



Raymond Jonson

Addison Rowe Gallery

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*This catalog is arranged chronologically and grouped by medium to provide readers with the opportunity to experience the progression of the art of...*

**Raymond Jonson (1891 - 1982)**



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*Rock Cliff*, 1918. Graphite and white pastel on brown paper. 12 ½" x 16 ¾". Signed & dated: lower right

Raymond Jonson was more than a painter. His life was dedicated to understanding and teaching the technical and spiritual basis of art. He pioneered the use of various tools such as the airbrush, brayer, and acrylic polymer paint. From his youth, he recognized the spiritual power of art and spent a lifetime exploring the ways painting can improve not only the painter's life, but also the viewer's. As an instructor at the University of New Mexico for twenty years, he influenced a generation of artists. He also founded the Jonson Gallery at UNM, thus ensuring an exhibition space for the future of modern (non-objective) art. Jonson's life was not dedicated to art, it was art.

To truly understand the work of Raymond Jonson, one must look at the evolution of his art chronologically. His early works were done while he was living in Chicago (1910 – 1924). These pieces have a very academic feel and show only traces of his individuality. He took his first trip to Colorado in 1917 and to New Mexico in 1921—these two excursions motivated Jonson to move to the southwest and inspired some of his best works from this early period.

In 1924, Jonson moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. This middle period from 1924 -1945 is considered by most to be his best. During this time he created the *Earth Rhythms* series, *Cityscapes*, the *Letters* and *Numbers* series, and his transcendental paintings (1938-1945). For most people, Jonson's career isn't worth examining after 1945—seeing the transcendental period pieces as the culmination of his work. Yet, if one has read and understood his philosophy it is clear that by 1945 he is just beginning.



## Oils and Polymers



1945-1978 is Jonson's late period; when he finally gained enough experience and knowledge to leave the physical behind and paint pure form and color. Although he read Kandinsky's Concerning the Spiritual in Art in 1921, it took him a lifetime to fully express these concepts. His 1930s and '40s paintings show movement into non-objective art, yet these pieces are complex, layered, and maintain elements that reference the physical world. It is not until the 1960s that Jonson's art gains a sense of simplicity—a subtlety of color and form that carries a greater intensity than the most intricate of paintings. Here we see vast expanses of color that seem at once inviting and overwhelming (much like the vistas of New Mexico). His hard-edge lines move beyond technical marvels into optical illusions; adding color and depth to his painting without the addition of paint. In a sense, his late period works are an expression of the Socratic Method. They are a question, and the viewer is invited to answer. Of course, there is no answer in art. This differs from his early works which stand as bold statements; lengthy discourses in which the viewer is involved, but not actively. One can stand entranced in front of an *Earth Rhythms* painting for hours, but the question of “what” is not foremost. These paintings are involved with the “how” of the physical world; how does it reflect nature, or how does it capture the scene? The later period pieces are focused on the “what”; what do you feel, what do you see, and what is it? In this regard Jonson believed he was approaching the spiritual in art. By challenging the viewer with a question he felt he could inspire people to look beyond the physical into the spiritual.

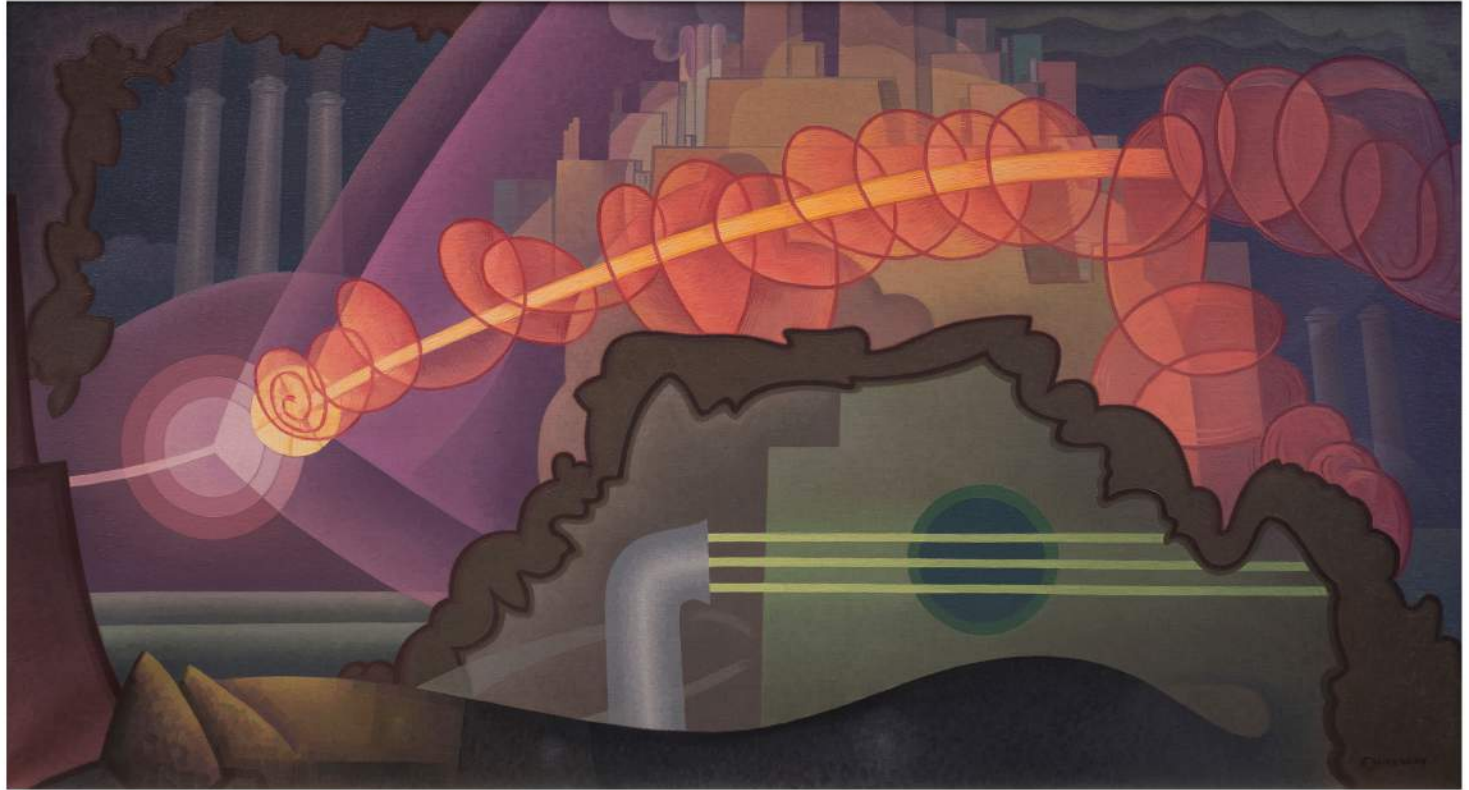
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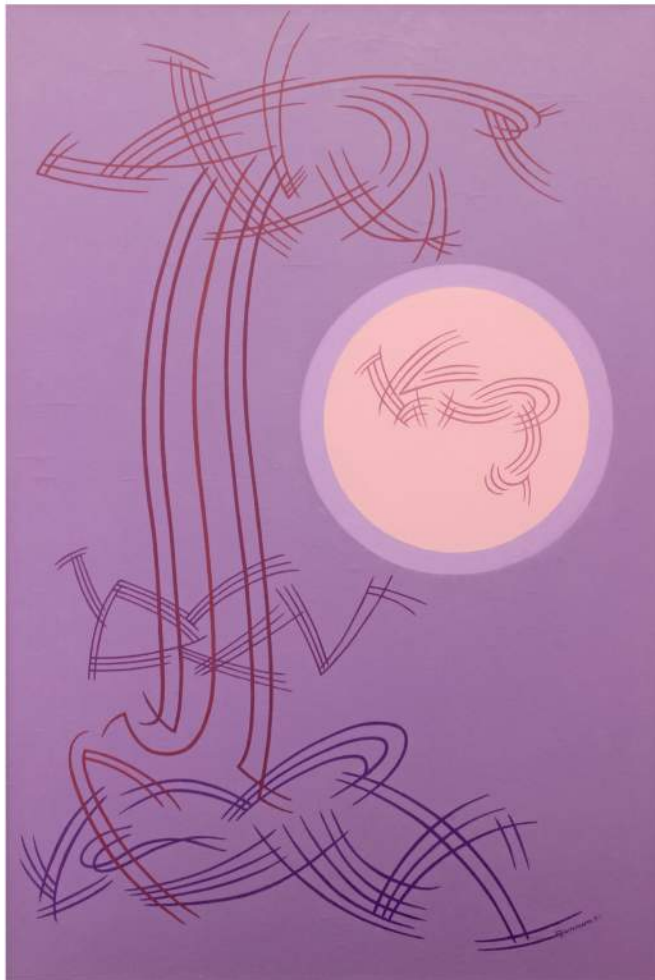
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Garman, Ed. *The Art of Raymond Jonson, Painter*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico, 1976. Print.

Kandinsky, Wassily. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Trans. Michael Sadleir. New York: Dover Publications, 1977. Print.

Ware, Robert, and MaLin Wilson-Powell. *To Form from Air: Music and the Art of Raymond Jonson*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 2010. Print.





*Oil No. 4, 1941*

Oil on canvas

35" x 24"

Signed & dated: lower right



*Oil No.11, 1941*

Oil on canvas

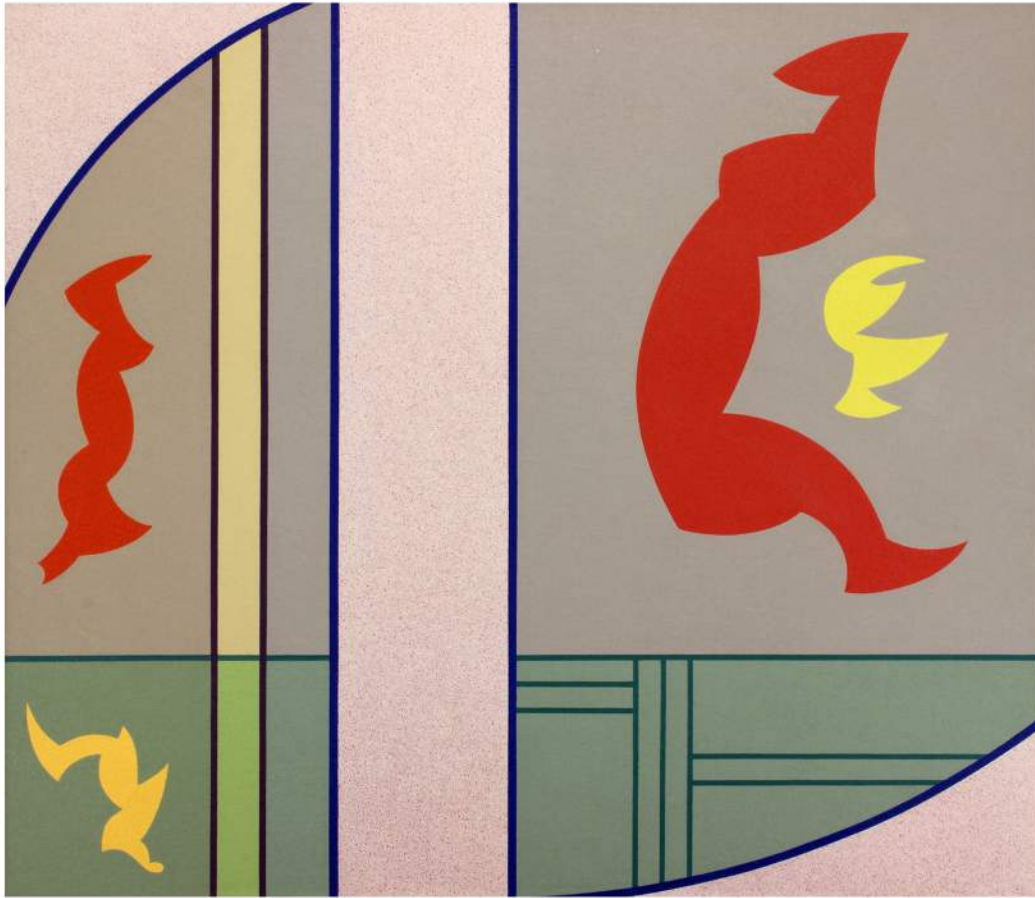
45" x 35"

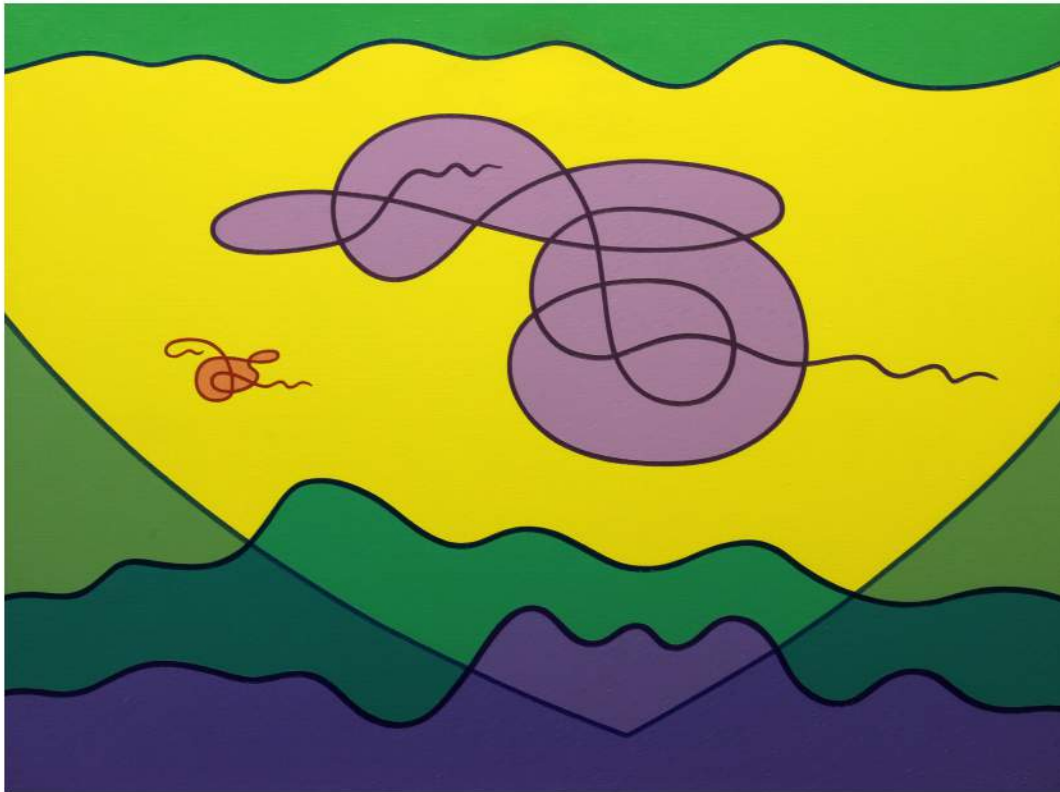
Signed & dated: lower right





*Oil No. 2, 1942*  
Oil on canvas  
42" x 36"  
Signed & dated: verso





*Chromatic Contrasts No. 20, 1945 (Oil No. 11). Oil on canvas. 24" x 32". Signed & dated: verso*







*Oil No. 16, 1953*  
Oil on linen  
50" x 37"  
Signed & dated:  
lower right



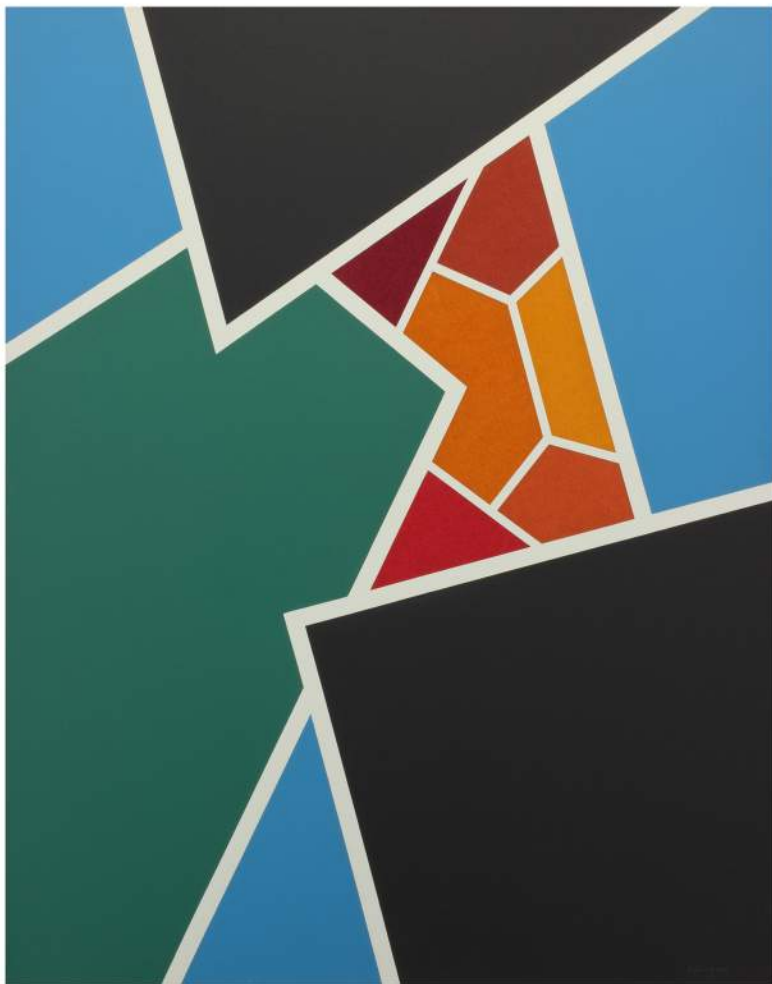


*Polymer No. 43, 1964*  
Acrylic on Masonite  
42" x 33"  
Signed & dated:  
bottom center

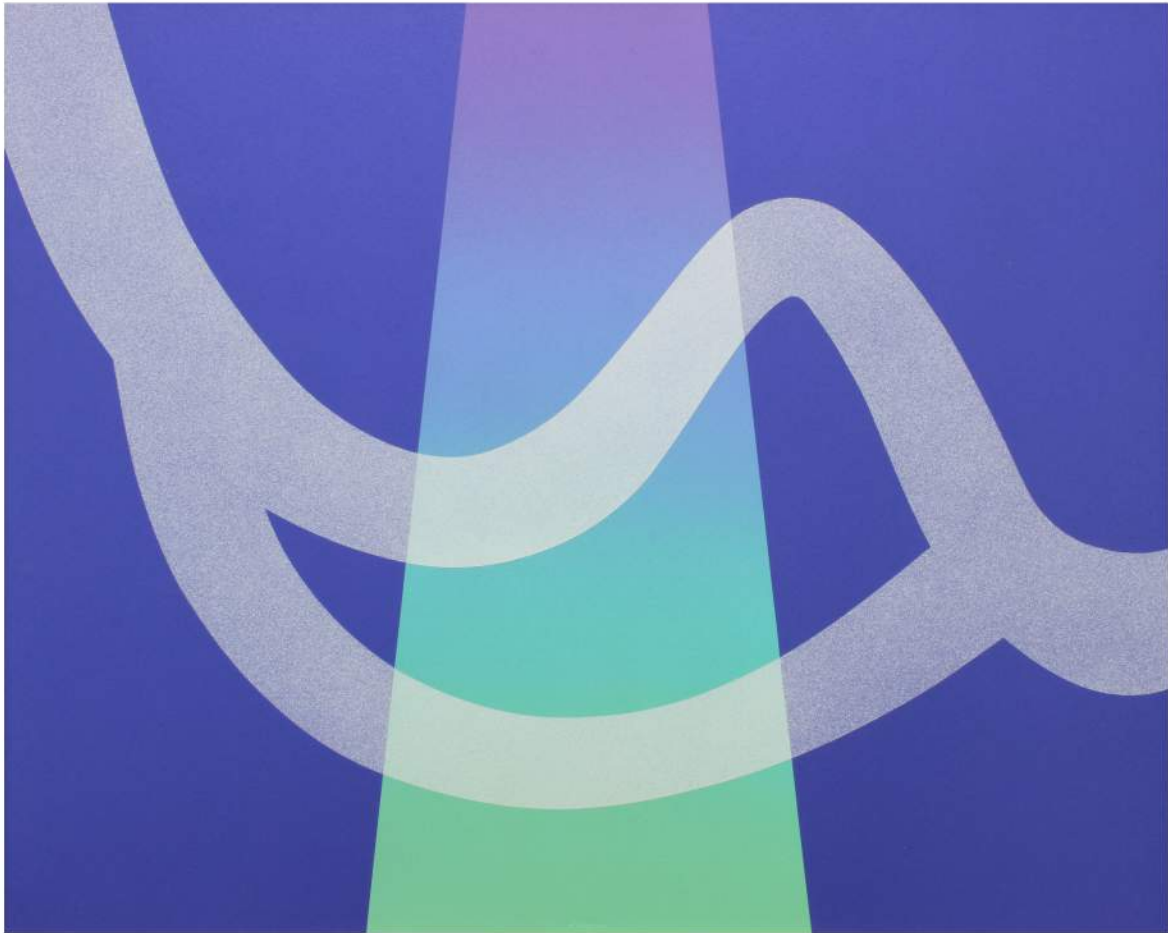


15 *Chromatic Contrasts No. 34 (Polymer No. 4)*, 1965. Acrylic on Masonite. 33" x 42". Signed & dated: lower left



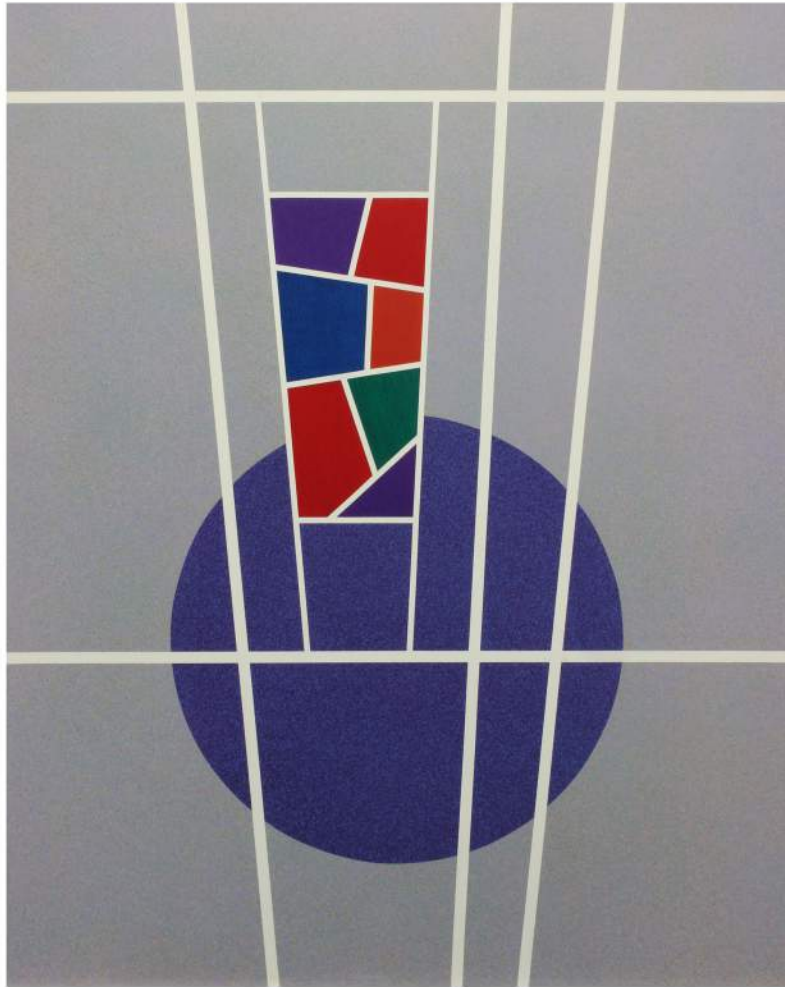


*Polymer No. 6, 1966*  
Acrylic on Masonite  
42" x 33"  
Signed & dated:  
lower left



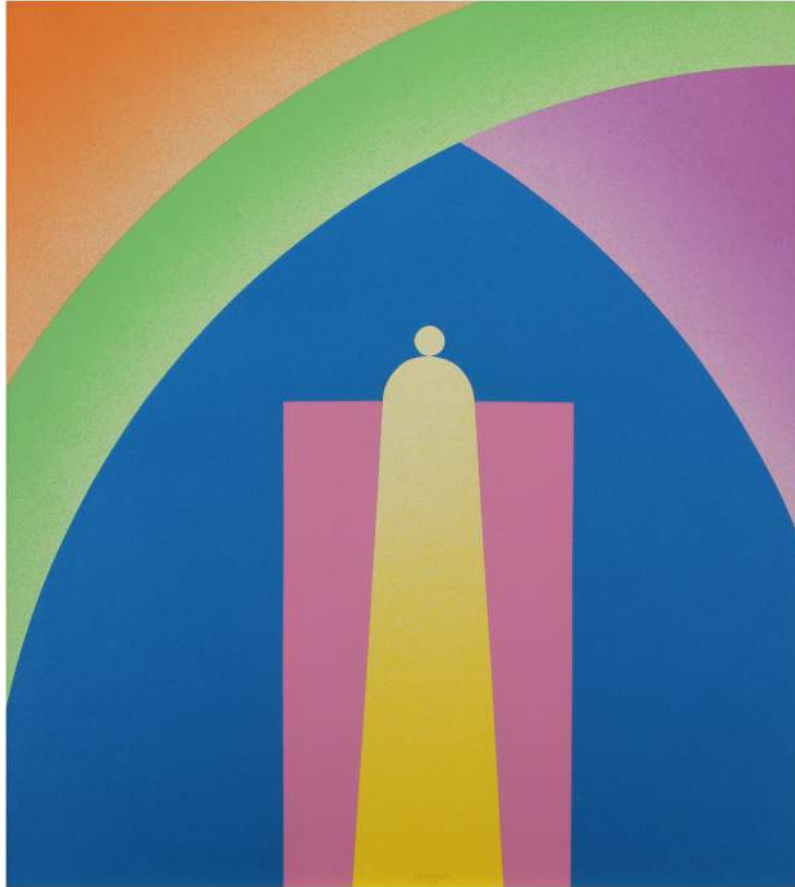


*Polymer No. 33, 1969. Acrylic on Masonite. 33" x 42". Signed & dated: bottom center*



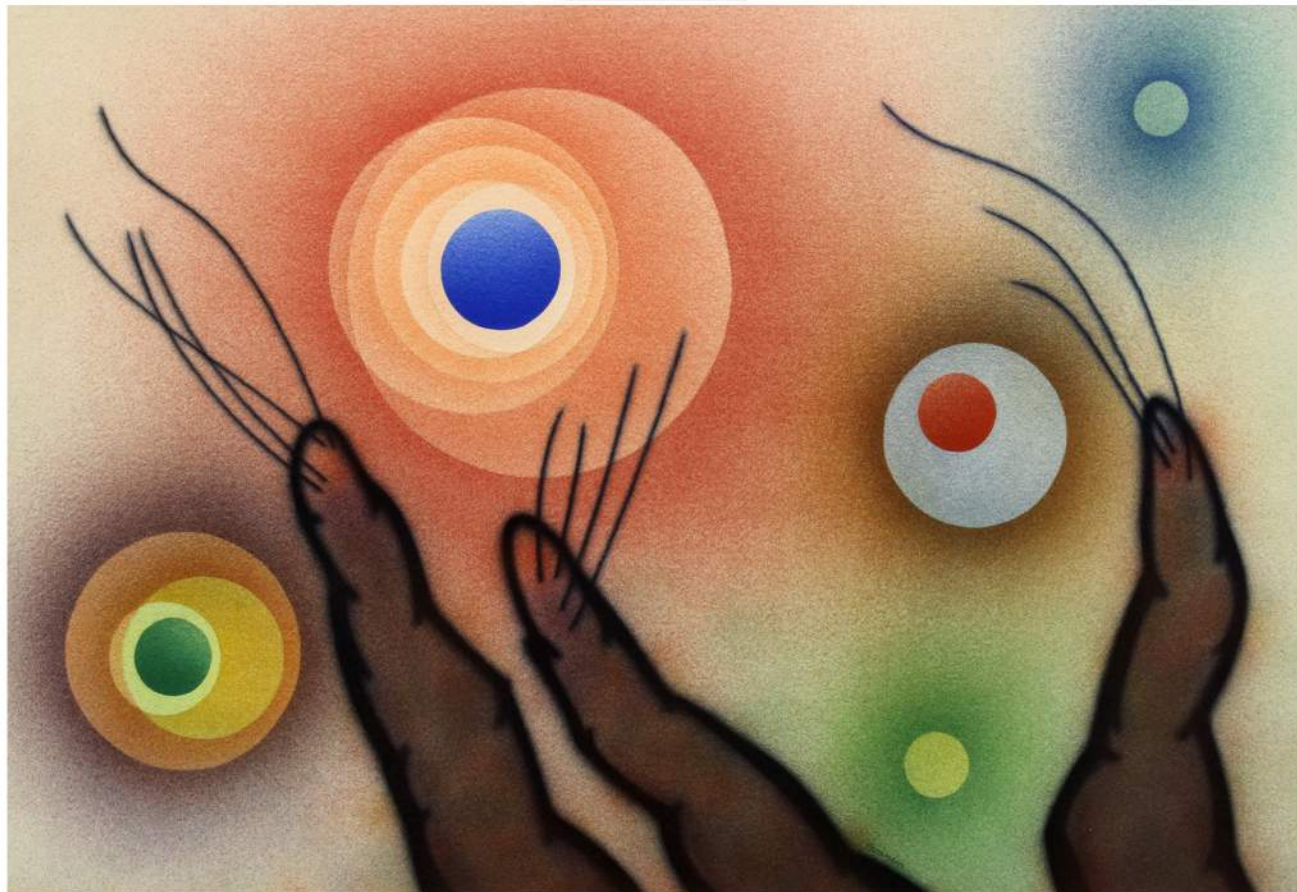
*Polymer No. 14, 1971*  
Acrylic on Masonite  
45" x 36"  
Signed & dated:  
bottom center

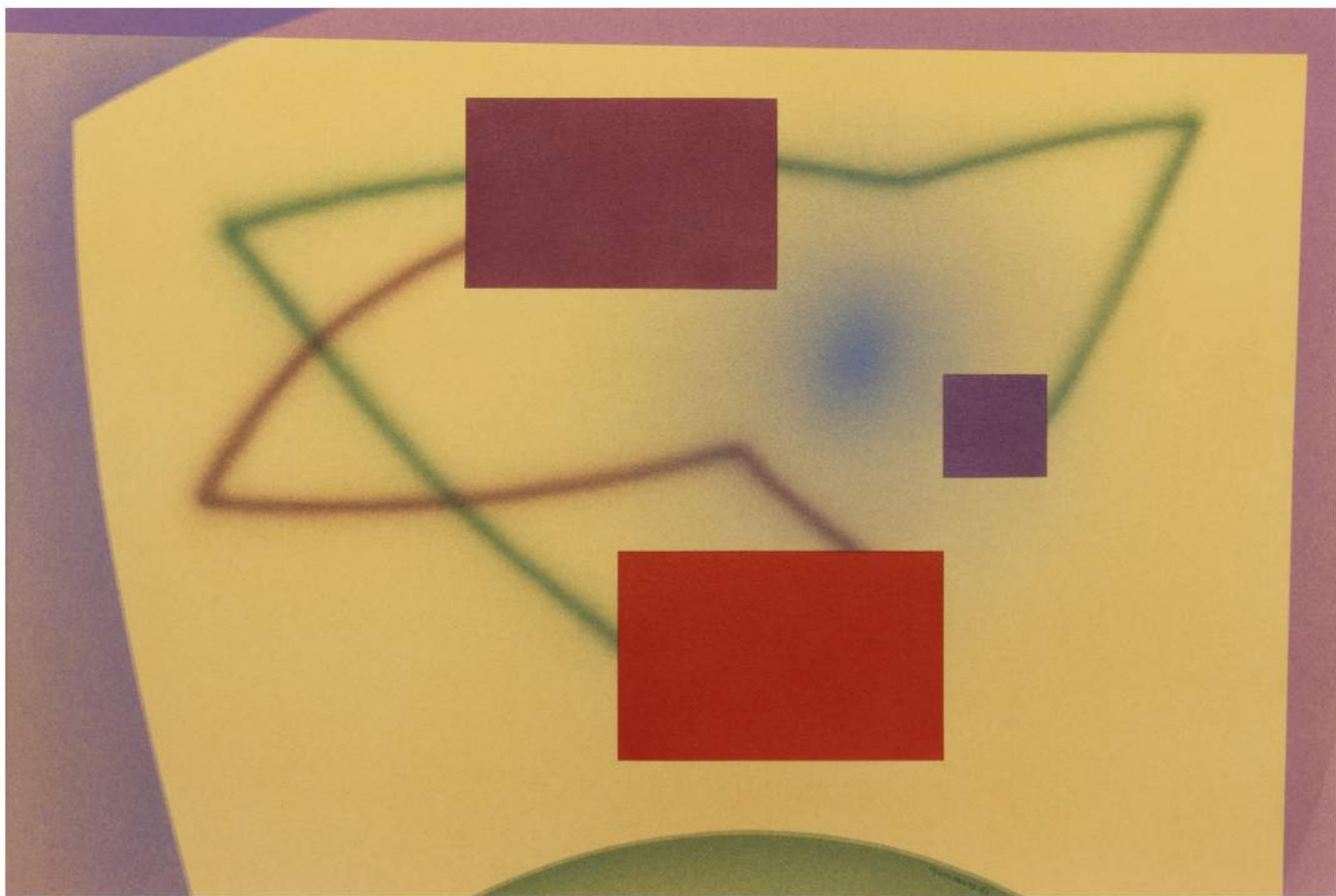




*Polymer No. 20, 1974. 30" x 27". Acrylic on Masonite. Signed & dated: bottom center*

Watercolors



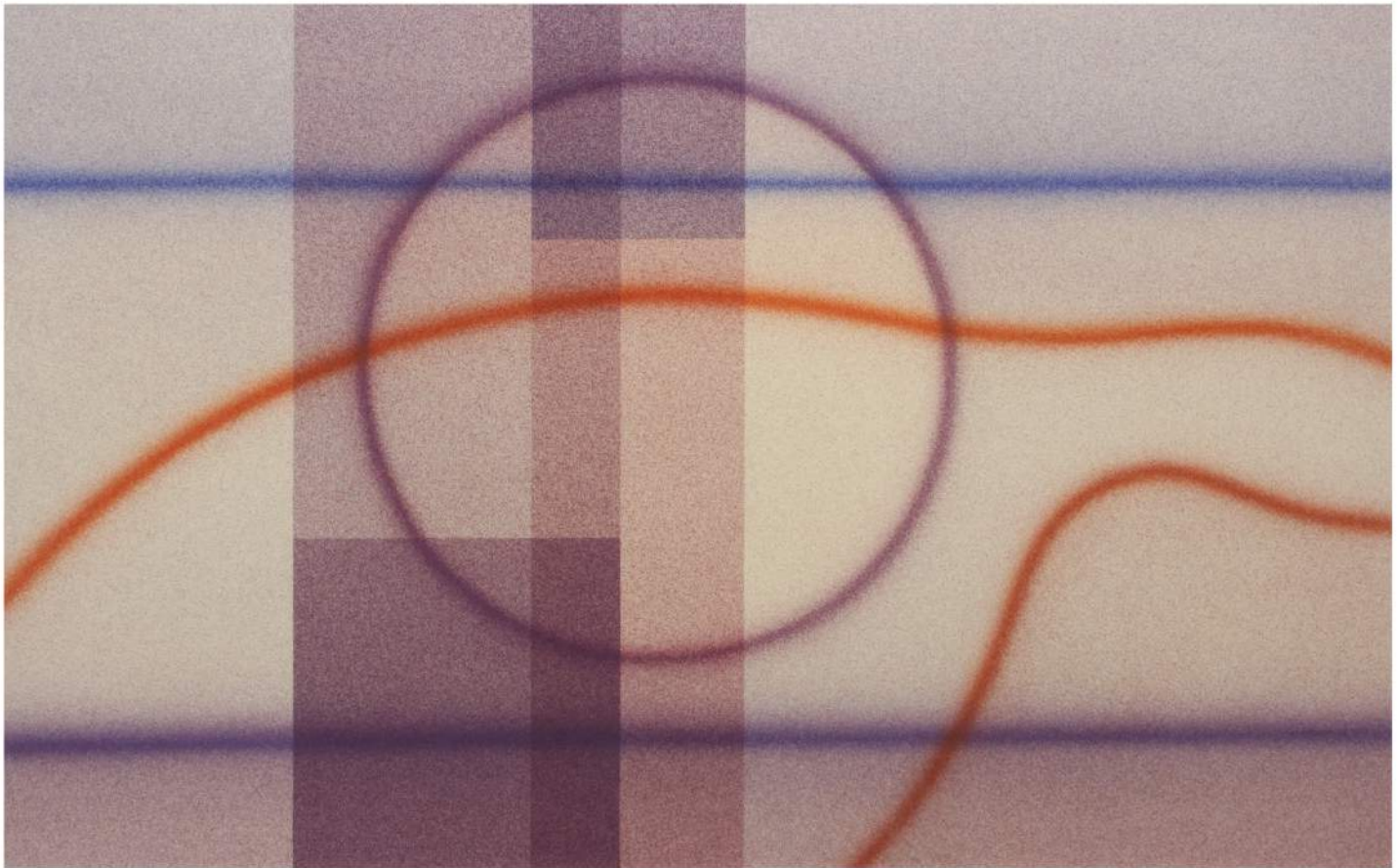


*Watercolor No. 26, 1941. Watercolor on board. 23" x 34". Signed & dated: lower right*

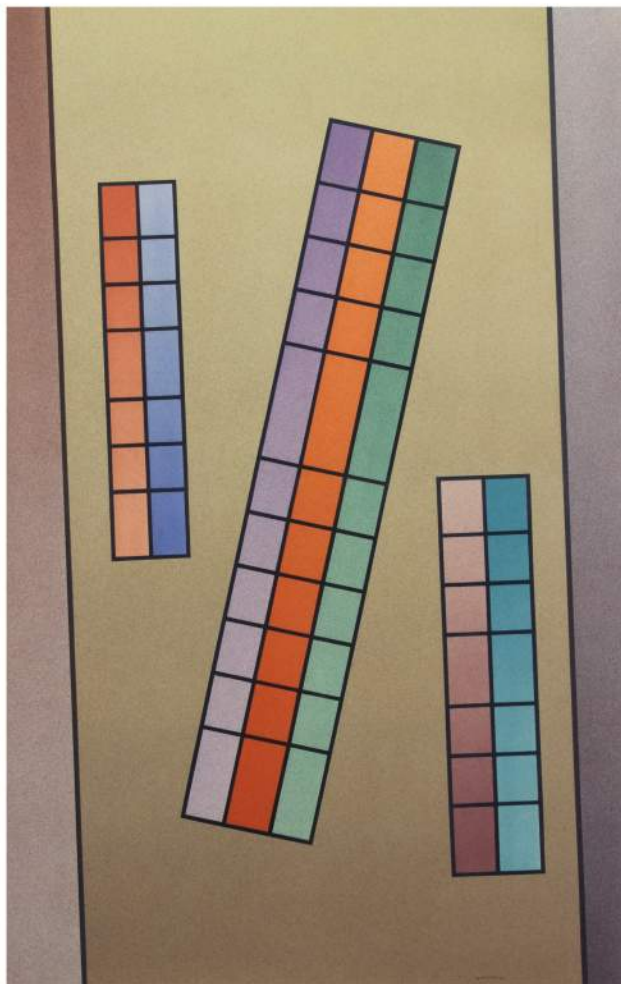








*Watercolor No. 34, 1944.* Watercolor on board. 22" x 35". Signed & dated: lower right

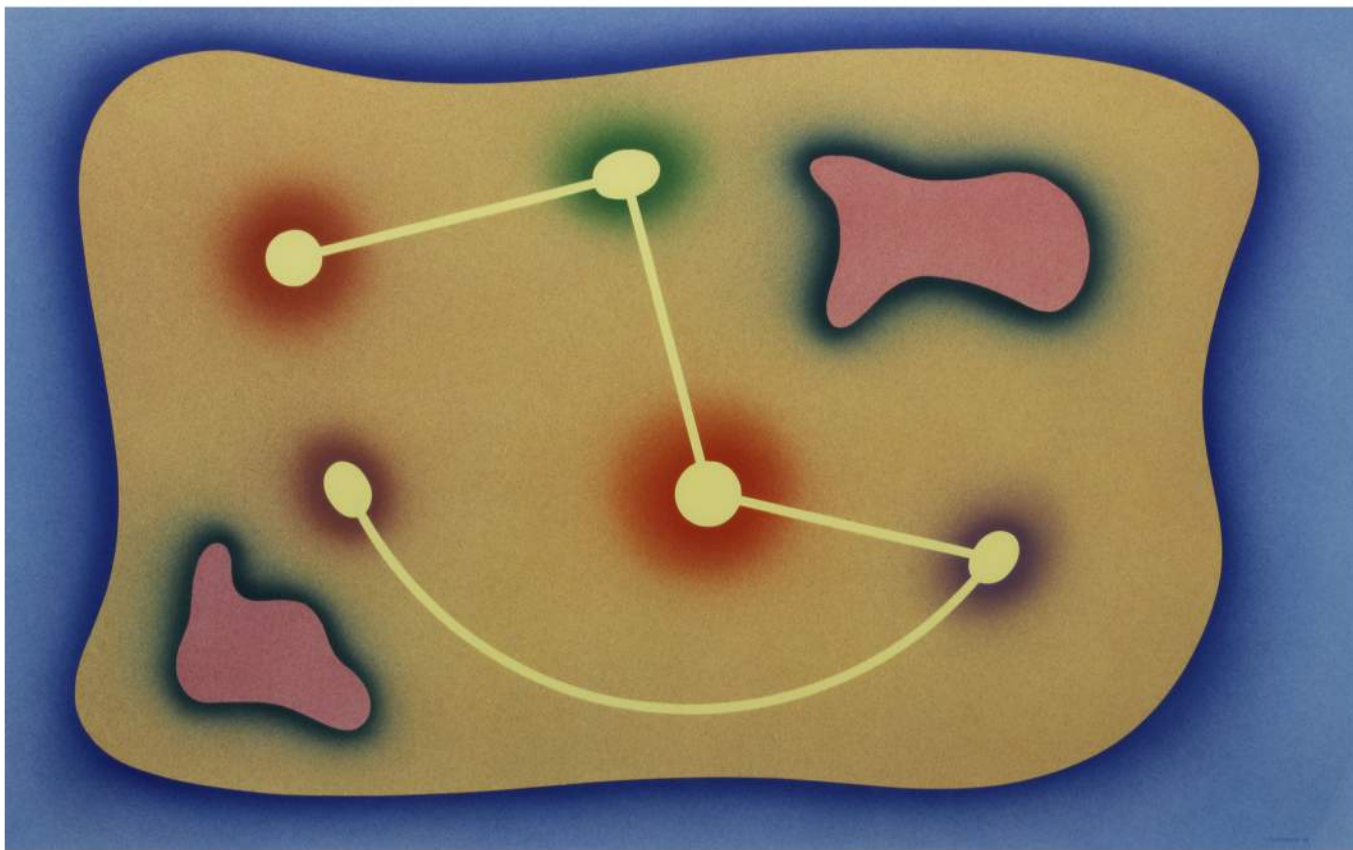


*Watercolor No. 9, 1946*

35 x 22 inches

Watercolor on board

Signed & dated: lower right



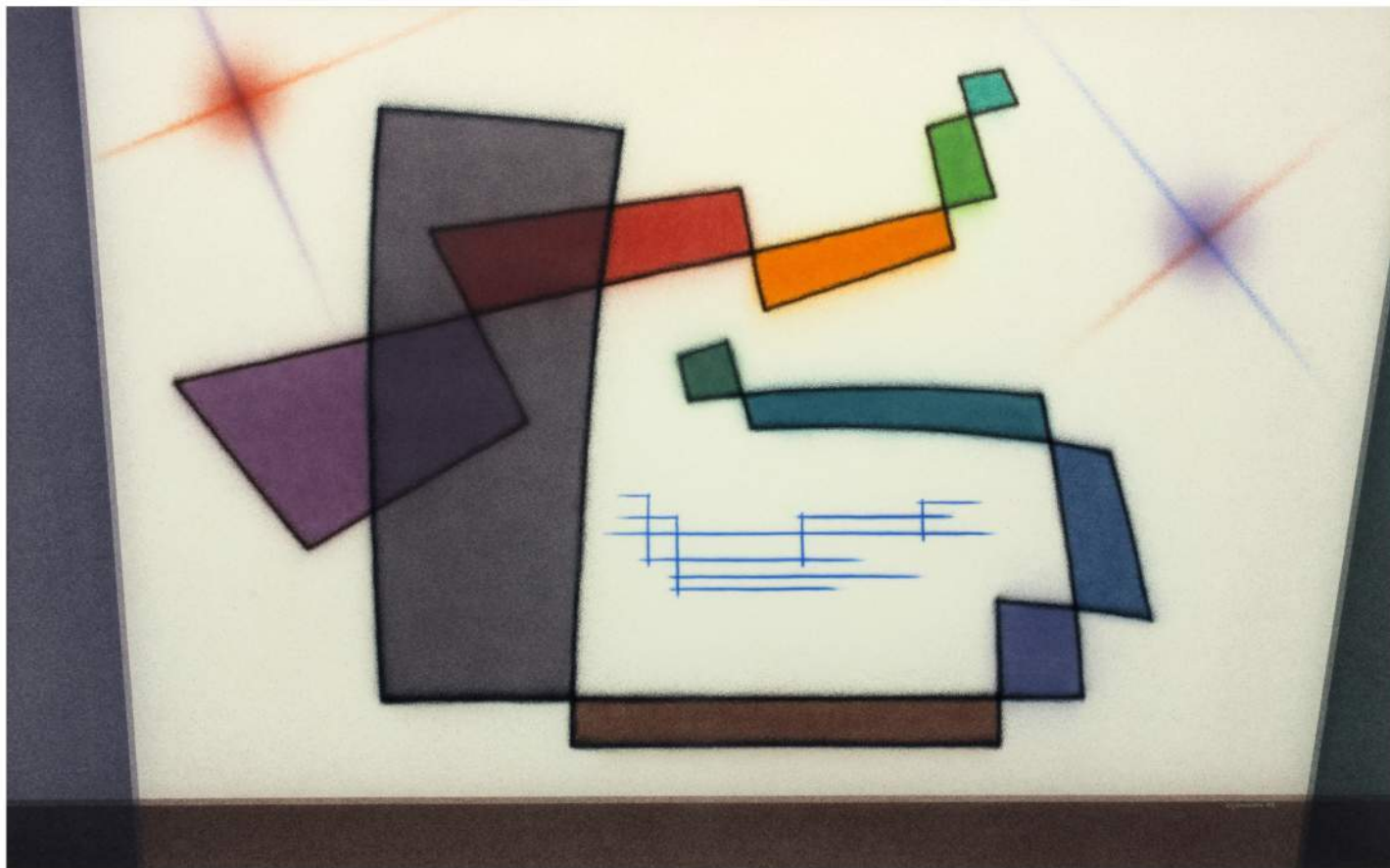
*Watercolor No. 11, 1946. 22" x 34". Watercolor on board. Signed & dated: lower right*



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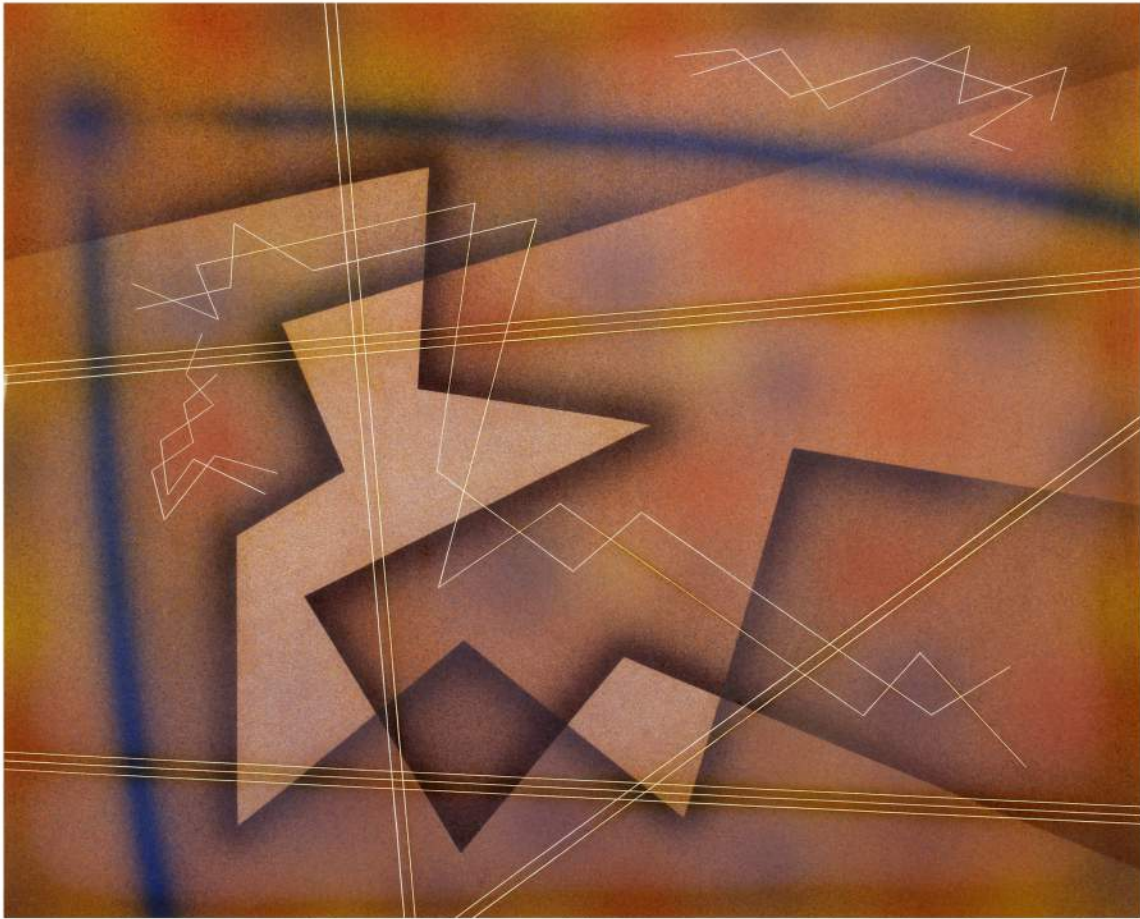
*Watercolor No. 3, 1948. Watercolor on board. 23" x 36 1/2". Signed & dated: lower right*





*Watercolor No. 29, 1948.* Watercolor on board. 22" x 35". Signed & dated: lower right





*Watercolor No. 1, 1947 (Pictographic Composition No. 17)*. Watercolor on board. 18" x 21 ½".  
Signed, titled & dated: verso



*Watercolor No. 17, 1950.* Watercolor on board. 21" x 27 ¼". Signed, titled & dated: verso

# Addison Rowe Gallery

229 East Marcy Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501

I am pleased to present our second catalogue of important paintings by Raymond Jonson. The more I explore this artist's oeuvre, the more the importance and brilliance of his work becomes apparent. He was dedicated to his continued growth as a person and an artist through the exploration of innovative concepts of color theory and spirituality. He was a devoted teacher and colleague. He challenged the limits of conventional color contrasts and was never afraid to stretch the boundaries of what could be put on a canvas. His work is dynamic, powerful, and worthy of greatness.

This catalogue is produced in a continued effort to increase awareness in the art community of the quality and diversity of Jonson's work. He was a prolific artist whose passion and inspiration can be experienced in each work he created.

Enjoy

-Victoria Addison, gallery owner.

All images © The Raymond Jonson Collection, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque  
Photography, essay, and catalog design by Matthew Rowe

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