

The image is an abstract artwork by Richard Pousette-Dart. It features a large, light-colored circle in the center, which is surrounded by a thick, textured blue-grey ring. The background is a mottled, textured blue-grey. The overall effect is a sense of depth and texture, characteristic of Pousette-Dart's style.

RICHARD POUSETTE-DART

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THE SPACES WITHIN

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Self-portrait in the artist's Suffern studio, circa 1960s.

RICHARD POUSETTE-DART (1916 – 1992)

I have come to the brink of eternity from which nothing can vanish. (Rabindranath Tagore, 1861-1941)

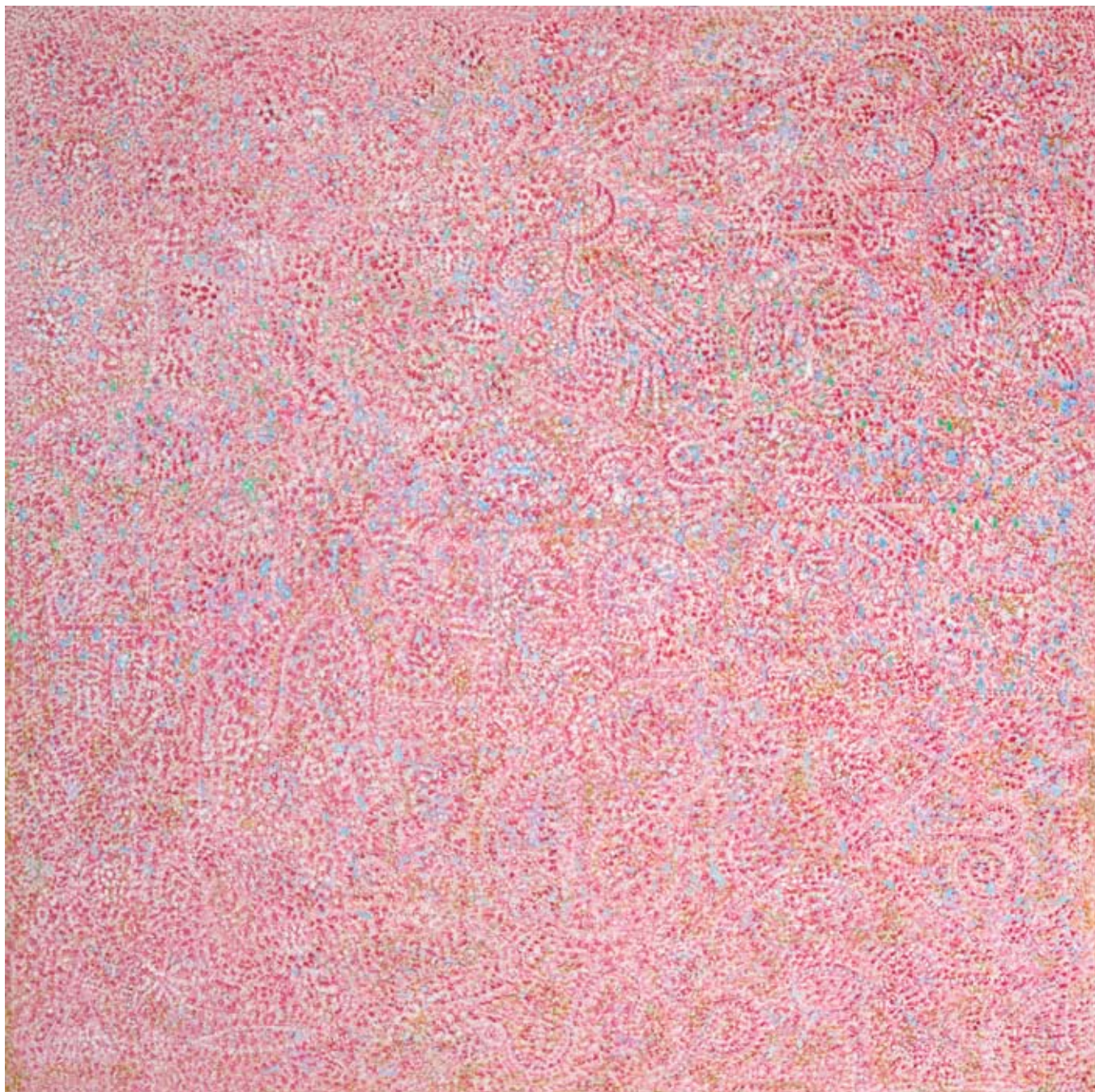
Richard Pousette-Dart was an excavator of life's myriad mysteries. One of the youngest members of the New York School, from the beginning Pousette-Dart wanted to forge his own path. In the 1950s, he removed himself from the distractions of New York City and with his wife, the poet Evelyn Gracey, and family, moved to rural Suffern in Dutchess County, New York. While fully rooted in art history, his paintings drew upon his immediate surroundings for their subject matter with celestial imagery and subtle allusions to the infinite. In the midst of these natural surroundings, he pushed himself to the very brink of his known reality and discovered a world unavailable to the naked eye. Here, the night sky offered the possibility of accessing pure abstraction through acute observations of the spatial relationships between heavenly bodies. Pousette-Dart understood that the immediacy of mark making and emotive power of line could take one's imagination to the edge of oblivion. He believed that it was at this point of "nowhere" he would achieve visual synchronicity and serenity within the composition.

For Pousette-Dart, the center of the canvas held the greatest promise—as both the point of departure from, and the nucleus of, creative desire. He believed that a picture should be composed and radiate from the center out. Therefore, not unlike the perceived equilibrium of objects in the cosmos, his work from the 60s, 70s and 80s found its harmony, luminosity and rhythm from within. Pousette-Dart sought to create symbiotic relationships between shape and color, often rotating the canvas as he painted, using dark and light marks in a nuanced rhythm. For him, the process dictated the progress of his paintings. He applied paint in clusters, accruing moments of pigment that alluded to extant forms, which were then scraped away to reveal the bruised layers and remnants of these prior applications. These meticulously composed abstractions are his personal visions of chaos, sometimes contained and at times unleashed but always in perfect balance.

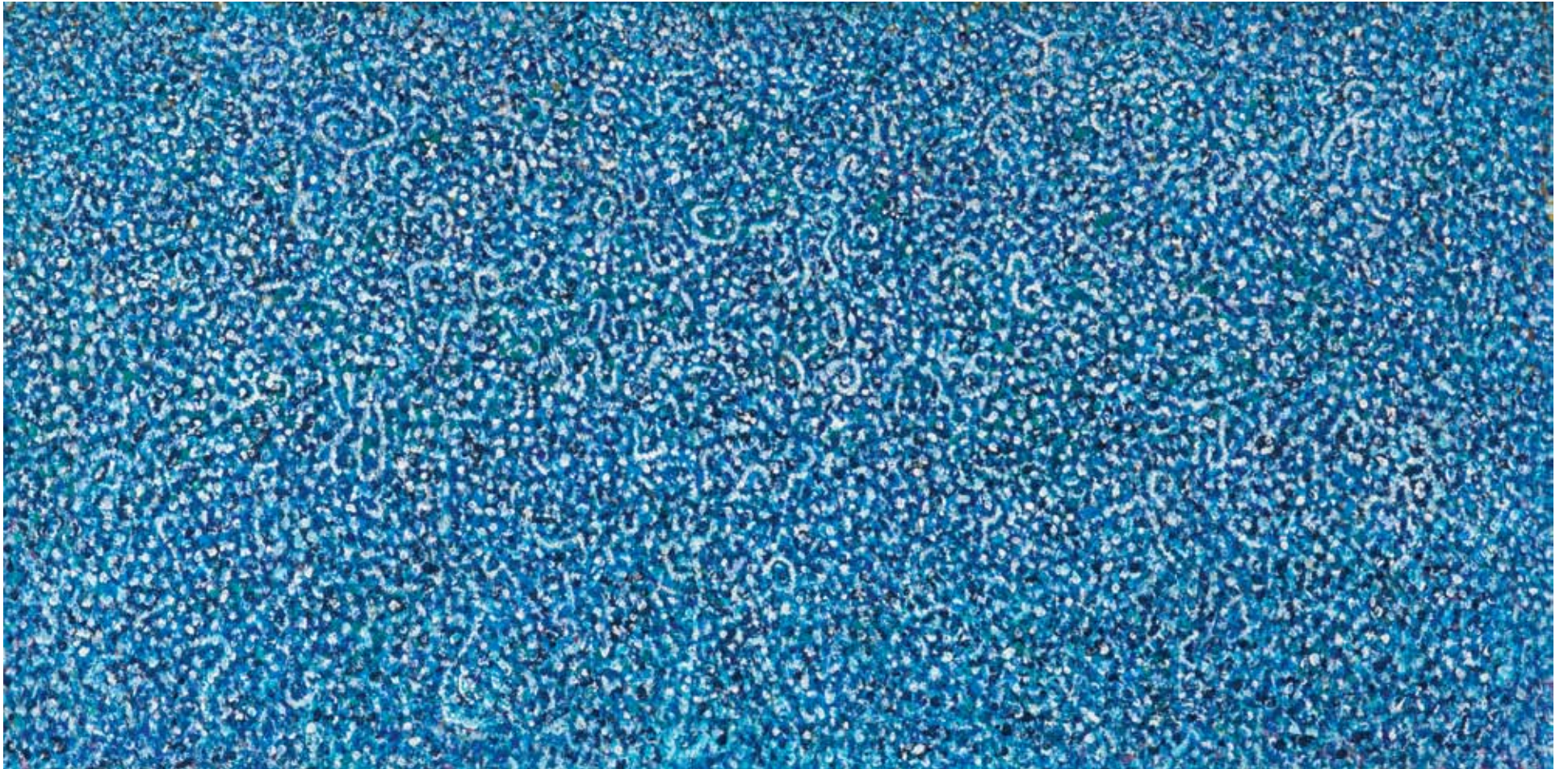
I strive to express the spiritual nature of the universe. Painting for me is a dynamic balance and wholeness of life; it is mysterious and transcending, yet solid and real. (Richard Pousette-Dart)

Waqas Wajahat
New York, 2013

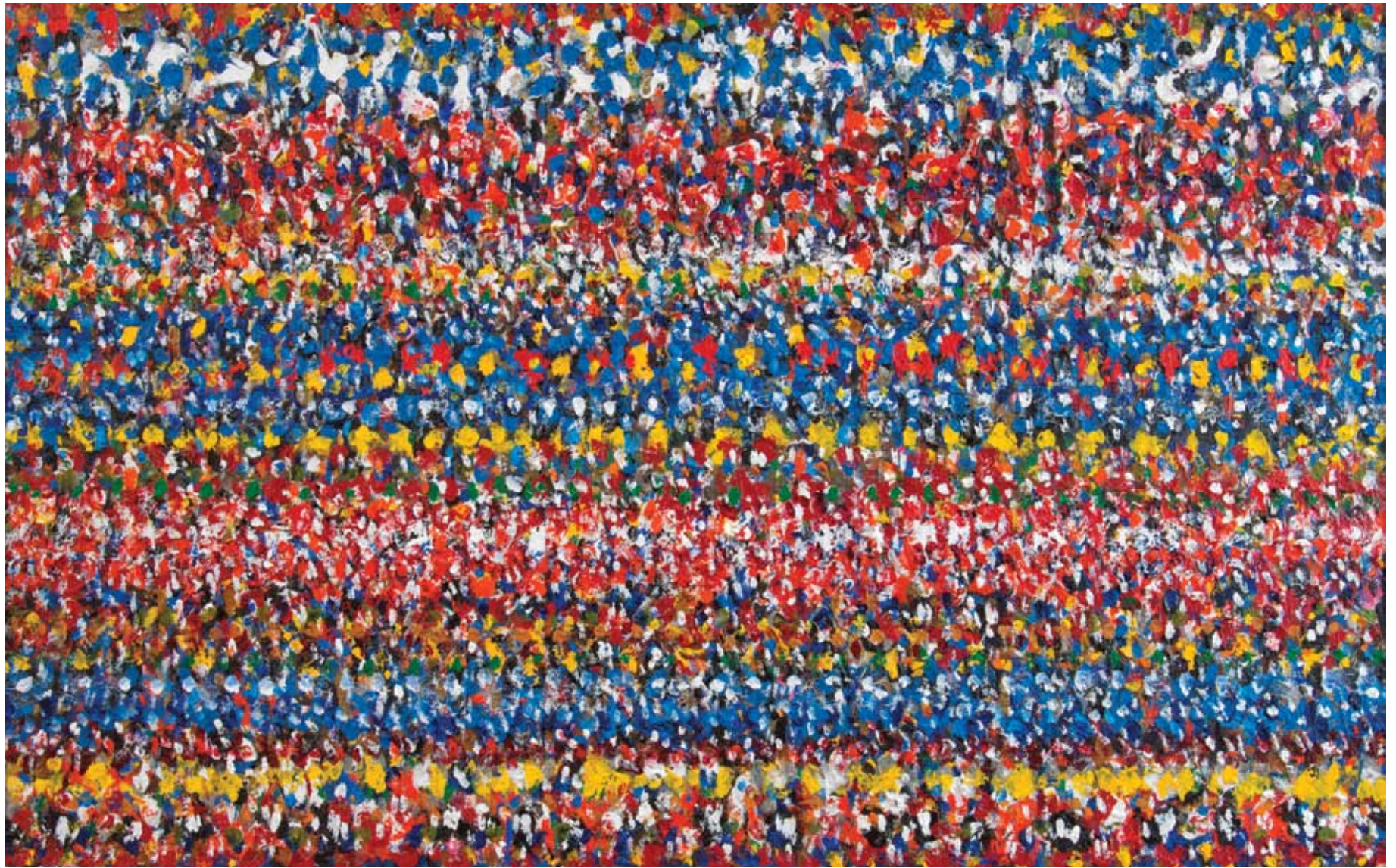




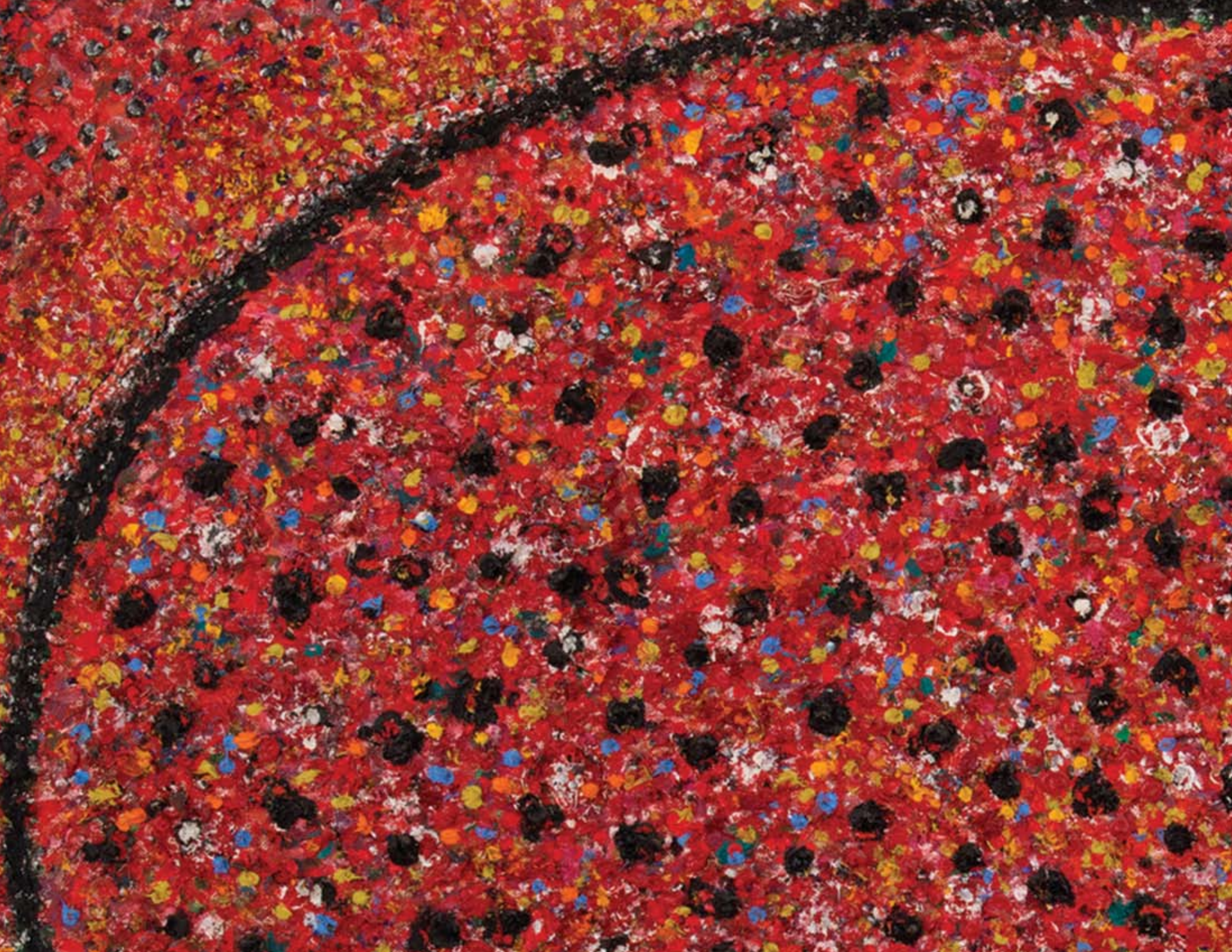
Lacing, Tracing, Trellis and Lacework, 1990, acrylic on linen, 72 x 72 inches



Presence Blue Amaranth III, 1975-76, oil on canvas, 28 x 48 inches

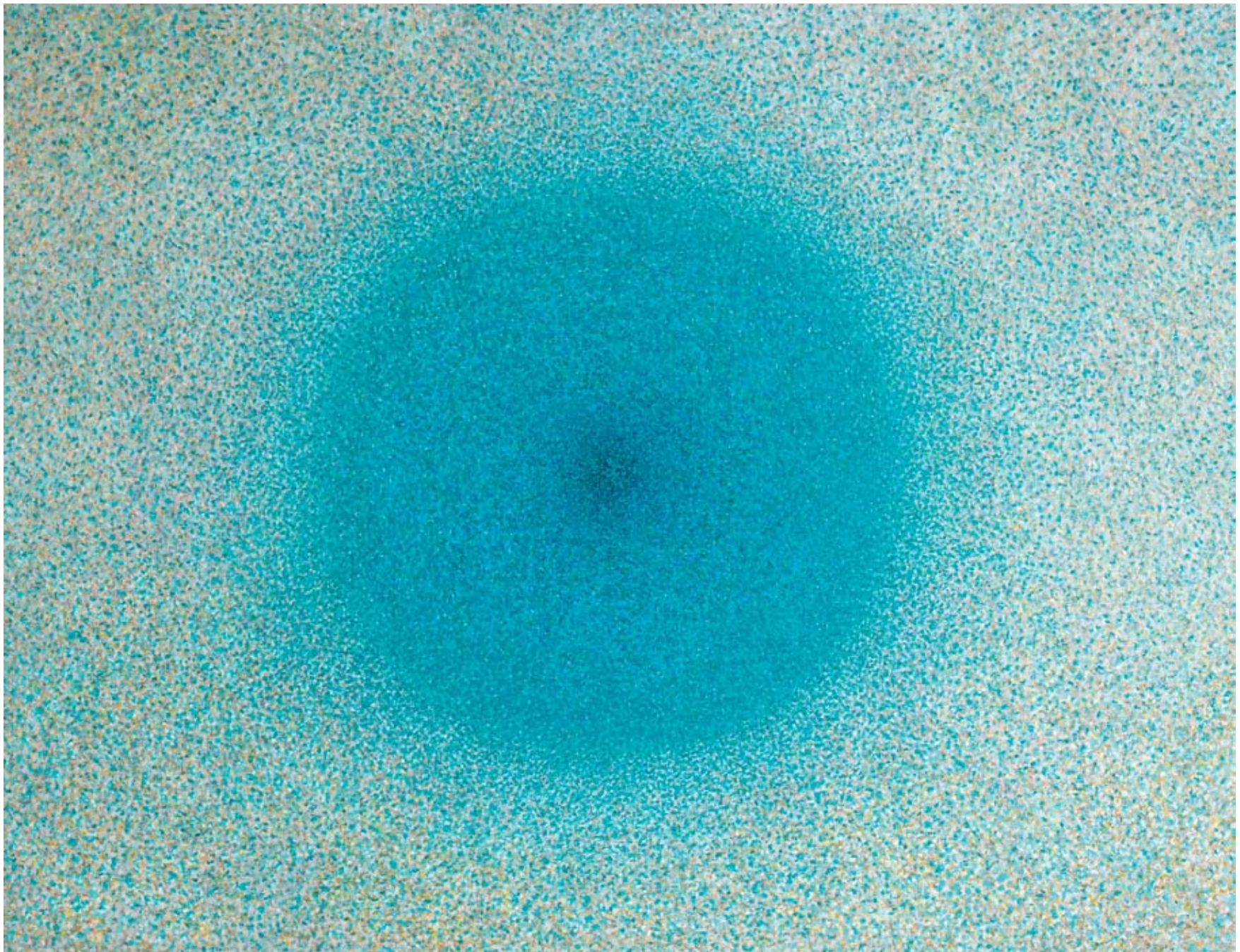


Aquarian Strata, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 26 x 42 inches





Red Nimbus, 1979-80, acrylic on linen, 54 x 72 inches



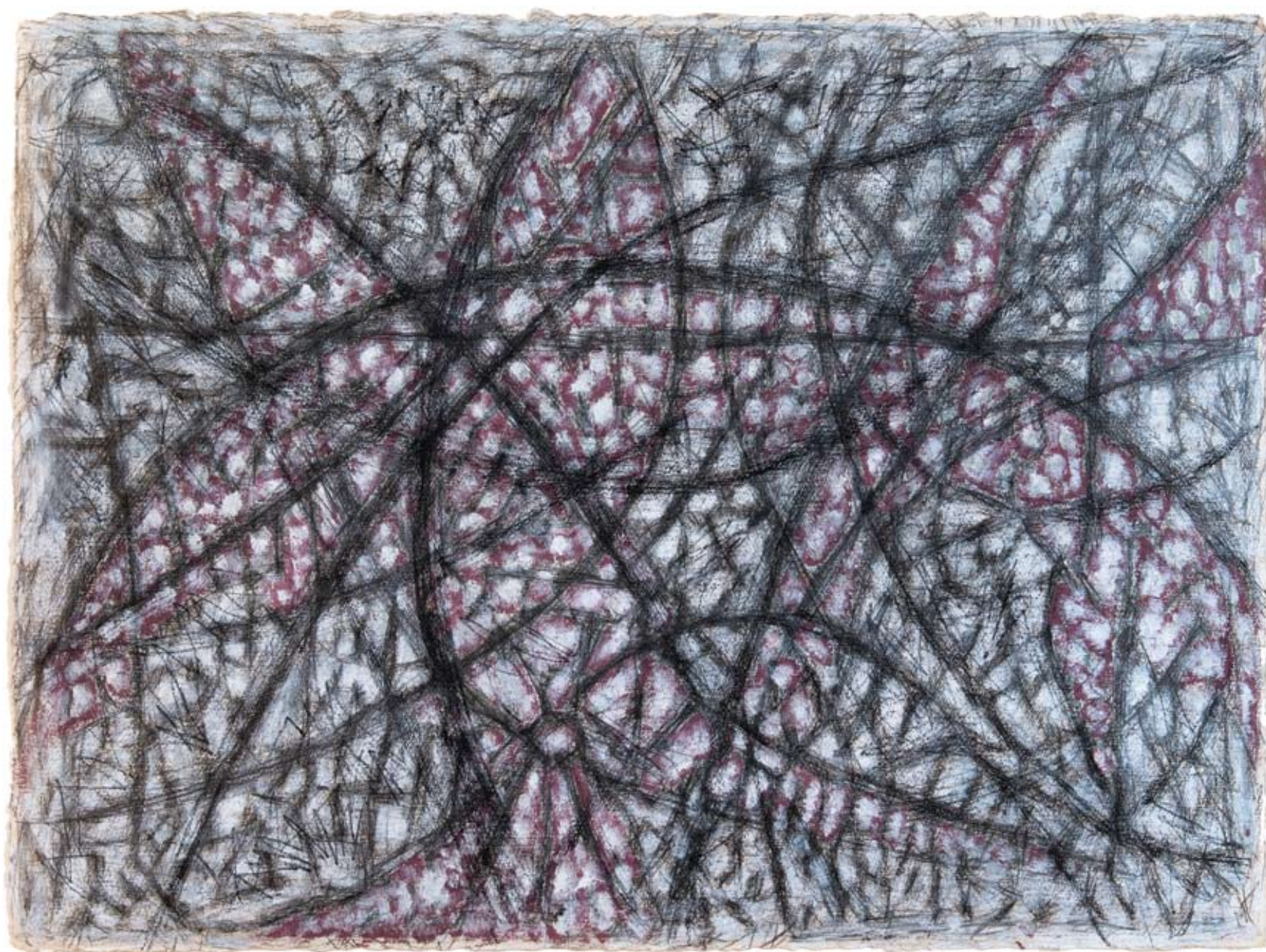
Presence Cerulean Being, 1968, oil on linen, 46 x 60 inches



Rose Hieroglyph, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72 inches



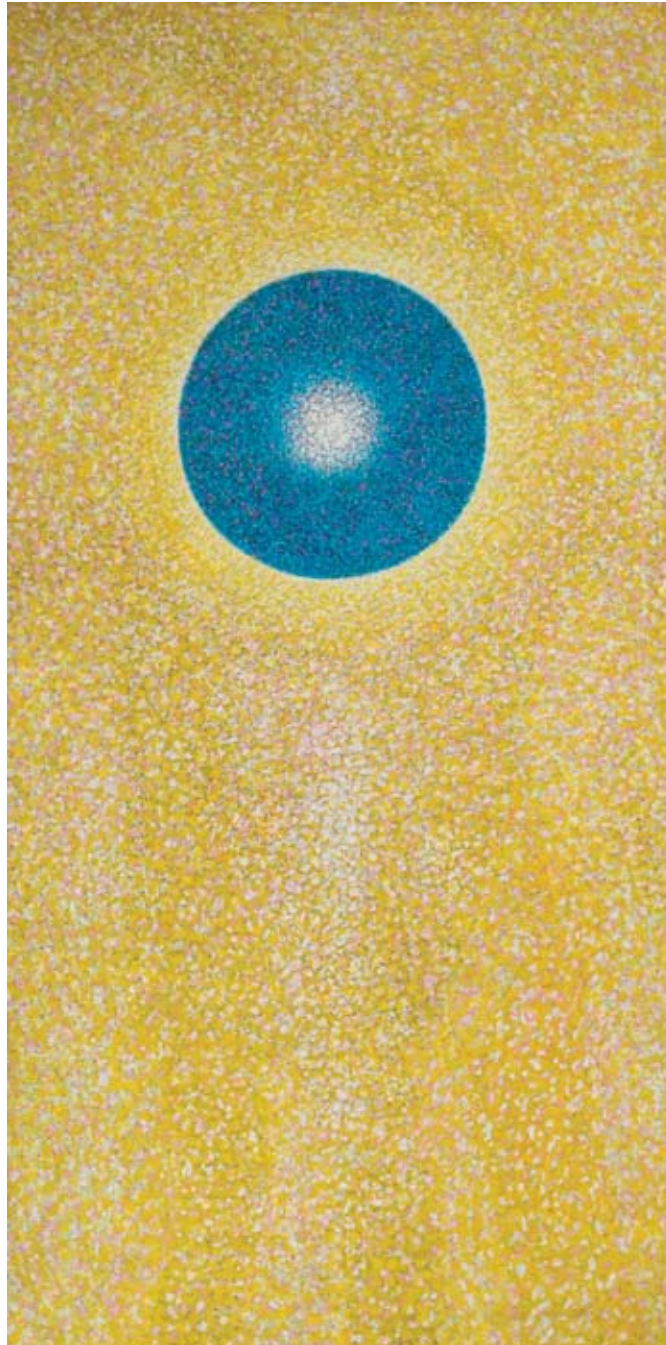
Souchow, 1991, acrylic on paper, 23 x 30 inches



When the Arch is Finite, 1990, acrylic on paper, 22½ x 30¼ inches



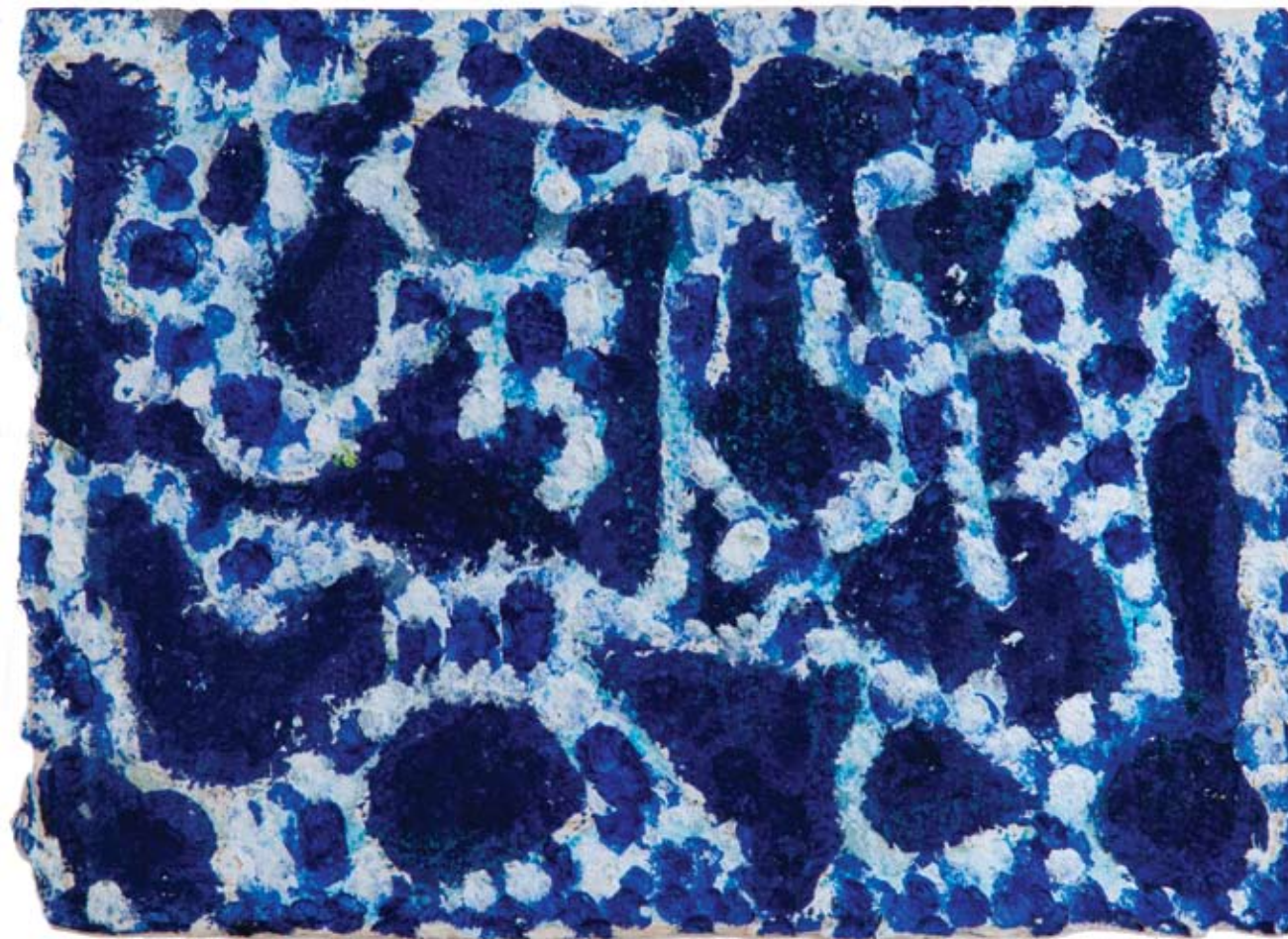
Time Mounting Light, 1978, acrylic on linen, 51 x 27 inches



Trembling Sun, 1964, oil on linen, 24 x 48 inches



Black and White Transition, 1988, acrylic on handmade paper, 27³/₄ x 27³/₄ inches



This Space of Blue, 1985-86, acrylic on paper, 7 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches



Serene Horizons, 1981-82, acrylic on paper, 9 x 11 inches



The Interior of the Oval, 1984, acrylic on handmade paper, 22 x 26 inches



Self-portrait in the artist's Suffern studio, circa 1960s.

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, MA
Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
The Art Institute of Chicago, IL
The Brooklyn Museum, NY
The Cleveland Museum of Art, OH
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
The Detroit Institute of Arts, MI
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA
J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Milwaukee Art Museum, WI
Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Utica, NY
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York, Purchase, NY
New Britain Museum of American Art, CT
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy
Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
Princeton University Art Museum, NJ
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich, Germany
Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Worcester Art Museum, MA
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- 1916 Richard Warren Pousette-Dart is born on June 8 in Saint Paul, Minnesota to Nathaniel Pousette (1886-1965), a painter and writer, and Flora Louise Dart (1887-1969), a musician and poet.
- 1918 The Pousette-Dart family moves to Valhalla, New York.
- 1924 Encouraged by his parents, Pousette-Dart begins painting at the age of eight.
- 1936 Pousette-Dart enrolls at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, which he leaves after a few months to pursue art independently.
- 1936-37 Pousette-Dart executes large stone sculptures in semi-abstract forms, influenced by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. He also begins to work in brass, a medium he will continue to explore throughout his career.
- 1937-38 Pousette-Dart meets John Graham, an influential Russian émigré artist and writer. Graham's book, *System and Dialectics of Art* (1937), which emphasizes myth and primitivism as avenues to the exploration of the unconscious mind, provides Pousette-Dart with inspiration for his understanding of the spiritual and social role of art. Pousette-Dart subsequently begins to experiment with automatism and totemic imagery in his painting.
- 1939 Pousette-Dart develops an interest in the art and culture of Northwest Coast Native Americans. His work begins to reflect this influence, as illustrated in paintings such as *Birds and Fish* (1939) and *Bird Woman* (1939-40).
- 1941 Pousette-Dart has his first solo exhibition at The Artists' Gallery in New York City.
- 1943 Marian Willard Gallery holds a one-man show of works by Pousette-Dart, *Forms in Brass*. At the Willard Gallery exhibition, Pousette-Dart meets Evelyn Gracey, a poet who will become his third wife and lifelong companion.
- 1944 His work is included in the seminal exhibition *Forty American Moderns* at Howard Putzel's 67 Gallery, along with that of Milton Avery, Stuart Davis, Adolph Gottlieb, Morris Graves, Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Mark Tobey, and also in *Spring Salon for Young Artists* at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery, alongside William Baziotes, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, and Hedda Sterne.
- 1946 Marries Evelyn Gracey. They live on 56th Street, near the East River. The Willard Gallery holds two one-man exhibitions of work by Pousette-Dart: in May, with *Paintings and Gouaches*, and in December, with *Forms in Brass and Watercolors*. Richard Pousette-Dart dies, October 25, in New York City.
- 1947 Pousette-Dart is included in the annual exhibitions at The Art Institute of Chicago and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
- 1948 Pousette-Dart joins the Betty Parsons Gallery, which opened in 1946 and showed the work of Pollock, Rothko, Still, Reinhardt, and others. In his first year with the gallery, Pousette-Dart has two one-man shows: *Paintings* (March-April), and *Brasses and Photographs* (November-December).
- 1949 The Museum of Modern Art in New York includes Pousette-Dart in the exhibition *Contemporary American Painters*. Pousette-Dart presents works at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors, Drawings and Paintings, eventually becoming a regular contributor.
- 1950 The Museum of Modern Art acquires *Number 11: A Presence* (1949), the first of many works by Pousette-Dart that the institution will add to its collection.
- 1951 The historic photograph of "The Irascibles", which documented the central figures of the emerging New York School, including Pousette-Dart, is published in the January 15 issue of *Life* magazine. Pousette-Dart is awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Pousette-Dart's work is included in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*. Wishing to isolate himself from the commercial pressures of the New York art world and assert himself creatively, Pousette-Dart moves his family from New York City to Sloatsburg, New York.
- 1953 The Whitney Museum of American Art acquires the institution's first work by Pousette-Dart, *The Magnificent* (1950-51), for the permanent collection.
- 1954 Peggy Guggenheim gives the painting *Spirit* (1940) to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art as part of a bequest of twenty-seven paintings that also includes work by Baziotes, Masson, Pollock, and Tanguy. The following year the museum uses the Guggenheim bequest as the basis of their first major exhibition of international Abstract and Surrealist painting.

- 1958 The Pousette-Dart family moves to Suffern, New York, where the artist establishes his final studio
- 1963 The Whitney Museum of American Art hosts Pousette-Dart's first retrospective exhibition. The museum subsequently acquires the work *Sky Presence (Morning)* (1962-63).
- 1964 The Museum of Modern Art acquires the painting *Radiance* (1962-63).
- 1966 Delivers "Convocation Lecture" at the Minneapolis School of Art. Presented with the National Council of the Arts Award for Excellence.
- 1967 Receives The National Endowment for the Arts Award for Individual Artists.
- 1968-69 Teaches painting at Columbia University, New York, where he also serves as guest critic.
- 1969 The Museum of Modern Art acquires the paintings *Desert* (1940), *Fugue Number 2* (1943), and *Chavade* (1951). The Whitney Museum of American Art acquires *Presence*, *Ramapo Mist* (1969). Pousette-Dart is included in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition *The New American Painting and Sculpture: The First Generation*.
- 1970-74 Teaches at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York.
- 1973 Spends two months in Provence, France, working on watercolors and drawings. Pousette-Dart and his daughter Joanna both exhibit at the Whitney Museum's Biennial Exhibition: *Contemporary American Art*.
- 1974 The Whitney Museum organizes a second survey exhibition of Pousette-Dart's paintings, focusing on the period of 1963 to 1974, the years following his earlier retrospective. Joins Andrew Crispo Gallery in New York City.
- 1980 Joins Marisa del Re Gallery in New York.
- 1983 Appointed the Milton Avery Distinguished Professor of Arts at Bard College. Included in *Modern American Painting* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
- 1990 The most complete retrospective exhibition of the artist's work, Richard Pousette-Dart, is organized by the Indianapolis Museum of Art in Indiana (October-December). As part of the show, the artist is commissioned by the museum to design a monumental bronze door titled *Cathedral*, based on a painting of the same name. The door is to adorn a new pavilion designed by the architect Edward Larrabee Barnes.
- 1992 A selection of works from Richard Pousette-Dart travels to its final venue, The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.
- 1993 A memorial service is held for the artist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- 1995 The Estate of Richard Pousette-Dart joins Knoedler & Company, New York.
- 1997-98 Retrospective exhibition titled *Richard Pousette-Dart: 1916-1992* is held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- 1998 The Whitney Museum of American Art presents the exhibition *Richard Pousette-Dart: The Studio Within*.
- 2001-02 An exhibition of works on paper organized by Konrad Oberhuber, *The Living Edge: Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-1992)*, opens at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, Germany. The show travels to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in Texas, and the Boca Raton Museum of Art in Boca Raton, Florida.
- 2005 Knoedler & Company, New York holds an exhibition titled *Richard Pousette-Dart: Presences*.
- 2006 The exhibition *Transparent Reflections: Richard Pousette-Dart, Works on Paper (1940-1992)* opens at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and travels to the California Palace of the Legion of Honor and the Cincinnati Art Museum.
- 2007-08 A retrospective exhibition, titled *Richard Pousette-Dart*, is held at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy, and later travels to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.
- 2010 Pousette-Dart: *Predominantly White Paintings* exhibition is held at the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
- 2011 Luhring Augustine gallery presents an exhibition of rarely seen paintings and sculpture made while the artist was living on East 56th Street in Manhattan. Titled *Richard Pousette-Dart: East River Studio*, the show is co-curated by the artist Christopher Wool and the painter Joanna Pousette-Dart.

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ALIGHIERO BOETTI

ALEXANDER CALDER

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JOSEPH CORNELL

HERBERT FERBER

SAM FRANCIS

SIDNEY GOODMAN

NEIL JENNEY

RICHARD POUSETTE-DART

JAMES PROSEK

ALEXIS ROCKMAN

CLARE ROJAS

SEAN SCULLY

DAVID SMITH

REBECCA SMITH

DONALD SULTAN

JOHN WALKER



Blue with White Sphere, 1960's, oil on paper, 12 x 16 inches

RICHARD POUSETTE - DART
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