

UNITED STATES EMBASSY  
*ART in Embassies Exhibition*  
RANGOON

LINDBERG **float 01**, undated. *Ink on vellum, 28 x 34 in. (71.1 x 86.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Kansas City, Missouri*

# ART IN EMBASSIES



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of ART in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a: "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

*For fifty years, ART in Embassies has played an active diplomatic role by creating meaningful cultural exchange through the visual arts. The exhibitions, permanent collections and artist exchanges connect people from the farthest corners of an international community. Extending our reach, amplifying our voice, and demonstrating our inclusiveness are strategic imperatives for America. ART in Embassies cultivates relationships that transcend boundaries, building trust, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. It is a fulcrum of America's global leadership as we continue to work for freedom, human rights and peace around the world.*

— John Forbes Kerry  
U.S. Secretary of State

# INTRODUCTION

This exhibition looks at five American artists who share a common thread of their artwork being informed by traditions of Eastern philosophy. Prominently featured in their art is a sense of meditative introspection, which gives the viewer a basis for conceptual understanding of the varied methods used by each artist to explore not only spiritual representation within their works but the personal experience between the art and viewer. These artists all live in the United States, but have international perspectives of Eastern aesthetics, as seen through intercultural experiences, to create this American art. Sohan Qadri and Anil Revri were born in India, and thus were raised in an Eastern culture. Both artists' works have direct references to religions of the region, but are also influenced through Western abstract art such as the Washington color school and abstract expressionism. Karen Arm and Elena Volkova use metaphysical exploration of nature and landscape to ask questions of existence and being. Anne Lindberg's line drawings relate the inner human experience; she states "The work references physiological systems – such as heartbeat, respiration, neural paths, equilibrium – and psychological states."

Together their works present opportunities for introspection, a sense of spiritual visual communication for the viewer to experience a liminal transition, a journey.

**Imtiaz Hafiz Curator**

# WELCOME

We are very proud to participate in the State Department's ART in Embassies program, which has long been a terrific opportunity to showcase the creativity and artistry of America's leading contemporary artists to audiences around the world. As the U.S. relationship with Burma enters a new era, we consider ourselves particularly fortunate to now welcome more Burmese, American, and other international visitors to our Residence to view the outstanding works of art featured in this catalogue.

We have chosen to showcase the work of five American artists whose art not only reflects our own tastes but also beautifully compliments the architecture of our Residence, a lakeside colonial-era structure striking for its rich teak walls and floors, and relaxed elegance. The deceptively simple use of color and line in the works enriches the warmth of our rooms, and draws attention in a subtle way without demanding it. Countless visitors have remarked on their quality.

Those who come to Burma will also discover what is becoming an open secret here: the remarkable talent of Burmese contemporary artists and the vibrant art scene that is emerging in this country. Years of isolation and a curb on free expression obscured the breadth of talent of Burmese artists from the world. With cultural restrictions easing, these artists are now able to showcase their talents for all to see. We are fortunate to get to know many of these artists, and to watch the reinvigorated local art scene flourish before our eyes as a potential leader in Asia.

We welcome one and all to visit us in Rangoon to experience the exceptional changes occurring in this country, and to enjoy its rich cultural heritage and gracious people. At the same time, we look forward to hosting you at our Residence, where you may surround yourself with contemporary American artistry in an American home at the heart of Asia's "Golden Land."

**Ambassador Derek Mitchell and Mrs. Min Mitchell**

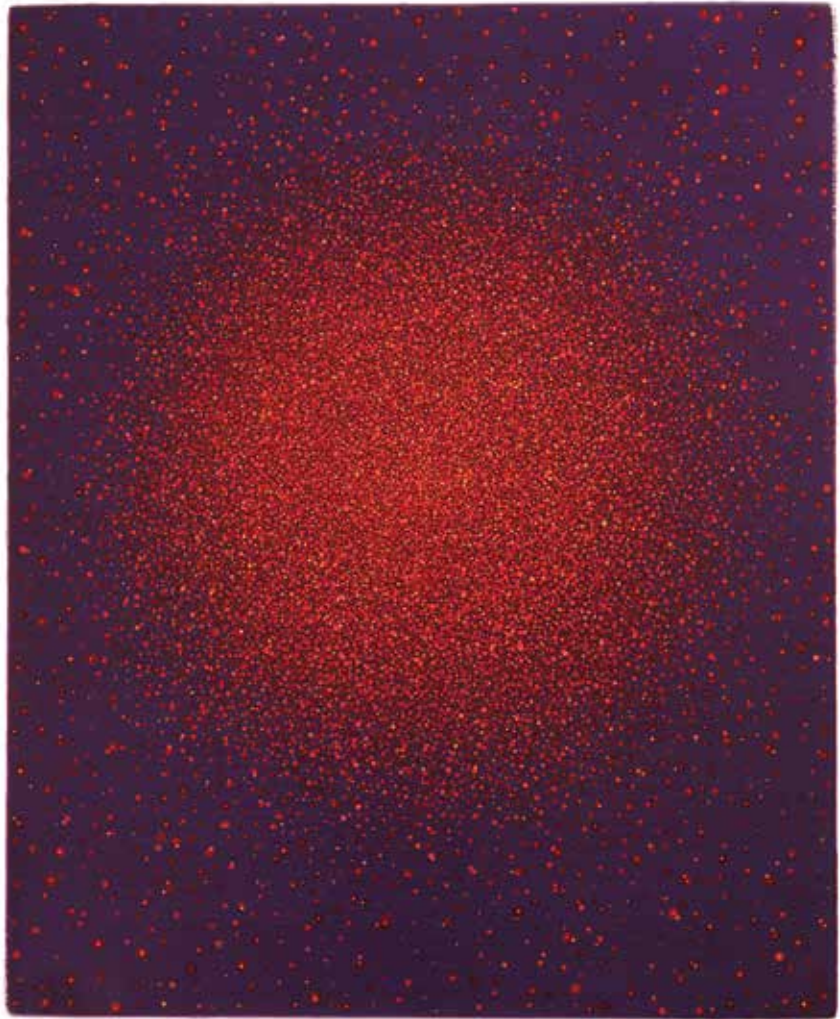
*Rangoon, June 2014*

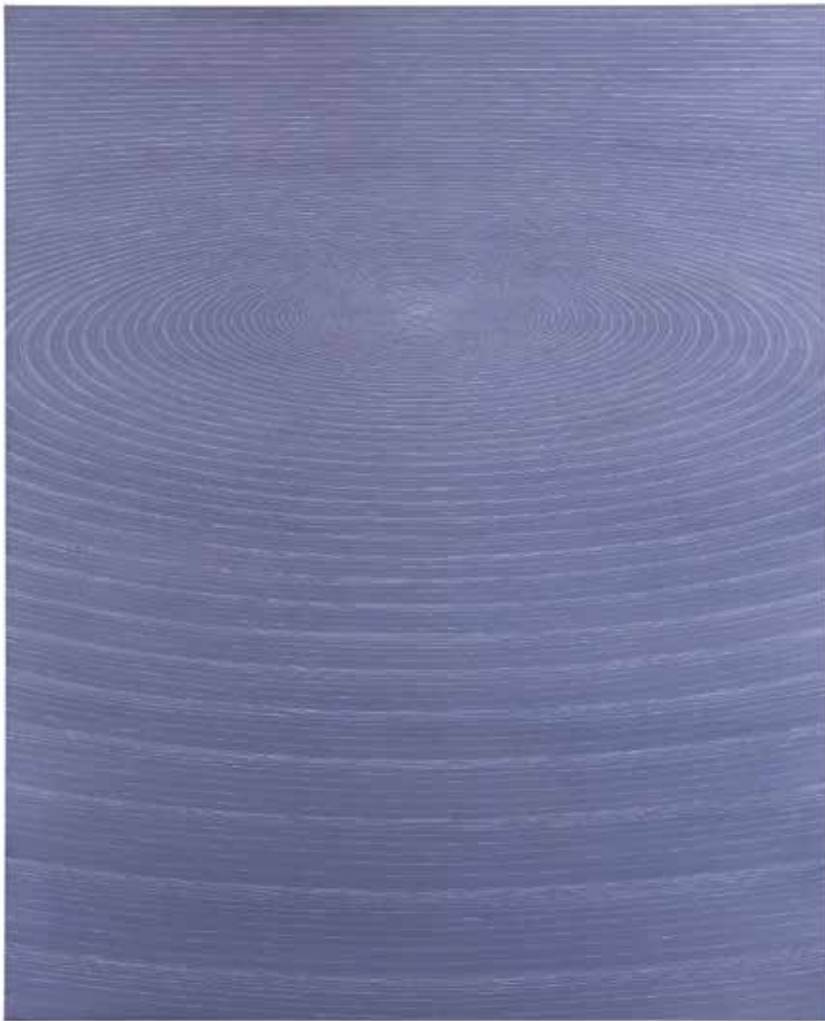
# KAREN ARM 1962

In her imagery, Karen Arm refers to nature as a catalyst for something more ambiguous, more abstract and as a point of exploration. Her works capture an invisible moment in time and heighten nature by making the intangible visible. What she is representing is unavailable to the human eye but the idea of the form and element is made precise. The accumulation of dots and lines that Arm makes is instinctive, as she sometimes works without being able to see the final result. Observing the natural world, she mimics the processes of nature, thus creating randomness in her own obsessive process. Through her work Arm is seeking to capture something elusive, ephemeral, and enigmatic. For Arm, the works possess action in their paused state. They are like the moment of fission, of an energy that could be destructive or creative.

Karen Arm lives and works in Brooklyn and Shelter Island, New York. In 2002 she received a New York Foundation for the Arts Award for Painting.

ARM  
**Sun #3**, 2009  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
22 x 18 in. (55.9 x 45.7 cm)  
*Courtesy of the artist and PPOW,*  
*New York, New York*





ARM

**Untitled (Gray Whirlpool #2), 2002**

*Acrylic on canvas*

*66 x 54 in. (167.6 x 137.2 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist and PPOW,*

*New York, New York*

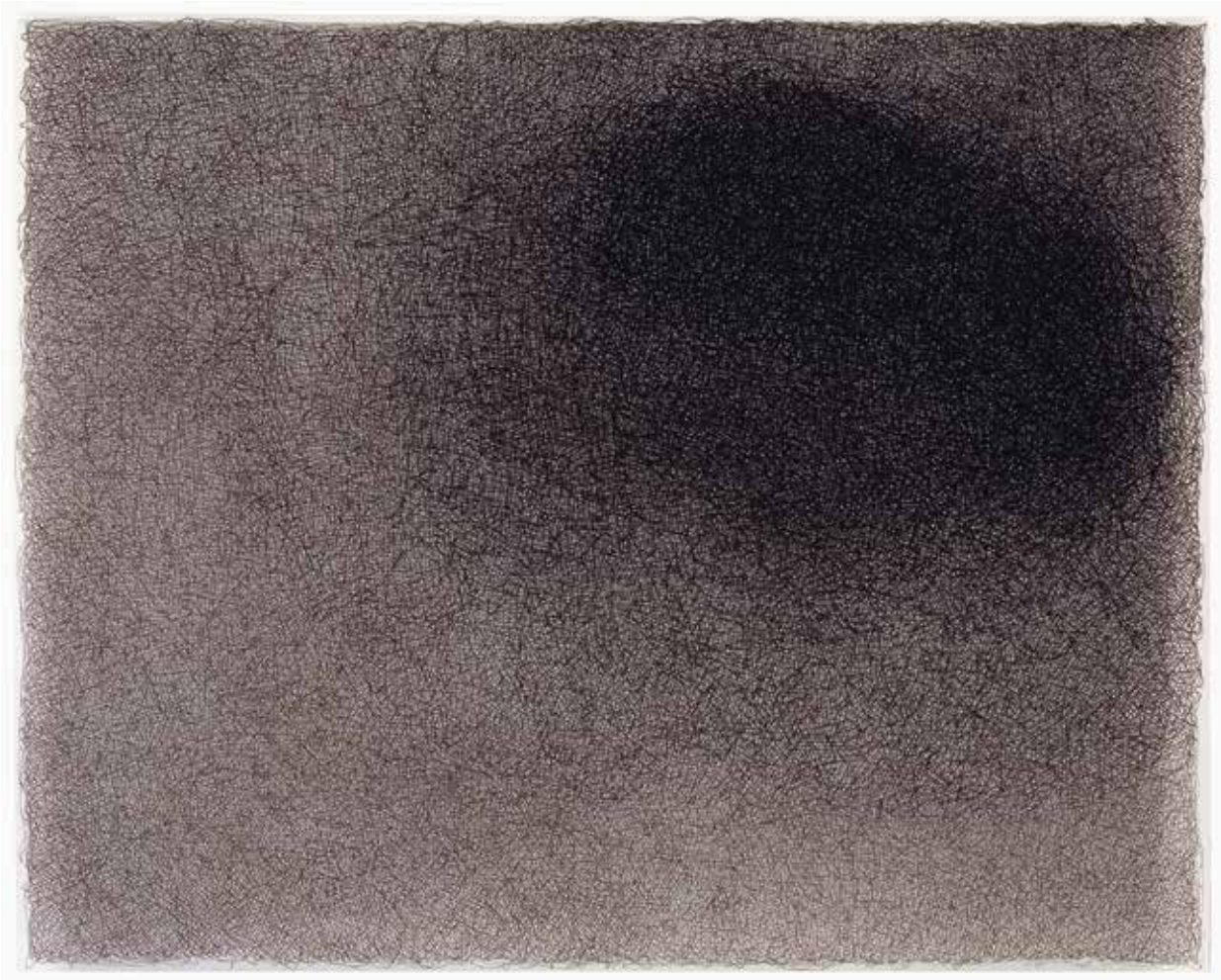


# ANNE LINDBERG 1962

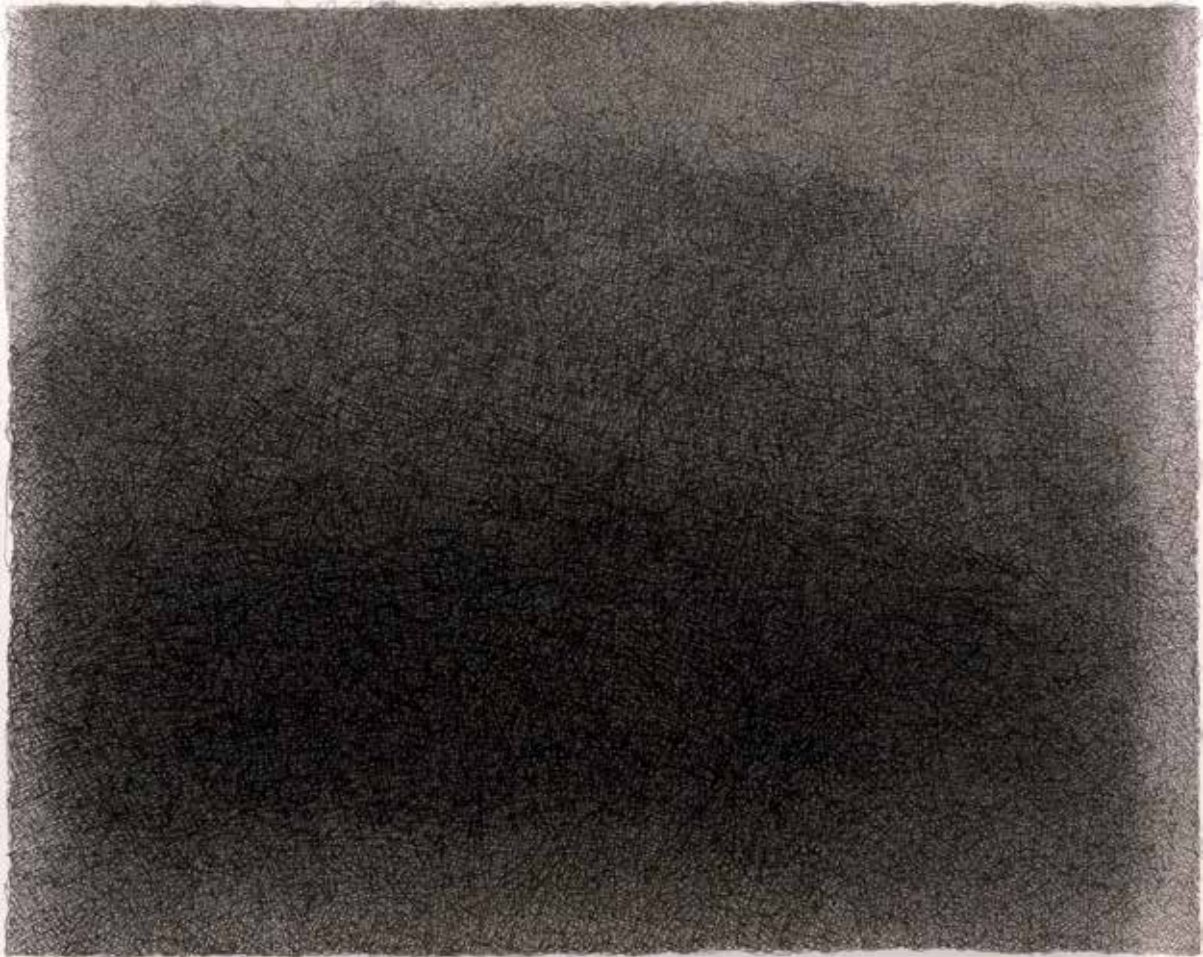
“My sculpture and drawings inhabit a non-verbal place resonant with such primal human conditions. Systemic and non-representational, these works are subtle, rhythmic, abstract, and immersive. I find beauty and disturbance through shifts in tool, layering, and material to create passages of tone, density, speed, path, and frequency within a system. The work references physiological systems – such as heartbeat, respiration, neural paths, equilibrium – and psychological states.

I’ve come to understand my work as a kind of self-portraiture. Within the quiet reserve and formal abstraction is a strong impulse to speak from a deep place within myself about that which is private, vulnerable, fragile, and perceptive to the human condition.”

Lindberg holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Miami University, Florida (1985), and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (1988).



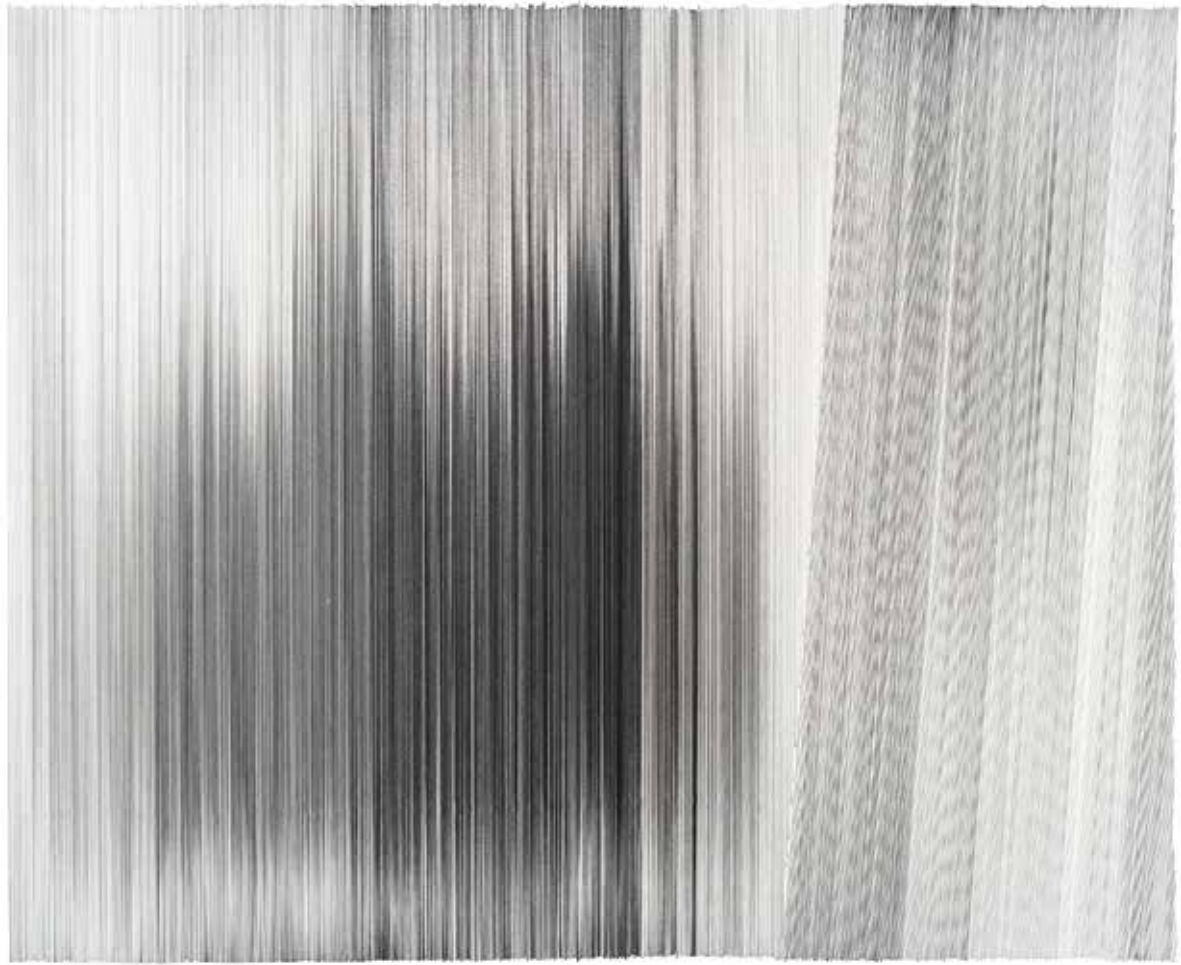
LINDBERG **float 01**, undated. Ink on vellum, 28 x 34 in. (71.1 x 86.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Kansas City, Missouri



LINDBERG **float 12**, undated. Ink on vellum, 28 x 34 in. (71.1 x 86.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Kansas City, Missouri



LINDBERG **motion drawing 21**, undated. Ink on vellum, 35 ¼ x 29 ¼ in. (89.5 x 74.3 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Kansas City, Missouri



LINDBERG **motion drawing 22**, undated. Ink on vellum, 35 ¼ x 29 ¼ in. (89.5 x 74.3 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Kansas City, Missouri

# SOHAN QADRI 1932-2011

Sohan Qadri can be described as a Tantric painter. Born in 1932 in Punjab, India, Qadri began his quest for his true self through Tantric yoga and spent long periods of time silently meditating in remote temples in the Himalayas and Tibet. His isolation propelled his urge to paint. He received his Master of Fine Arts degree in 1960 from the Government College of Art in Simla, India, but soon discovered that academic trappings were not for him. Shortly after his first exhibition in 1965, he left India for the West.

In Qadri's work, there is a tranquil coexistence of binary opposites – male and female, known and unknown, physical and spiritual. Although he has been influenced by Western artists such as Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still, his work is uniquely Eastern. Heinrich Boll, the 1972 Nobel Prize winner in Literature, has said that Qadri, "... with his painting liberates the word meditation from its fashionable taste and brings it back to its proper origin uninfluenced by Western propaganda, misunderstandings and corruptions." His paintings are monochrome surfaces with structural effects that, in their repetition, convey the rhythmic expressions of color energies. In their pulsations, the colors allow for a meditation in which those who experience space seek to become space itself. As Qadri has said, "The narrowness of space has posed as a great problem to me. Phenomenal life can hardly be lived within a few known dimensions."

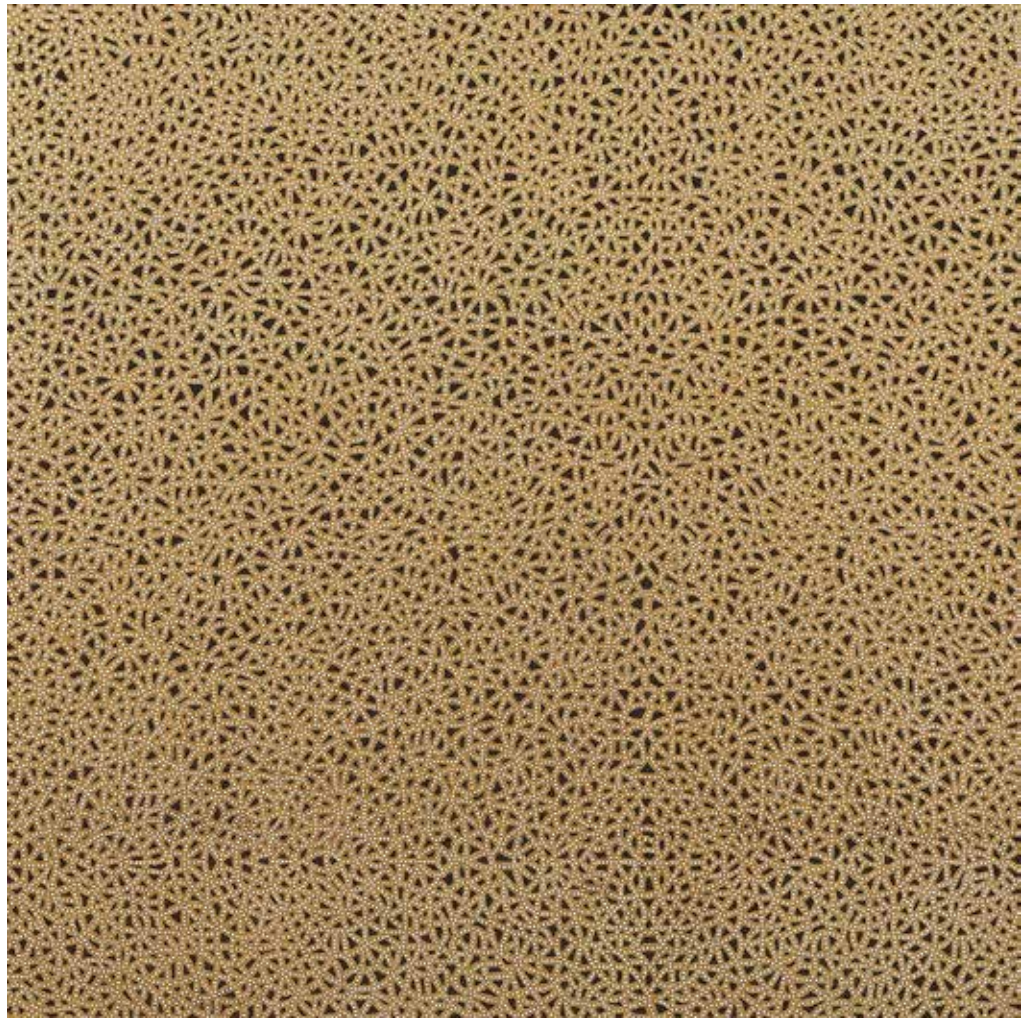


QADRI **Prana**, 2004. Ink and dye on paper, 39 x 55 in. (99.1 x 139.7 cm). Courtesy of Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, New York

# ANIL REVRI 1956

A native of New Delhi, Anil Revri holds a degree in interior design from the Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai, India, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, D.C. Despite these contrasting backdrops, Revri's style is an intriguing marriage of these two disciplines and environments. From the Washington color school's abstract languages of serialized stripes, dots, and circles, to the meditative aspects of Middle Eastern arts, Revri's works offer boundless theories about what truths can be expressed and discovered in the order of visual language. Revri's geometric abstractions employ a variety of dotted, curved, and slanted lines that create an illusion of three-dimensional space. With subtle elegance, the viewer is simultaneously drawn into the void of negative spaces and repelled, as shapes move over and under one another. These serialized patterns are premeditated, each one having internal harmony and a wholly balanced completeness. Implied in the sequence of Revri's works is that order – both personal and universal – is possible. "Though abstract in their rendering, the work is inspired by Eastern philosophy. Each piece becomes a meditation," comments Revri. "There is no reference to narrative here, excepting that of an implied order beneath the restless surface."





REVRI

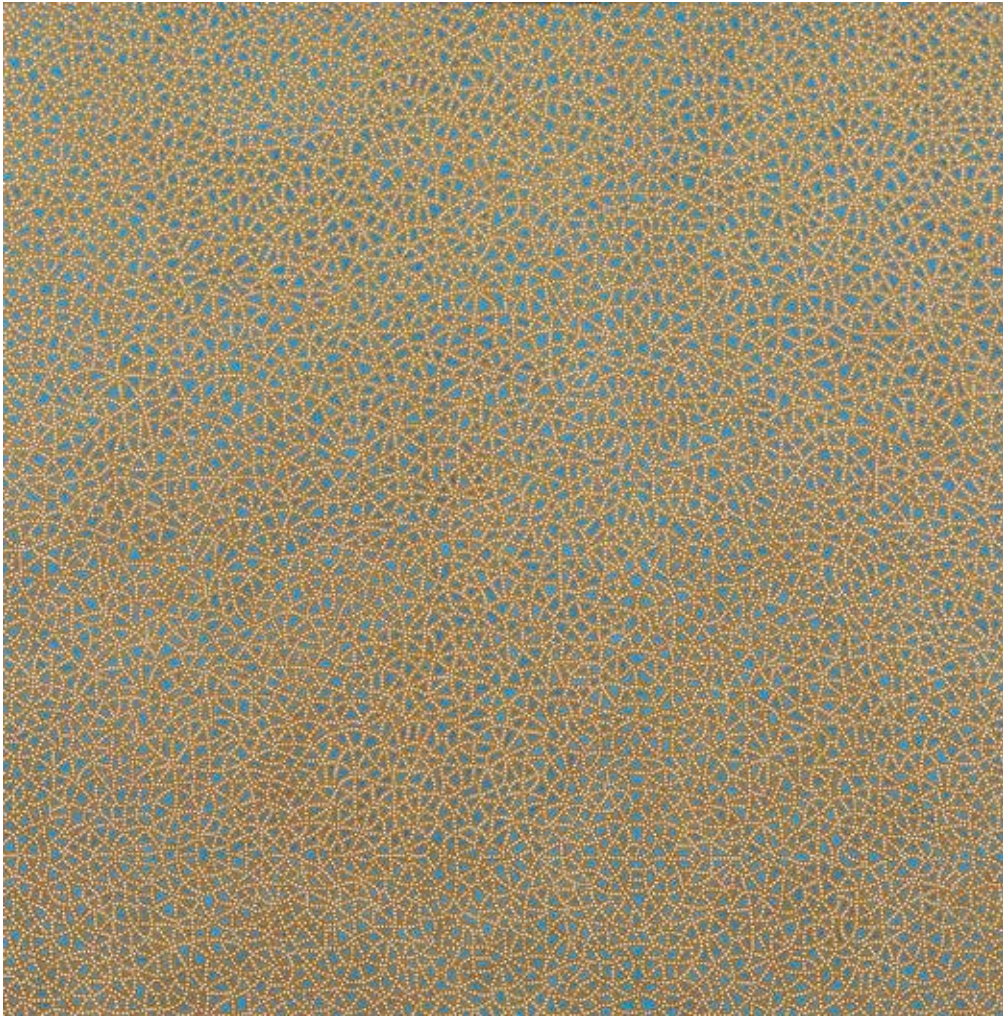
**Fractal 8**, 2006

*Mixed media on canvas*

*48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist,*

*Washington, D.C.*



REVRI

**Fractal 9**, 2006

*Mixed media on canvas*

*48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm)*

*Courtesy of the artist,*

*Washington, D.C.*

# ELENA VOLKOVA 1975

“My artistic curiosity lies in the interchange between nothing and something, and its manifestation in everyday reality. While focused on natural elements, I am interested in the threshold between the two, their connotative values, and the ways in which they inform and question each other.

For the premise of my work, I focus on forms easily recognizable and universally understood: water, sky, land, forms that are part of our everyday poetry, sublime or mundane. Creating photographs of these subjects, my goal is to explore how much visual information is needed to perceive the essence of the subject against the background of nothing, a void.

My exploration of nothingness is informed by Eastern philosophy, in which the notion of nothing is understood as the beginning and the potential. This I believe varies significantly from the Western existential notion of nothing as doom or death. According to the Taoist principles of Chinese painting, space is not a measurable quantity, but rather a means for suggesting the immeasurable vastness. Similarly, in most of my photographic work, the subject matter is gradually obliterated into large areas of a white void, suggesting unknown vastness and unrealized possibilities.

Elena Volkova earned two degrees from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore: a Master of Fine Arts degree in studio arts, as well as a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography.

**[www.elenavolkova.com](http://www.elenavolkova.com)**



VOLKOVA **Seascape #1097, 2004**

*Photograph, inkjet print, 20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Baltimore, Maryland and Hamiltonian Gallery, Washington, D.C.*



VOLKOVA **Seascape #1098, 2004**

*Photograph, inkjet print, 20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist, Baltimore, Maryland and Hamiltonian Gallery, Washington, D.C.*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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