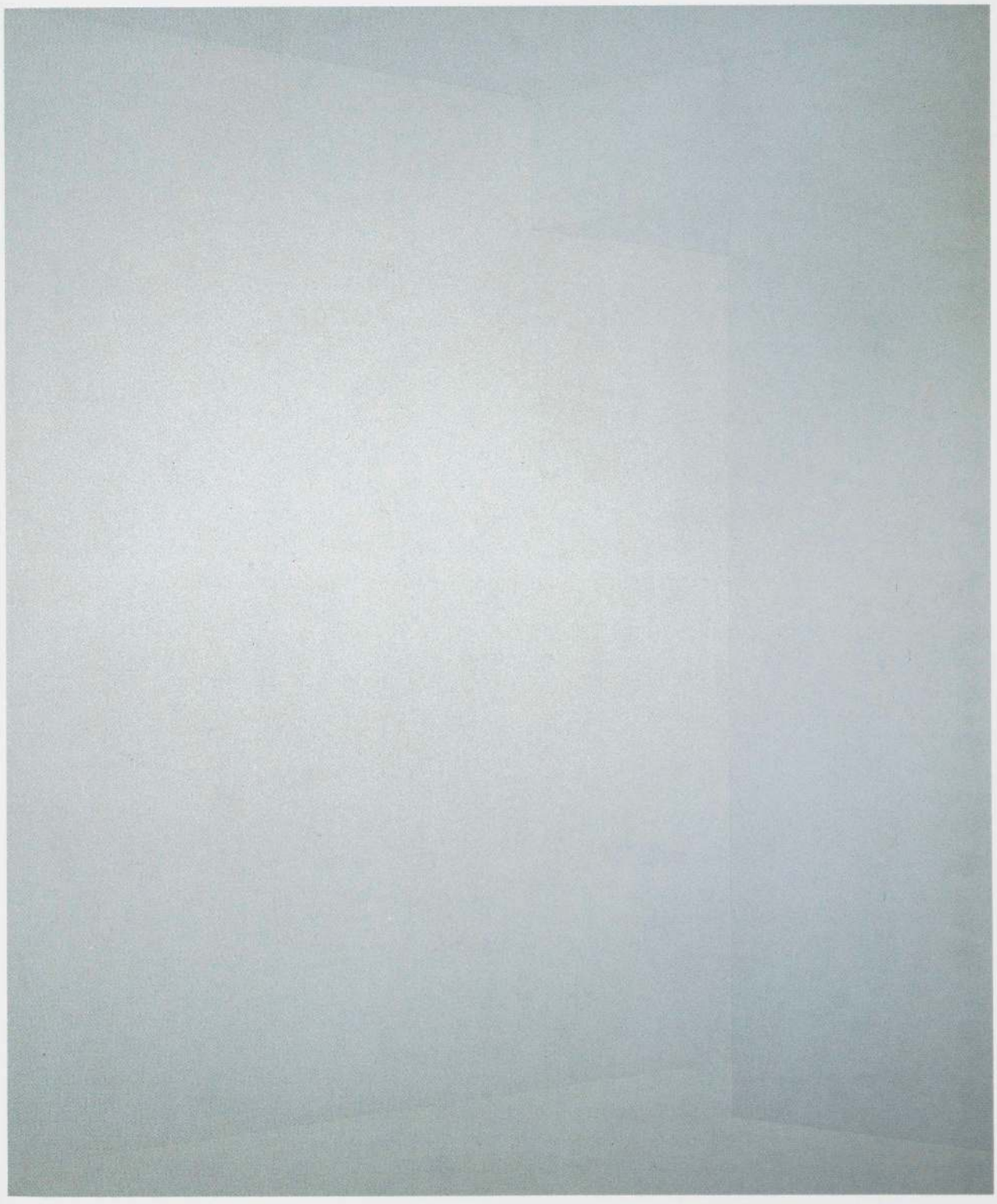
17 UNTITLED, 1965, watercolor on paper, 10⅞ x 9⅞ in.
Collection of the artist



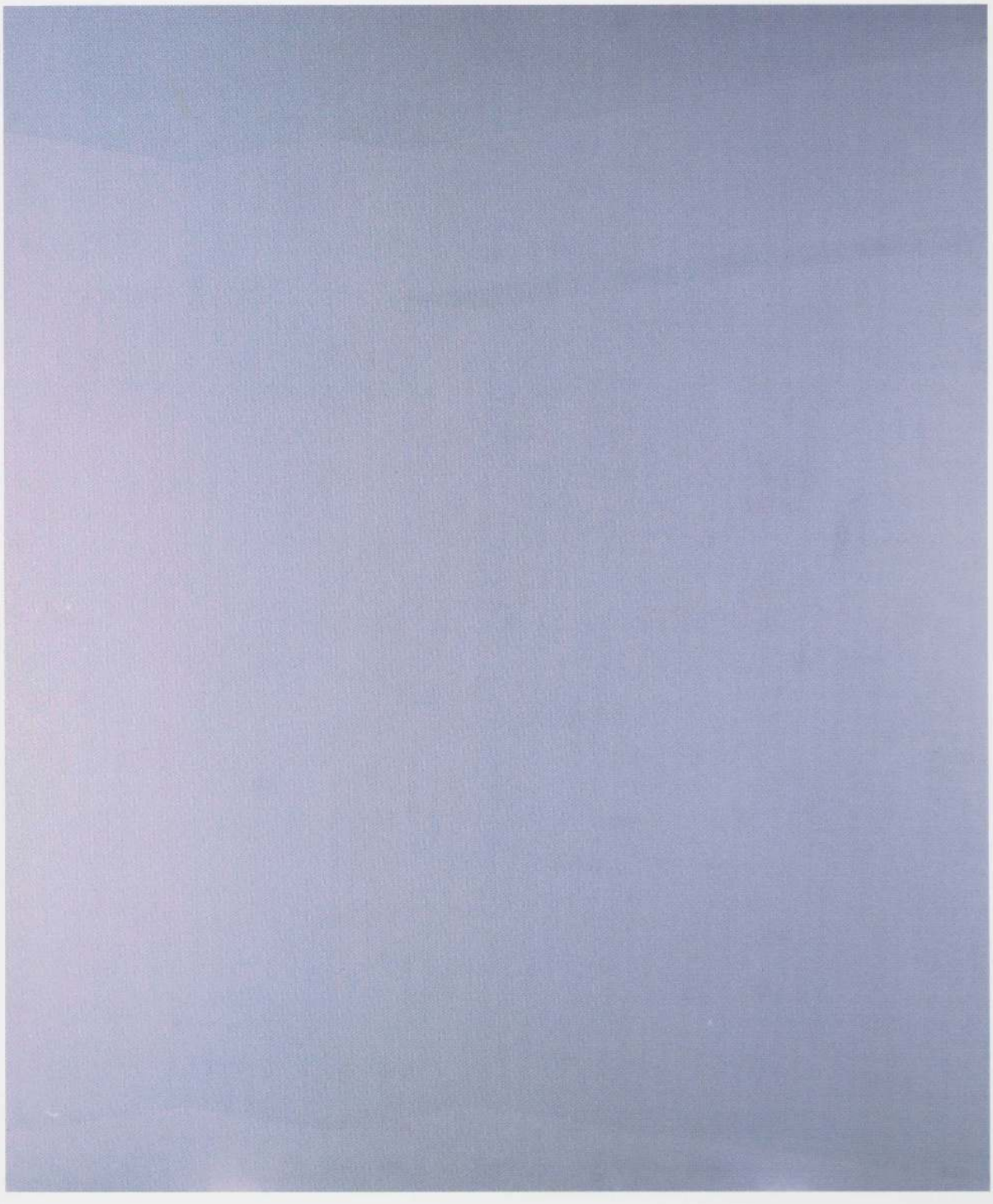
18 UNTITLED, 1966, oil on canvas, 71⅞ x 80⅞ in.
Collection of the artist



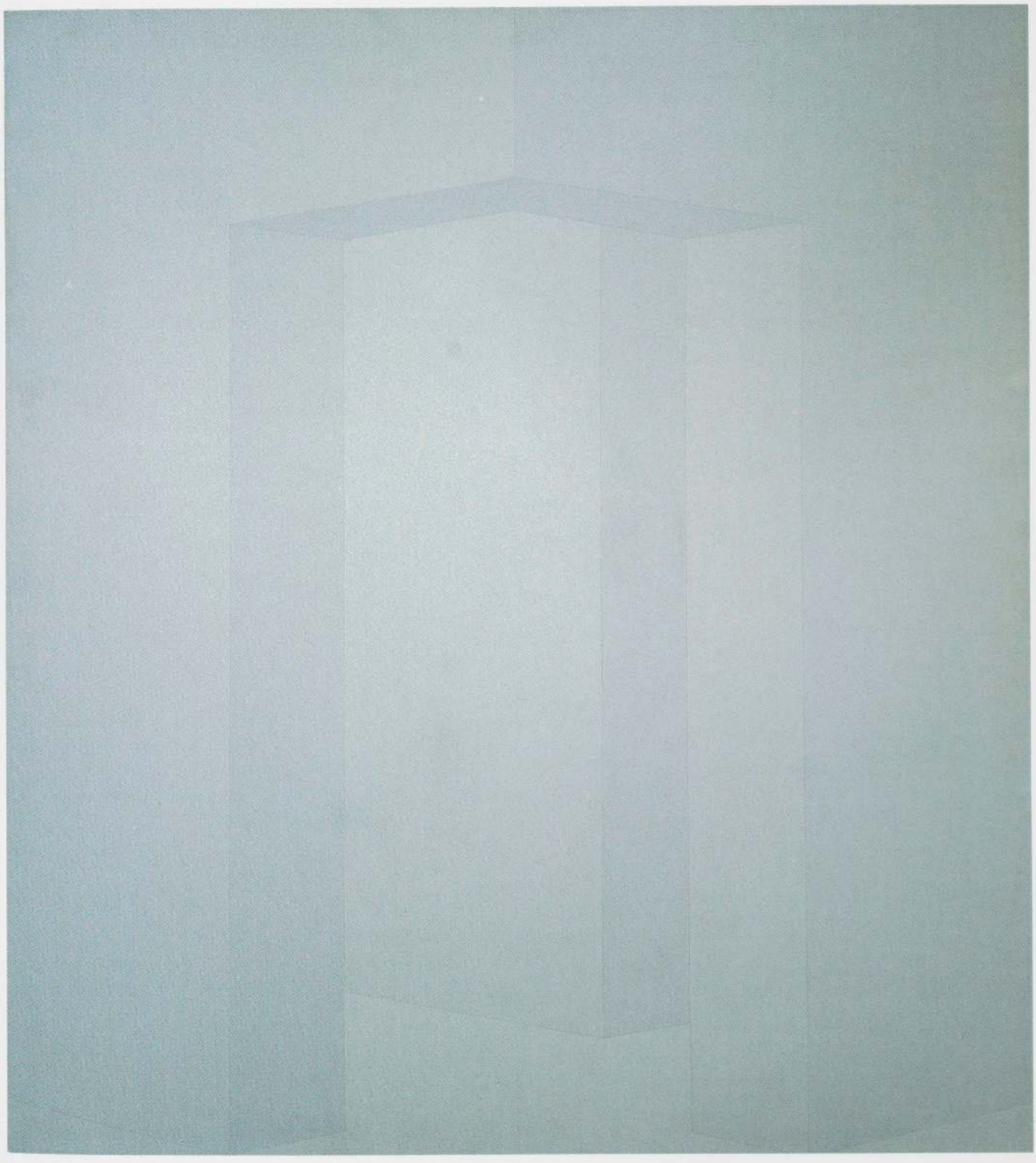
19 UNTITLED, 1967, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist



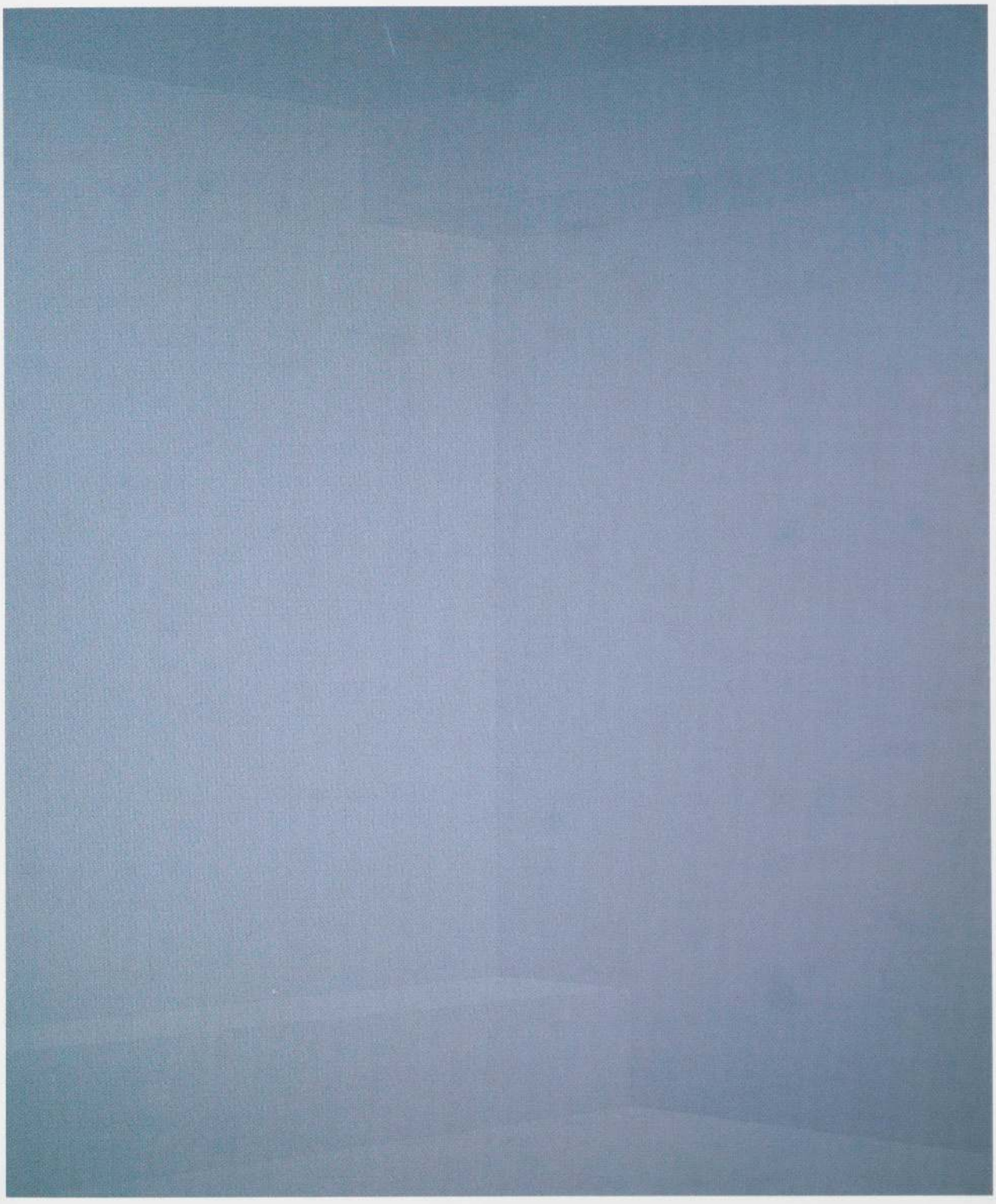
20 UNTITLED, 1967–68, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Lewis Zachary Cohen and Pamela Bicket, Paris and Berkeley, California



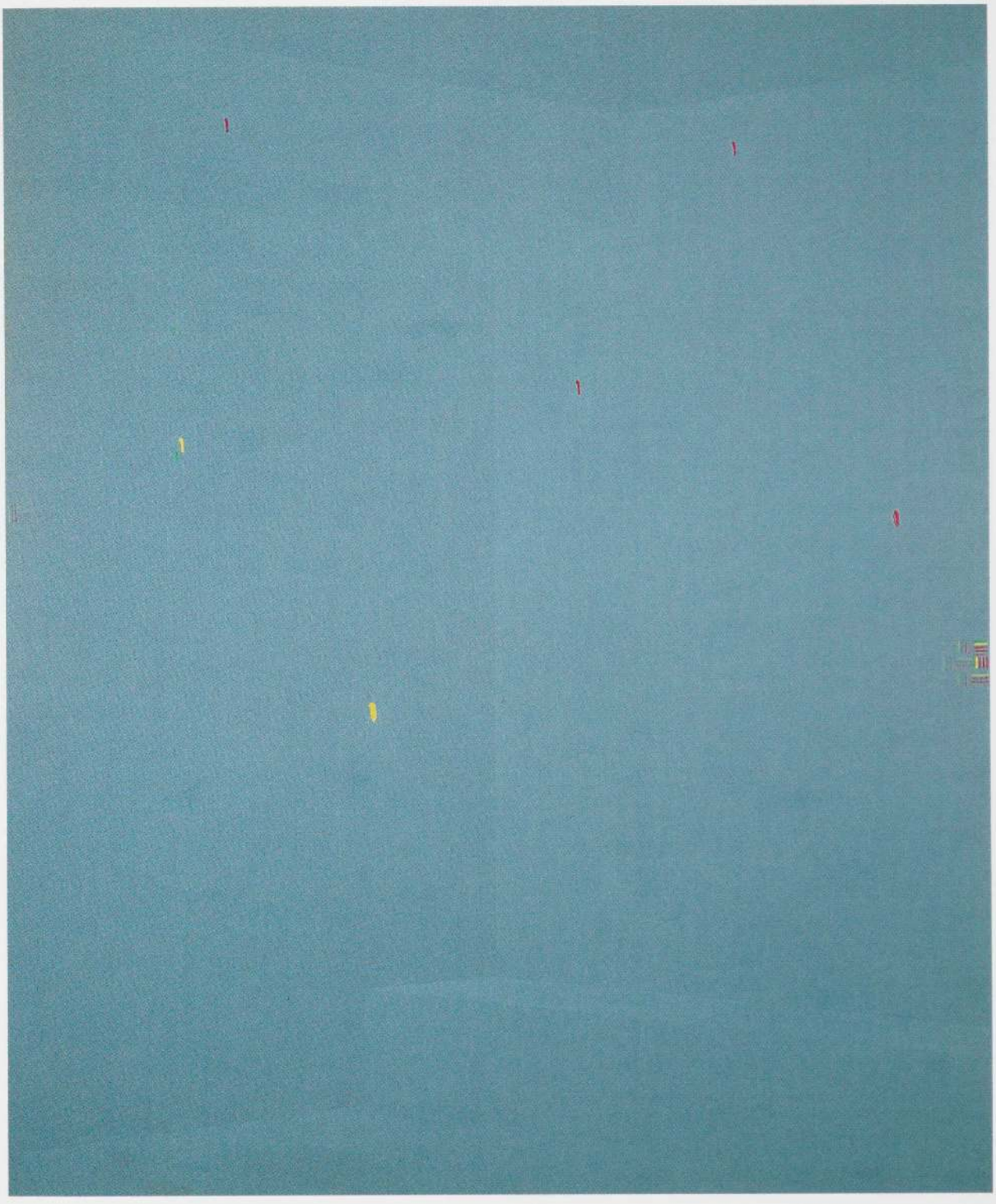
21 UNTITLED, 1969, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 36 in.
Collection of the artist



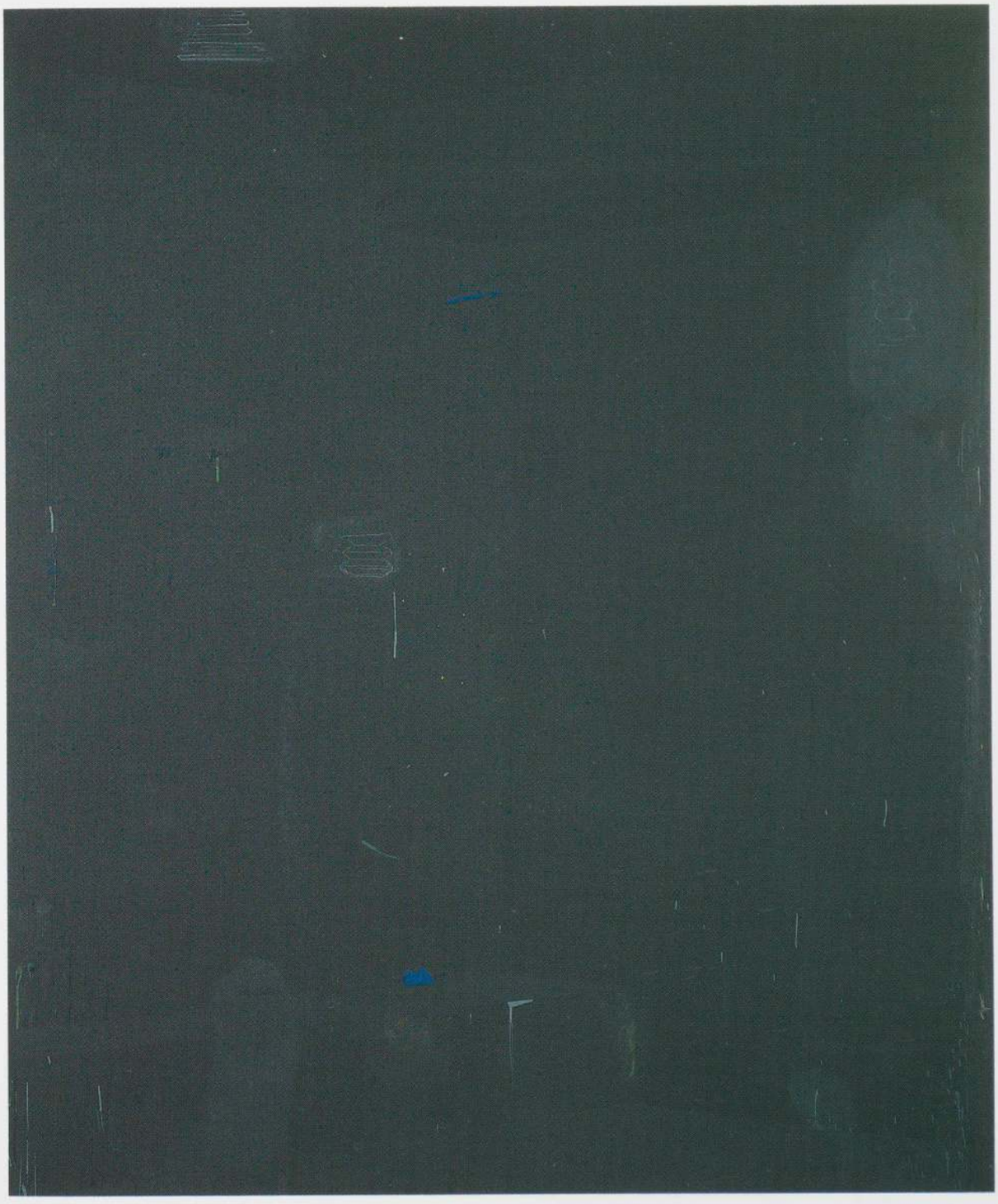
22 UNTITLED, 1970, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist



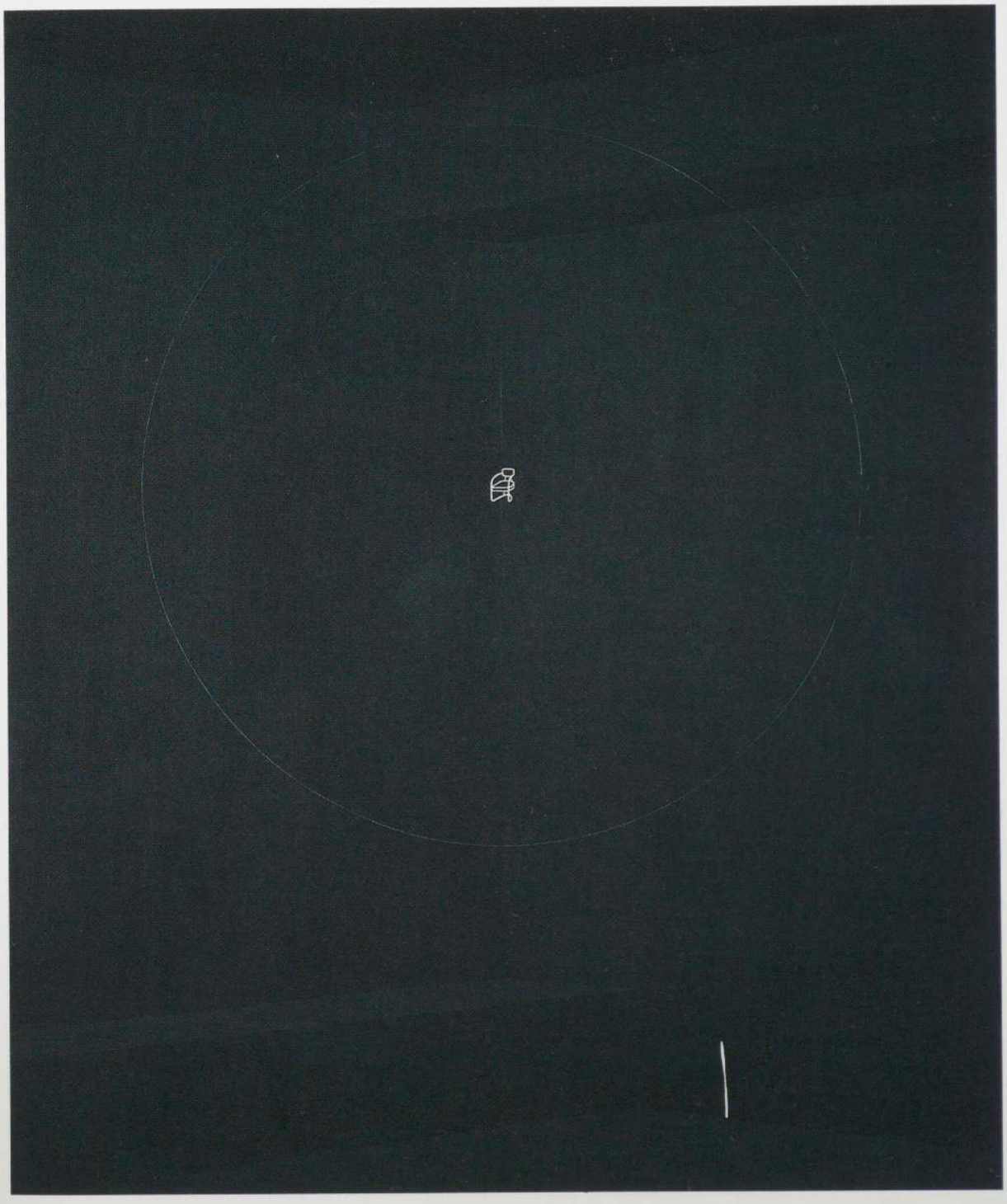
23 UNTITLED, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist



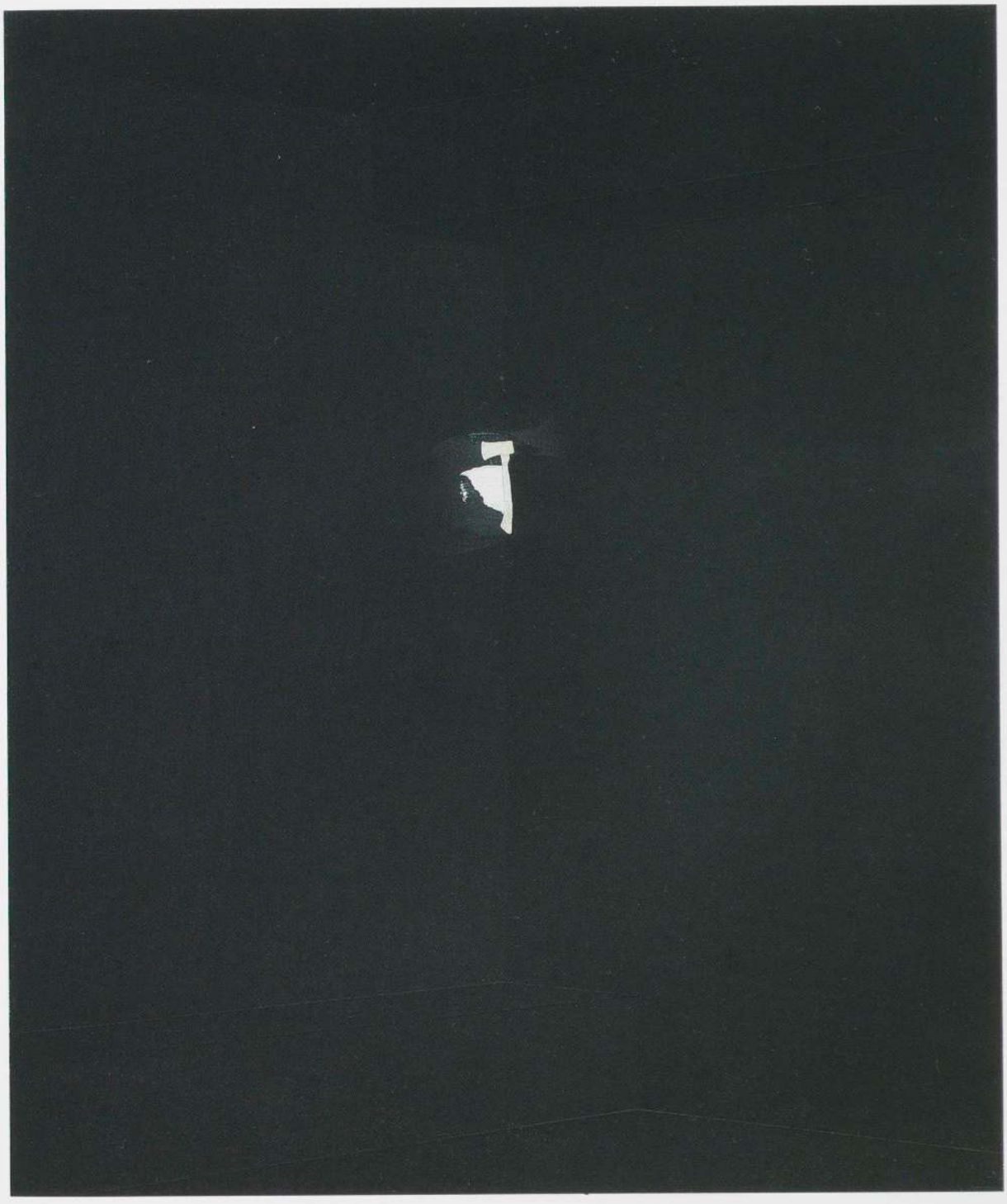
24 UNTITLED, 1972, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Collection of the artist



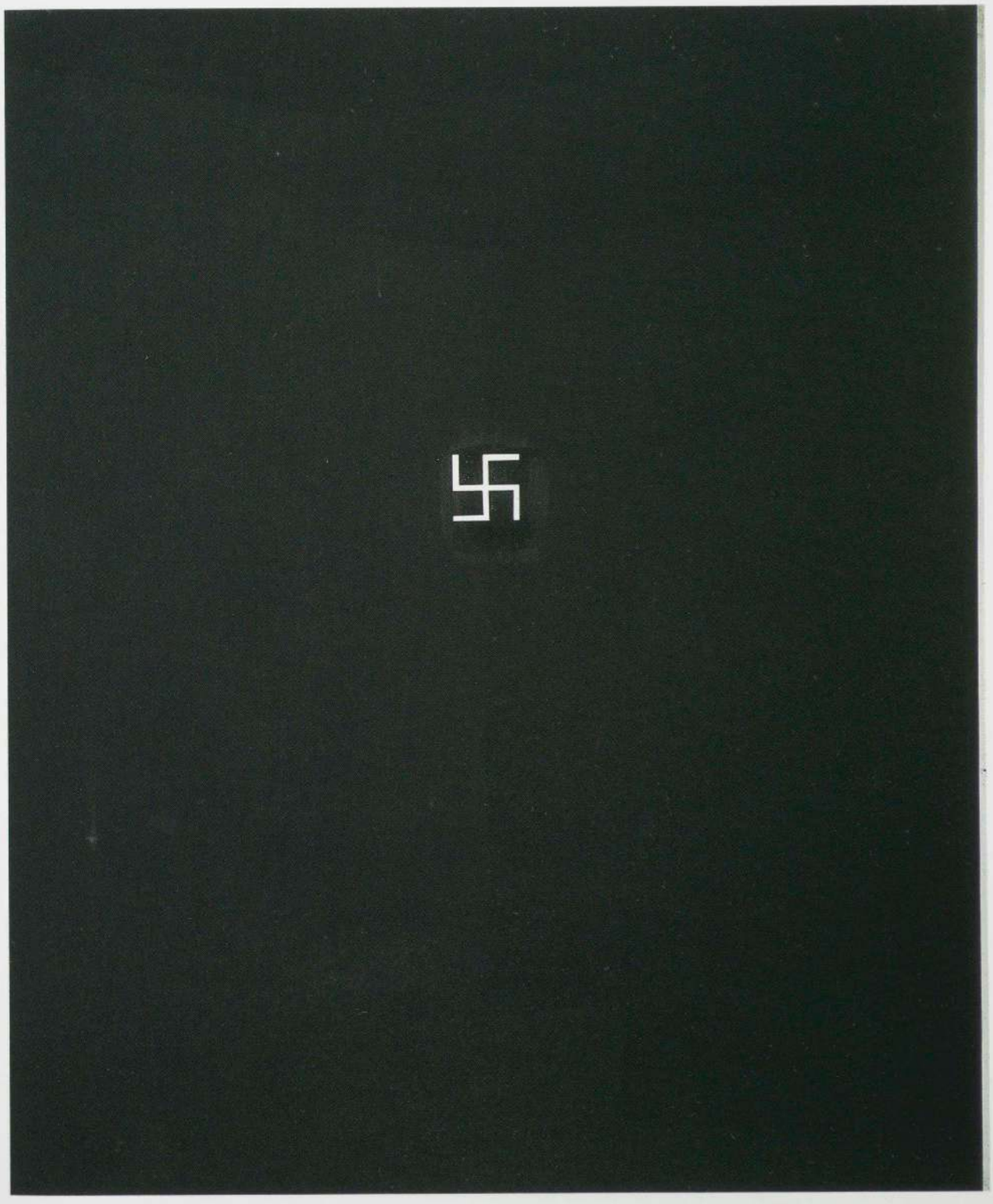
25 THE PERFECT PAINTING (FOR MICHAEL HURSON), 1973, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
The Rivendell Collection



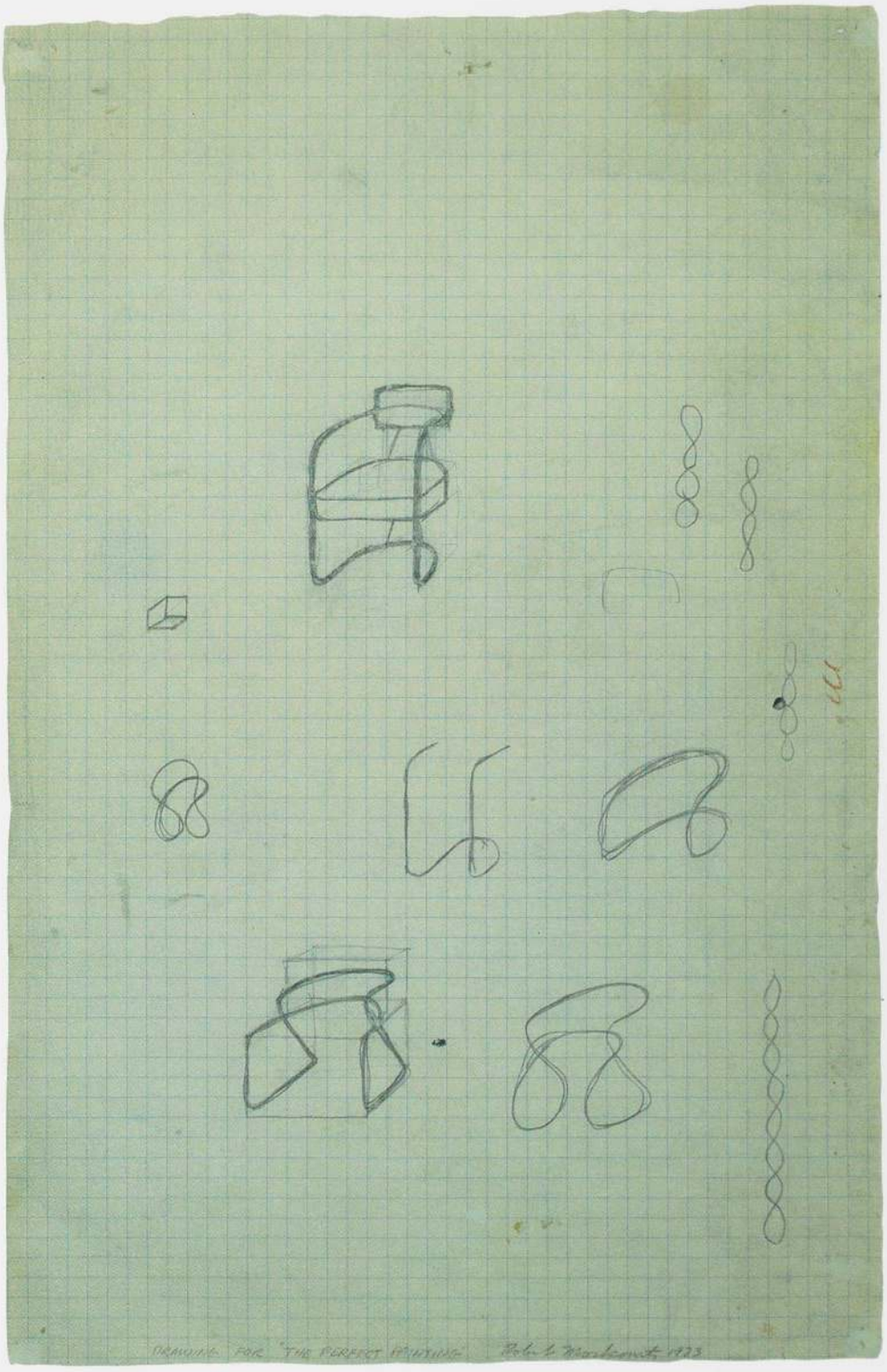
26 UNTITLED, 1973, latex and acrylic on canvas, 30 x 25 in.
Joan Thorne, New York



27 UNTITLED, 1973, latex and acrylic on canvas, 30 x 25 in.
Collection of the artist

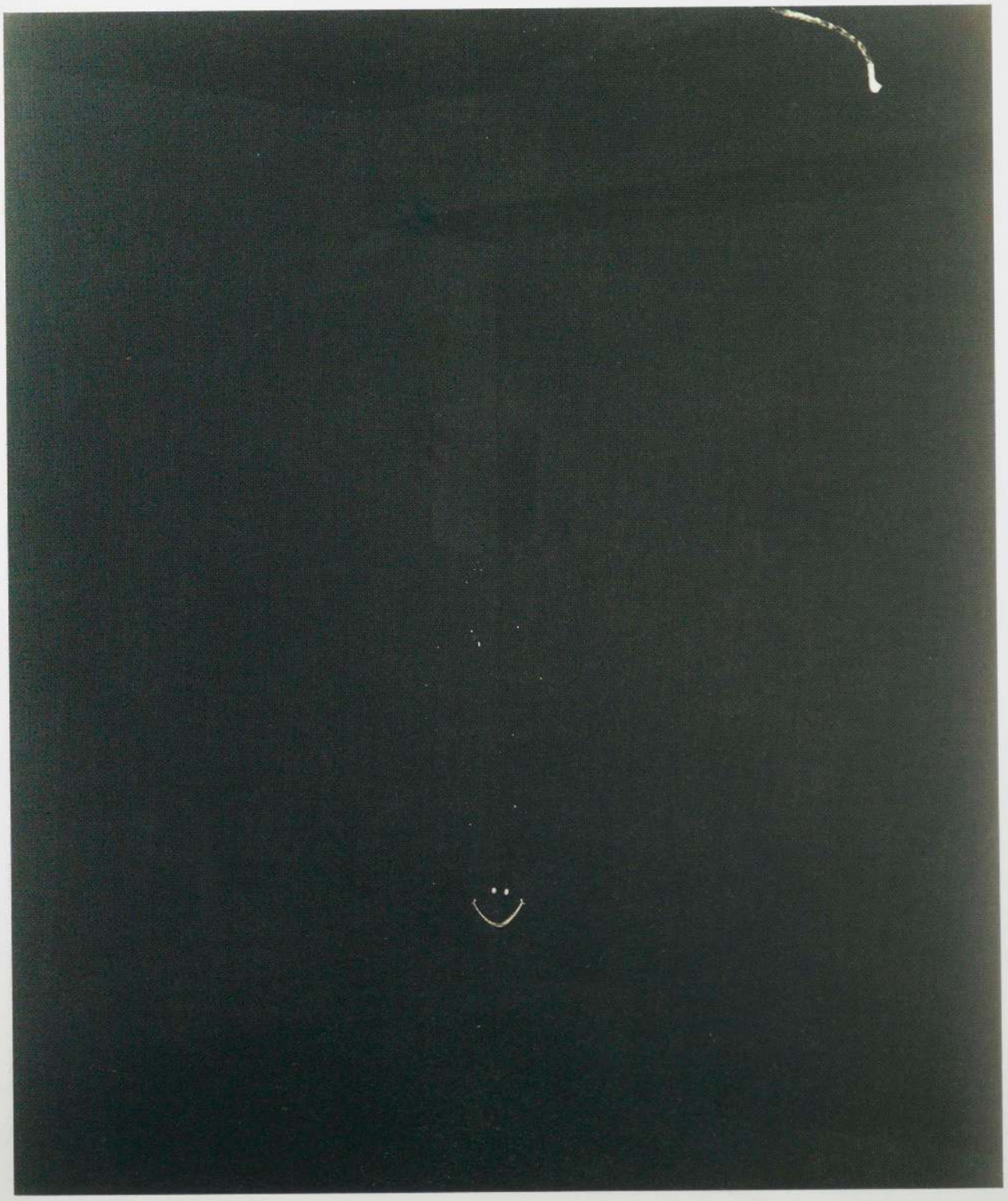


28 DRAWING FOR "THE PERFECT PAINTING," 1973, graphite on paper, 16¾ x 10¾ in.
Michael Hurson, New York

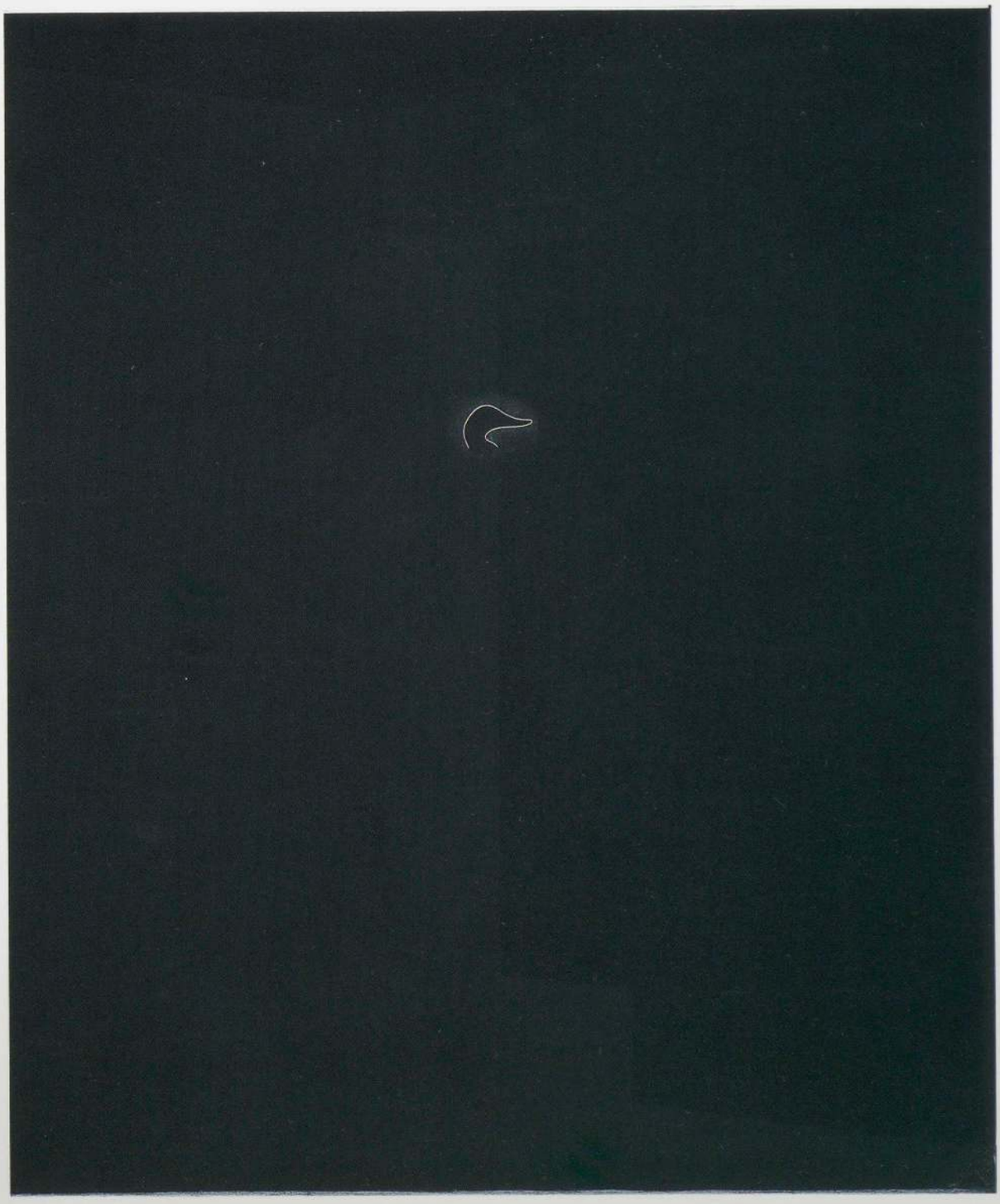

DRAWING FOR "THE PERFECT PAINTING"
Robert Morris 1973

29 SKYLINE, 1974, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, gift of Lewis Zachary Cohen

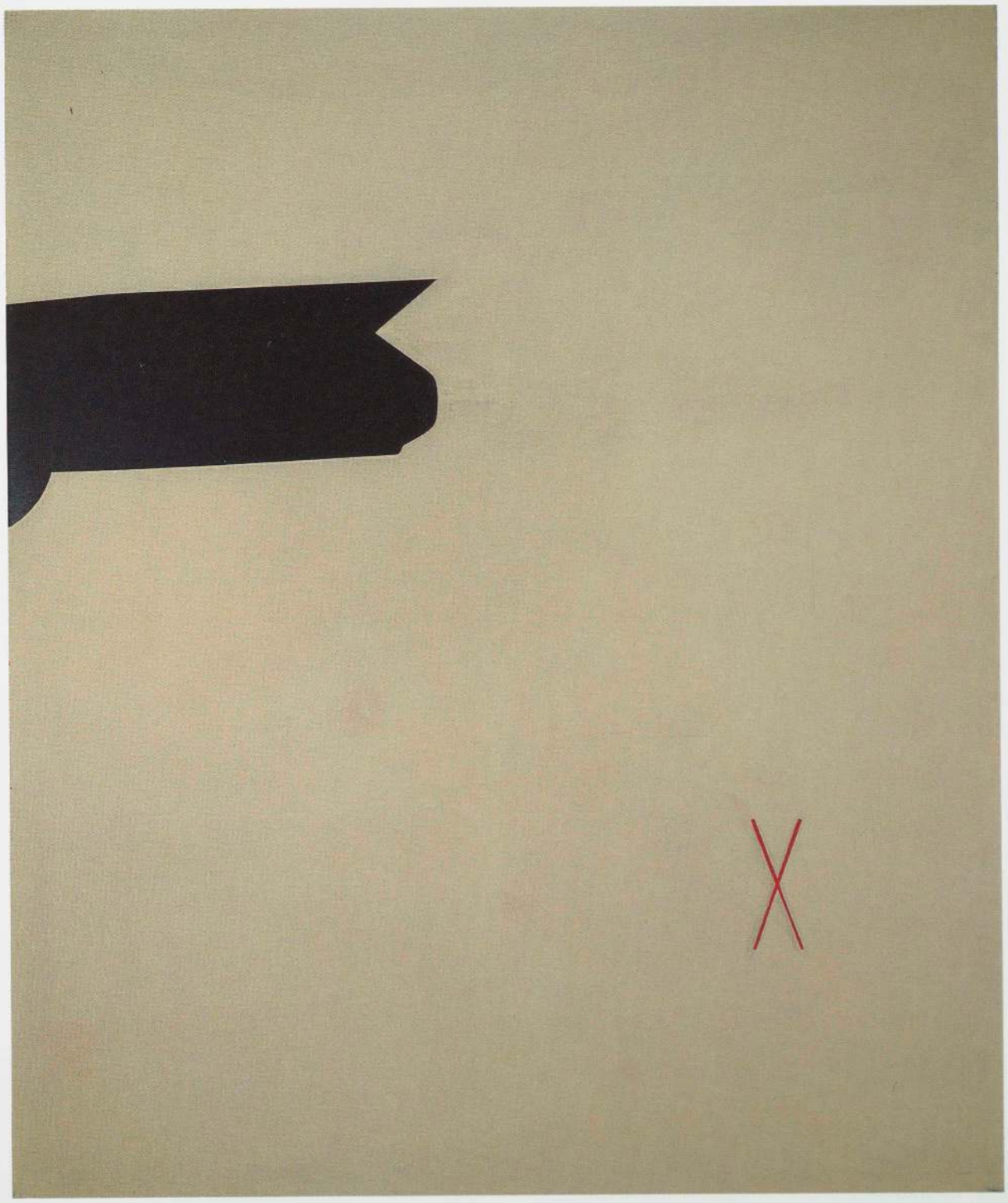
30 SMILE IN THE LOTUS POSITION, 1974, latex, acrylic, and graphite on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Anne and William J. Hokin, Chicago



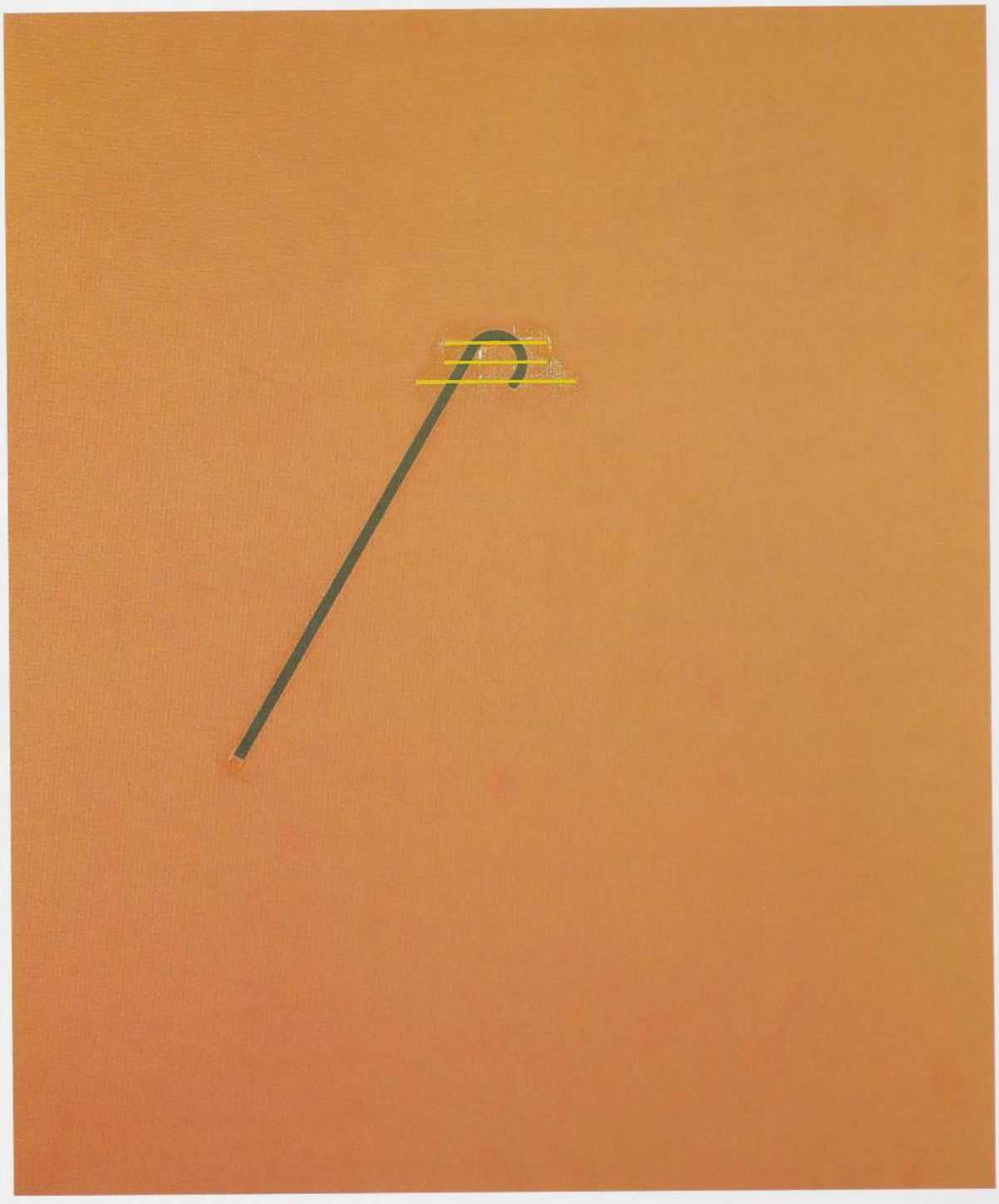
31 UNTITLED, 1974, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Marne and Jim De Silva, Rancho Santa Fe, California



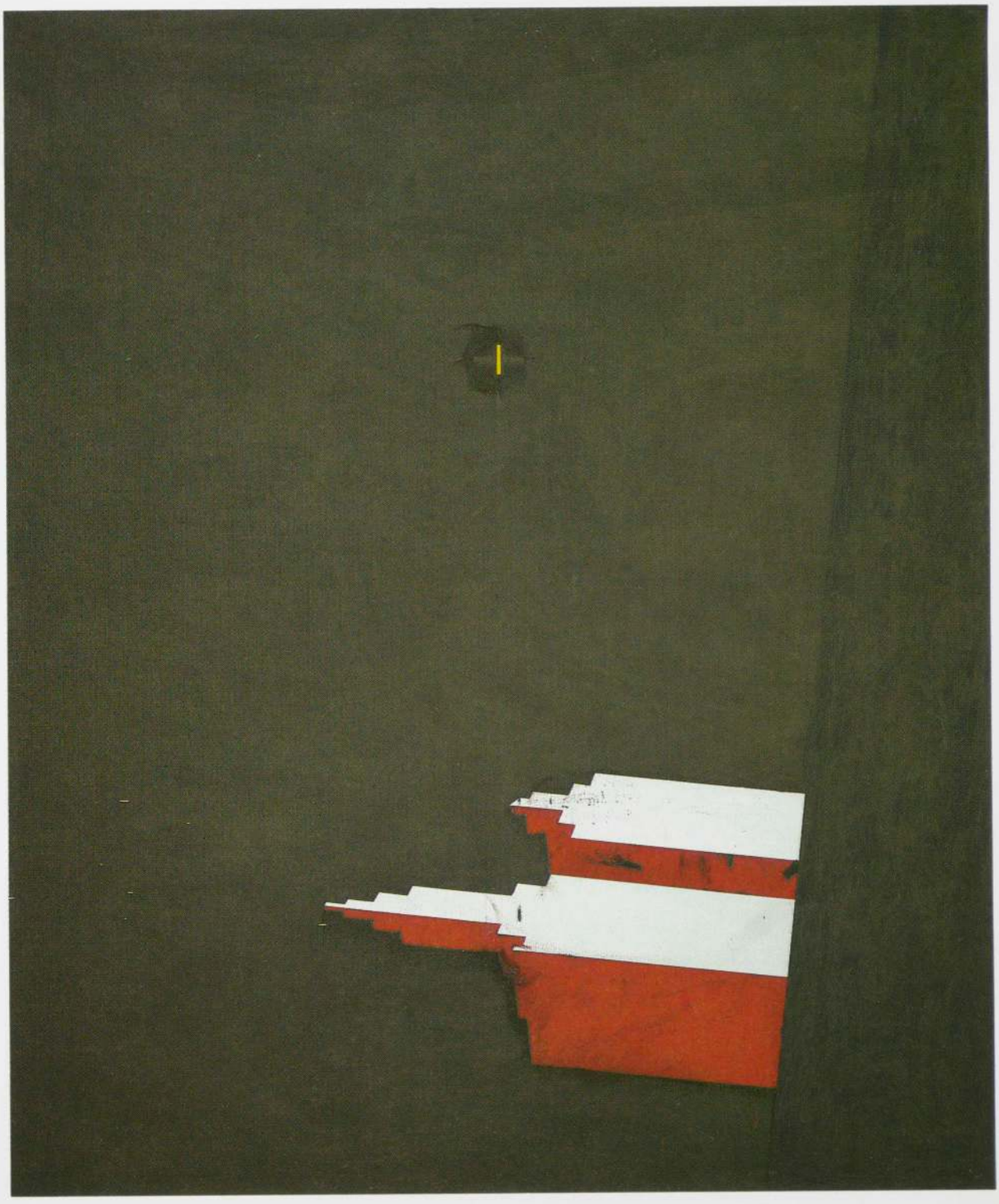
32 CADILLAC/CHOPSTICKS, 1975, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Barry Lowen Collection



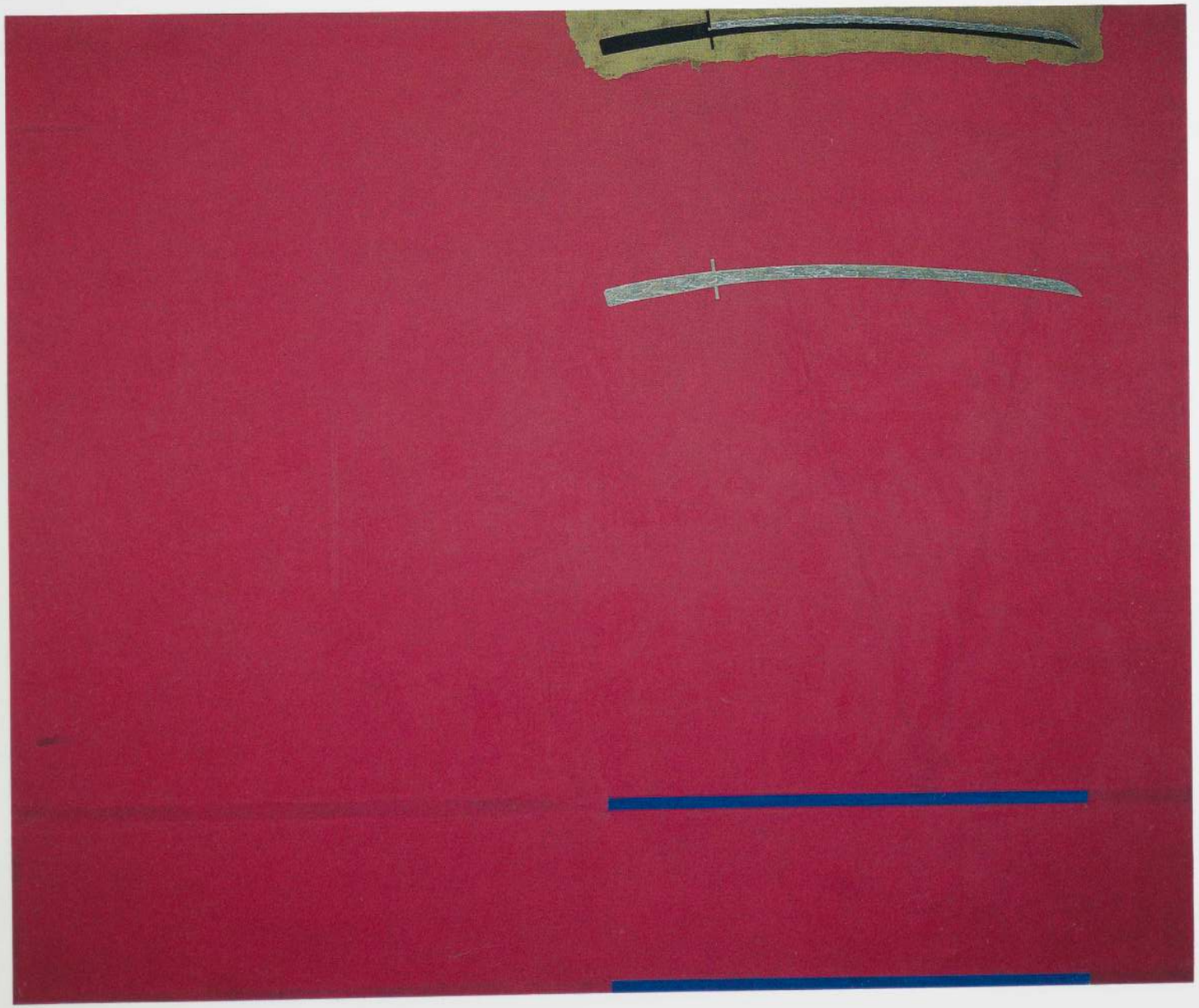
33 RETIREMENT PAINTING, 1975, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Edward R. Downe, Jr., New York



34 WRIGLEY BUILDING (CHICAGO), 1975, latex and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Philip Glass, New York



35 SWORD, 1976, oil and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Alanna Heiss and Fred Sherman, New York

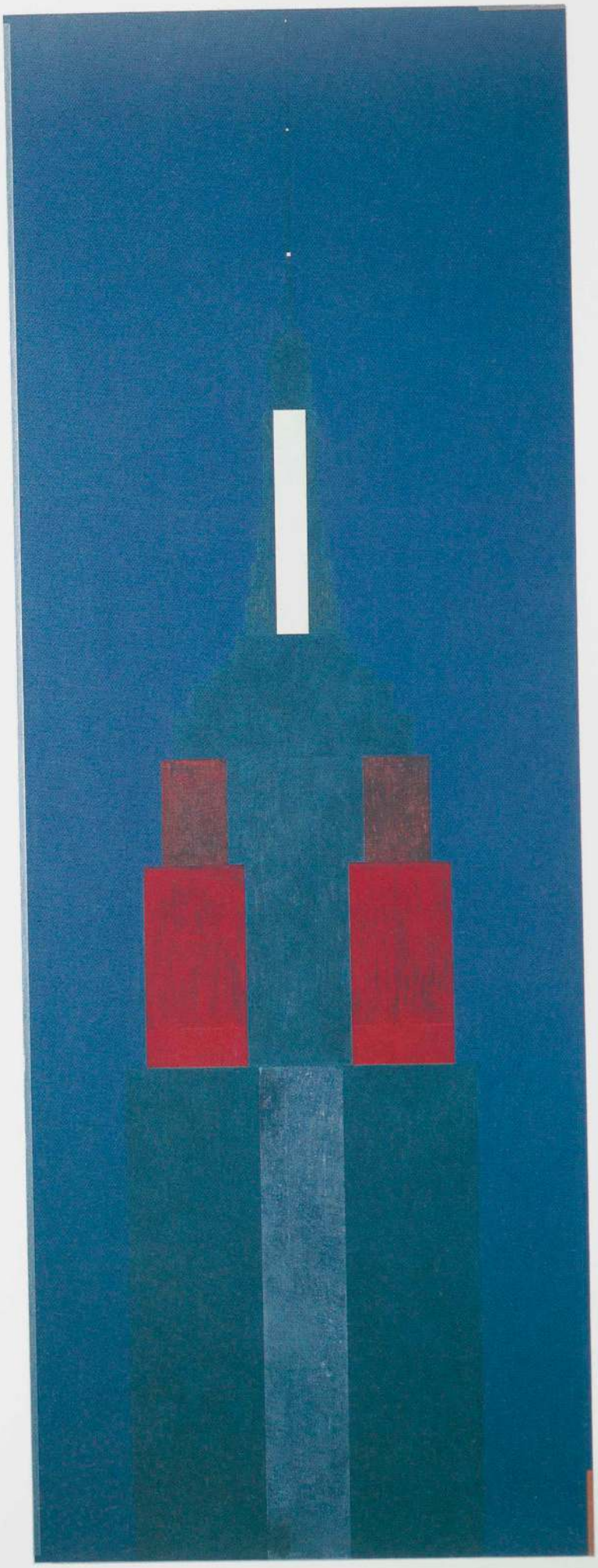


36 TEAPOT, 1976, oil and acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
First Bank System, Inc., Minneapolis

37 PIANO (FOR DUKE ELLINGTON), 1977, oil on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Mary and Jim Patton, Great Falls, Virginia

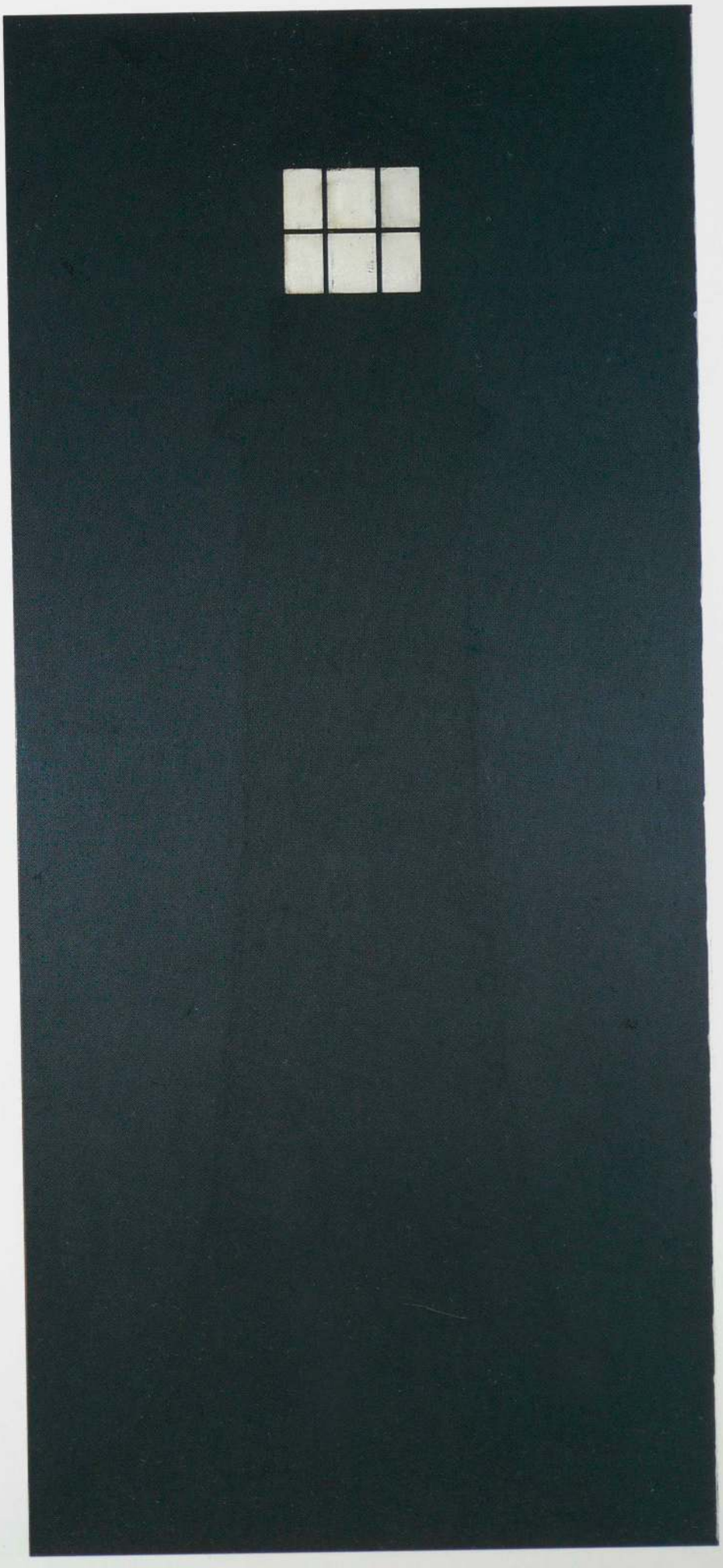
38 SWIMMER, 1977, oil and pure pigment on canvas, 90 x 75 in.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, gift of Jennifer Bartlett

39 EMPIRE STATE, 1978, oil on canvas, 108 x 38¾ in.
Thomas Ammann, Zurich

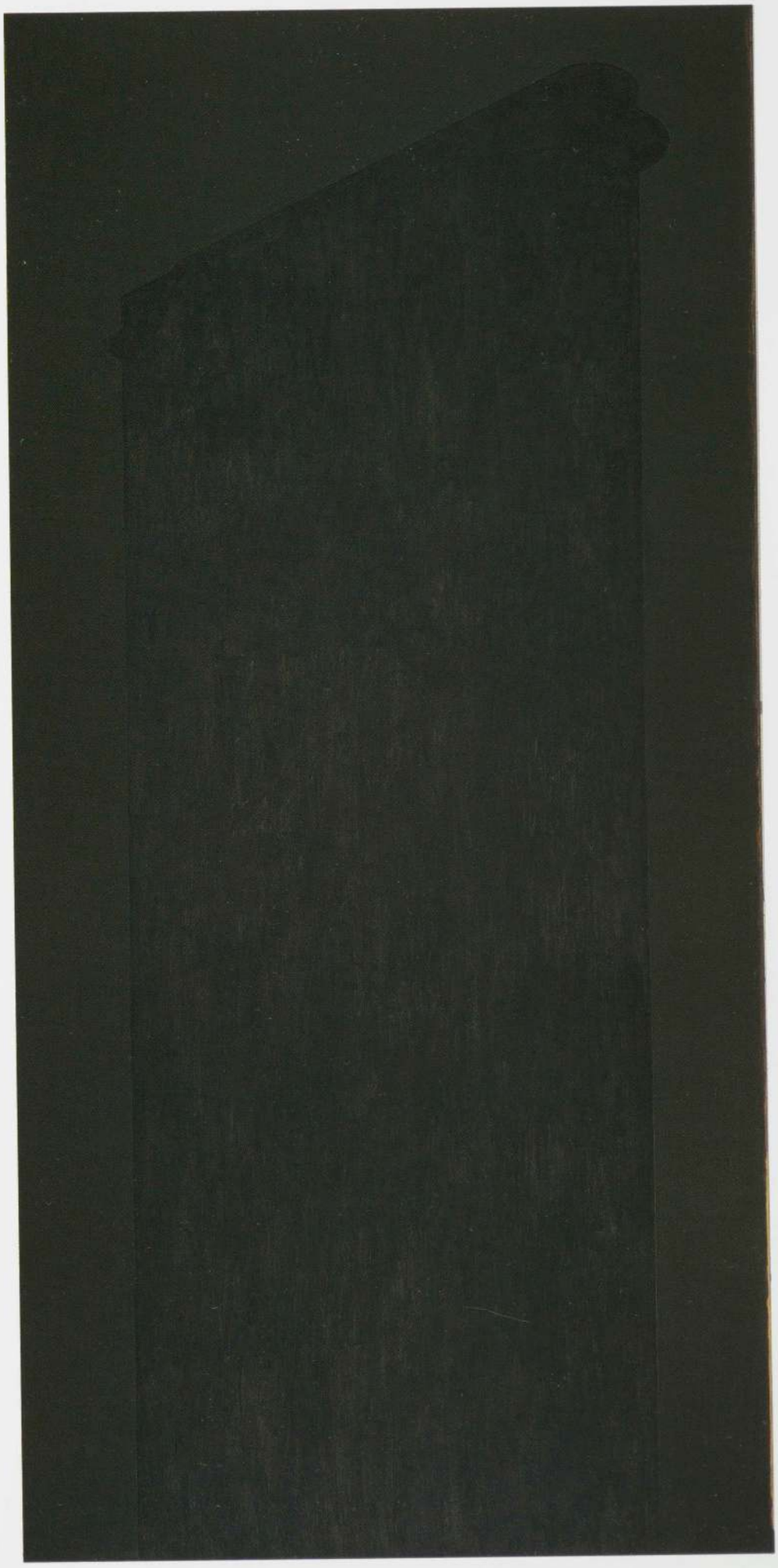


40 SKYSCRAPER II, 1978, latex, acrylic, and oil on canvas, two panels, 120 x 57½ in. overall
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Greenwald, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

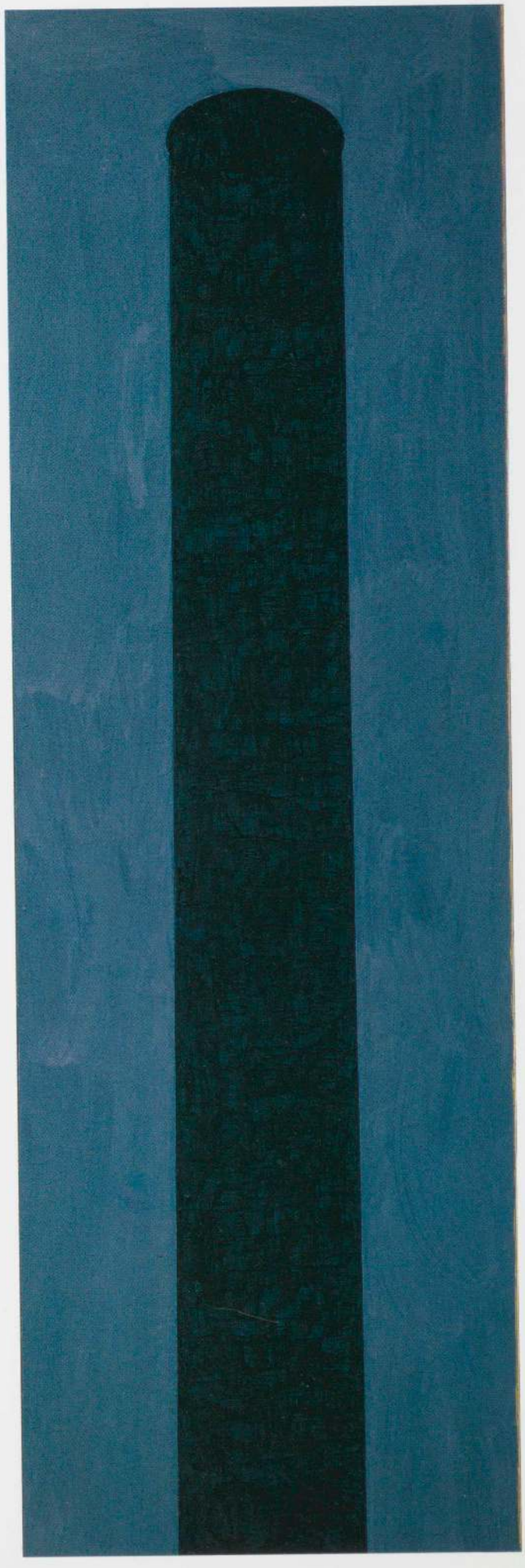
41 EDDYSTONE, 1979, oil on canvas, 108 x 48 in.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, president



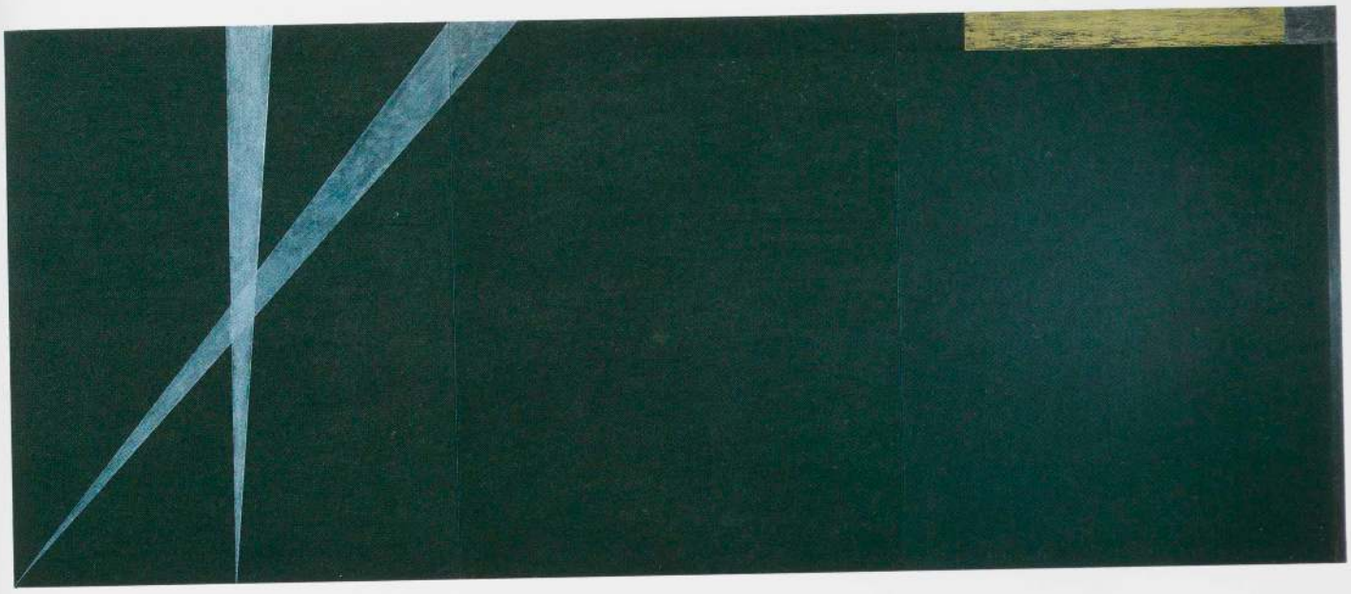
42 FLATIRON (FOR LILY), 1979, oil on canvas, 108 x 52 in.
The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Collection, Los Angeles



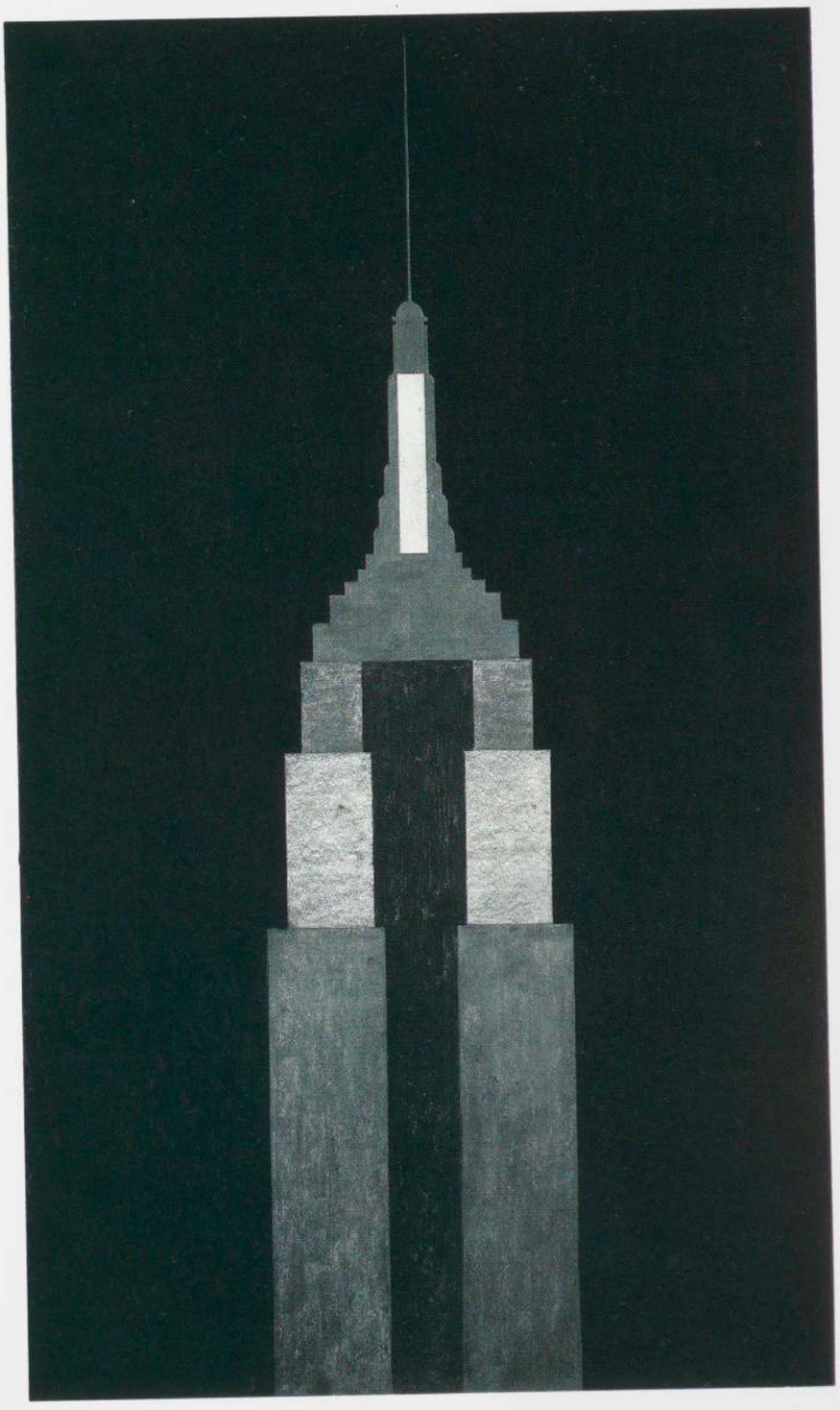
43 STACK, 1979, oil on canvas, 108 x 34½ in.
Loretta and Robert K. Lifton Collection, New York



44 BIG PICTURE, 1979–80, oil on canvas, three panels, 96 x 228¾ in. overall
Blum Helman Gallery, New York



45 UNTITLED, 1980, graphite and pastel on paper, 53 x 31¼ in.
Jack E. Chachkes, New York



46 UNTITLED, 1980, graphite and pastel on paper, 106 x 31¼ in.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Hoffman, Dallas

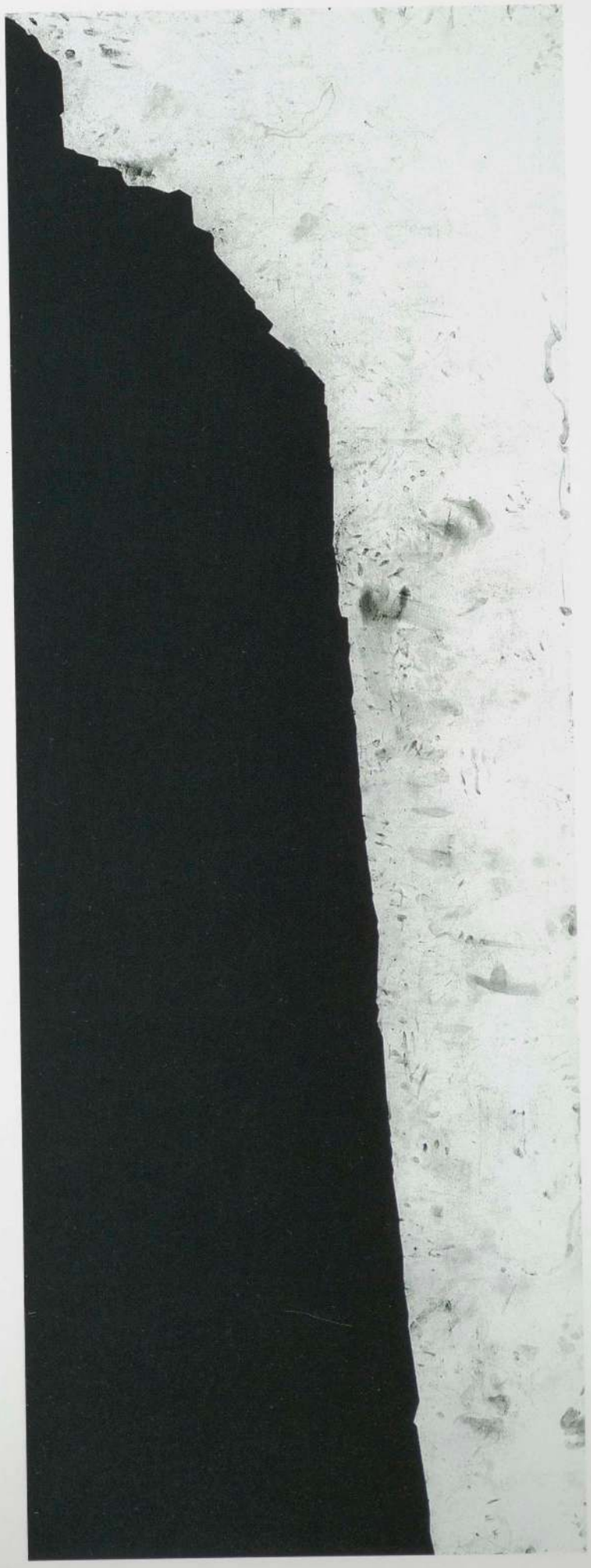
47 THE MITTENS, 1980–81, oil on canvas, 39 x 144 in.
Lewis Zachary Cohen and Pamela Bicket, Paris and Berkeley, California

48 EDDYSTONE, 1980–81, pastel on paper, 109½ x 47¾ in.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Hoffman, Dallas

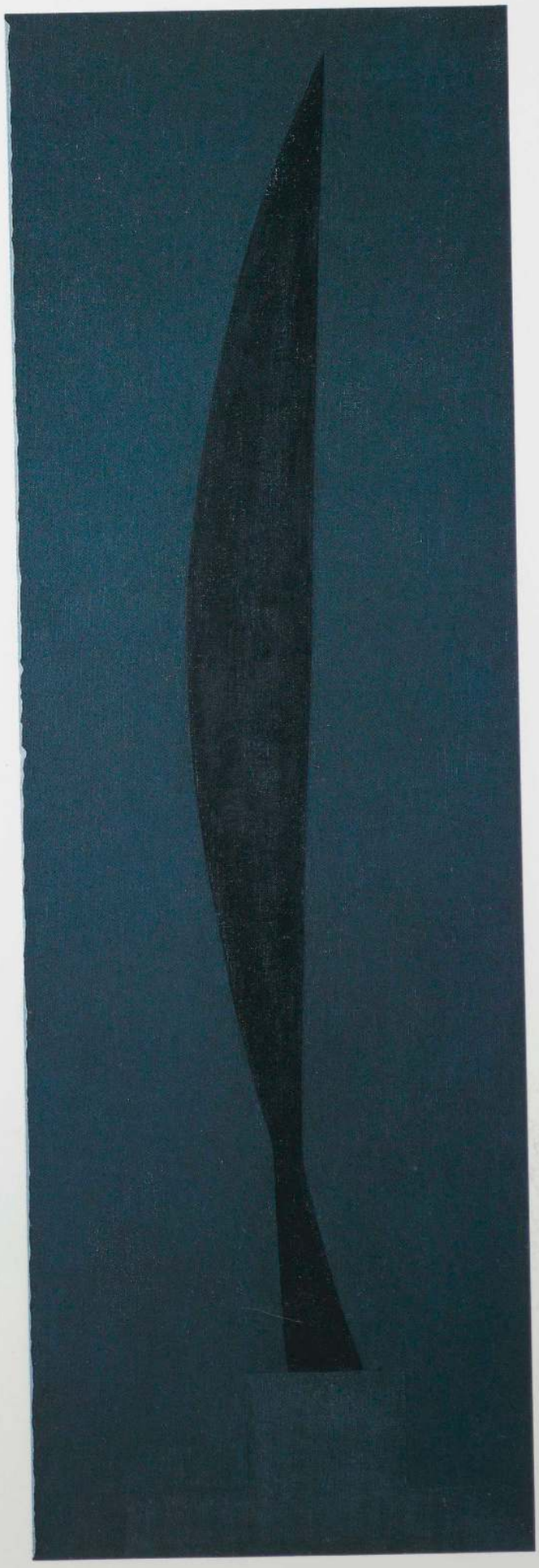
49 BLACK MILL, 1981, oil on canvas, 108 x 63 in.
Susan and Lewis Manilow, Chicago

50 RED MILL, 1981, pastel on paper, 111 x 48¾ in.
La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, museum purchase

51 THE SEVENTH SISTER, 1981, pastel on paper, 108 x 39 in.
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Greenwald, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan



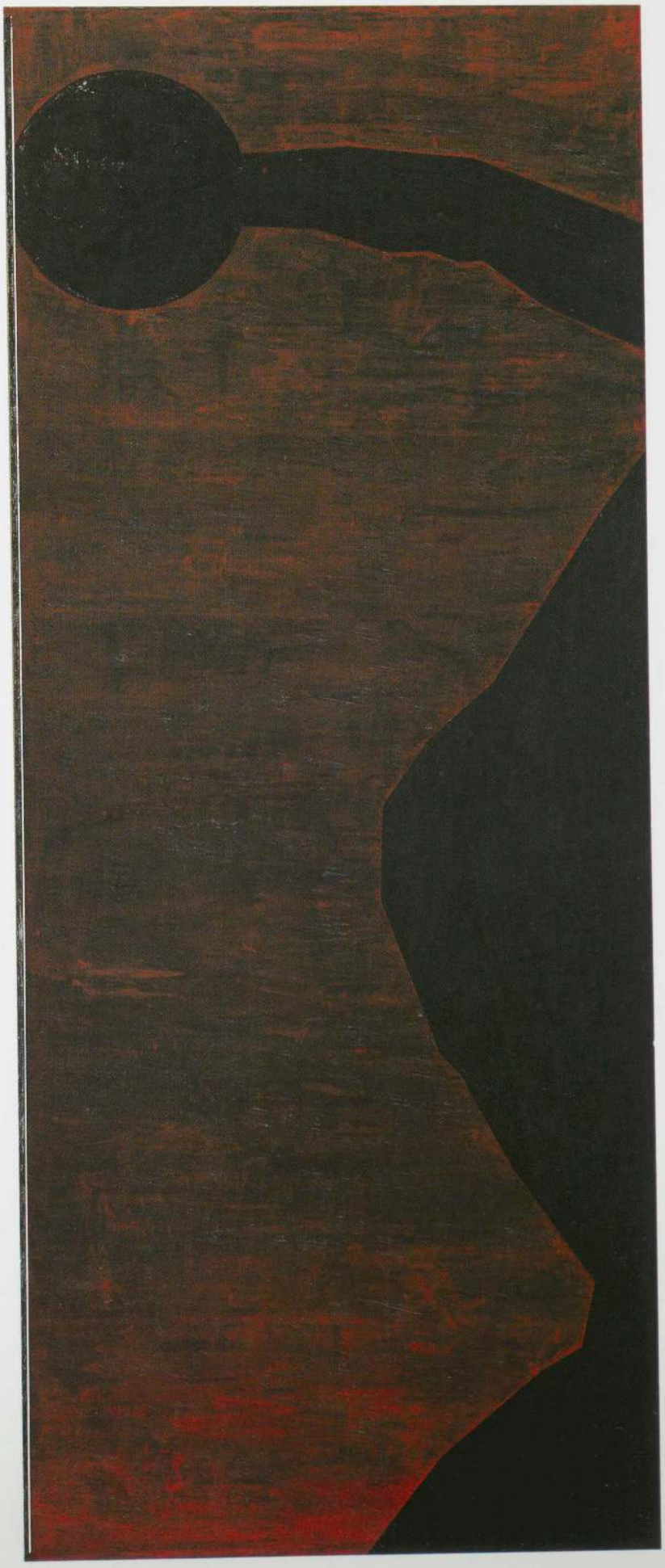
52 BLACK BIRD, 1982, oil on canvas, 63 x 20½ in.
Collection of the artist



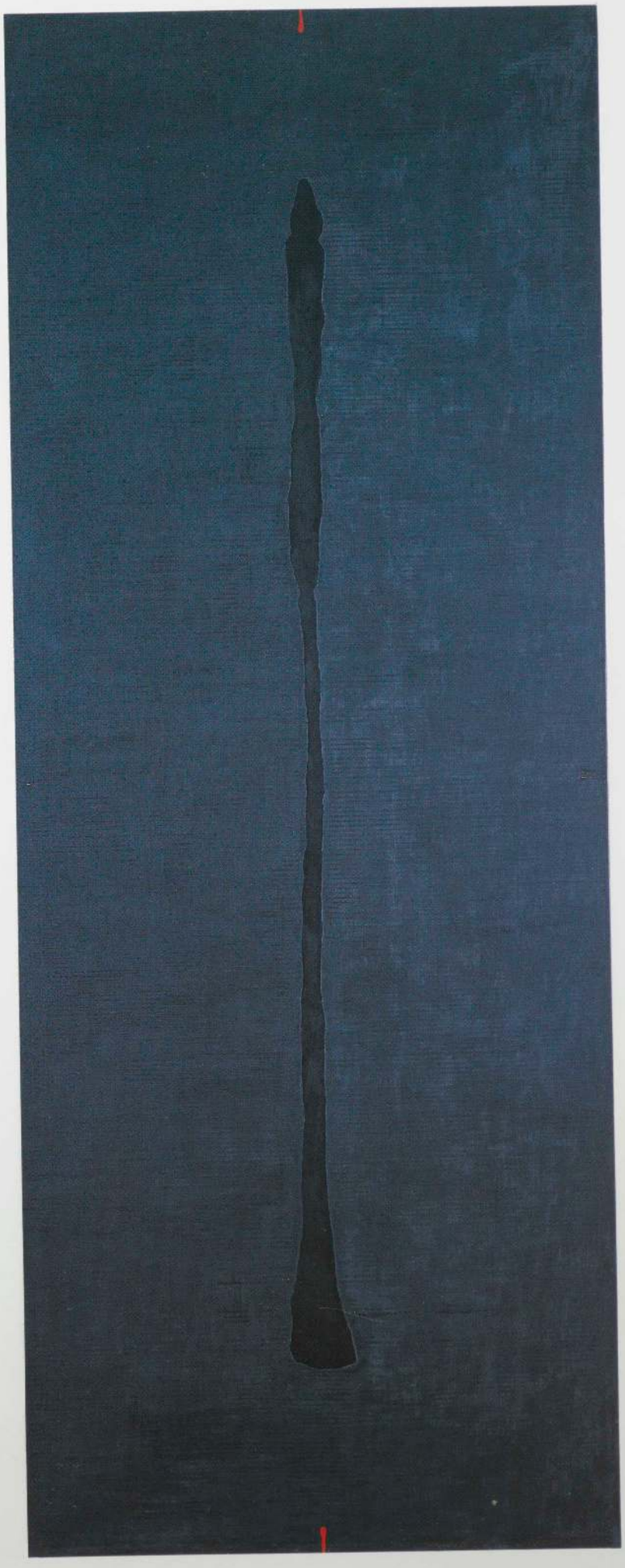
53 THINKER, 1982, oil on canvas, 108 x 63 in.
Helman Collection, New York

54 THINKER, 1982, pastel on paper, 108 x 63 in.
Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha

55 BOWLER, 1982–84, oil on canvas, 108 x 44⅝ in.
John and Mary Pappajohn, Des Moines



56 GIACOMETTI PIECE, 1983–84, oil on canvas, 108 x 41¾ in.
Roger Davidson, Toronto

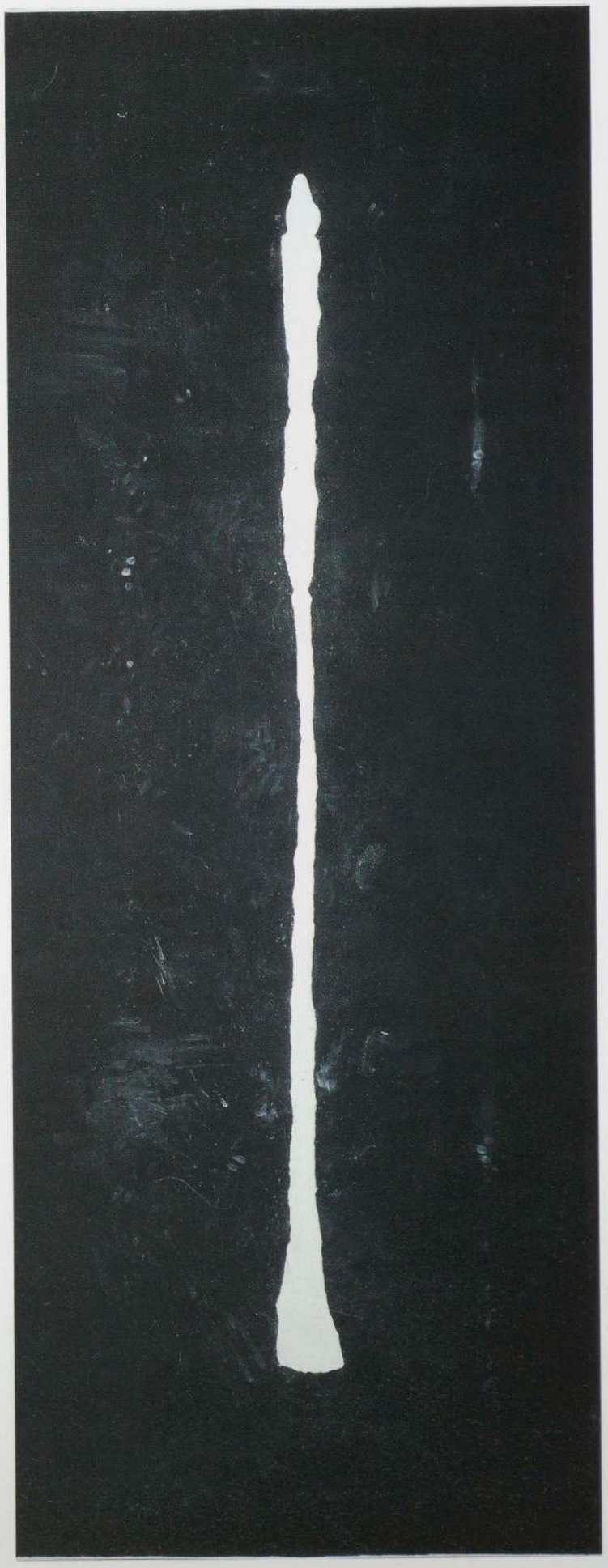


57 ICEBERG, 1984, latex and oil on canvas, 56 x 157⅜ in.
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., gift of the Friends of the Corcoran

58 SKYSCRAPER III, 1984, oil and latex on canvas, two panels, 120 x 57½ in. overall
Locksley Shea Gallery, Minneapolis

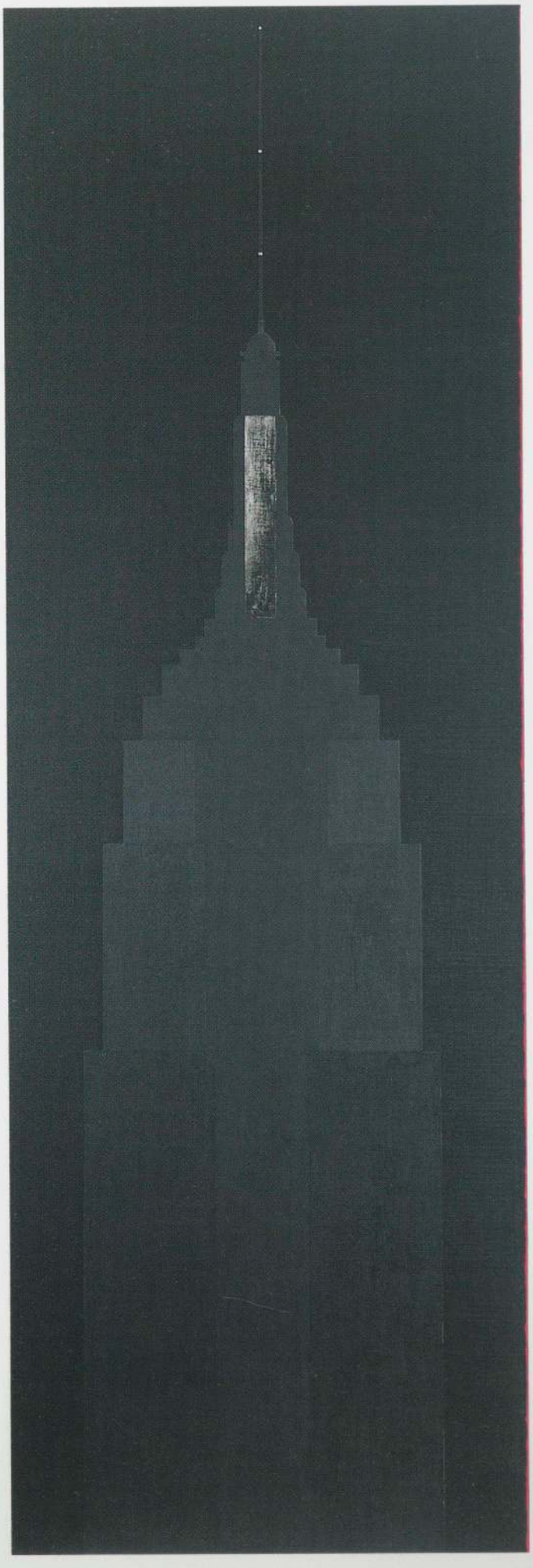
59 BOWLER, 1984, pastel on paper, 108 x 44⅝ in.
Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Anderson, San Francisco

60 GIACOMETTI PIECE (FOR BOB HOLMAN), 1984, pastel on paper, 108 x 34½ in.
Collection of the artist



61 THE RAZOR'S EDGE (FOR BILL MURRAY), 1985, oil on canvas, 30⅛ x 72 in.
Gerald S. Elliott, Chicago

62 EMPIRE STATE, 1985–86, oil on canvas, 96 x 32 in.
Gerald S. Elliott, Chicago

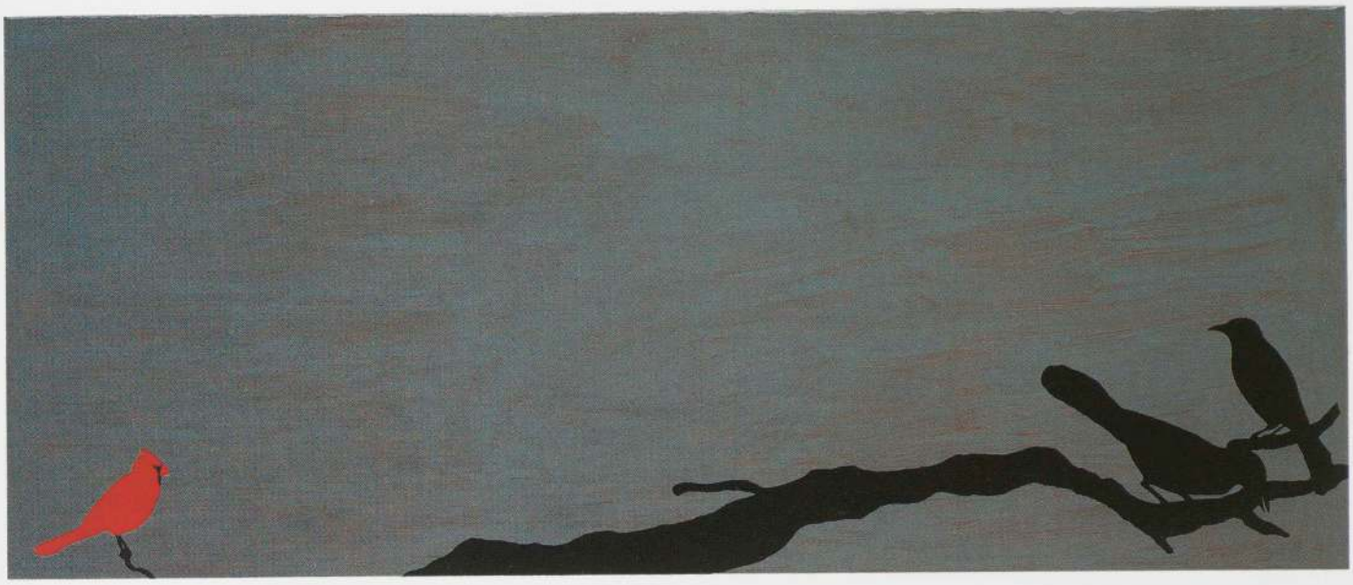


63 RED CROSS, 1986, pastel on paper, 38⅛ x 38⅛ in.
Sheldon and Joan Krasnow, River Forest, Illinois

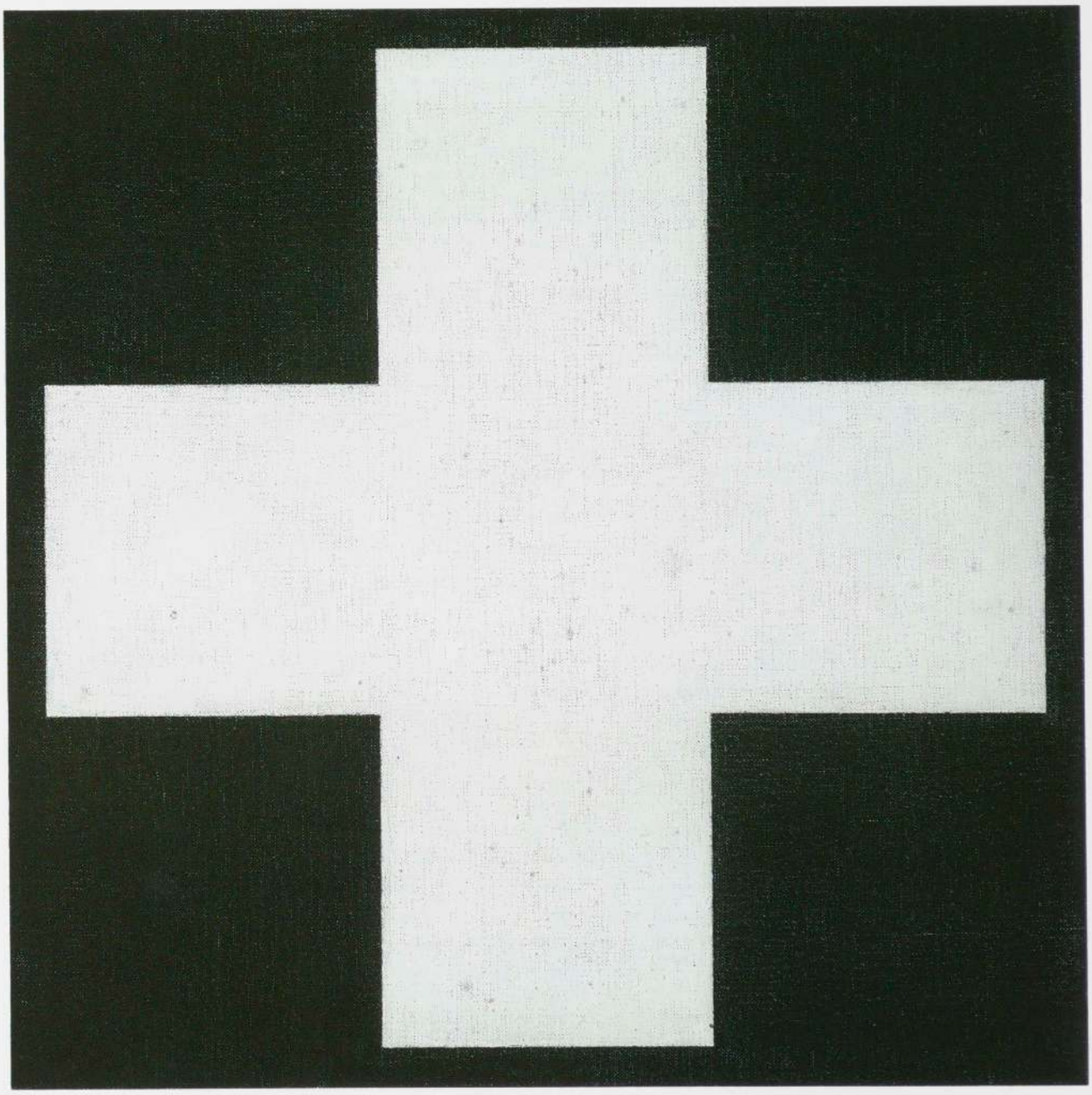
64 LANDSCAPE, 1987, oil on canvas, 112 x 66 in.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Joseph H. Hirshhorn Purchase Fund

65 MOON DOG (FOR HELEN), 1987, oil on canvas, 108 x 60 in.
Thomas Ammann, Zurich

66 THE RED AND THE BLACK, 1987, oil and latex on canvas, 30⅛ x 72 in.
Collection of the artist



67 RED CROSS (WHITE ON BLACK), 1987, oil on canvas, 39 x 39 in.
Private collection, courtesy Blum Helman Gallery, New York



CHRONOLOGY

1935
June 20—Robert Stephen Moskowitz born in Brooklyn to Louis and Lily Moskowitz. Grows up in Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn. Father owns a dry-cleaning business. Has one older sister, Elaine.

1941–47
Attends Public School 205 in Brooklyn.

1945
February 6—younger sister, Karen, is born.

1947–49
Attends Seth Low Junior High School in Brooklyn.

1948
Father, Louis, abandons family.

1949–53
Attends Lafayette High School in Brooklyn; graduates in June 1953.

1953–54
Works at various jobs during the day, including work for Hammacher Schlemmer and typesetting for a teacher.

1953–56
Studies engineering drafting at Mechanics Institute, New York, at night; graduates in 1956. Continues to live at home with his mother and two sisters. Mother, Lily, begins periodic work as a nurse in Florida, leaving Robert to care for younger sister.

1954–59
March—works as a technical illustrator for Sperry Gyroscope Company (a subsidiary of Sperry Rand Corporation, now called UNISYS) in Lake Success, New York, where he meets Tom Russell who shares his interest in art.

1956
September—together with Tom Russell, attends Pratt Institute of Art in Brooklyn at night, studying first with Robert Richenburg (1956) and later (1958) with Adolph Gottlieb who influences his work.

1959
June—goes to England, sees Adolph Gottlieb exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Finds a studio and spends a year north of London in Bushey in an artists' community. Forms friendship with artist Gwyther Irwin. Makes collages and starts window-shade series. Travels to Amsterdam and Brussels. Visits museums.

1960
Summer—when visa expires, returns to Brooklyn where he shares an apartment on Clinton Avenue with artist Lynn Leland. Paints and works as a free-lance technical illustrator. Art dealer Ivan Karp notices his paintings while visiting the studio to see Lynn Leland's work; Karp returns later with curator Henry Geldzahler.

1961
Summer—meets Hermine Ford, daughter of Rachel "Wally" and Jack Tworkov. Fall—moves to 822 Sixth Avenue in Manhattan. Joins Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, where he takes part in his first group exhibition in September.

1962
March—first solo exhibition, at Castelli. Fall—travels for three months to London, Paris, Greece, and Italy. Begins friendship with artist Michael Hurson. Meets artist Jack Tworkov.

1962–63
Makes envelope paintings.

1964
Teaches undergraduate students at Maryland Institute of Art, Mount Royal School of Painting, Baltimore, one day a week, until 1973. Leaves Castelli Gallery. June 21—marries Hermine Ford. Moves into apartment at 1686 Third Avenue, New York, near Ninety-fifth Street; studio remains at 822 Sixth Avenue.

1965
Moves studio to 1687 Third Avenue

across the street from his apartment. Spring—assists photographer Walker Evans on a project for Time-Life Books, traveling with him to the Hudson River Valley, where Evans photographs Frederic Edwin Church's mansion.

1966
December 30—son Erik born.

1966–70
Makes blue and lavender corner paintings.

1967
Receives Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and drives across the country to the West Coast visiting the Southwest en route. June–July—teaches drawing at Yale Summer School, Norfolk, Connecticut.

1968
Moves to Westbeth Artists Housing at 55 Bank Street, New York.

1968–80
Drives a taxi in New York.

1969
June–July—teaches drawing at Yale Summer School. Moves studio to 100 Wooster Street.

1970
First solo gallery exhibition in eight years, at French & Co., New York.

1971
March—first solo museum exhibition, at Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.

1972–1973
Receives Creative Artists Public Service Program (CAPS) grant in painting from the New York State Council on the Arts.

1973
With artist-friend Jim Starrett begins a stretcher business in New York (until 1981). Continues to teach and drive a taxi as well as paint. Moves house and studio to 81 Leonard Street. Joins Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York.

1973–74
Makes series of black paintings.

1974
April—lecturer, Ohio State University, Columbus. Begins to spend summers in Nova Scotia. September–October—Visiting Artist, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Leaves Nancy Hoffman Gallery.

1975
Receives National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist's Fellowship, $4,000. Introduces color into his work.

1976
April–June—lecturer, Ohio State University.

1979
August—mother dies.

1979–81
Makes three trips to southwestern United States with Erik and with Hermine.

1981–84
Artist-in-residence in graduate department, Maryland Institute.

1983
Travels with Hermine to Spain for two weeks. Visits North Africa with friend Jack Szanto for two weeks. Makes first prints, two screenprints, *Swimmer* and *Eddystone*, with Hiroshi Kawanishi at Simca Print Artists, New York.

1985
Makes lithograph and screenprint *Cadillac/Chopsticks* with Steve Andersen at Vermillion Press, Minneapolis.

1985–86
Travels to Japan twice.

1988
October—spends ten days making two woodblock prints, *Moon Dog* and *The Red and the Black*, in Kyoto, Japan, with Tadashi Toda for publication by Crown Point Press, New York.

Robert Moskowitz at the age of ten.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Atlanta, The High Museum of Art

Bennington, Vermont, Bennington College Art Collection

Berkeley, California, University Art Museum

Buffalo, Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum

Kitakyushu, Japan, Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art

La Jolla, California, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art

Los Angeles, The Lannan Foundation

Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art

New York, The Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University Art Collection

New York, The Museum of Modern Art

New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

New York, Whitney Museum of American Art

Omaha, Joslyn Art Museum

Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Seattle, Seattle Art Museum

Waltham, Massachusetts, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University

Washington, D.C., The Corcoran Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution

Anna Brooke

EXHIBITIONS

Solo Exhibitions

1962
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, "Robert Moskowitz," March 10–April 5.

1970
French & Co., New York, "Robert Moskowitz," April 13–May 4.

1971
Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, "Robert Moskowitz: Recent Paintings," March 13–April 10.

1973
Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, "Robert Moskowitz," November 10–29.

1974
Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, "Four New Paintings by Robert Moskowitz," November 30–December 19.

1977
The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, "Robert Moskowitz," October 19–November 16.

1979
Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, "Robert Moskowitz: Paintings, 1973–1974," September 5–29, and tour to Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, October 6–November 3; La Jolla (California) Museum of Contemporary Art, November 30–January 6, 1980.

1980
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, "Robert Moskowitz: Recent Drawings," December 6–24, and tour to Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, January 7–31, 1981.

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, "Robert Moskowitz:

Paintings and Drawings, 1966–1970," December 9–January 3, 1981, and tour to Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, January 7–31, 1981.

1981
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "Viewpoints: Robert Moskowitz: Recent Paintings," March 22–May 10, and tour to Hudson River Museum of Art, Yonkers, New York, July 10–August 30.

1983
Blum Helman Gallery, New York, "Robert Moskowitz: Paintings and Drawings," February 16–March 19.

Portland (Oregon) Center for the Visual Arts, "Robert Moskowitz: Recent Paintings and Drawings," March 31–April 30.

1986
Blum Helman Gallery, New York, "Robert Moskowitz: Paintings and Drawings," February 5–March 8, and tour as "Robert Moskowitz: Matrix/Berkeley 97" to University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, May 31–July 13.

1988
Blum Helman Gallery, New York, "Robert Moskowitz: New Work," March 3–26.

Selected Group Exhibitions

1961
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, "Group Show," September 22–October 14.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "The Art of Assemblage," October 2–November 12, and tour to Dallas Museum of Contemporary Arts, January 9–February 11, 1962; San Francisco Museum of Art, March 5–May 15.

1962
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, "Drawings," May 26–June 30.

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, "New Realists," November 1–December 1.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Recent Acquisitions," November 20–January 13, 1963.

1963
De Cordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts, "New Experiments in Art," March 23–May 28.

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, "Group Show," April 2–25.

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, "Drawings," May 20–June 30.

The Oakland Museum, "Pop Art USA," September 7–29.

University of Kentucky Art Gallery, Lexington, "Graphics '63," November 17–December 15, and Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service tour to American International College, Springfield, Massachusetts, February 25–March 17, 1964; National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C., April 4–26, 1964; Saint Norbert College, West De Pere, Wisconsin, September 12–October 4, 1964; Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, October 17–November 8, 1964; Towson State College, Baltimore, November 21–December 13, 1964; Indiana University, Bloomington, January 2–24, 1965; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York, February 6–28, 1965; Nevada Southern University, Las Vegas, March 13–April 4, 1965; Cincinnati Art Museum, April 17–June 13, 1965; University of

Southern Florida, Tampa, July 3–25, 1965.

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, "Mixed Media and Pop Art," November 19–December 13.

Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York, "New Directions in American Painting," December 1–January 5, 1964, and Poses Institute of Fine Arts, Brandeis University tour to Isaac Delgado Museum, New Orleans, February 7–March 8, 1964; Atlanta Art Association, March 18–April 22, 1964; J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, May 4–June 7, 1964; Art Museum, Indiana University, Bloomington, June 22–September 20, 1964; Washington University, Saint Louis, October 5–30, 1964; Detroit Institute of Arts, November 10–December 6, 1964.

1964

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, "Black, White, and Grey," January 9–February 9.

Art Gallery, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, "Selections from the L. M. Asher Family Collection," January 20–February 23.

Davison Art Center, Weslyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, "The New Art," March 1–22.

1965

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "A Decade of American Drawings: 1955–1965," November 28–June 6, 1966.

1966

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, "Variety," April 4–30.

1968

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Recent Acquisitions," May 23–July 7.

1969

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1969 Annual Exhibition: Contemporary American Painting," December 16–February 1, 1970. Also included in 1973, 1979, and 1981 exhibitions.

1970

School of Visual Arts, New York, "The Invisible Image," February 10–March 5.

1975

The Art Institute of Chicago, "The Small Scale in Contemporary Art," May 8–June 15.

1978

Willard Gallery, New York, "Group Show," January 7–February 11.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "New Image Painting," December 6–January 28, 1979.

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, "American Paintings of the 1970s," December 8–January 14, 1979, and tour to Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California, February 3–March 18, 1979; Oakland Museum, April 10–May 20, 1979; Cincinnati Art Museum, July 6–August 26, 1979; Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, September 9–October 21, 1979; Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, November 11, 1979–January 2, 1980.

1979

Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, "Visionary Images," May 6–June 16.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "The Decade in

Review: Selections from the 1970s," June 17–September 3.

Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, New York, "American Paintings: The Eighties: A Critical Interpretation," September 5–October 13.

1980

Venice, La Biennale di Venezia, "Arti visive '80," June 1–September 28.

Indianapolis Museum of Art, "Painting and Sculpture Today 1980," June 24–August 17.

1981

Blum Helman Gallery, New York, "Bryan Hunt, Neil Jenney, Robert Moskowitz, Donald Sultan," September 16–October 10.

Kunsthalle, Basel, "Robert Moskowitz, Susan Rothenberg, Julian Schnabel," October 3–November 15, and tour to Frankfurter Kunstverein, December 18–January 31, 1982; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark, March 13–May 2, 1982.

1982

Metro Pictures, New York, "Painting," January 7–30.

Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, "Great Big Drawings," April 3–May 2.

The Art Institute of Chicago, "Seventy-fourth American Exhibition," June 12–August 1.

Willard Gallery, New York, "White & Black," December 1–23.

1983

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, "Drawing Conclusions: A Survey of American Drawings: 1958–1983," March 9–April 9.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Some Recent Acquisitions: Painting and Sculpture," May 27–October 11.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Minimalism to Expressionism: Painting and Sculpture since 1965 from the Permanent Collection," June 2–December 4.

Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, "Black & White," June 25–August 13.

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, "Mostly X-L," July 1–August 28.

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, "Season's Greetings," September 10–October 8.

Palacio de Velázquez, Madrid, "Tendencias en Nueva York," October 11–December 1.

1984

La Jolla (California) Museum of Contemporary Art, "American Art since 1970: Painting, Sculpture, and Drawings from the Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York," March 10–April 22, and tour to Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, May 17–July 29; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, September 29–November 25; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, January 12–March 3, 1985; Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, March 30–May 26, 1985.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture," May 17–August 19.

CDS Gallery, New York, "Artists Choose Artists III," May 24–June 30.

Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston, "Off the Press: Recent Prints," September 4–27.

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., "Content: A Contemporary Focus: 1974–1984," October 4–January 6, 1985.

Kitakyushu (Japan) Municipal Museum of Art, "Painting Now," October 6–28.

Blum Helman Gallery, New York, "Drawings," October 10–November 3.

Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, "Eccentric Images: An Exhibition of Contemporary Drawings," October 20–November 24.

1985

Lorence Monk Gallery, New York, "Drawings," April 6–27.

Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, "Robert Moskowitz: Recent Paintings and Pastels; Judith Shea: Recent Sculpture," May 11–June 23, and tour to Knight Gallery, Charlotte, North Carolina, July 19–September 14.

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, "AIDS Benefit Exhibition: A Selection of Works on Paper," November 9–30.

1986

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "New Acquisitions: Works on Paper," June 21–August 31.

The Brooklyn Museum, "Monumental Drawing: Works by Twenty-two Contemporary Americans," September 19–November 10.

Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, "The Window in Twentieth–Century Art," September 21–January 18, 1987, and tour to Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, April 24–June 29, 1987.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Contemporary Works from the Collection," November 6–March 31, 1987.

Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston, "Drawings," November 29–January 7, 1987.

1987

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, "Selections from the Roger and Myra Davidson Collection," January 14–March 22.

Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston, "Poetic Substance," December 5–January 6, 1988.

1988

Blum Helman Gallery, New York, "Group Show," February 3–27.

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On the jacket FRONT: *Red Mill,* 1981 (detail), pastel on paper, 111 x 48¾ in. La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California, museum purchase [50]. BACK: *Black Mill,* 1981 (detail), oil on canvas, 108 x 63 in. Susan and Lewis Manilow, Chicago [49].

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