

Craig Kauffman

Constructed Paintings 1973-1976



Craig Kauffman: *Constructed Paintings 1973-1976*

Front Cover:

Wooster Orange, 1975

acrylic on wood and muslin

97 x 79 inches



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Craig Kauffman: *Constructed Paintings 1973-1976*

Craig Kauffman always regarded himself as a painter. He once remarked that he never made a painting that he could not carry by himself, and felt that even his plastic wall reliefs dealt with issues of painting, not sculpture. "I'm accused of skirting the ground between painting and sculpture and several people these days are accused of skirting the real problems of art by the older critics. Whether it's painting or sculpture I don't really know."¹ This is a significant statement, as Kauffman's plastic relief paintings were his most well-known work, and had some resonance with the sculpture of his era.

In the constructed paintings of 1973 - 1976, Kauffman deliberately returned to basics, challenged the rectangular format of painting, and maintained his sensibility. As he told Frederick S. Wight in an interview published in 1971, "I've become more interested in painting again, not with the problems of painting in a traditional format on a canvas but somewhat more of a flat idea upon a wall."²

By the early 1970s, Craig Kauffman had completed a lengthy seven-year period of working with formed plastic, experimentations with reflected light installations, as well as some collaborative works with his friend Robert Morris. He had completed a series of molded plastic works that incorporated structural elements, and began to reconsider his relationship with painting. Kauffman then made a conscious decision to leave the medium of painting on plastic and the light installations to begin a new body of work. His

exploration of basic painting support and structure was parallel to the post-minimal and process-oriented painting and sculpture of that time, yet retained Kauffman's inventive use of high-key color. The works reflect Kauffman's life-long interest in unorthodox supports for painting, as well as a sensuous and luminous color sensibility. "Kauffman's work has maintained its radiant color and its emphasis on certain sensuous physical properties of his materials," noted Susan C. Larsen.³ It is through his integration of color, linear structure, and shape that he achieved the architectural presence of this series of constructed paintings.

This significant group of works was produced in studios in California, New York, and Paris. Kauffman began to use a lightweight but dimensionally stable wood called jelutong to form the structural elements and to develop a vocabulary of shapes. Canvas and muslin were attached to the front and the back of these supports. He also made use of the wall and the open space between the painted areas, and incorporated drawing into the work. In an interview with Michael Auping in 1976, Kauffman stated "...the only way I can work my way back into painting is to really reconstruct painting for myself."

¹Wight, Frederick S., *Transparency, Reflection, Light, Space: Four Artists*, University of California Los Angeles, 1971. P. 118.

²Ibid.

³Larsen, Susan C., *Sunshine and Shadow: Recent Painting in Southern California*, Fellows of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1986.



Untitled, 1970s
acrylic on wood and muslin
96 x 79 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



L'Indien, 1975
acrylic on wood and muslin
98 x 69 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



Wooster Orange, 1975
acrylic on wood and muslin
97 x 79 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



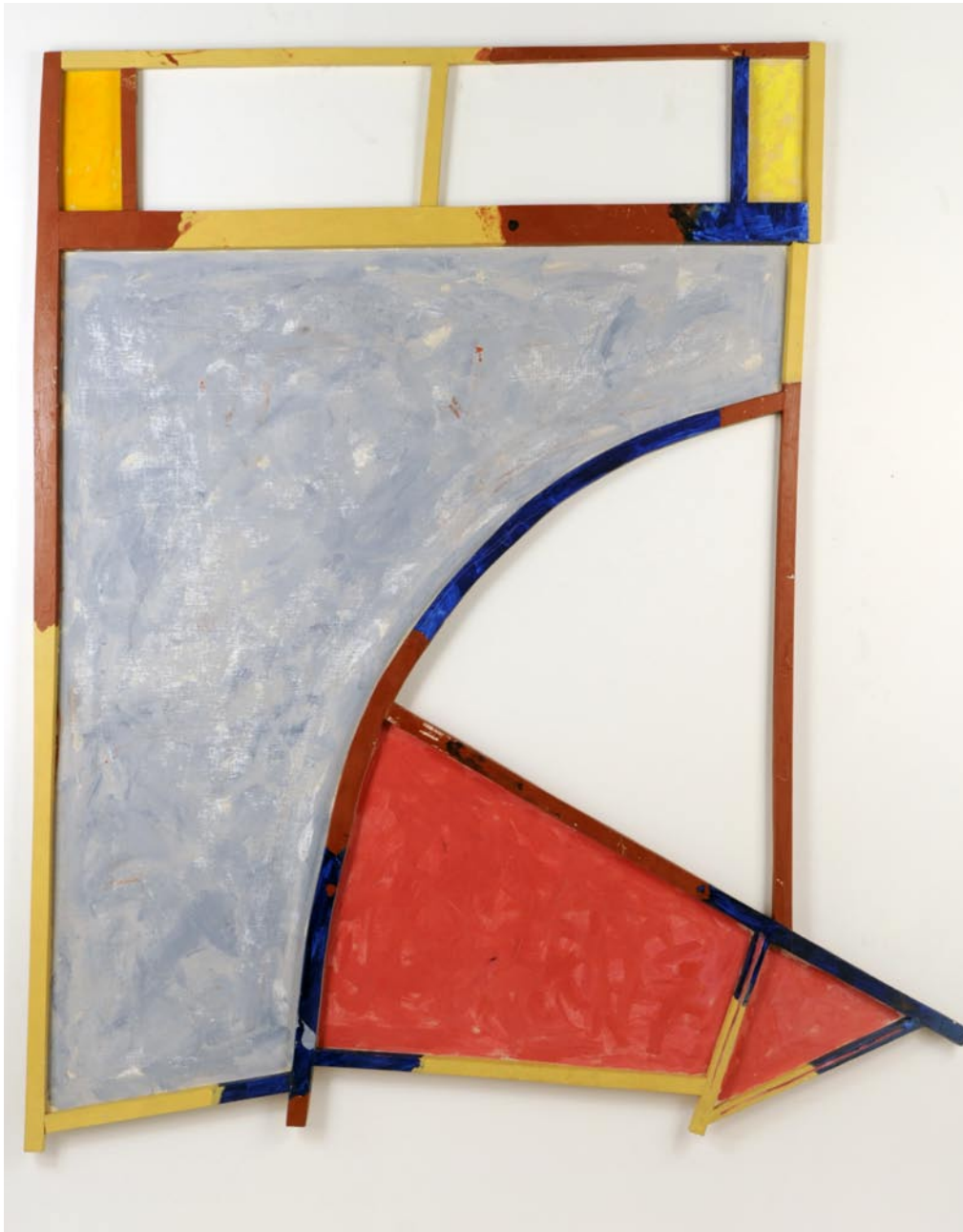
Caroline's Rickets, 1975
acrylic on wood and muslin
62 x 60 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



V.P. with Red, 1975
acrylic on wood and muslin
72 ½ x 64 ½ inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



Untitled, 1973-1974
acrylic on wood and muslin
107 ½ x 82 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



Untitled, 1973-1974
acrylic on wood and muslin
96 x 83 ½ inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



Untitled, 1976
acrylic on wood and muslin
118 ¼ x 72 ¼ inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



Fenetre #1, 1976
acrylic on wood and muslin
52 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



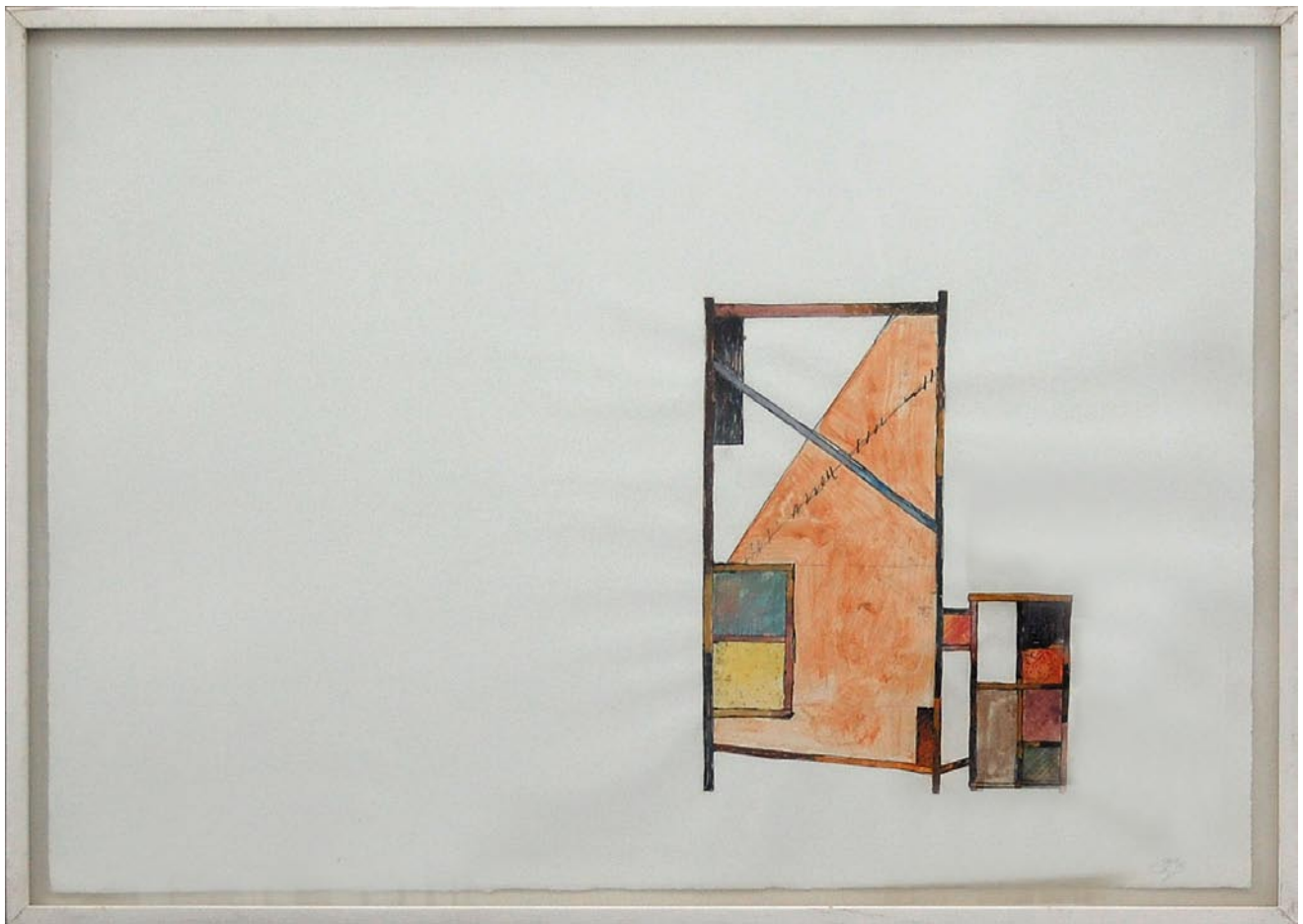
Untitled, 1976
watercolor on paper
22 x 30 inches



Double Section, 1975
acrylic on wood and muslin
98 x 152 inches



Diptych, 1975
acrylic on wood and muslin
95 x 140 inches
Courtesy of the Estate of Craig Kauffman



Untitled, 1975
watercolor on paper
20 ³/₄ x 29 ³/₄ inches

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