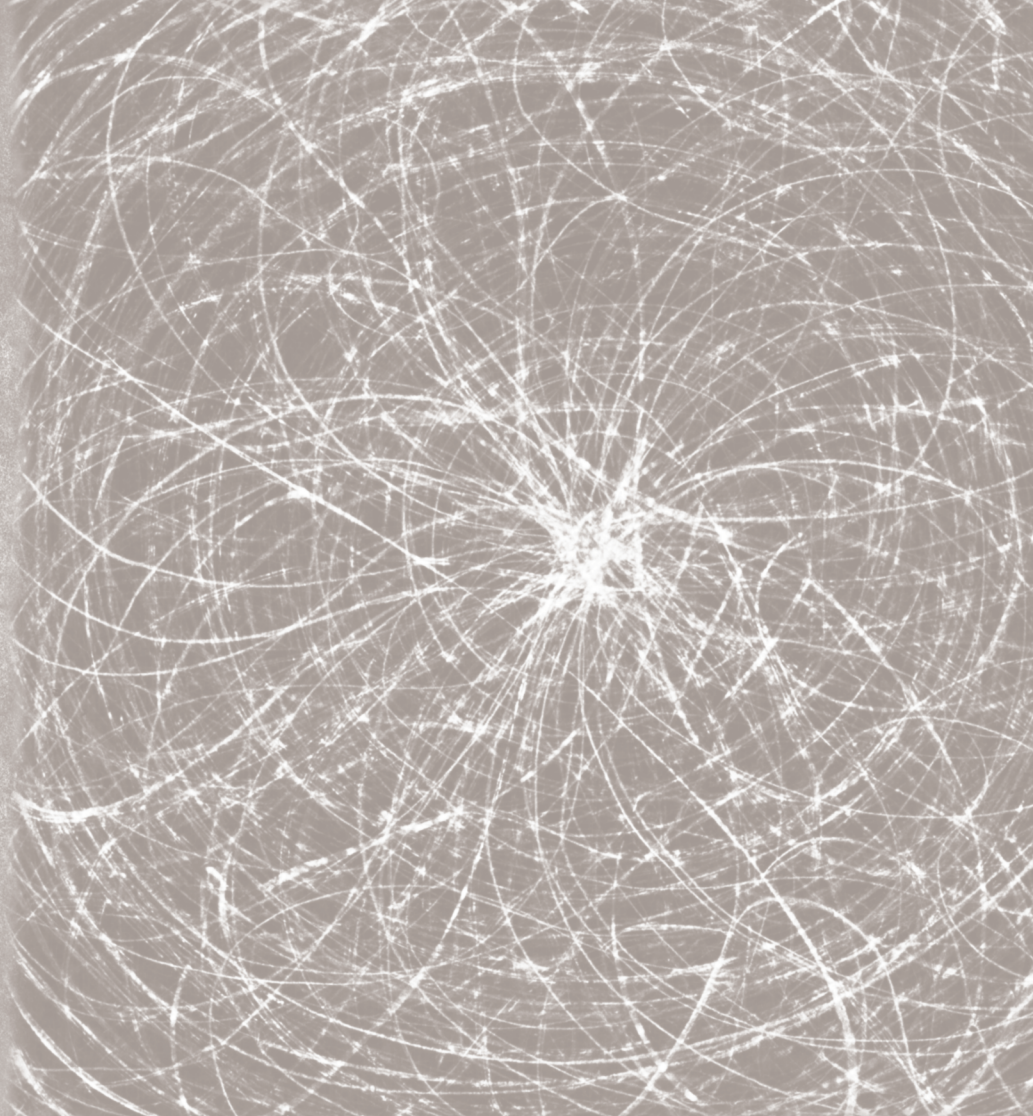
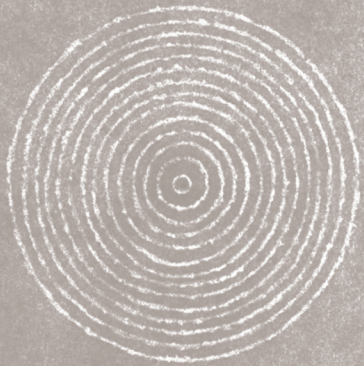


DAVID SHAPIRO

*TWENTY YEARS 1988-2008*





DAVID SHAPIRO

*TWENTY YEARS 1988 - 2008*

*MARCH 13 - MAY 2 2008*

**Goya Contemporary · Goya-Girl Press**

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## F O R W A R D

M A R T H A M A C K S – K A H N, P R E S I D E N T & O W N E R O F G O Y A C O N T E M P O R A R Y

My acquaintance with David Shapiro began many moons ago, of that I am sure. The exact date is a mystery, a point in time I cannot recall, nor can I be certain of the decade in which our first meeting actually occurred. I just know this happened, similar to the way innate understanding is transmitted. I knew the work before I knew the man, but in some ways the work and the man are identical. Both flow through an ancient dialogue with interpretations about “ways of being.”

Shapiro uses multiple strains of familiar shapes and repeated patterns, sectioning them sequentially into space on paper or canvas. How to “be” with the work (or with oneself) depends on the sectional rhythm of parts selected from the artist’s repertoire: *Mudras* have two parts, *Savasans* have six, *Clearings* have two, *Origins and Returns* have four and those titled *Seer Actor Knower Doer* have four sections. Texture and surface markings evidence the artist’s hand into an acute awareness of the present moment. Both organizational formality and tactility of surface juxtapose one’s immediate physical participation with a mystical memory encoded in the human evolutionary experience.

The work is an ongoing monochromatic conversation of restrained color and composition. Much like walking in the desert, subtleties of beauty suddenly appear without warning – Shapiro’s works burst into surprisingly intense color, form and texture. Just when one is certain there is nothing new to discover, the desert shows its complexity – a symphony of form and unexpectedly vivid color, recognizable in an instant that it has been within us for thousands of years.

So it makes perfect sense that meeting David Shapiro, becoming his friend and dealer happened quite naturally, knowing him and understanding his work in both past and present tense.

Shapiro has worked steadily in the same studio for almost 30 years, leading a quiet existence, without concern for current fashion. Even so, he has been well known to my colleagues, and appreciated by many who have known the work over time. I was pleasantly surprised when Jacob Lewis, while admiring my new publication of Shapiro’s prints, expressed his familiarity with Shapiro’s work and its relevancy to a younger generation of artists.

With much gratitude, I wish to thank Jacob Lewis, Director of *Pace Prints Chelsea*, for accepting my invitation to curate with me this 20 year retrospective, and for enlightening me with a new perspective.

## DAVID SHAPIRO AND JACOB LEWIS

*JACOB LEWIS IS DIRECTOR OF PACE PRINTS CHELSEA*

**Jacob Lewis / JL:** Looking at your work, I break it down into different elements. I see very sensitive line, mark-making ability and a layering process, as well as the use of texture. In addition, I look at the work and start to see you as a colorist. When I am really focusing and I begin to look at it through the past couple of decades, I find your work to be about mark-making and developing an image beyond color. So I wanted to ask you about approach. Do you try to add a color palette at times, rather than consistently making work that is black and white?

**David Shapiro / DS:** Okay, that’s a good question. I think that my work does roll out of a tradition of drawing and I feel that is the first element I did well and understood. You know how to do it and its meaning comes from the very traditional background of descriptive drawing – realistic drawing. And color has always remained a very mysterious thing to me. In fact, in art school I failed the Albers color

course. I recall saying to my teacher (who had been a student of Albers) “Well, what about the background of Velasquez or Rembrandt?” She replied, “That’s not color. That’s mud!” It was a kind of instruction that I received which I knew could not be true. Velasquez, at that time, was one of my favorite artists. There is something else about color that is not necessarily perceptual or design oriented as the Albers system was, and it has to do with light and expressiveness.

Later, I became interested in Yoga. There is a Yogic color system where colors are assigned to specific feelings or moods. I became interested in the concept of using color symbolically. I looked at artists like Albert Jensen (who I had the good fortune of meeting several times when I was a young student). He used color in a similar way. Half of the time I didn’t even know what he was talking about, but it turned a switch on in my head about what color could be.

**JL:** What you brought up about Albers’ approach to color and working method (which was mathematical) is interesting. When I look at your work, it reads mathematically as well. Even when your marks are loose and abstract, they are very deliberate. I noticed that they fall into a grid pattern much of the time. Even when you’re using elements like cheese cloth or different fabrics, there is still this grid based system in there. Your use of the *circle*, the *cross* and *plus* symbol ... did Jensen influence your approach in creating these works? Are you thinking about mathematics or different formulas?

**DS:** I can’t say I’m thinking about mathematics. That’s another subject I failed, but Jensen is an interesting artist in the sense that he had all these different processes he used ... very few people understood them. Even today, very few people understand that he utilized a Mayan numerical system or calendar, and I think that if you showed it to

ancient Mayans they would look at it and not know what this was about. He took a system and reinvented it in his own way.

Another way to answer to your question ... years ago when I was younger and was trying to figure out what I was doing, I was asked to describe my work and how it came about, much like you’re asking me now. I thought about metaphors – what could be the central metaphor for my work, because I didn’t believe in actually describing the work. If you describe your work you don’t need to do it. It would be redundant. I thought about the things I was interested in like ceramics and textiles. Both are evidence of early civilization. I thought, “What was the central metaphor for weaving?” It’s basically the warp and the weft, which is a grid. It is an infinite form in the sense that a grid could go on forever, it has no limit – its limit is an artificial one. The central metaphor that I thought



about for ceramics or pottery was centering. The symbol you get when you think of centering is the circle – something that is going in. You are pressing the clay in to make a form. So I found it was interesting that these two opposite metaphors gave me a clue.

My metaphor for my work would be to join those two opposite metaphors into one. My painting, drawing and printmaking would at the same time, reach out and move towards the center.

I have an interesting quote from French film maker, Jean Luc Godard, written on my wall. “You have to confront vague ideas with clear images.” When I originally read that, it sort of slapped me in the face. I said, “Oh that’s what I’m doing.” All of my ideas are so vague, and they’re purposefully vague because if they were clearer, I wouldn’t have to make the work – I could produce an essay instead.

**JL:** Since you are using multiple panels to make the large compositions, are you making these panels separately? Are you making these panels to react to other panels? Also, why don’t you do things in odd numbers when theoretically and visually it is sometimes more pleasing and easily understood to the human eye?

**DS:** Well, the answer to why I don’t do it is perhaps that I haven’t done it yet. Or, I haven’t gotten to it yet. Or, it doesn’t satisfy what I’m interested in now. Years ago, I had an experience that formed much of my thoughts. I used to run in the park and that was important to me for two reasons (besides health benefits). One, I began to sense myself as a mover through an environment and that made me think of when one looks at a work of art – how one activates that space between the object and the viewer. One way is to make them count ... one, two, three, four, five, six – however many panels there are. Or, if something

is divided diagonally (which I used to do quite a bit) someone would tilt their head one way and then the other and ask “Which side am I supposed to look at first?” They would take in the entire field – then decide how to see it, where to start.

On these runs through the park I would stop once in a while and draw with a twig; I would draw a circle on the ground and there would be an immediate composition there ... cigarette butts, stones, some more twigs, wrappers. If I drew a bigger circle, it would still be a composition ... and if I drew a bigger circle, it would be another composition. But it was almost as if there was nothing that one could do that wouldn’t look composed. I don’t know if that makes any sense with what you asked me – it just popped into my head. The idea of having a middle seems to work against that, because with a middle, you get an odd numbered piece. There is something that has a

hierarchical value, such as a renaissance triptych. The most important section is always the center, not on the wings. This experience of drawing in the sand or dirt made me think that one section wasn’t more important than any other.

**JL:** Since you bring up textiles and pottery, art forms derived from natural elements (clay and of course fibers), I see that your work has a very natural feeling to it. I have to assume that you are finding some natural elements to play with, to add into the paper. It seems like some of these things are even handmade paper. Do you consciously seek out more natural elements to try and apply into your work?

**DS:** I agree with what you are saying and I think that what you call “*materials from the natural world*” isn’t so different from paint or ink. Essentially paints and inks are dirt, colored dirt that is mixed with some oil, or gum arabic or

something from the earth. I like to use materials that have what I call character or indigenous life. It was a big revelation for me early in my printmaking career, when I was shown handmade papers for the first time. The first prints I made were on standard manufactured papers, and then a printer showed me some Japanese papers and said, “What do you think of these?” I thought I was looking at the king’s treasury! They all had these incredible edges and light within them. I started to work with Asian papers, then some American and European handmade papers. It became very difficult for me to start any projects without having the paper first. The paper often gave me the clue of what was to be on that paper. Before I had this experience, I worked on paper – not in paper.

An artist that has always inspired me is Paul Klee. He is my touchstone of twentieth century art. One thing I learned from Paul Klee was the use of a variety of mate-

rials and textures. In art school they teach composition, color, line but they don’t teach texture. Surface is always considered some superficial thing. But I’ve always thought that you couldn’t separate color from texture. For instance, Matisse uses a pink and he really waters it down with turpentine and you really see the weave of the linen he’s working on – that’s color and texture together. Color and texture are inseparable.

**JL:** Let’s talk more about printmaking, especially since I am a printmaker and a print dealer. Many times I have to look closely at your work to find out what elements reside in printmaking and what elements are drawing or painting. I have to feel that printmaking is a huge influence on how you create your work. I was wondering if you could tell me how printmaking is affecting your paintings. Or do you find that your paintings affect your printmaking – or both?

**DS:** From making prints, I became more conscious about what I was working with, rather than what I was working on. I started to select different weaves of canvas, painted on silk, or felt or burlap ... in that way I think working on paper influenced my painting. Color was influenced by watching printers mix colors because printing colors are not the same as painting colors.

The collaborative aspect is also important – both the collaboration with the printer and the collaboration with a surface. Working on paper caused me to consider the edge and its relation to the interior. It actually influenced my painting enormously.

**JL:** Well David, you and I are a couple of generations apart. I am curious ... with the way that the art world has exploded here in the past few years, are there artists in

my generation that you are looking at? Or anyone that you can say is influencing you at all? Do you see a change in art and how it is affecting your work?

**DS:** That’s a tough question, but I don’t think that it is as much a generational thing – I’m in my own little world. I don’t feel like what is going on at the moment, what critics call “the discourse,” affects my work. I certainly look at it and I try to understand it, but, as an artist gets older, you try to make your own work as strong as possible – whether or not it measures up to what “the discourse” is ... our world and culture are turning into a more technological, hands-off society. I find my work becoming more and more hands-on. I respond to work that I see a hand in much more than not seeing a hand.

**JL:** Do you feel like your work relates to people my age? I’ve grown up looking at your work.



## P L A T E S

**DS:** That's very satisfying for me because I know when I stopped teaching around 1979-80, I felt an enormous generation gap with my students. When I asked them who their favorite artists were, I got answers like Andy Warhol or David Bowie. Someone who was interested in Andy Warhol would find nothing that I had to offer of any interest. I felt there was no need for me to do this anymore. You know I probably got out of it too early. Maybe I should have stayed longer and pitched more for what I believed in.

Rather than being a de-constructor of a tradition or the antithesis of a tradition, the way art history is traditionally presented to us is that "X" was a reaction to "Y" which was a reaction to "Z"... I prefer to be part of a tradition – to cultivate rather than be against something. That's always been very important to me. I want to be a continuation, a lineage. That's why I mentioned people

like Alfred Jensen, Paul Klee, Mark Tobey or a number of sixteenth century Japanese masters. I feel like I'm in that lineage, or that's where I would like to place myself. I judge myself by how my work feels next to theirs. You can see on my wall I have all these reproductions. That's what gives me satisfaction.

I have been very interested in Buddhism. I studied some when I was younger. I just never felt I had to reinvent the wheel. The artists or craftsmen who moved me gave me a model of excellence to reach for, a visual arena that I want to be part of. I have been very interested in and have collected tribal art, ancient pottery, and textiles. Those are my reference points.

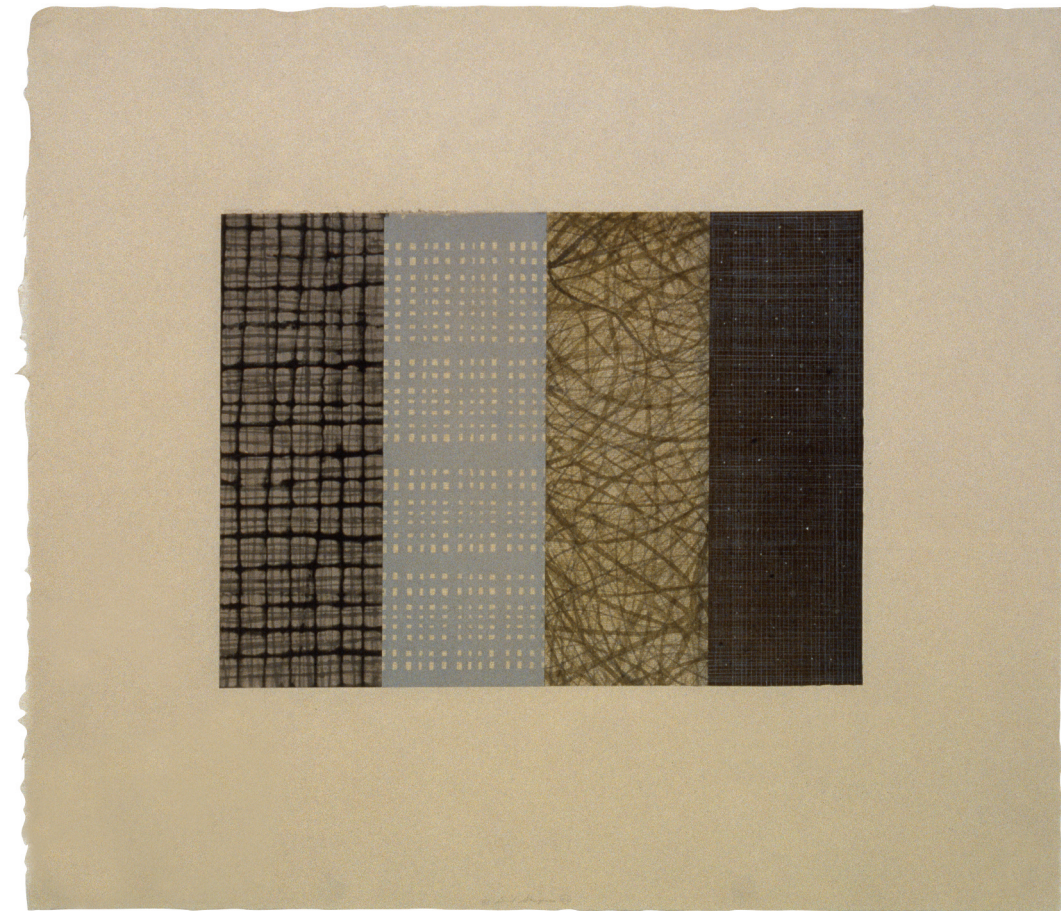
**JL:** Maybe we should end on that note. David, I really do appreciate you letting me into your studio.

**DS:** Oh, my pleasure.



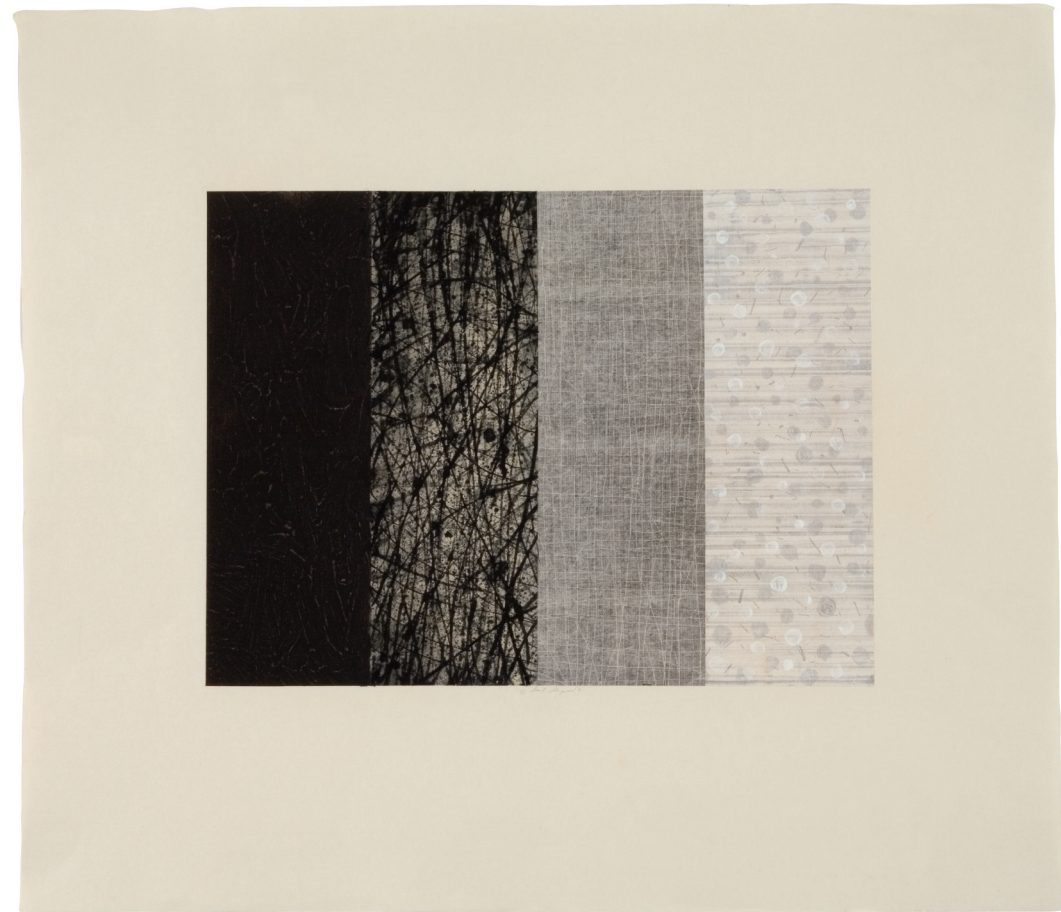
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2002 / ACRYLIC ON PAPER / 22.5 X 25 INCHES / DETAIL LAST PAGE <<



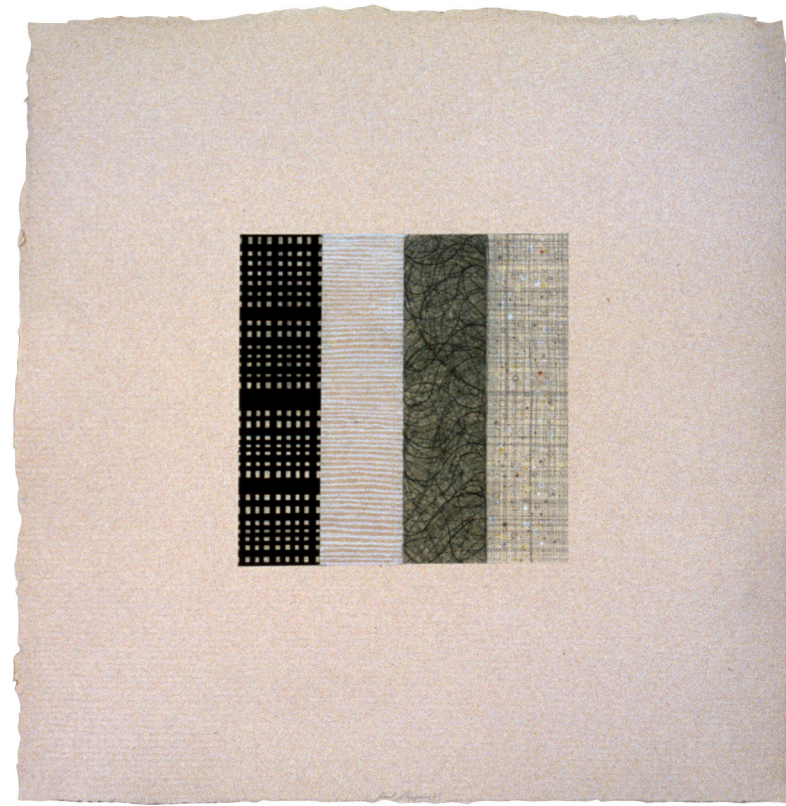


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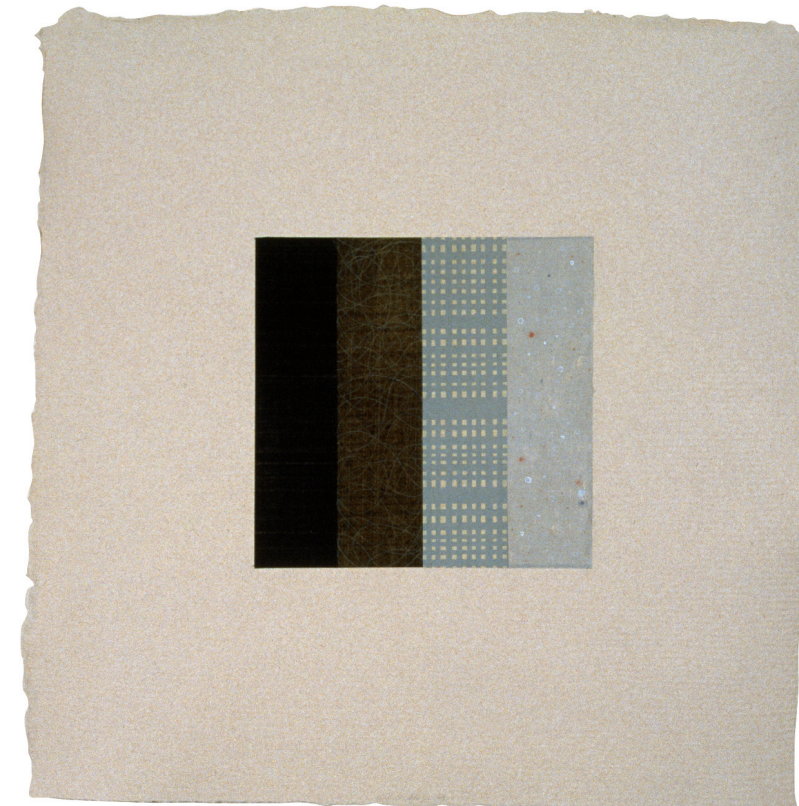


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**B / SEER, ACTOR, KNOWER, DOER 43-03-P**  
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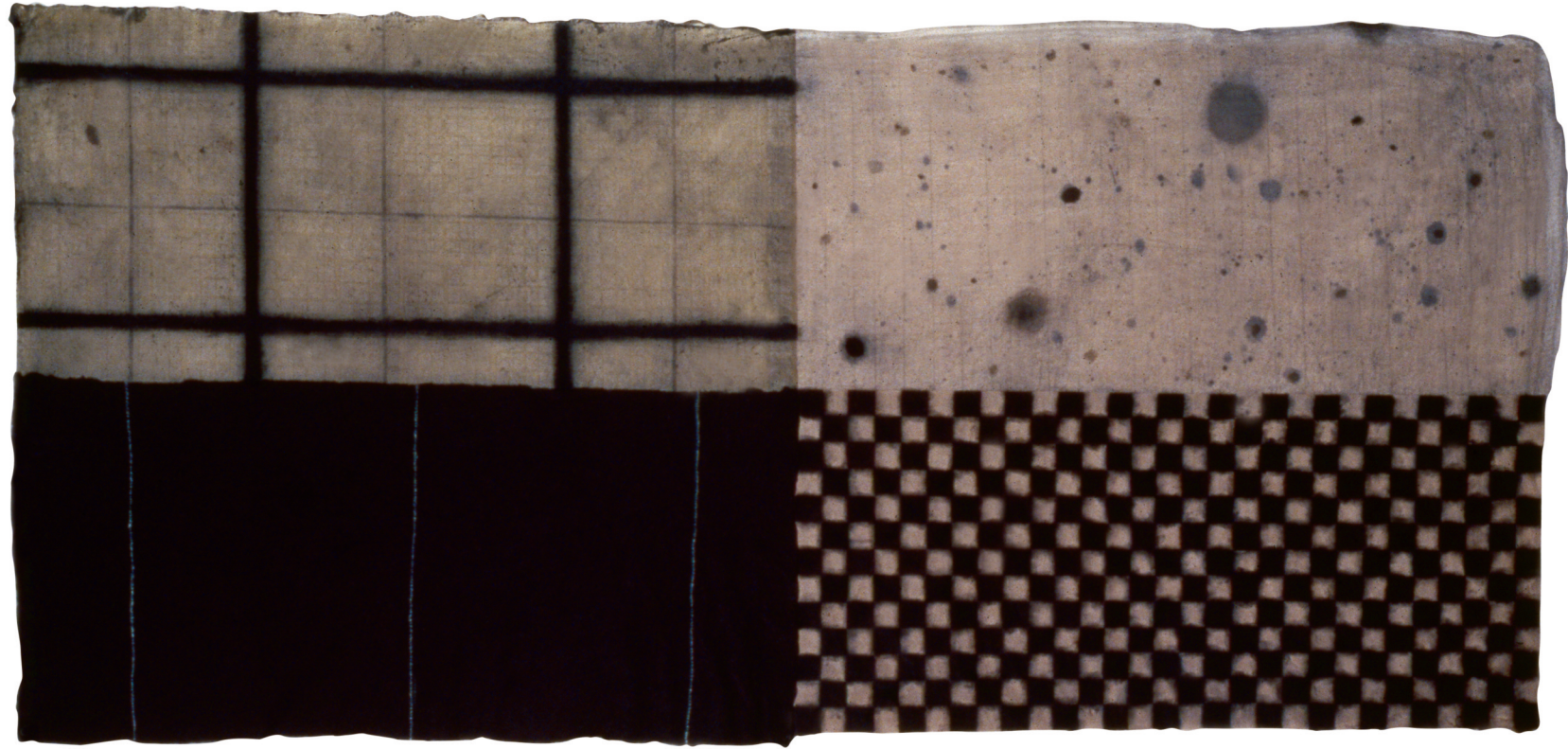


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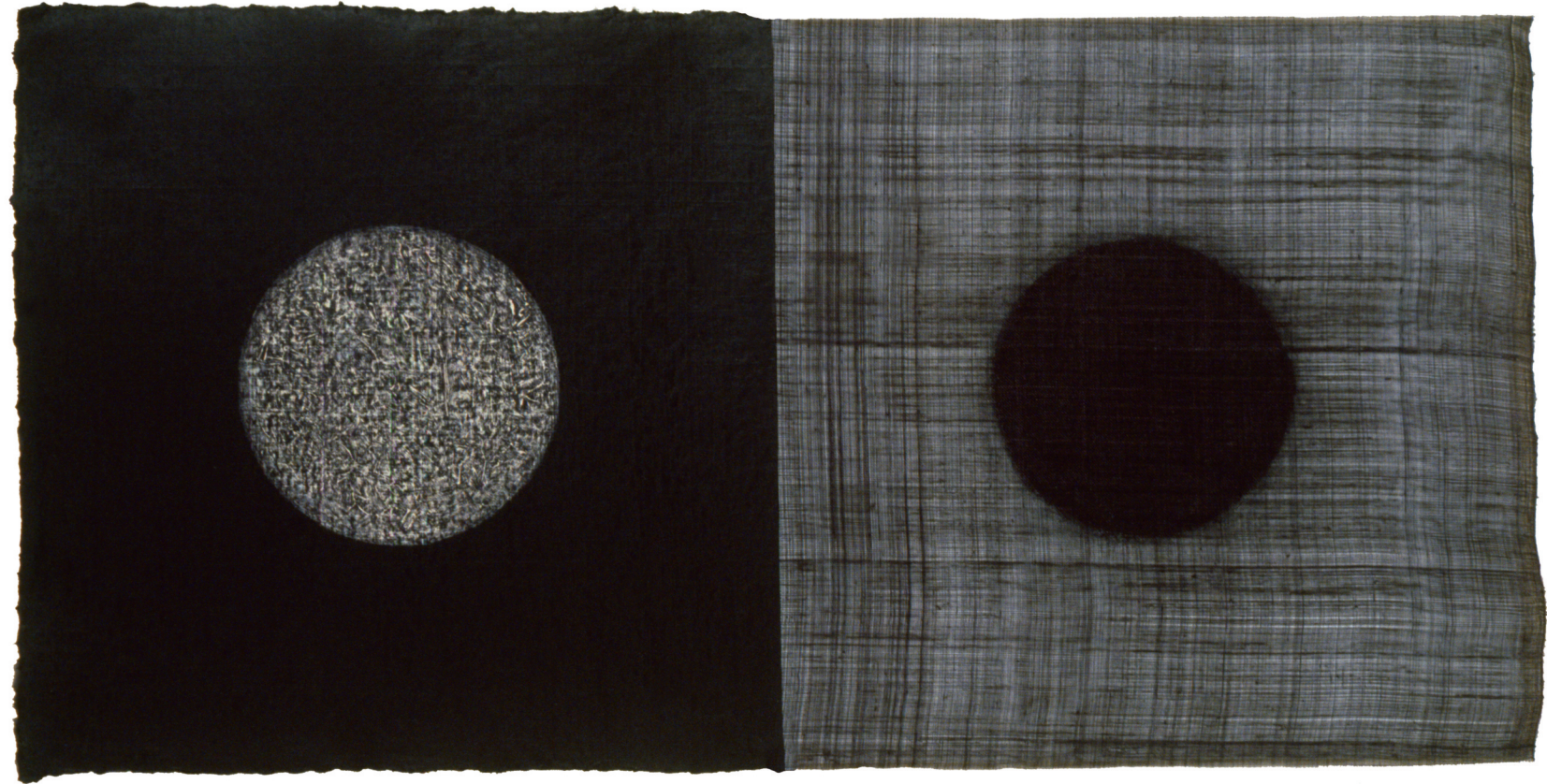


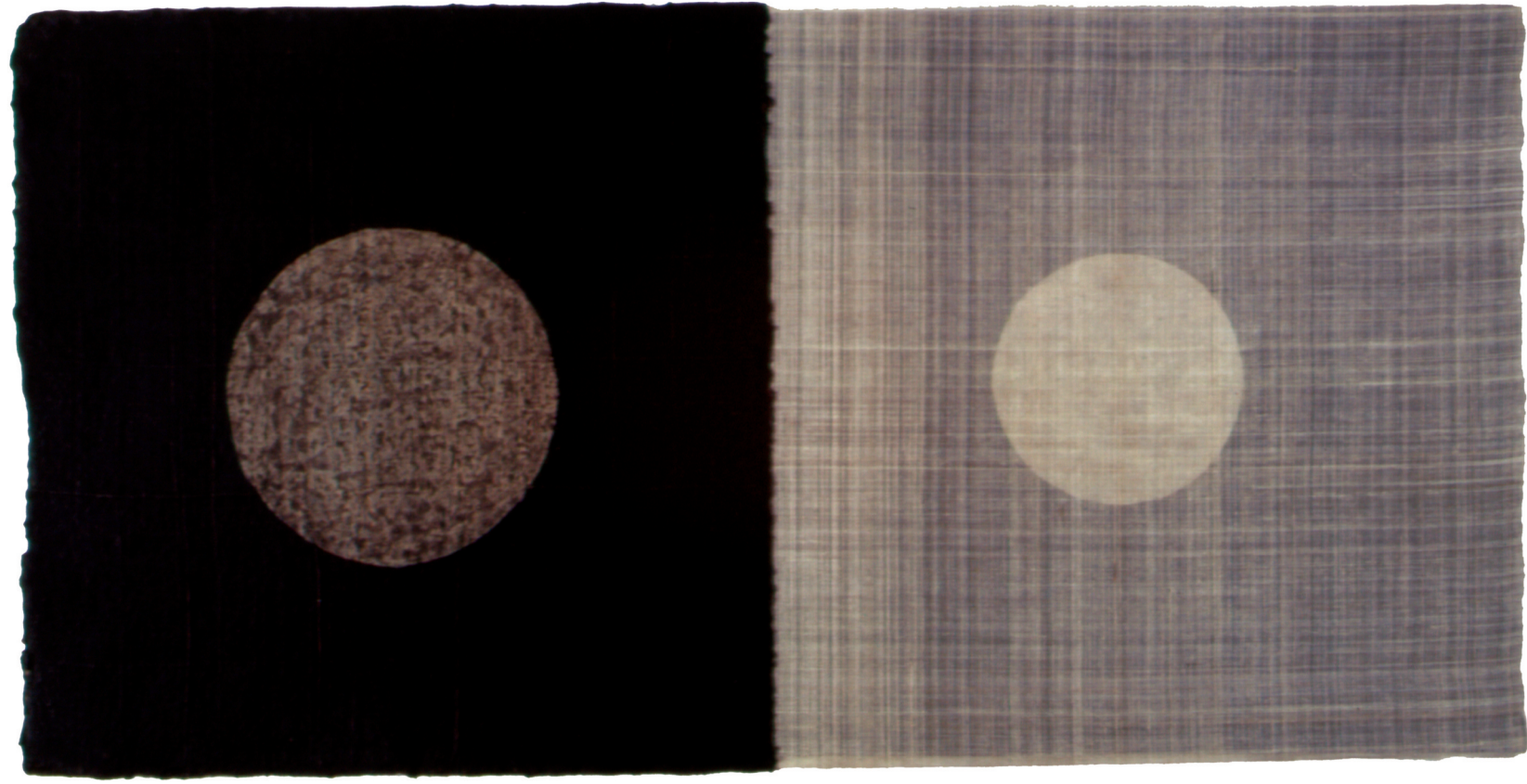
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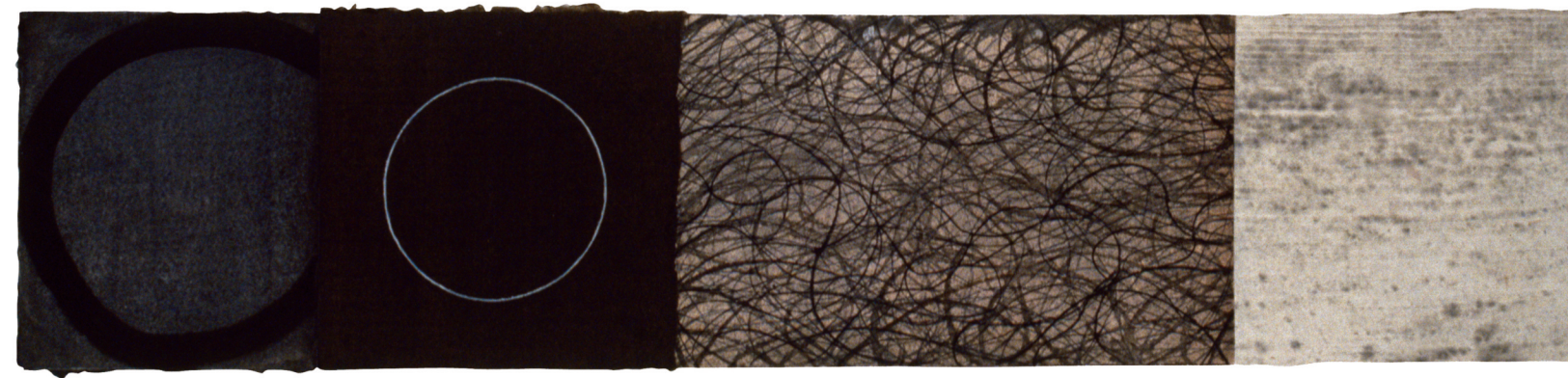




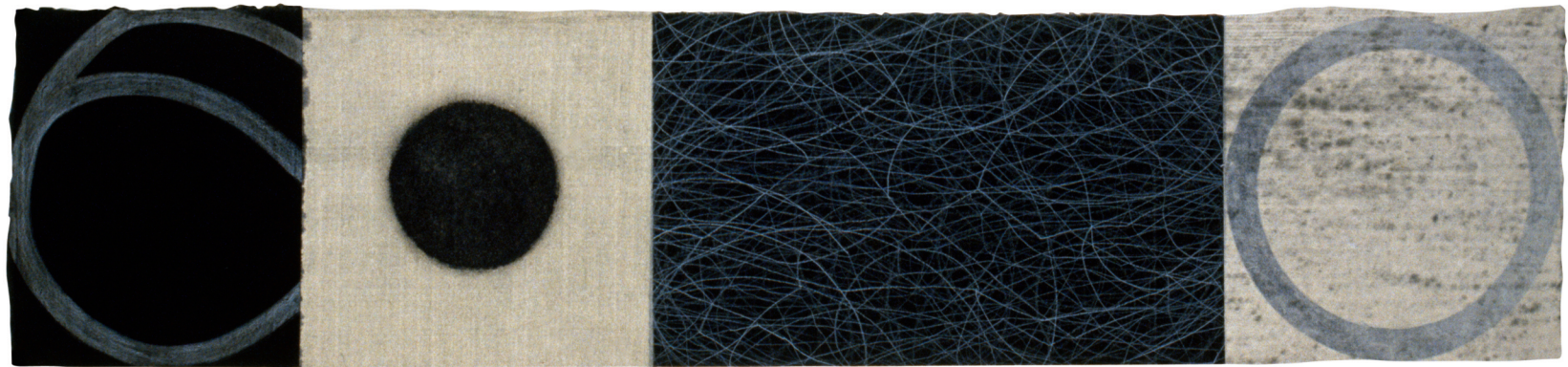








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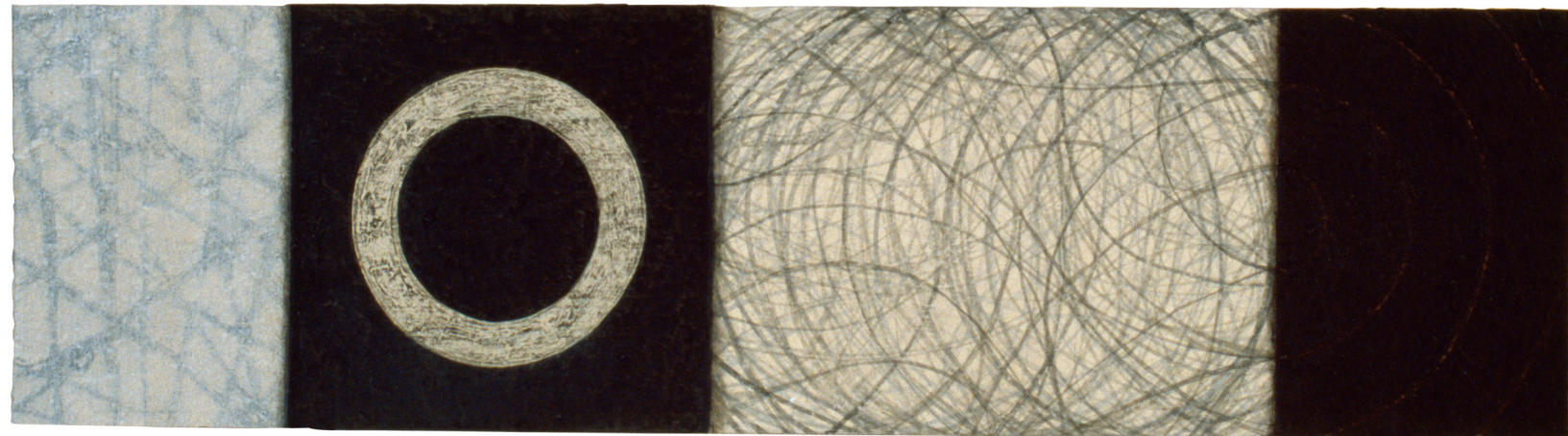
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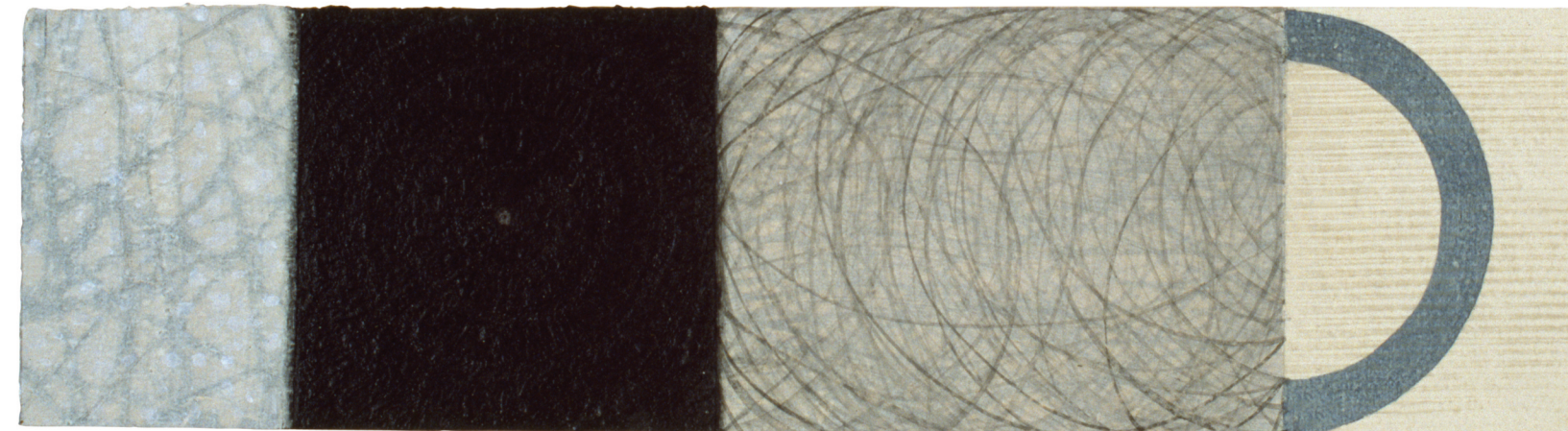
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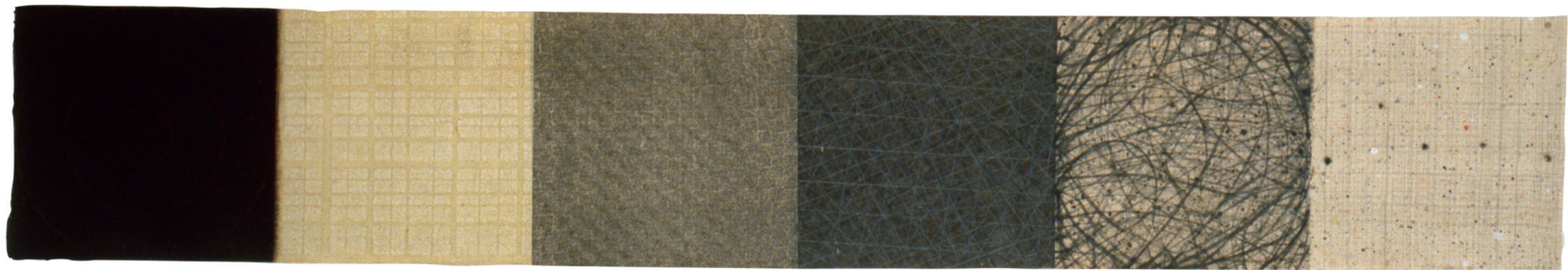


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1998 / ACRYLIC ON PAPER / 6.75 X 25 INCHES





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SAVASAN 182-08-P  
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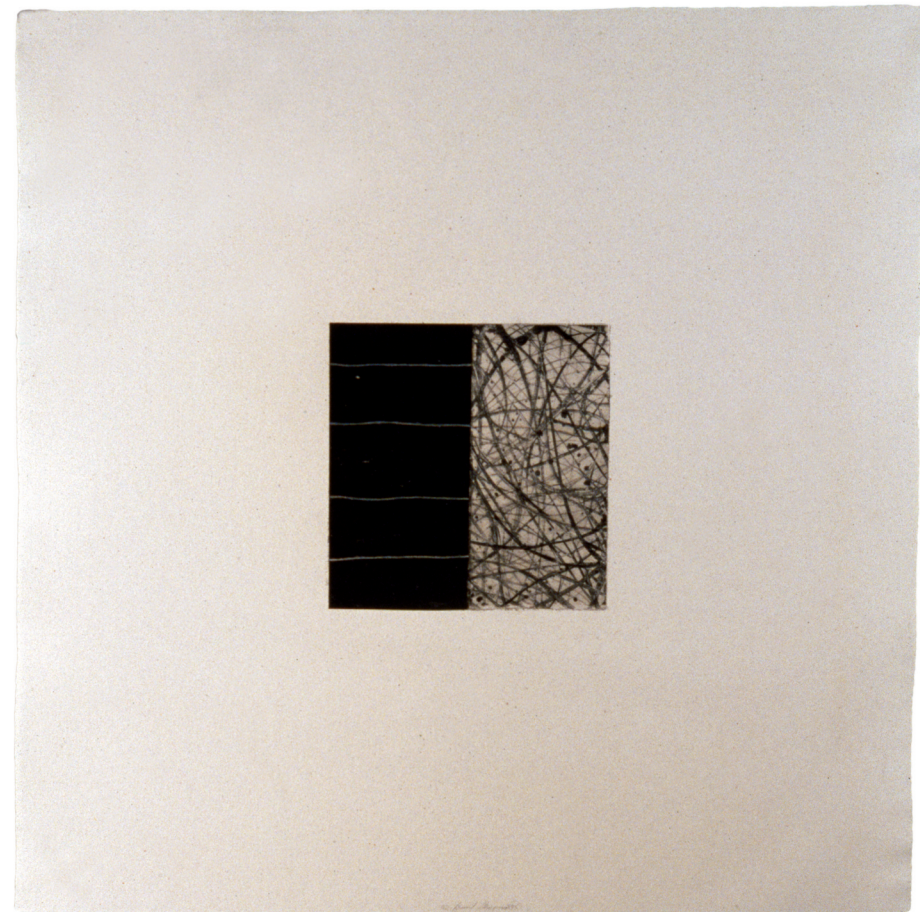




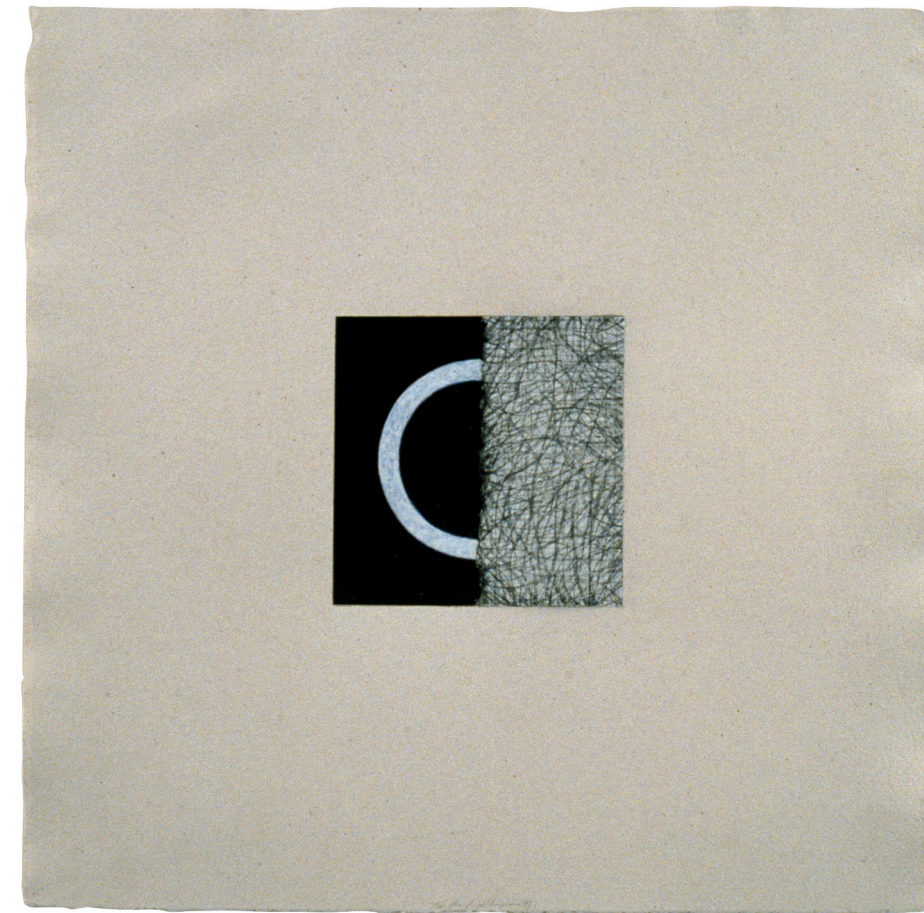
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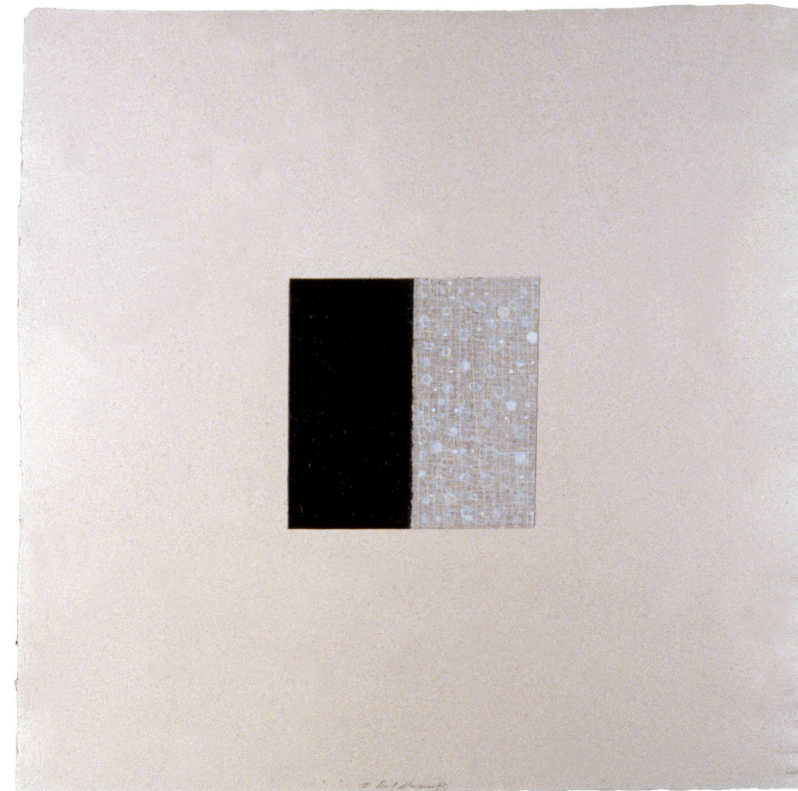
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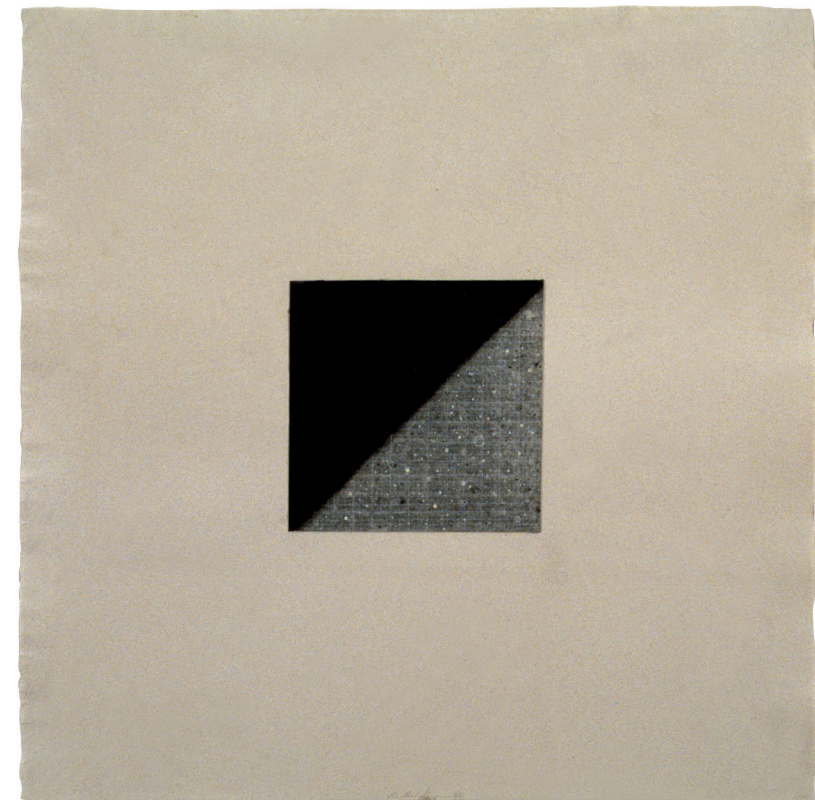


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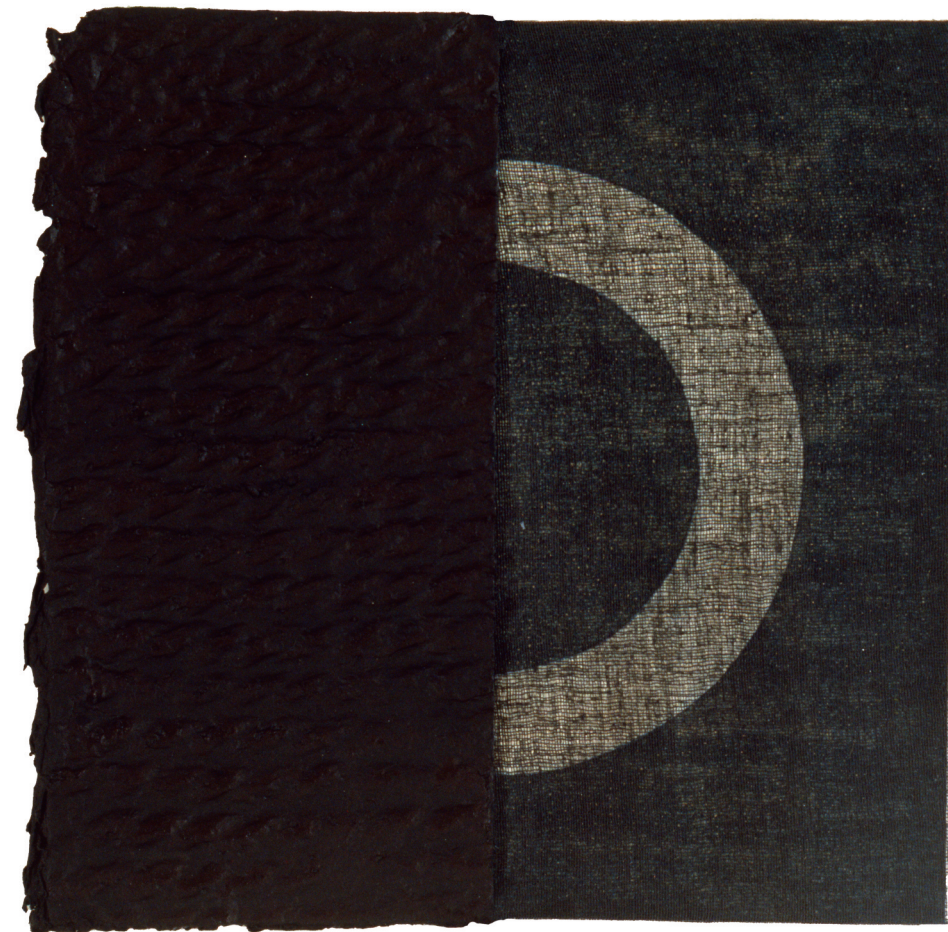


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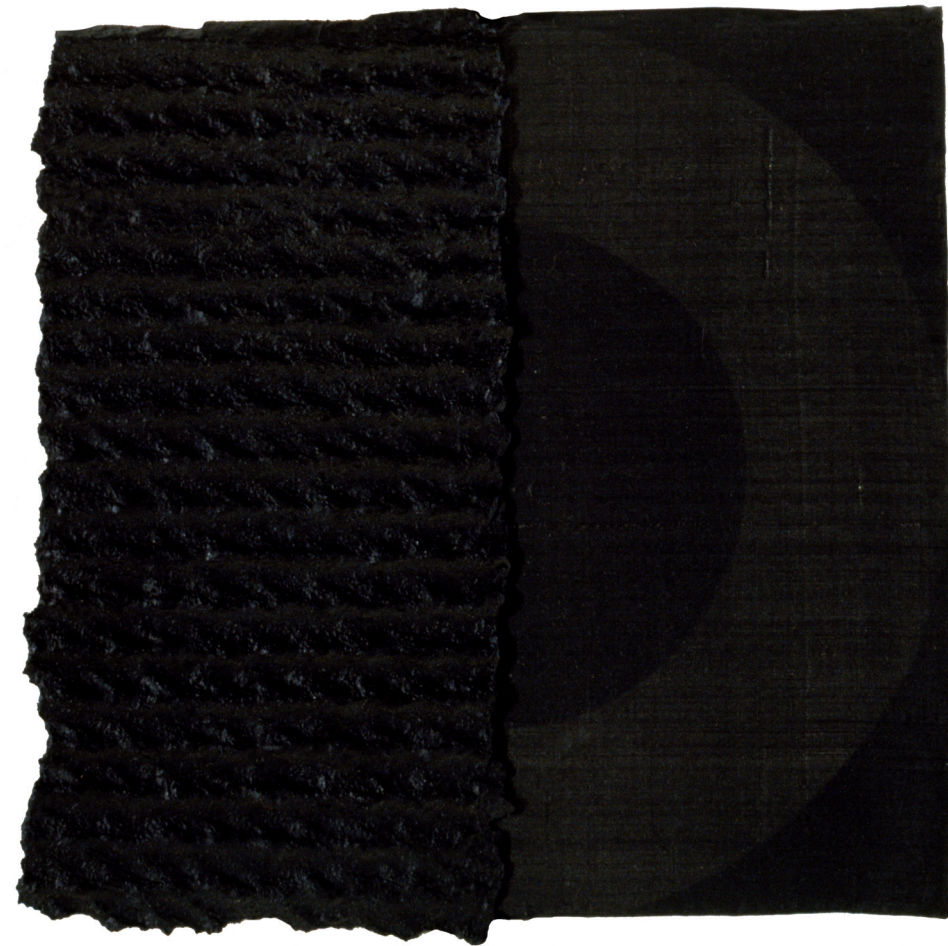
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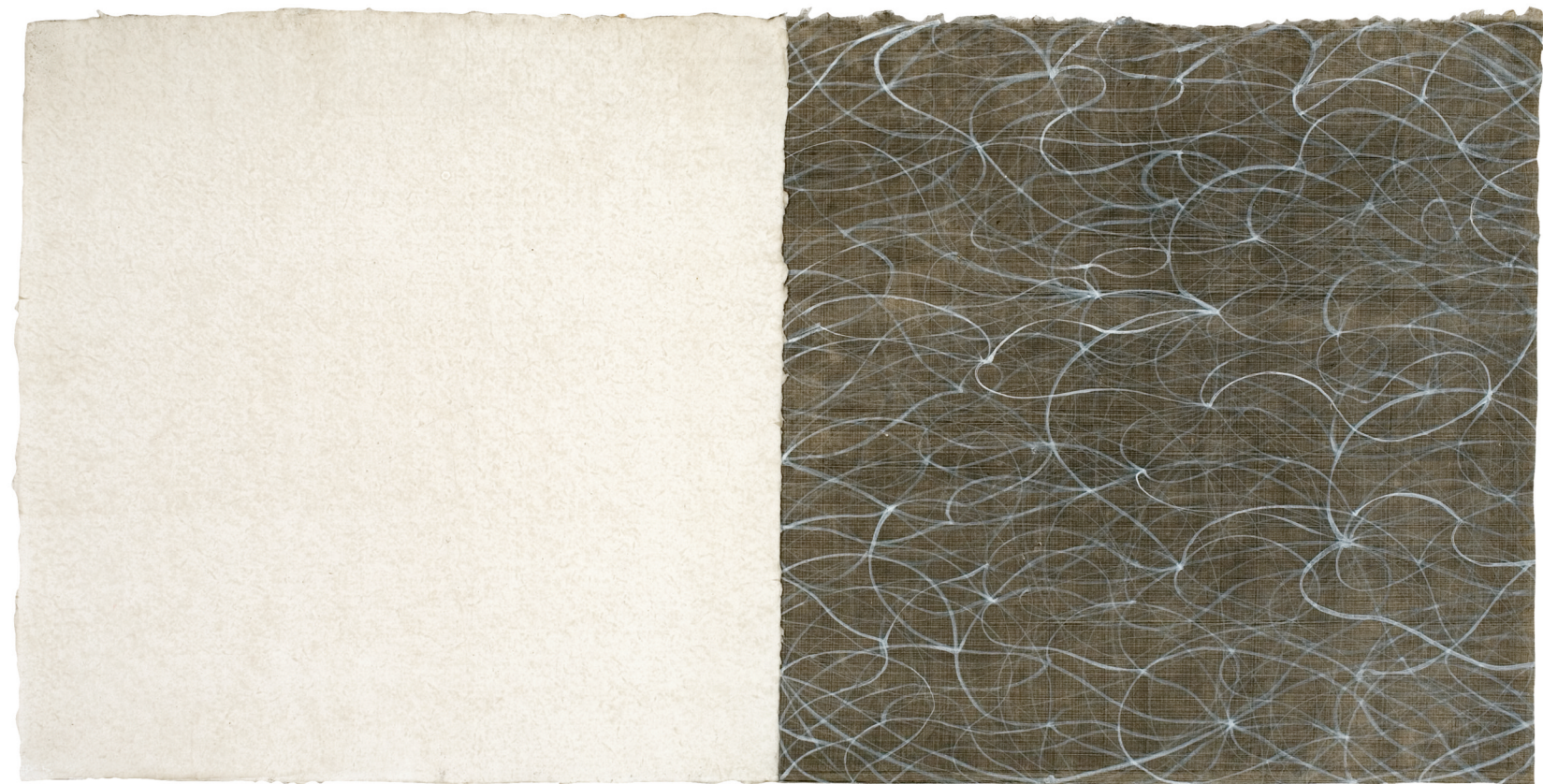
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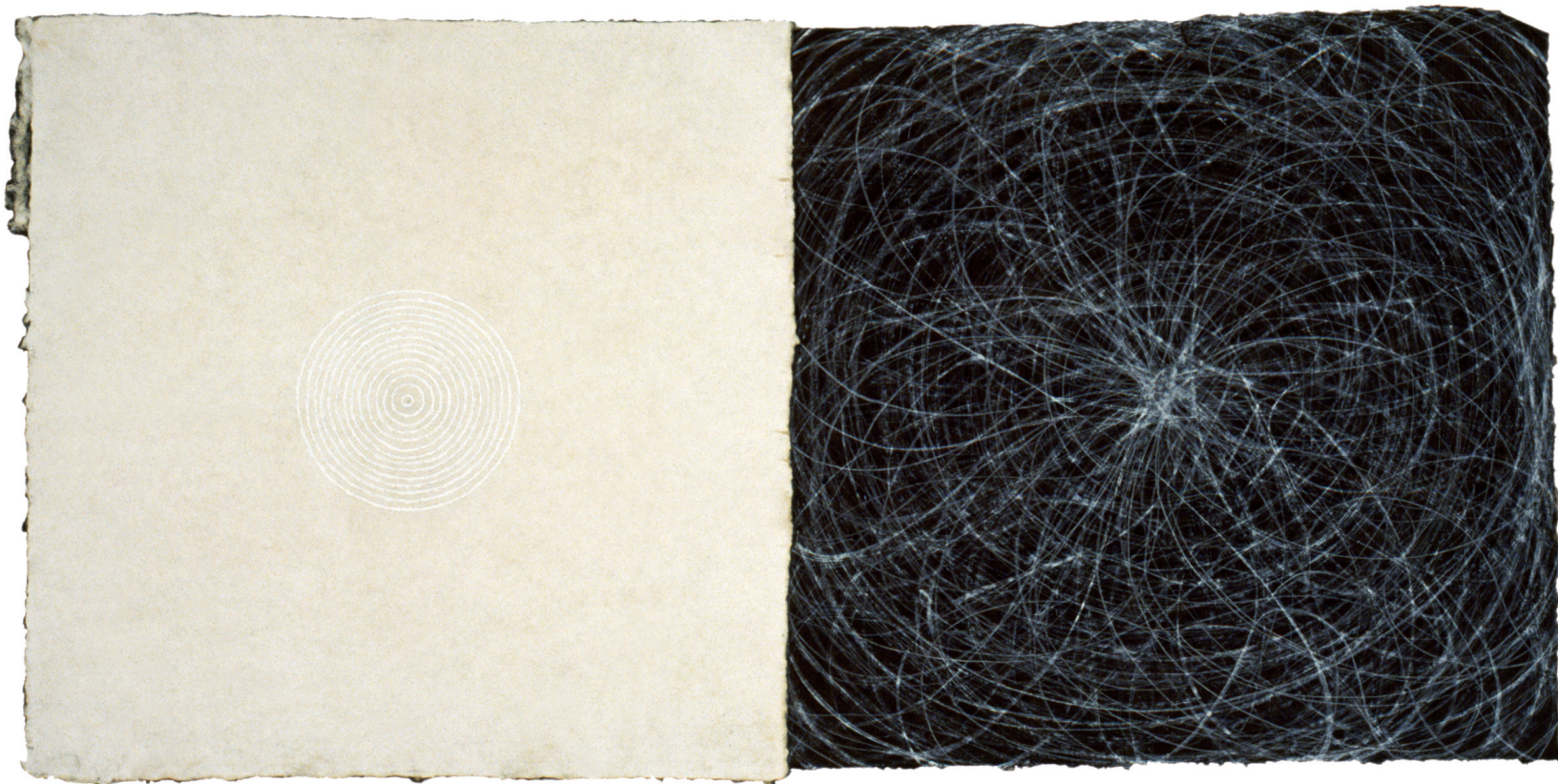




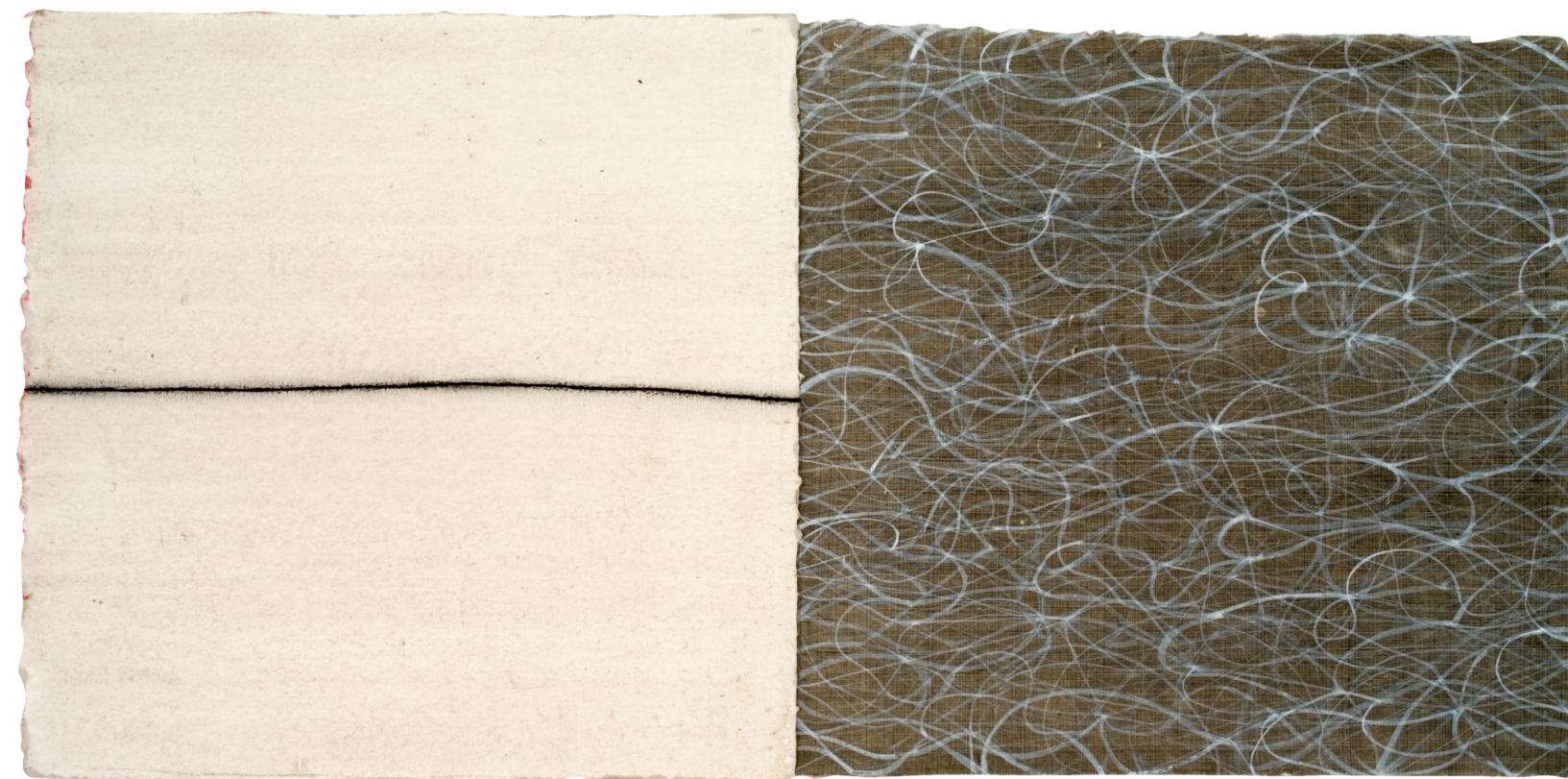
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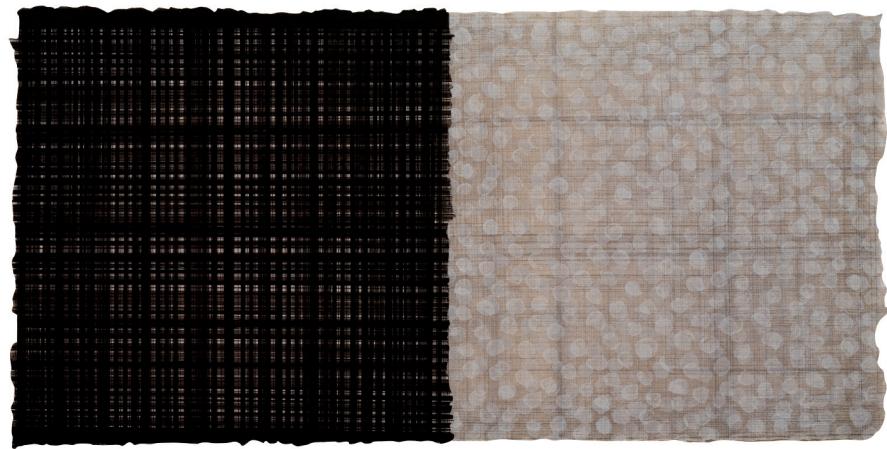
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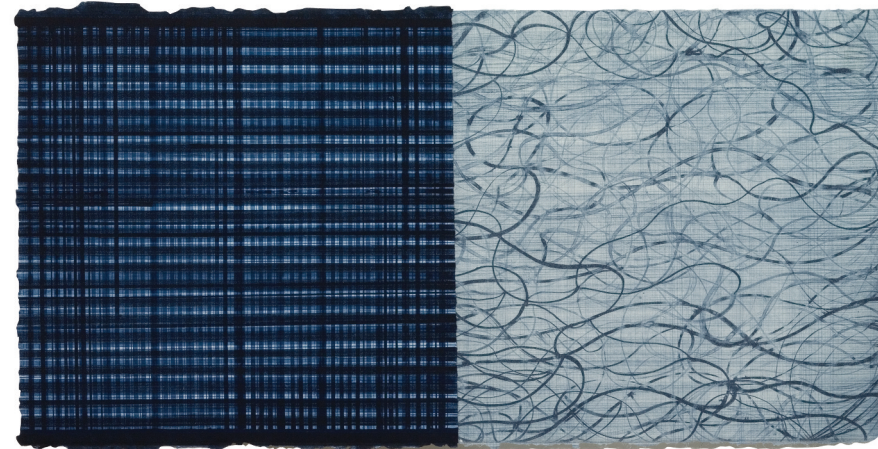






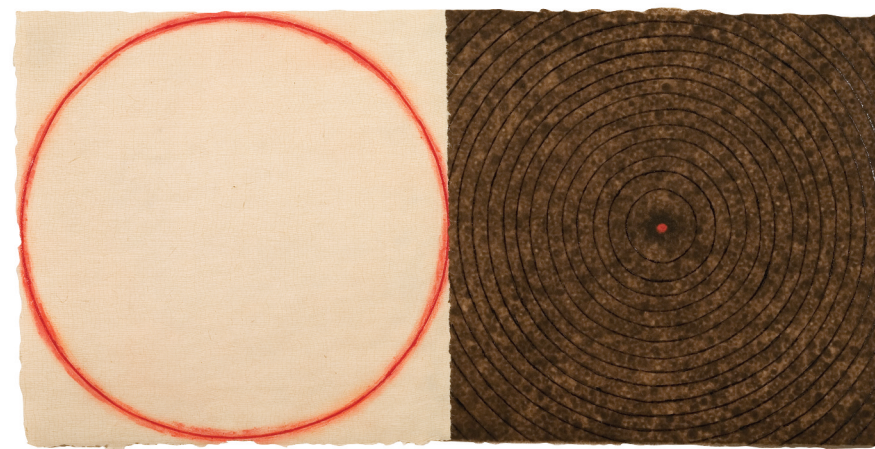
A

A / CLEARING 10  
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B

B / CLEARING 11  
2007 / EDITION OF 14 / PHOTOPOLYMER INTAGLIO, CORBORUNDUM RELIEF, AQUATINT, COLLOGRAPH / 12 X 24 INCHES / DETAIL NEXT PAGE >>



C

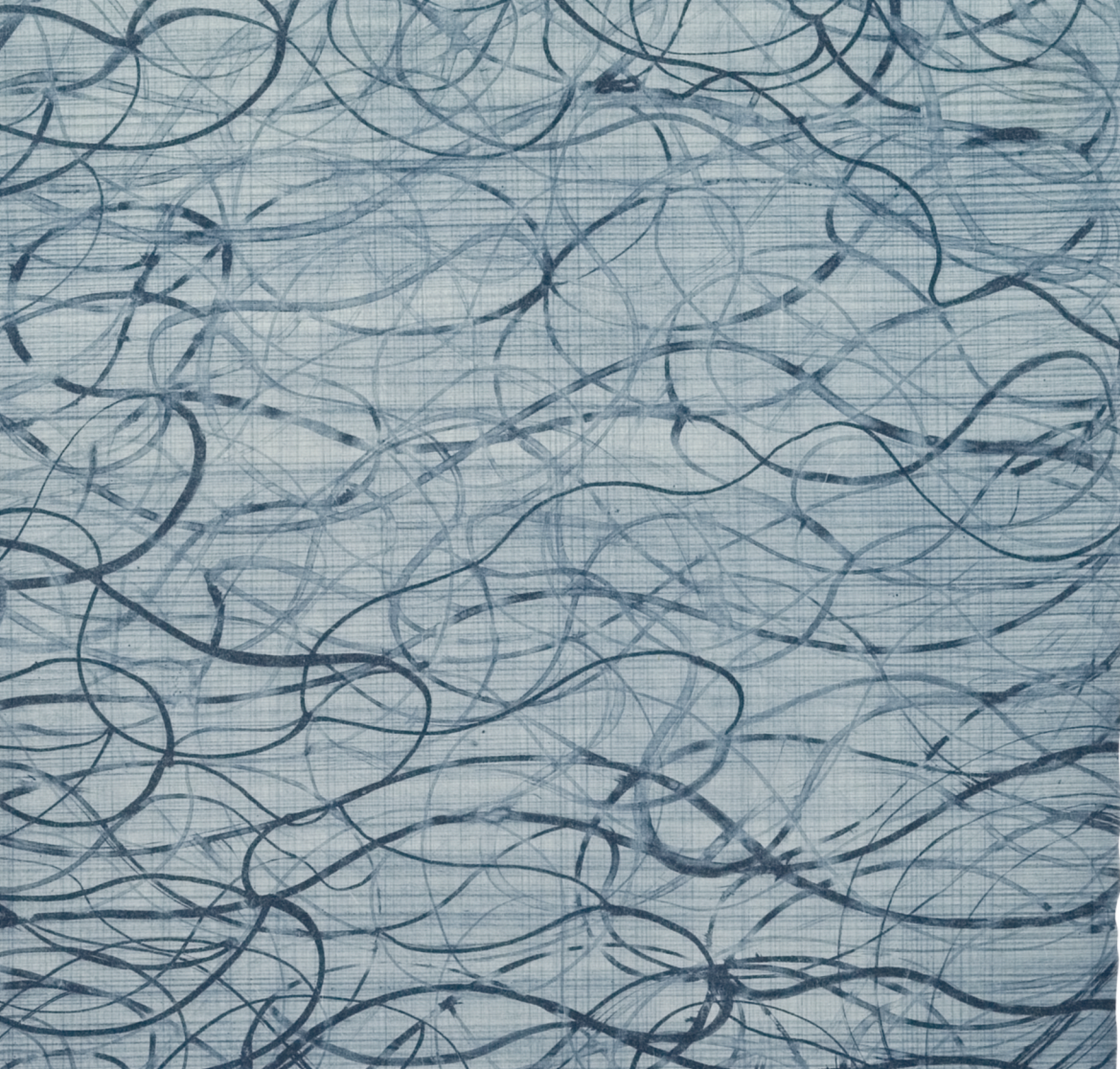
C / CLEARING 12  
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D

D / CLEARING 13  
2007 / EDITION OF 14 / PHOTOPOLYMER INTAGLIO, ENGRAVING, COLILOGRAPH / 12 X 24 INCHES





## S E L E C T E D   B I O G R A P H Y

1968 MFA, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

1966 BFA, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

1965 Skowhegan School of Art, Skowhegan, ME

2008 Goya Contemporary, Baltimore, MD

2008 Bobbie Greenfield Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

2008 Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, GA

2007 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

2007 Bobbie Greenfield Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

2006 Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto

2006 Numark Gallery, Washington, DC

2005 Parimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

2003 Perimeter Gallery, New York, NY

2003 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

2003 Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto, Canada

2003 Numark Gallery, Washington, DC

2003 Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, GA

2001 Sherry Leedy Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO

2000 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

2000 Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto

1999 The Fine Art Society, London

1999 Numark Gallery, Washington, DC

1998 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

1998 Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, GA

1998 Elliot Smith Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO

1997 Numark Gallery, Washington, DC

1997 Sen Gallery, Tokyo

1996 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

1996 Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto

1996 Elliot Smith Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO

1995 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL

1994 Kaoru Gallery, Tokyo

1994 Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto

1992 Davidson Gallery, Seattle, WA

1992 Fine Art Gallery, Indiana University,  
Bloomington, IN

1992 Thomson Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

1991 Kaoru Gallery, Tokyo

1991	Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto	1987	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	1981	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	2005	Square, Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto	1989	Mind and Matter, exhibition sponsored by	1983	23rd National Print Exhibition, Brooklyn
1991	Kansas City Artists Coalition, Kansas City, MO	1987	Thomson Gallery, Minneapolis, MN	1980	Union College, Cranford, NJ	1995	Frameless, Inaugural International Invitational	USA, traveling to Seoul, Tokyo, New Zealand,		1983	Museum, Brooklyn, NY
1991	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	1986	Vandewoude-Tananbaum Gallery, New York, NY	1979	Alexander Milliken Gallery, New York, NY		Bienale, Mie Cultural Center, Japan	Australia, Bangkok, Manila, Taiwan, Hong		1983	World Print Tour, San Francisco Museum of
1990	Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL	1985	Thomson Gallery, Minneapolis, MN	1979	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	1995	US Print Grafikan Paja Hummelblau,	Kong and Singapore ( <i>catalog</i> )			Art, San Francisco, CA
1990	Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, GA	1985	Getler / Pall Gallery, New York, NY	1979	Getler / Pall Gallery, New York, NY		Tampere, Finland	1989	Graphic Biennial, exhibition sponsored by	1982	American Academy & Institute of Arts &
1990	Dolan / Maxwell Gallery, New York, NY	1985	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	1979	Poindexter Gallery, New York, NY	1990	Art on Paper, Weatherspoon Art Gallery,	USA, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia ( <i>traveling to the</i>		1982	Letters, New York, NY
1990	Dolan / Maxwell Gallery, Philadelphia, PA	1985	Graphics I & II, Boston, MA	1978	Alexander Milliken Gallery, New York, NY		University of North Carolina, Greensboro	<i>University of Florida Gallery, Gainesville, Florida</i> )		1981	Recent Acquisitions, Brooklyn Museum,
1989	Dolan / Maxwell Gallery, New York, NY	1983	Getler / Pall Gallery, New York, NY	1978	Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL	1990	Echo Press: A Decade of Printmaking,	1989	Myth Symbol Dream: Structures of the		Brooklyn, NY
1989	Thomson Gallery, Minneapolis, MN	1983	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	1978	Huntington Galleries, Huntington, WV		Indiana University Museum of Art,	Unconscious, Delaware Center for the		1981	22nd National Print Exhibition, Brooklyn
1988	Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL	1983	Cumberland Gallery, Nashville, TN	1977	Poindexter Gallery, New York, NY		Bloomington, IN ( <i>catalog</i> )	Contemporary Arts, Wilmington, DE			Museum, Brooklyn, NY
1988	Dolan / Maxwell Gallery, Philadelphia, PA	1983	Styria Studio, New York, NY	1974	Poindexter Gallery, New York, NY	1990	Eleventh British International Print Biennial,	1988	Combination Prints-1980's, New Jersey Center	1980	Recent Acquisitions, Solomon R. Guggenheim
1988	Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, GA	1983	Vandewoude-Tananbaum Gallery, New York, NY	1973	Gertrude Kasle Gallery, Detroit, MI		Bradford Art Galleries and Museums ( <i>traveling</i>	for the Visual Arts, Summit, NJ			Museum, New York, NY
1988	Souyun Yi Gallery, New York, NY	1982	Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH	1973	Poindexter Gallery, New York, NY		<i>to the Royal College of Art, Henry Moore Galleries,</i>	1987	Contemporary American Prints, Garton &		
1988	Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL	1982	Canton Art Institute, Canton, OH	1973	William Sawyer Gallery, San Francisco, CA		<i>London, catalog</i> )	Cooke, London ( <i>catalog</i> )			
1987	Dolan / Maxwell Gallery, Philadelphia, PA	1982	Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN	1971	Gertrude Kasle Gallery, Detroit, MI						
1987	Jan Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, CA	1981	Getler / Pall Gallery, New York, NY	1971	Poindexter Gallery, New York, NY						



Aichi Prefecture, Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan  
Achenbach Foundation for the Graphic Arts,  
San Francisco, CA  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH  
Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH  
Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH  
Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA  
Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, Ft. Lauderdale, FL  
Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN  
Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN  
Kresge Art Center, Michigan State University,  
East Lansing, MI  
Kunsthalle der Stadt Nurnberg,  
Nurnberg, Germany  
Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, FL

Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC  
Museum of Fine Art, Boston, MA  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
North York Performing Arts Center, North York,  
Ontario, Canada  
Ohio University Art Museum, Athens, OH  
Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, CA  
Pennsylvania Academy, Philadelphia, PA  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,  
San Francisco, CA  
Smithsonian Museum of American Art,  
Washington, DC  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY  
Spencer Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS  
University of Iowa Art Museum, Iowa City, IA  
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

University of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
Weatherspoon Gallery, University of North Carolina,  
Greensboro, NC  
Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers University,  
New Brunswick, NJ

American Express  
Amoco  
Ashland Oil Corporation  
AT&T  
Bank of New York  
Bayer, USA  
Chase Manhattan Bank  
Coca Cola  
City Corporation  
Continental Grain Corporation  
Commerzbank, New York  
Dun & Bradstreet International  
Deloitte  
Fidelity Investments  
First National Bank of Chicago  
General Electric Corporation

General Mills  
Goldman Sachs  
Harper, Detroit Deiser LTD  
Haworth Canada  
Hewlett Packard  
Hospital Corporation of America  
IBM  
JK&B Capital, Chicago  
Legg Mason  
Morgan Guaranty Trust  
Mobil Oil Corporation  
Northern Telecom  
Nissho Iwai America  
Novartis  
Pepsico Corporation  
Philadelphia Savings Fund Society

Price Waterhouse  
Sea First Bank  
Security Pacific National Bank  
Shearson Lehman Brothers  
Southeast Banking Corporation  
SSC&B Lintas Worldwide  
Sun Life of Canada  
Swiss Re Corporation  
Time Warner  
3M Corporation  
Union Bank of Switzerland, Canada  
Vanguard Investments  
Westinghouse Corporation  
Winston & Strawn

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