



Craig Kauffman:

The Numbers Paintings from 1989

Front Cover:
Craig Kauffman
N.B. #18, 1989
acrylic on silk
60 x 30 inches



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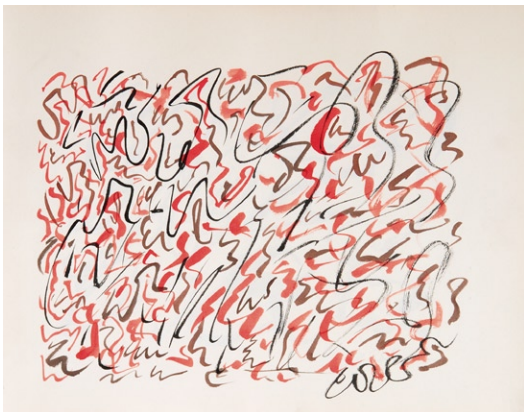
Craig Kauffman:

The Numbers Paintings from 1989

A rhythmic, wandering line has been present in Craig Kauffman's paintings since the 1950s. Based in his experiments with skipping, dotted lines made with ink on paper, the line in those paintings displayed a loose, calligraphic hand that seems to define form, yet also describe a suspended space. In the *Numbers* paintings from 1989, Kauffman employed that line again to make numerals, boldly drawn in paint and hovering over a colored ground of imagery.

In the third exhibition to be drawn from the Estate of Craig Kauffman (1932-2010), the Frank Lloyd Gallery presents a series of paintings by Kauffman made in 1989. Kauffman's interest in unorthodox application of paint and his love of the physicality of painting are accompanied by a brilliant color sense. Kauffman considered these works, which became known as the *Numbers*, to be a continuation of his use of calligraphic line, and an integration of sensuous color with architectural form. The paintings demonstrate a masterful range of painting's language: dark versus light, the organic and architectural, and luminosity with density.

The large-scale paintings—some as tall as ten feet—were made following Kauffman's first move to the Philippines. A rich landscape and powerful native forms from his new-found home are interwoven with the layers of numbers. Images of volcanos, ethnic figurative sculpture (*Santos*) and architecture (*Four Kubo*) are included in the backgrounds of the works. With these allusions to elements from his new environment, as well as his use of the bifurcated canvas, Kauffman again made use of his broken, skipping line. As biographer Hunter Drohojowska-Philp has written, "Most are divided vertically, like Asian scrolls, and painted in two contrasting colors such as white and red. The outlines of orchids, volcanos or houses with pitched roofs are repeated like a fabric pattern while the thin, curling numbers are overlaid. The iconography is drawn from his exposure to Philippine culture."¹



Kauffman retained the unusual line from his early drawings. In an essay for Craig Kauffman drawing retrospective in 2008, curator Jay Belloli wrote:

*In these linear works on paper, Kauffman began an approach to drawing that he has employed more and more frequently over the years. At the time, the top of a bottle of Pelikan ink had a rubber squeeze attachment similar to an eye dropper, so an artist could draw up small quantities of ink and put them in a bowl or shallow tray for easier use. Kauffman used the squeeze attachment directly as a drawing tool. The line that resulted was uneven, sometimes broken, and it revealed the direct and somewhat uncontrolled way in which it was made. This approach to ink drawing was like a Western means of creating some of the spontaneity associated with Asian calligraphy.*²



The vertical composition of the *Numbers* paintings can also be strongly associated with Asian calligraphy. This clear structure of marking from top to bottom, and the reference to the format of a scroll, belies the artist's life-long fascination with the arts of Japan, China and Southeast Asia. Indeed, his move to the Philippines provided him with easy access to Taiwan and Hong Kong, and his viewing of landscape paintings made with ink was made possible. "Japanese calligraphy is organized in columns and rows," Belloli wrote, "and Japanese painting as one or several simple recognizable elements." The format of the *Numbers* paintings not only recalls the influence of Asian painting, but also provides an expansive view of pictorial space, which Kauffman skillfully divides into a space for a specific purpose: a combination of linear and architectural form.

Architecture was one of the artist's passions since his teenage years. Kauffman was highly influenced by reading *Kindergarten Chats*, by Louis Sullivan and *A New Vision, from Material to Architecture*, by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. These books lay out the foundations of modern art. Intended to inform readers about the elements of Bauhaus design, the text by Moholy-Nagy merges theory, art and design. The influence on Kauffman, and on his desire to create a new way of seeing the world through art, was profound.

Kauffman's architectural elements in the *Numbers* paintings also reflect his own practical experience of building. In the later

decades of his life, Kauffman designed several homes, including four in the Philippines and one in the Central California town of Arroyo Grande. His eye and hand were naturally drawn to architecture, a profession he considered when he first entered college at the University of Southern California. The *Numbers* paintings contain some of the simple architecture of the Philippines, known as *Kubo* bamboo houses.



The paintings present a merging of all of these elements: architecture, calligraphy, and painting. They are held together by the network of lines, executed in an architect's italic block numbers. But the unity is also achieved by Kauffman's extraordinary ability with brilliant color combinations—from the rich reddish column on the left to the subtle whites and greys on the right, or the overlays of red and green.



These eight paintings were not shown in Los Angeles, although some were included in the large survey of Los Angeles painting, *Abstraction*, mounted by the Nagoya City Art Museum in 1990.³ That Nagoya exhibit included the work of Kauffman, Sam Francis, John Altoon, John McLaughlin and Ed Moses. The eight major paintings in the current show are accompanied by five works on paper.

--Frank Lloyd

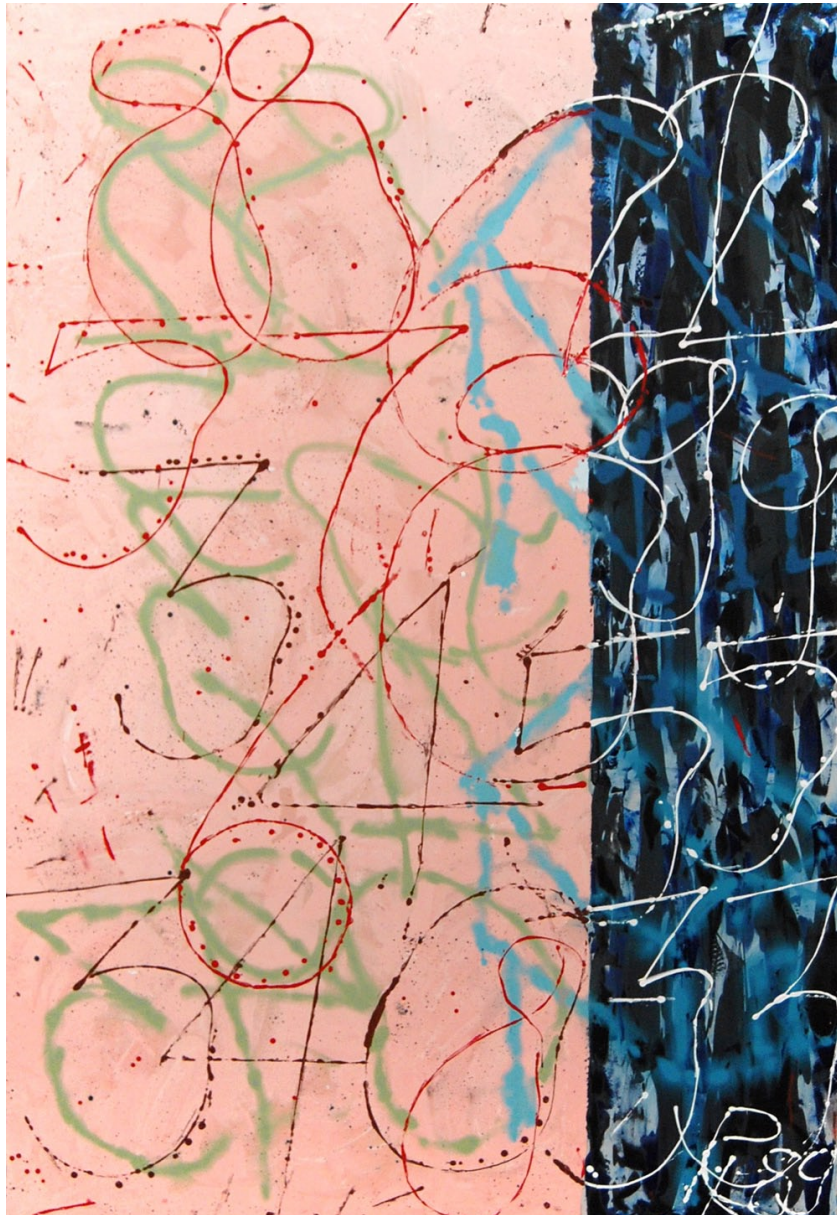
¹ Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, *Craig Kauffman: Sensual Mechanical*, Frank Lloyd Gallery and the Estate of Craig Kauffman, 2012, p. 73.

² Jay Belloli, *Craig Kauffman: A Retrospective of Drawings*, Armory Center for the Arts, 2008, p. 14

³ Noriko Fujinami, *Abstraction: John Altoon, Sam Francis, Craig Kauffman, John McLaughlin, Ed Moses*, Nagoya City Art Museum, 1990.



Craig Kauffman
N.B. #17, 1989
acrylic on silk
59 x 46 inches



Craig Kauffman
N.B. #22, 1989
acrylic on silk
14 ½ x 10 x 7 ½ inches



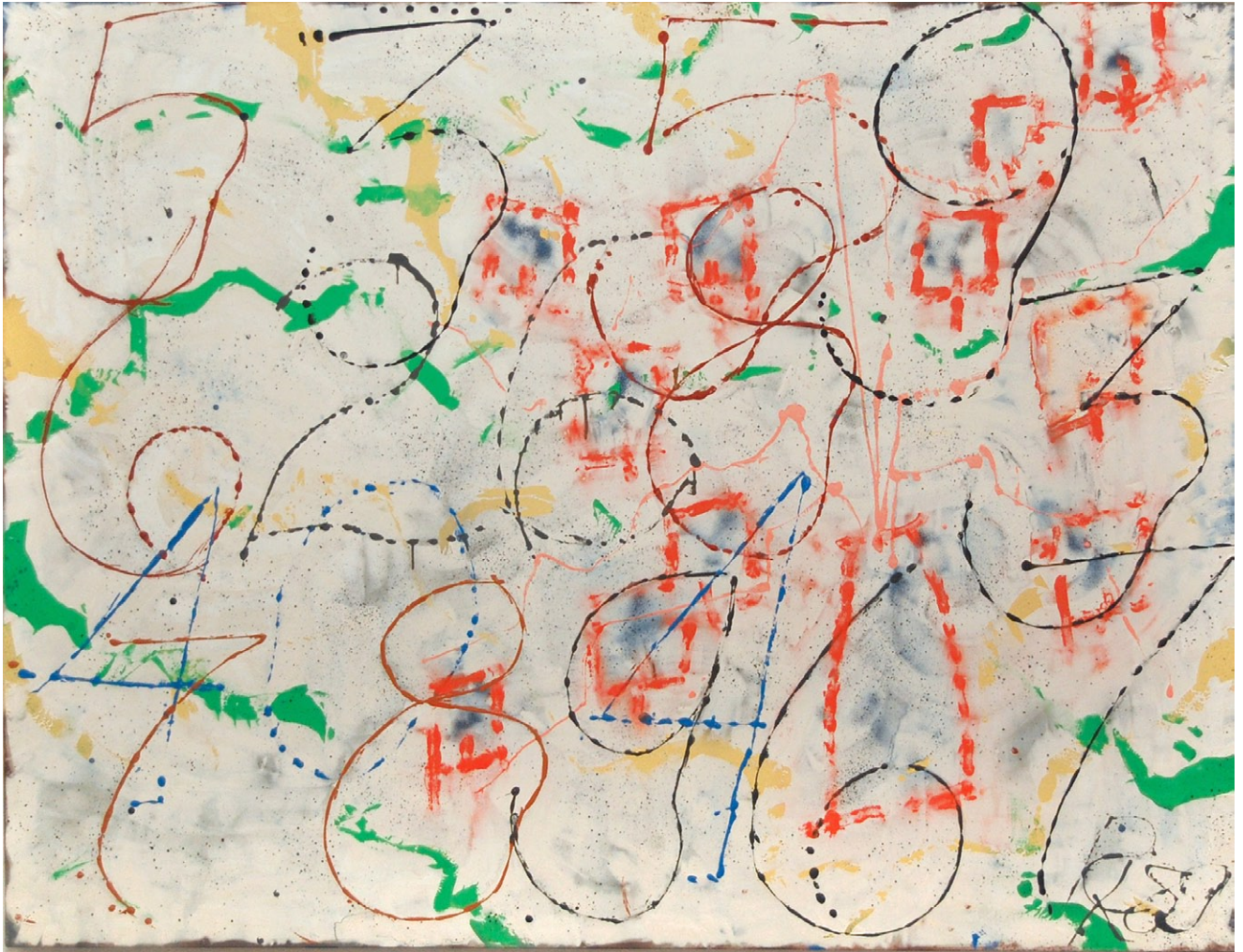
Craig Kauffman
N.B. #18, 1989
acrylic on silk
60 x 30 inches



Craig Kauffman
N.B. #19 (Four Kubo), 1989
acrylic on silk
80 x 54 inches



Craig Kauffman
Taal-Vocanos N.B. #13, 1989
acrylic on silk
116 ½ x 68 inches



Craig Kauffman
#7, 1989
acrylic on silk
46 x 60 inches



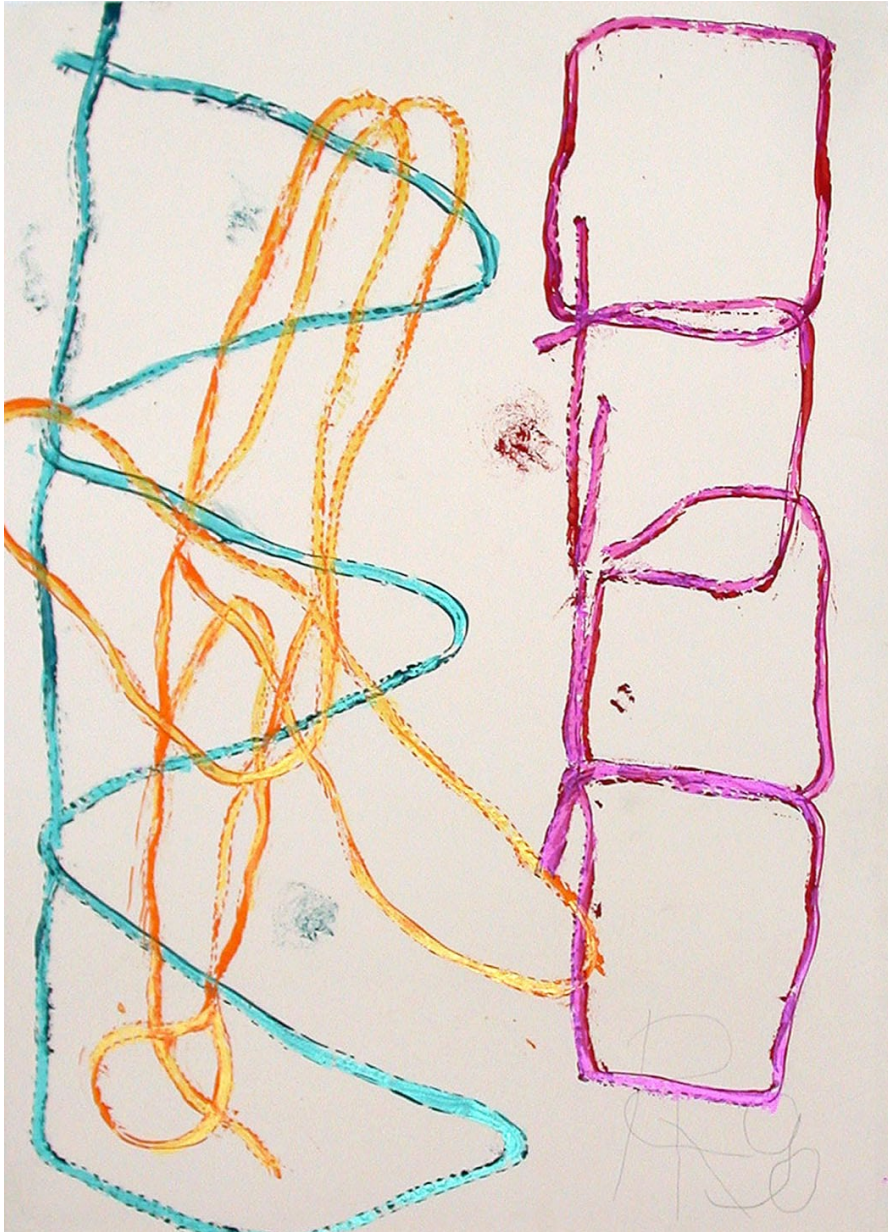
Craig Kauffman
Santos N.B. #10, 1989
acrylic on silk
96 x 72 inches



Craig Kauffman
N.B. #5, 1989
acrylic on silk
96 x 72 inches



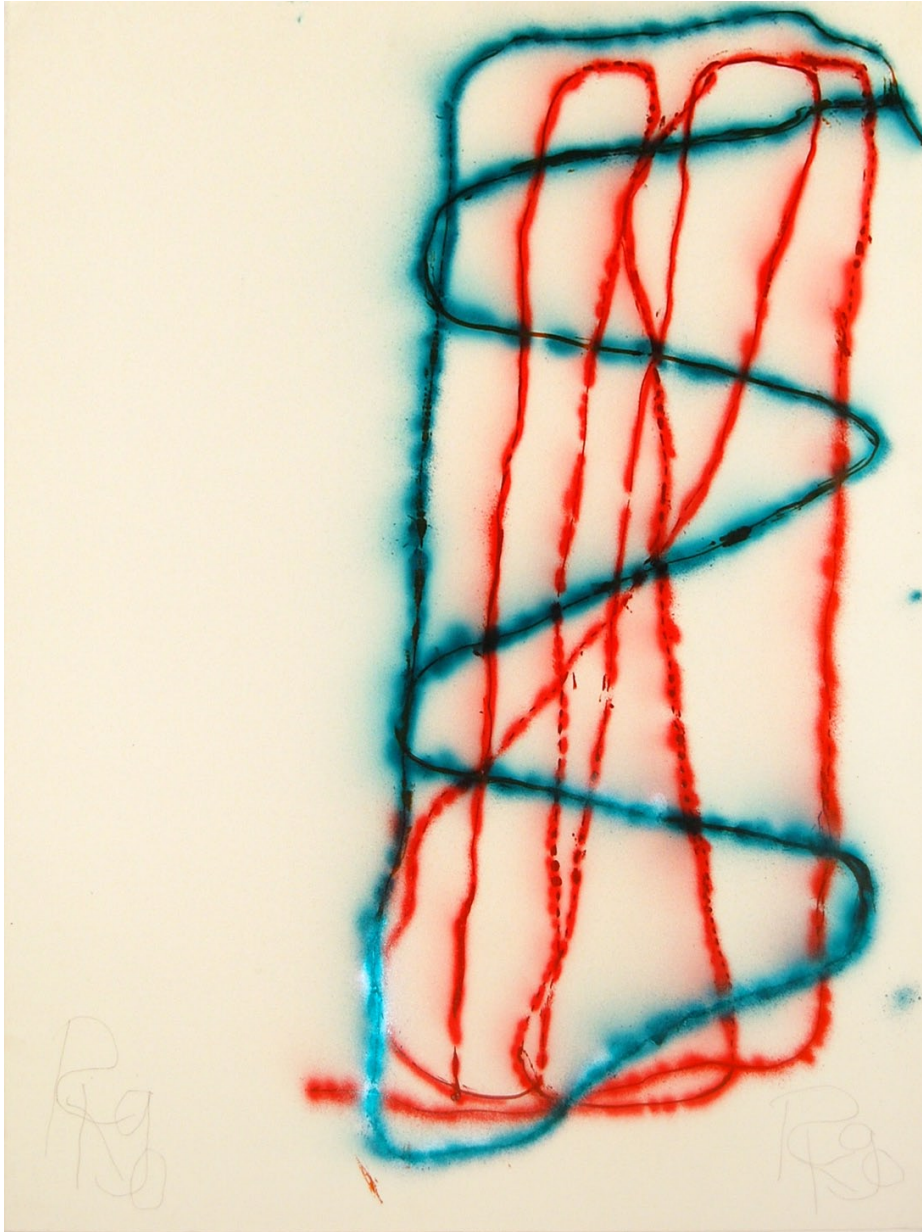
Craig Kauffman
Untitled, 1988
ink on paper
30 x 22 inches



Craig Kauffman
Untitled, 1990
acrylic on paper
30 ½ x 22 ½ inches



Craig Kauffman
Untitled, 1991
acrylic on paper
30 x 22 ½ inches



Craig Kauffman
Untitled, 1990
acrylic on paper
30 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches



Craig Kauffman
Untitled, 1988
paint on paper
30 x 22 ½ inches

Craig Kauffman

1932 Born in Los Angeles, California
2010 Died in Angeles City, Philippines

Education

1955 B.A., University of California, Los Angeles, California
1956 M.A., University of California, Los Angeles, California

One Person Exhibitions

2012 Craig Kauffman: *The Numbers Paintings from 1989*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California
2011 *Sensual Mechanical*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California
2010 *Loops*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California
Works on Paper Retrospective, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Late Work, Danese Gallery, New York
New Work, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California
2009 *Wall Relief Sculpture From the Sixties*, Nyehaus, New York
2008 *New Wall Relief Sculpture*, Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, California
Craig Kauffman: A Drawing Retrospective, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, California
2007 Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, California
2004 *Craig Kauffman: Works from 1960's*, Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York
2003 Sandra Gering Gallery, New York
2001 Sandra Gering Gallery, New York
1999 *Bubbles*, Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, California
1998 *Painted Drawings*, Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, California
1995 *New Work*, Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, California
1992 The Works Gallery South, Costa Mesa, California
1990 The Works Gallery South, Costa Mesa, California
1988 The Works Gallery, Long Beach, California
New Paintings, Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Craig Kauffman: Wall Reliefs, 1967-69, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, California
1987 *Craig Kauffman: Wall Reliefs from the Late 1960s*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1985 Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco, California
1983 *New Paintings*, Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Faith and Charity in Hope Gallery, Hope, Idaho
1982 Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
Blum Helman Gallery, New York
Drawing, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, California

- 1981 *Craig Kauffman: A Comprehensive Survey 1957-1980*, organized by the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, CA traveled to: the Elvehjem Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin; the Anderson Gallery at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia; Oakland Art Museum, Oakland California (1982)
New Paintings, Asher/Faure Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 1979 *Recent Paintings*, GrapeStake Gallery, San Francisco, California
New Works, Janus Gallery, Venice, California
 Blum Helman Gallery, New York
- 1978 Arco Center for Visual Art, Los Angeles, California
- 1976 Comsky Gallery, Los Angeles, California
 Robert Elkon Gallery, New York
 Galerie Darthea Speyer, Paris, France
- 1975 Riko Mizuno Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 1972 Galerie Darthea Speyer, Paris, France
 Pace Gallery, New York
 Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 1970 Pasadena Art Museum, California, traveled to the University of California, Irvine, California
 Pace Gallery, New York
- 1969 Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles, California
 Pace Gallery, New York
- 1967 Ferus/Pace Gallery, Los Angeles, California
 Pace Gallery, New York
- 1965 Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 1962 Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- 1960 Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco, California
- 1958 *Paintings and Drawings*, Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, California
 Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco, California
- 1953 Felix Landau Gallery, Los Angeles, California

**Museum
 Collections**

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
 The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
 Fredrick R. Weisman Collection, Los Angeles, California
 Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, California
 Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California
 Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California
 The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark
 Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, California

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York
Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California
Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, California
Orange County Museum of Art, Newport, California
Philip Morris Foundation
Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington
The Tate Gallery, London, England
University of New Mexico Art Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico
The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota
The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York

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