

Natvar Bhavsar

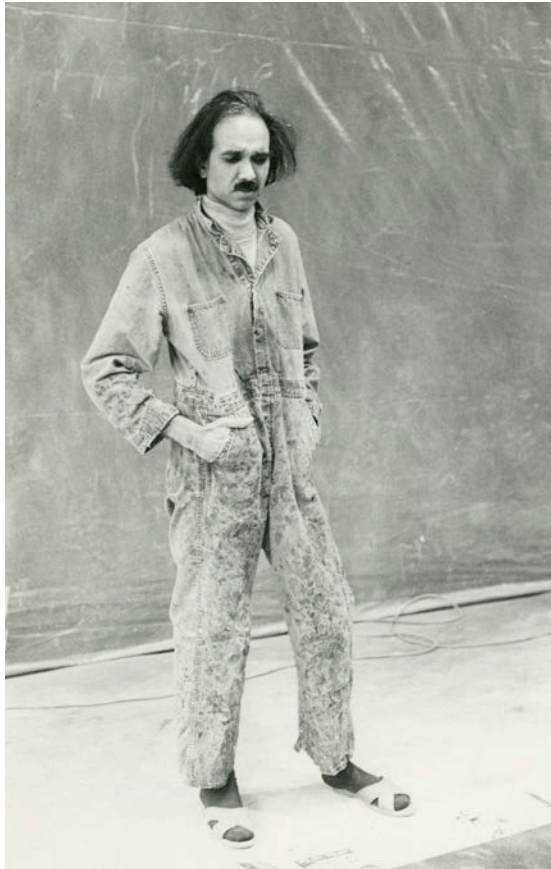
# BEGINNINGS & SUBLIME LIGHT

AICON ART

Natvar Bhavsar

**BEGINNINGS &  
SUBLIME LIGHT**

AICON ART | 35 GREAT JONES ST | NEW YORK, NY 10012



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# Primordial Energy: The Art of Natvar Bhavsar

By Carter Ratcliff

*Natvar Bhavsar: Sublime Light, Works from 1975 to 1985* continues the story of the artist's evolution launched in 2019 with the Aicon Art selection of paintings from 1967 to the early 1970s, the years in which the artist first became known to the New York art world. During that period, Bhavsar divided his canvases into rectilinear zones and filled them with glinting colors. One could see in these divisions faint echoes of the Cubism that influenced his early work or, just as plausibly, variations on the Minimalist geometry that shaped so much art in New York during the 1960s. Or, caught up in Bhavsar's intricate play of chromatic energy, one could set aside questions of allusions to earlier art. From the time of his New York debut until the present, he has been a remarkably independent figure, in part because of his unique way of making a painting.

After stretching a canvas, Bhavsar lays it on the studio floor and sifts powdered pigments onto its surface; at crucial intervals, he applies a fixative. A painting is finished when its mixture of colors finds the right balance of clarity and complexity. A close examination will reveal the sequence of layers that constitute a painting, yet one does not begin to see Bhavsar's art until one looks past matters of process, as fascinating as they may be.

The many colors of *Valabhee* (1980) are all keyed to orange; fluctuations from light tones to dark produce an undulating effect. Though abstraction appeared over a century ago, we still have a habit of reading objects into paintings, no matter how non-representational there are. In *Valabhee's* case, it is inevitable that we will see its flowing orange as a curtain. It might be tempting to fight this inevitability, to try to see this painting as purely abstract, but that would be a pointless struggle. Bhavsar has never pursued an absolutist idea of abstraction. So there is no harm done if we are unable to banish the thought of a curtain from the vicinity of *Valabhee*, for it cannot obscure the overriding point: a curtain is a secondary thing, a surface to be drawn aside to expose something hidden, whereas the orange of *Valabhee* is primary. In its surface is the life of the painting, a flickering texture of pigment that makes visible the artist's joy in exercising his pictorial powers.

*Valabhee* orange turns an icy white in *Shamana* (1984) though icy is not quite the right word, for this painting's bright, almost glaring passages shade off into warm grays. *Shamana* is both icy and warm, expansive and contained. Ordinarily, these paired qualities would be contraries. In Bhavsar's art, they co-exist without paradox, so capacious is the space of the imagination that he opens up with his color-spreading gestures. Thus, *Arjuman III* (1984), is dark but also luminous. Even the near-blacks that hover behind the painting's streaks of orange and yellow have a kind of brightness—a subtle glitter that make itself known to a patient, close-up gaze.

Critics, curators, and just about everyone else in the art world—except, of course, artists—are always eager to assign a new painter to a category. When Bhavsar's work first attracted attention, he was routinely called a color-field painter. This made a certain degree of sense. Jules Olitski, Helen Frankenthaler, and others who were gathered under that label made big paintings, as did Bhavsar; like him, they emphasized color and applied it, for the most part, without brushes. There were, however, crucial differences. Each of the color-fielders subscribed, more or less faithfully, to the idea that painting is an exclusively chromatic matter; the full range of tones was to be avoided in favor of a uniformly high-keyed palette. Bhavsar, by contrast, employs not only myriad hues but extremes of light and dark. As we've seen, his brightest colors often owe their power to the proximity of shades verging on black. So, despite the best efforts of admiring critics, he could never be recruited to the ranks of the color-field painters.

Bhavsar's closest affinities are with the Abstract Expressionists, a remarkably disparate group of painters. Jackson Pollock's skeins of flung paint have little resemblance to Barnett Newman's unruffled expanses of color, and none of their work has much in common with that of Clyfford Still or Philip Guston. "Abstract Expressionism" names a generation of painters, not a shared style, yet the Abstract Expressionists formed a close-knit group, and Bhavsar's American education introduced him to the visionary ambition they shared—an ambition with which he felt a deep sympathy.

Born in Gothava, a town in the state of Gujarat, on the



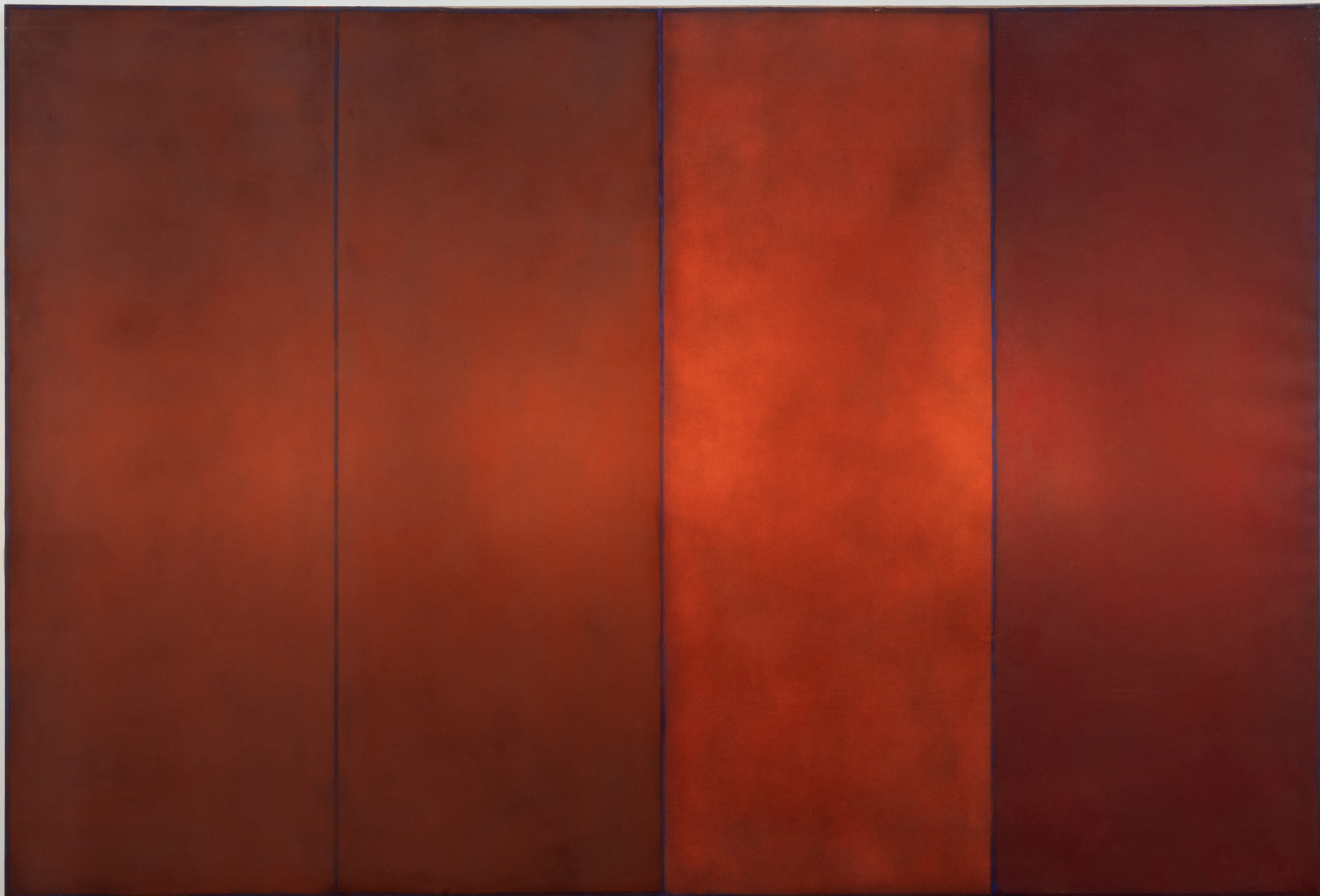
western coast of India, Bhavsar arrived in the United States in 1962, having earned advanced degrees in literature and art. After a semester at the Philadelphia College of Art, he enrolled at the Tyler School of Art, also in Philadelphia. Within a year, he had moved on to the graduate art department of the University of Pennsylvania, where he attended seminars conducted by the painter Piero Dorazio. Here Bhavsar met Newman, Robert Motherwell, the sculptor David Smith, and other artists affiliated with Abstract Expressionism. Though he never met Clyfford Still, he was impressed, almost overwhelmed, by a 1963 exhibition of Still's paintings at Philadelphia's Institute for Contemporary Art. Two years later, he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania. With the help of a Rockefeller Fellowship, he moved to New York—more specifically, to Manhattan, where he established a studio in the Soho loft building where he still works and lives.

The Manhattan art world's mid-60s were dominated by Pop Art and Minimalism. Neither distracted Bhavsar from his own development, which had attained its first stage by the end of the decade. Still in his thirties, he had become a unique—and uniquely original—figure in the history American art. His artistic independence was as complete as any Abstract Expressionist's; moreover, he had

achieved it without the support those painters gave one another. Bhavsar was and continues to be friends with many artists and others in the New York art world, yet he has always gone it alone on the plane of the aesthetic.

Clyfford Still once said that he meant each of his paintings to convey a single message: "Here am I; this is my feeling, my presence, myself." Those who do not respond to his art he dismissed as "fractional people." Still always tinged his self-assertions with belligerence, as did the other Abstract Expressionists. Bhavsar is just as confidently himself as were Still and his colleagues. After all, he invented a unique method of painting and has employed it, with inexhaustible inventiveness, for over five decades. His achievement is astonishing. Nonetheless, his art is not a vehicle for self-aggrandizement. Bhavsar is vibrantly present in his art, yet his individual presence is continuous with something larger—something difficult to name, especially in art criticism's familiar and rather limited terms. To hint at the full meaning of his art we must invoke the idea of being and suggest, further, that when we find our way into the spirit of his paintings, we come alive to the nuances of our own existences, as individuals and as inhabitants of a cosmos that—as Bhavsar intimates with the scintillating pulse of his colors—endlessly regenerates itself from its own, luminously primordial energies.





# Beginnings + Sublime Light

By Hussain Khanbhai

Claiming ‘color’ as his medium, Bhavsar has been exploring the sensual, emotional, and intellectual resonance of color since the early 1960s. His paintings evince influences from his childhood in India, surrounded by vivid textiles, practicing rangoli, and witnessing the Holi Festival, and adulthood in New York in the 1960s and ‘70s, The current exhibition explores the latter influence - works created during Bhavsar’s early foray into New York, in a milieu that included Andy Warhol, Merce Cunningham, and fellow Abstract Expressionists like Mark Rothko. In his essay on the artist, art critic Irving Sandler notes,

“Indeed, what Bhavsar has drawn from Indian life and culture, what he prizes in it, makes his art distinctive and valuable. In sum, Bhavsar has a personal vision that both continues American color-field painting and embodies his Indian heritage.”

Bhavsar’s work evolved significantly when he moved to Philadelphia in 1962 to pursue an MFA. It marked a period of inquiry for the artist that culminated in a move to New York City in 1965 with a coinciding artistic departure. The cubist tone of his work pre-1960 began to formalize into structured paintings that straddled the realm of color-field painting. It was the work *BEGIN* (1968) that Sandler was thinking of this work when he wrote,

“In New York, Bhavsar continued to paint floating organic and oblong color shapes, but they grew larger and larger. Then he divided the picture plane into huge

rectangular compartments, two to four per picture, each one a different, dominant flat color inflected with dry pigment. Each component became a kind of color-field, the picture a construction of color-fields.”

By 1969, the artist had already moved on to works like *MEGHA* (1969) and *VISHAKAA* (1969) that were a celebration of color-field, unconstrained by segmentation and line. The works were well received and exhibitions of Bhavsar’s works at the reputed Max Hutchison Gallery (1970) and at the Jewish Museum (1970) were lauded by critics. His works continued to mine the tenants of line and his borders became increasingly obfuscated, evidenced in works like *REE-THA* (1972) and *AHEER* (1973). This 5-year span in the artist’s career thus marks an important period of transition, assimilation and synthesis – both his identity as well as his visual language.

The immediacy in Bhavsar’s works is a result of the ‘controlled spontaneity’ of his artistic process. The works are constructed using dry pigment that is often sifted, poured or otherwise dispersed onto eagerly prepared surfaces. The use of dry pigment is a direct physical and spiritual link to the artists vivid connection to India. Each gesture marks a specific distance from the work’s surface, a particular density of color and a measured movement of the body. The resultant surface is grainy and made up of a density of color in varying tones. Referencing this process, art critic Robert C. Morgan writes,

“It is a reverse form of archeology, and is perhaps closer to the process of nature or the entropy of cities that have been eroded, deserted, destroyed, or simply lost in time. Bhavsar restores this sense of lost time through his intimate application of pigments. They are embedded in the surface of his work, reaching both microscopic and galactic proportions, depending upon one’s state of awareness and emotional receptivity to the amorphous shapes that the colors suggest.”

By the 1980s, Bhavsar’s canvases saw the important introduction of vertical flashes in his exploration of 1960s color field painting. Light and its interaction with material color was an obsession for the artist during this period. In an essay on the artist, art writer Carter Ratcliff has said,

“This (his) is the tradition of a specifically American Sublime, which uses color and gesture to invoke a sense of unbounded space and light.”

The energetic effect of these gestures makes the surfaces hum and vibrate, while their verticality indicates an abiding interest in architecture. The artist stresses the importance of the latter especially in works where the image seems to rise from the lower edge as if from the earth into ether. For instance, in Bhavsar’s *SHAMANA* (1984), the viewer is confronted with a seemingly monochrome canvas which upon further contemplation reveals a pulsating chorus of muted colors peeking through. The feeling of lightness in contrast with an eerie gravity.

Bhavsar continued this exploration in smaller works on paper, not so much studies as fully realized works in their own right. The *AA-KASH* (meaning ‘sky’ in Sanskrit) series – an intimate suite of pastels on paper completed between 1981- 89 – is a good example of this. The small-scale is deceiving to the extent that they suggest monumental-scale paintings. Not only are these abbreviated paintings important for their originality, coherence, and ebullient manner in handling color, but also in their awareness of contemporary painting by an artist who at the time was literally on the cusp of the emerging multicultural art world.

A striking feature of the 1980s work was the absence of a lower border in the paintings– drawing the eye upward. In works like *AMBHI II* (1983) and *OORVSEE* (1985) this effect is heightened by the vertical pours of color that hark to landscape painting but also to the notion of divine light, thus referencing the sacred. This relates directly to the spirituality in the work, engendered as much by the physical and emotional exertion the artist puts into it, as the ritual practice that contextualizes it. In a different essay on the artist, Ratcliff opines,

“It’s as if Bhavsar wants us to see darkness in a new way, not as the opposite of light but as a variant on it. In his art, all is in flux; everything is both what it is and all that it might become.”

# An Artist for Our Time

By Barbara Pollack

“Meditative,” “Transcendent,” “Beautiful”— these are words that have been used to describe the paintings of Natvar Bhavsar throughout his 50 years as an artist. Now he works as he always has, by brushing dry pigment through screens onto wet canvas soaked in acrylic medium in up to 80 or more layers. These mammoth fields of color have been interpreted and reinterpreted over the decades, often saying more about the history of art criticism than the evolution of an artist. Now is the perfect time to review this artist, born in India but living in the U.S. since 1962, not as an Asian American but as the transnational figure he has been way before the term was adopted.

Bhavsar’s painting is an oasis of contemplation. As early as 1972, Carter Ratcliff described the paintings as follows: “The cloudy shimmer, the glowing, flickering light in Natvar Bhavsar’s recent paintings gave them the look of sky over an unimaginably beautiful landscape.” In 2008, Irving Sandler in his great book on the artist writes, “In a world racked by national conflicts, racism, genocide, famine, pollution, ecological devastation, and crime, Bhavsar’s painting is an oasis of contemplation in which alienation, desperation, despondency, rage, and other psychic wounds can be calmed, a state of repose necessary to human beings.” Even with such continuous praise throughout his career, Bhavsar has not received the sustained attention an artist of his stature deserves.

Now is precisely the time to review and re-research his oeuvre, not as an Indian artist or an American artist, but as an early example of transnational identity, slipping between cultures in ways that redefine binary and limiting terms such as “Asian American art.” Bhavsar’s painting is an oasis of contemplation. In each decade of his career, critics have reviewed Bhavsar’s paintings positively, but in what can politely be called an evolving comfort level with art by a non-Western artist. While his paintings have always been deeply appreciated, Bhavsar supersedes categorization by mere geographical or cultural differences.

Born in 1934 in Gothava, a small village in the sophisticated state of Gujarat, Bhavsar received first a post-colonial education in India’s top art school, finishing his education in the United States at 28 years old with an MFA at the University of the Arts at University of Pennsylvania. During his time there, Bhavsar met the painter Piero Dorazio, director of the program, and his American education began in earnest. He benefited most from his encounters with the artists invited to meet with MFA candidates, among them Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Adolph Gottlieb, Ad Reinhardt, Frank Stella, and the sculptor David Smith. On visits to New York, he renewed his acquaintance with the work of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, which he saw for the first time in a 1957 traveling MOMA exhibition in Ahmedabad. In 1965, having received a grant of \$10,000 from the John D. Rockefeller III Foundation, he moved to New York and aligned himself with the New York school of painting that he had long admired.

From his perch in Soho in an apartment/studio where he still lives, Bhavsar met with almost immediate success. In 1969, he was included in the Whitney Biennial and in 1970, he was featured in an important exhibition at the Jewish Museum. Since then, he has shown nearly continuously, including a show at the Wichita Art Museum and a recent retrospective at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University but never at a major metropolitan museum, an oversight that demands correction.

The first reviews of his work in the early 1970s precluded any reference to Bhavsar’s Indian heritage, referring only to the materiality of his paintings and its similarities to Color Field painters. This interpretation gave primacy to Clement Greenberg’s agenda for American painting and ignored certain characteristics that made Bhavsar’s work unique, such as its textured surfaces and a passion that exceeds the parameters of Formalism. It also eliminated an appreciation of Indian culture and the unique role of color in the rituals, fabrics and foods of the artist’s home country. For example, in Carter Ratcliff’s 1972 essay he states “It’s interesting to

know that in India decorations are made by drawing with colored powder on the ground and that Bhavsar has made some of these decorations....This is interesting but not very revealing...in the New York setting, he shares his method as much with Pollock as with the practitioners of Indian decoration.”

While affiliation with the New York school may have elevated his stature as an artist on one level, Greenberg’s own insistence that abstraction expressionism is a uniquely American innovation left out many immigrant artists (of non-European descent) and limited Bhavsar’s inclusion into the canon. On the other hand, from the beginning, this artist raised the issue of Indian influences as well as Western influences, recalling the vats of vivid dyes at his grandparents’ textile shop, the frescos in the caves at Ajanta and the decorations at Hindu temples. As Irving Sandler asserted in 2008, “Above all, Bhavsar recalls the impression made on him by the use of color in Hindu rituals, notably Holi, during which dry pigment was thrown everywhere.”

Bhavsar’s delightful tales of his Indian upbringing proved highly informative when he first showed in the West, educating critics and curators who tended to see these sophisticated works purely in terms of American art criticism, categorizing Bhavsar as a Color Field painter. Critics drew comparisons to Rothko and Pollock, emphasizing similarity of process (painting on the floor) and the concretization of color as subject matter. However, while these American painters conveyed a somber existentialism, Bhavsar expressed the joy of his process and the ecstasy of transcendence.

As his career developed, so did American art criticism’s appreciation for non-Western cultures, which showed up in reviews of his work. His paintings were often described as a bridge between “East and West,” a formulation that is widely applied to many Asian artists living or showing in the U.S. even to this day. This formulation relied on an emphasis of biography, reinvigorating the assumption that Asian artists’

creativity derives from their national background or authenticity, rather than their insights into global contemporary art. While true in some ways, this description glosses over Bhavsar’s unique innovations and his sophisticated knowledge of both Indian and Western art history.

“Bhavsar recognizes that the response to his colors will be as individual and ethnocentric as the individual viewer, and that the observer will inevitably impose a set of criteria from his own experience,” writes Lowery Sims in her 1984 article in *Arts Magazine*. And so it has proven true that each decade has provided a new interpretation of Bhavsar’s multi-layered paintings. For Sims, the challenge is how to evaluate the work of a dual nationality artist without resorting to the simplistic equation of East meets West. “There are significant distinctions in Natvar Bhavsar’s approach to space and in the meaning that color has for him and his work that are predicated by his cultural heritage; to discern these nuances, one must delve deeper than a literal surface impression.”

Likewise, Kathleen Finley Morgan in *Art Asia Pacific* goes one step further in 1994, eloquently describing the meditative state induced by these glowing canvases, which she also attributed to the influence of Asian culture. But as Bhavsar told the author, “Nirvana is not a flying high kind of ecstasy. It is surrounded by something unknown. This is what I encounter when I relate to the experience of pure engagement in my work. All the meaning, all the mystification, and all the mythology you can attach to it sometimes enlarges it but it does not really clarify it.”

Just two years later, Asia Society held its groundbreaking *Traditions/ Tensions* exhibition, featuring the works of Southeast Asian artists, but no diaspora artists, excluding Bhavsar. Tellingly, in his catalogue essay, Thomas McEvilley announces a sea change in the way these artists can be considered. “It is no longer a matter of non-Western or non-Euro ethnic people confronting Western models; it is now a situation in which the West has to adapt to the inde-



pendent self-definition of other cultures in a way that it has long resisted.” Even now, this statement is supremely relevant to a consideration of Bhavsar’s paintings, requiring a new, more integrative approach to transnational artists with global careers. The distinctive influences in this artist’s work, from Holi to Rothko, are not oppositional. They are synthesized in ways that only underscore Bhavsar’s genius.

Natvar Bhavsar got his American citizenship in 1996 when he was 62 years old. More recently, he built a house in Ahmedabad designed by the renowned Indian architect Sen Kapadia. Diaspora artists, artists with dual nationalities, are now most often described as transnational, living somewhere on the “Mid-Ground” as defined by leading Asian critic Hou Hanru. As critics and even the Museum of Modern Art broaden their definition of modernism to “modernisms,” they express a willingness and desire to open the canon to women, African American artists, African artists and even Southeast Asian artists. The challenge is how to view these artists without reinforcing oppositions between their place of origin with their newfound locations. With the impact of globalization, especially in a country like India, the regional divides are not as pronounced and not accurately applied. It requires inventing new terminology to capture the synthesis of cultures now in play, a synthesis that definitely applies to Natvar Bhavsar and his paintings of universal appeal.

For example, a recent show at the Guggenheim, titled *Marking Time: Process in Minimal Abstraction* eschews formalist descriptions entirely. Instead, the curator David Horowitz emphasizes the way these artworks “allow viewers to imaginatively reenact aspects of the creative process.” This can be equally applied to Bhavsar’s paintings as they invoke awe at the attention needed to apply pigment dust to large scale canvases, over and over again, until achieving glowing hues with twinkling surfaces. Viewing their unique style of lyricism, you can almost imagine Bhavsar dancing

to music in his studio as he fills his work with his state of joy.

Better yet is the newly released book, *Productive Failure*, by Alpesh Kantilal Patel in which he invents the term “queer Zen,” to examine Natvar Bhavsar’s work. “I do not want to set up a binary between the formal properties of the work and the author as completely distinct entities,” he writes emphasizing that queer Zen does not imply a sexual subterfuge or identity politics, but that abstraction has a unique ability to convey the artist’s body movement without specifically identifying the gender, race or nationality of the artist. This allows viewers to move beyond “post-partition India and post-Second World War United States and to consider Bhavsar’s work through other frames.” In this new interpretation of Bhavsar’s painting, the artist is credited with balancing “extremely felt sensuousness and extremely felt contemplation.”

Key to this analysis is the history of Asian and Asian American artists in the United States post-WWII, their widespread exclusion from major art museums and collections. Natvar Bhavsar managed to overcome many barriers and succeed on certain commercial terms. His work is in museum collections: Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Australia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. He is also in an abundance of corporate collections including UBS, Chase Manhattan Bank, Estee Lauder, Inc., Westinghouse and Young & Rubicon, Inc. among many others. Bhavsar is a successful artist on many terms, but he has not received the widespread visibility he deserves.

For fifty years, Natvar Bhavsar has transcended all limitations placed on artists of his background by creating artworks that go beyond a mere meeting of East and West. His prescient paintings anticipate a more sophisticated appreciation of art in the age of globalization. And he did this all without relinquishing his roots or assimilating into American culture.



Natvar Bhavsar with Elwyn Lynn at Greene Street studio, New York, 1976. Photograph: Janet Brosious Bhavsar

As such, he is a key figure in our understanding of global contemporary art with a biography that reflects the seismic change in this field. Now is a perfect time for a thoughtful reevaluation of Bhavsar’s longevity and accomplishments by critics and curators studying transnational artists. Some would say such a study is long overdue.





# BEGINNINGS

Sept 20 — Oct 20, 2018







UNTITLED  
1967  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
100 x 74 in.





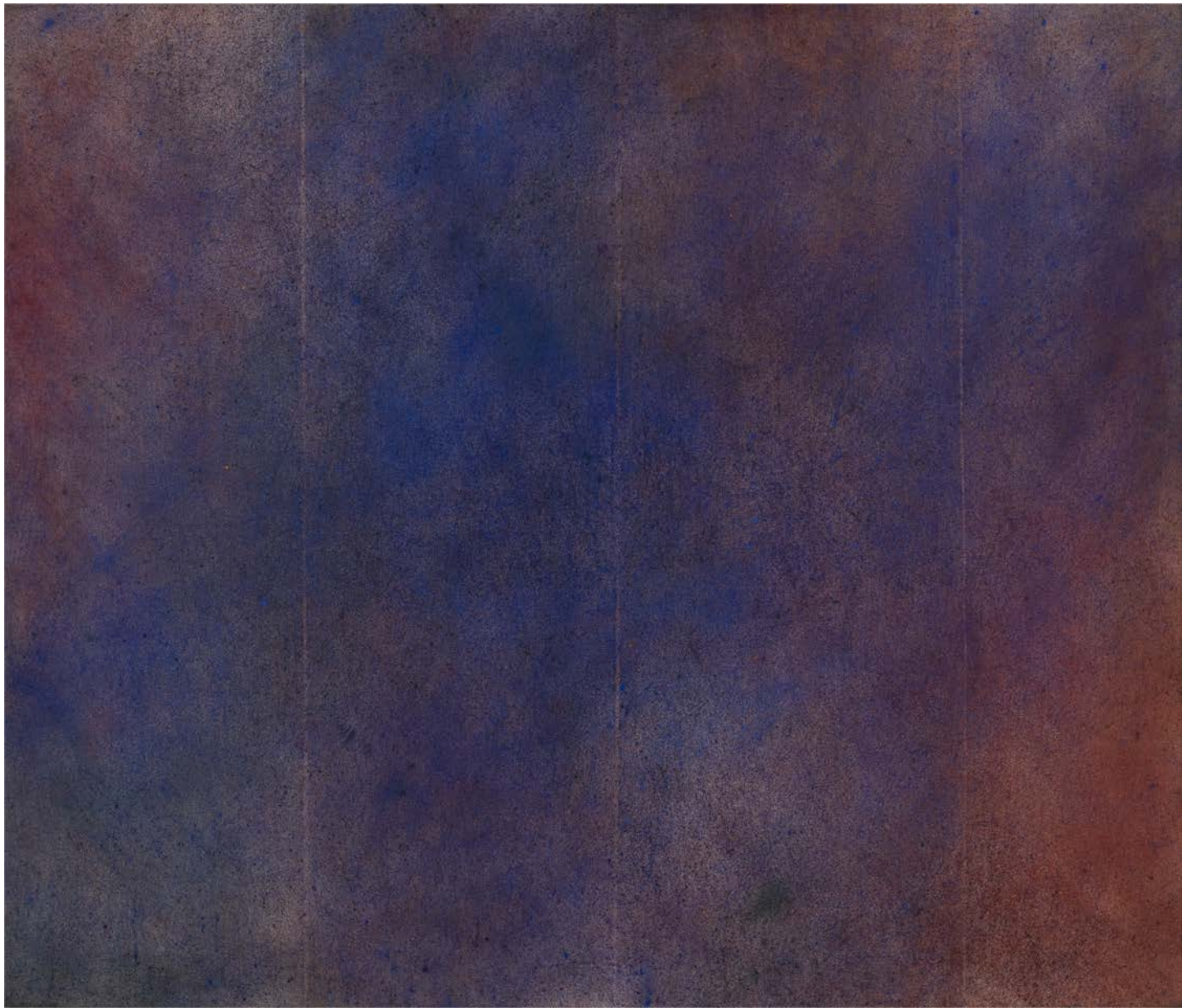


UNTITLED  
1968  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
97.75 x 100.25 in.



BEGIN  
1968  
Pigments and acrylic  
mediums on linen  
97.5 x 144 in.





VISHAKAA  
1969  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
82 x 96.5 in.



MEGHA  
1969  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
82 x 96.5 in.





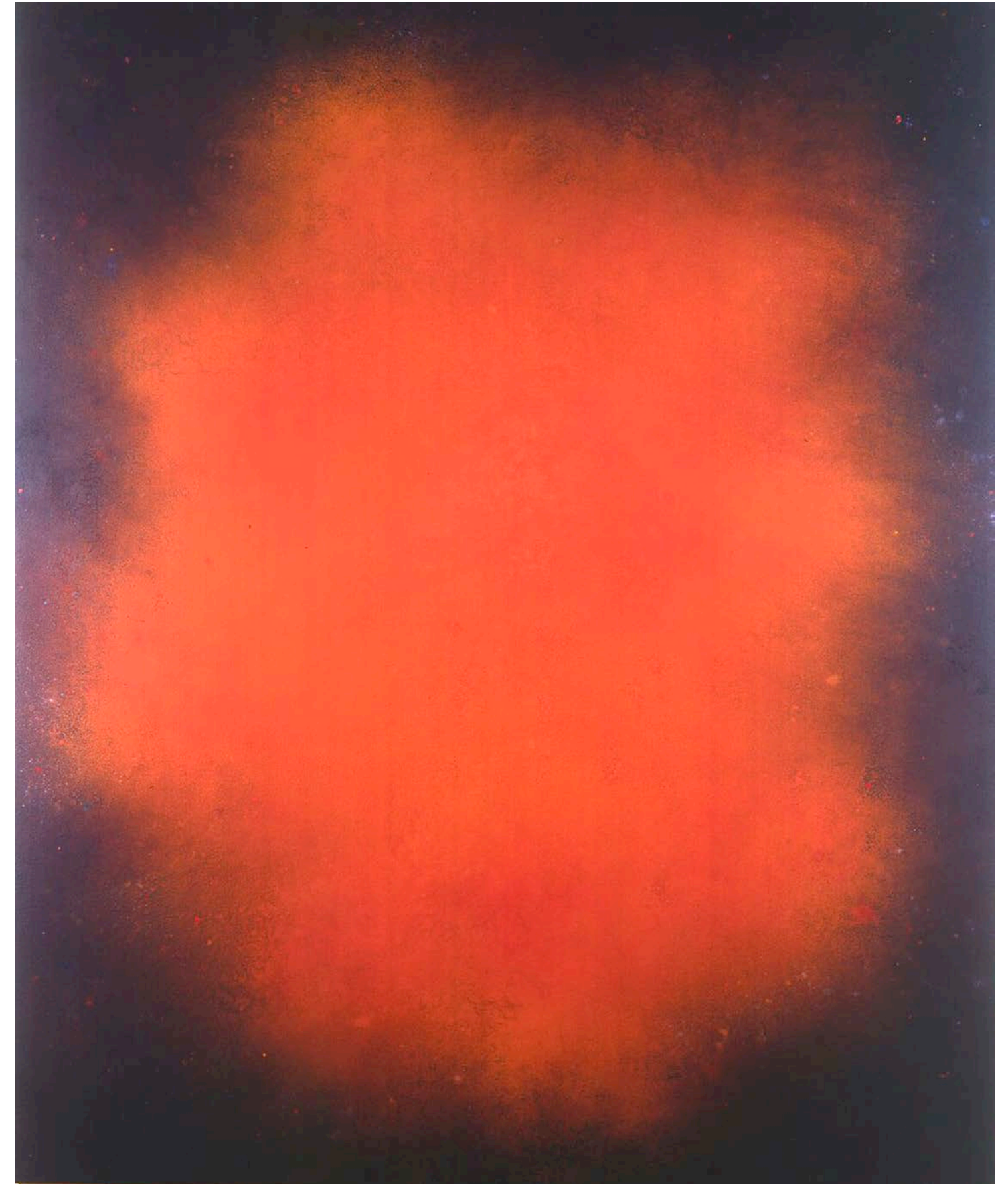
R-DHYA  
1972  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
96 x 96 in.



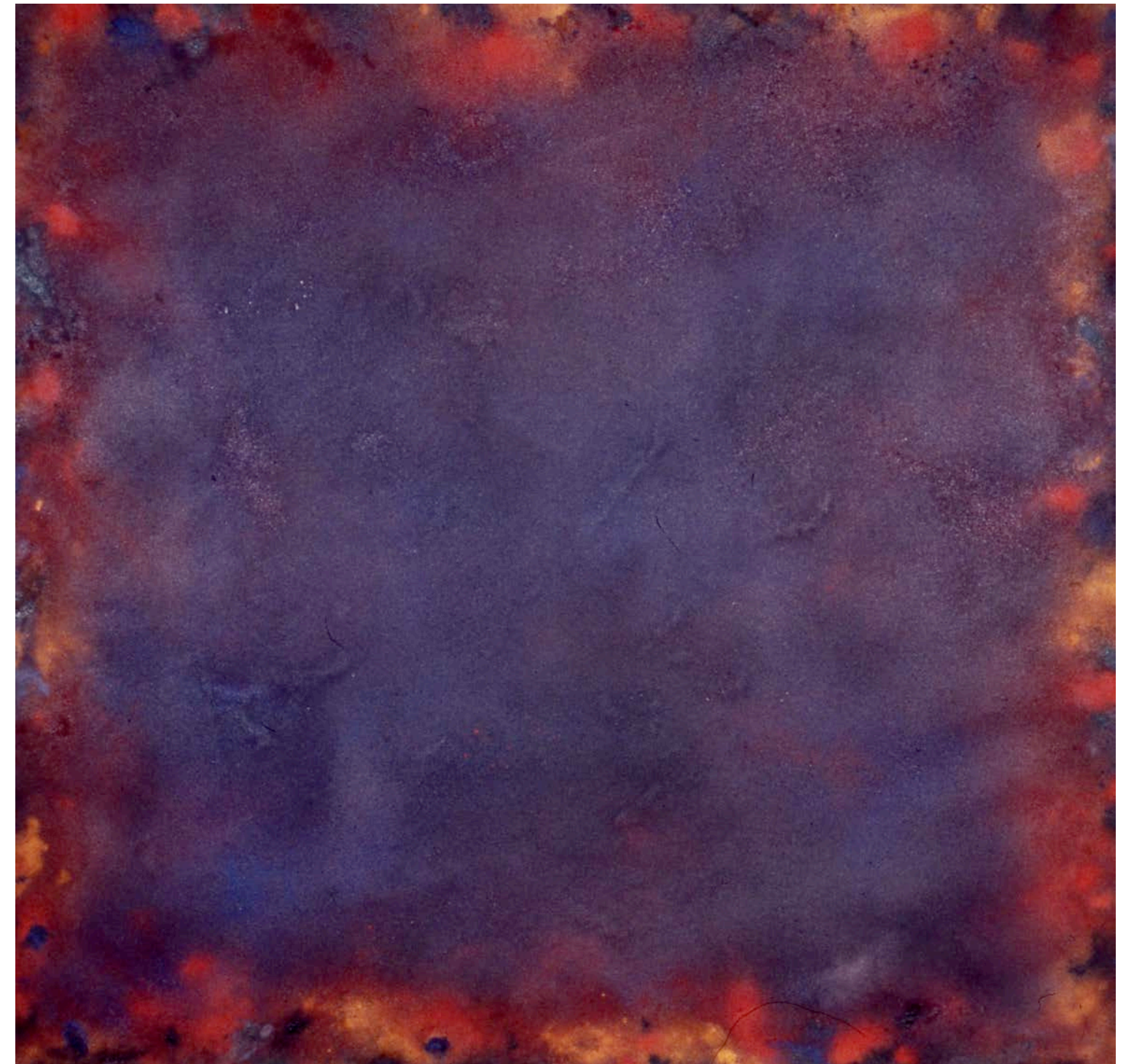
REE-THA  
1972  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
96 x 96 in.



JESUL  
1971-1988  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
108 × 90 in.



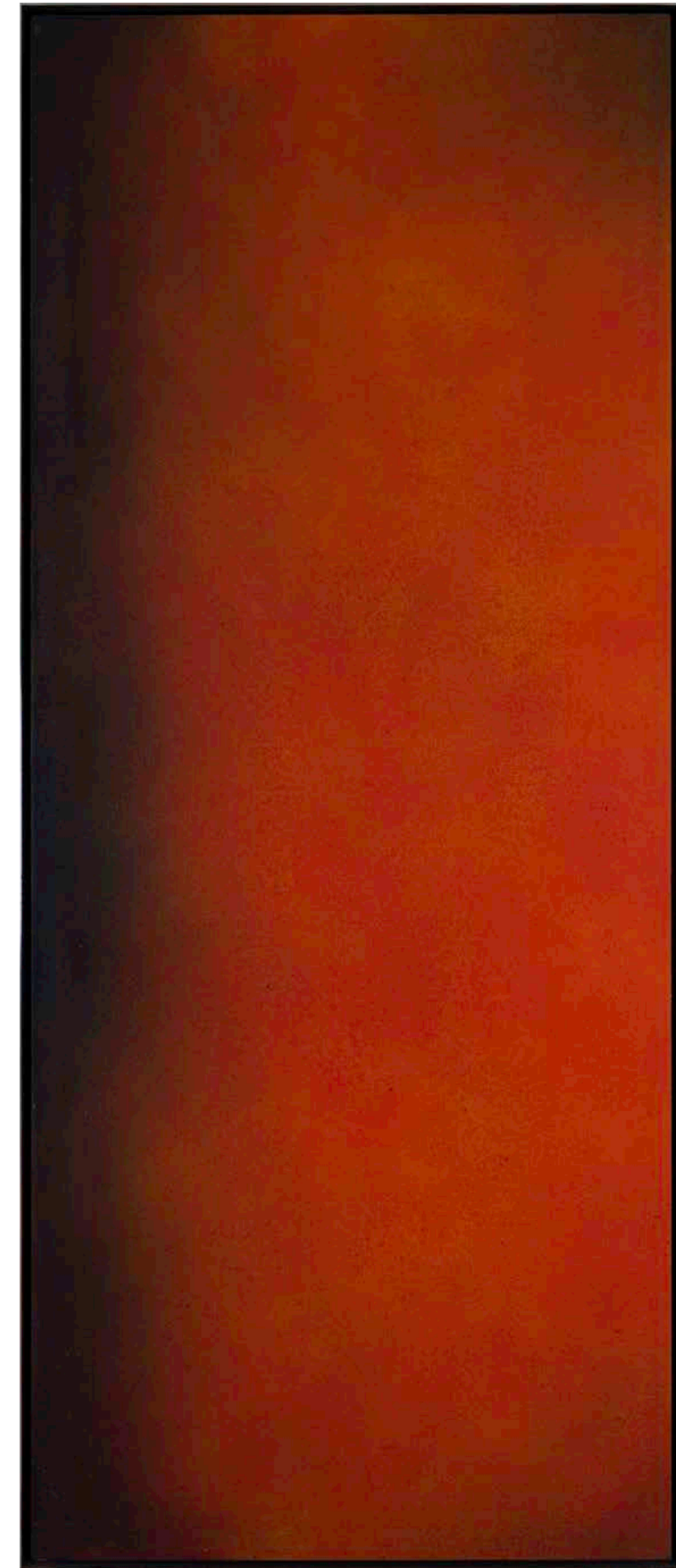




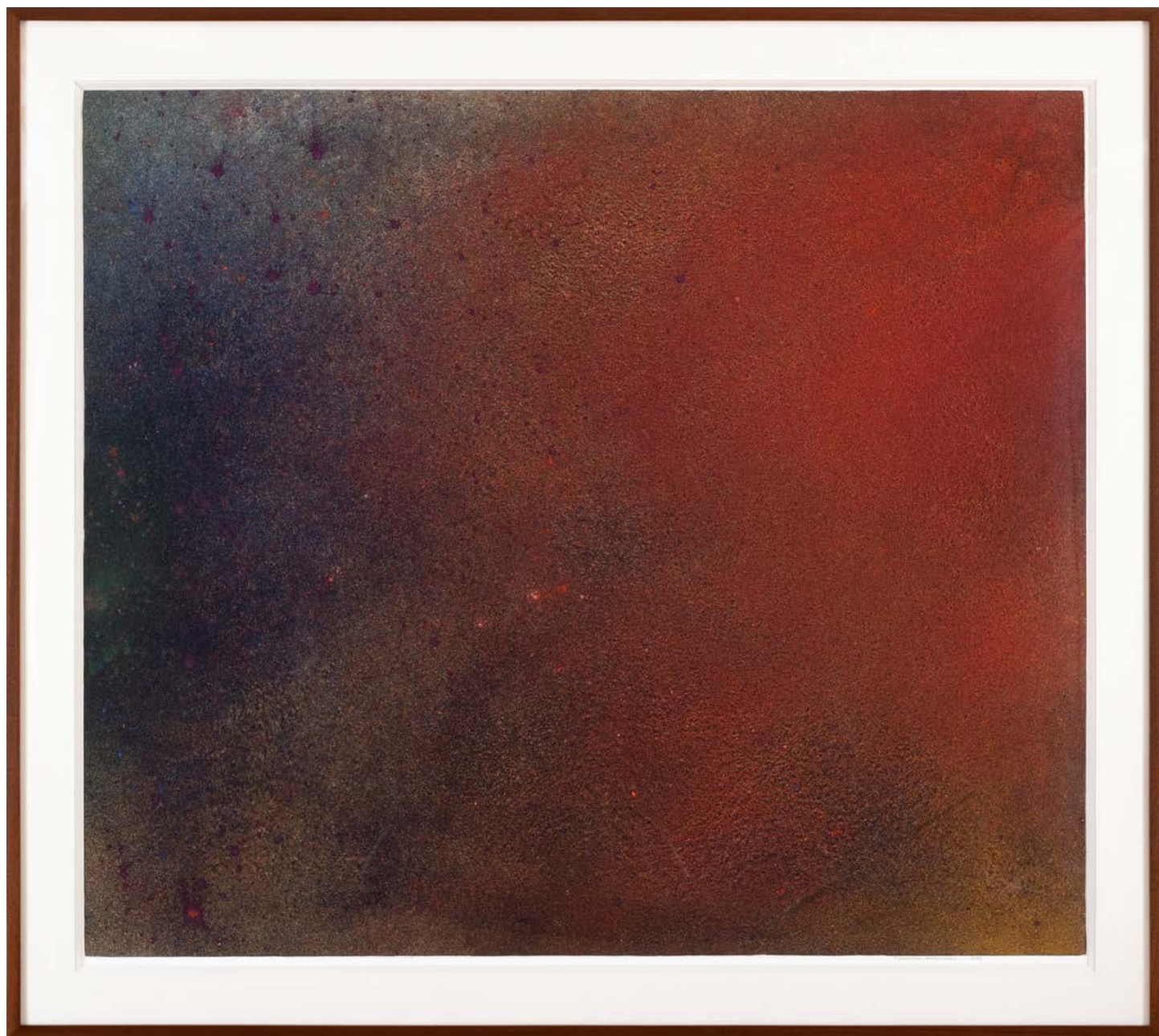
AHEER  
1973  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on canvas  
92 x 96 in.



KONARAK II  
1978  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on canvas  
108 x 46 in.







UNTITLED II  
 1968  
 Dry pigments with oil and  
 acrylic mediums on paper  
 45 x 50.25 in.



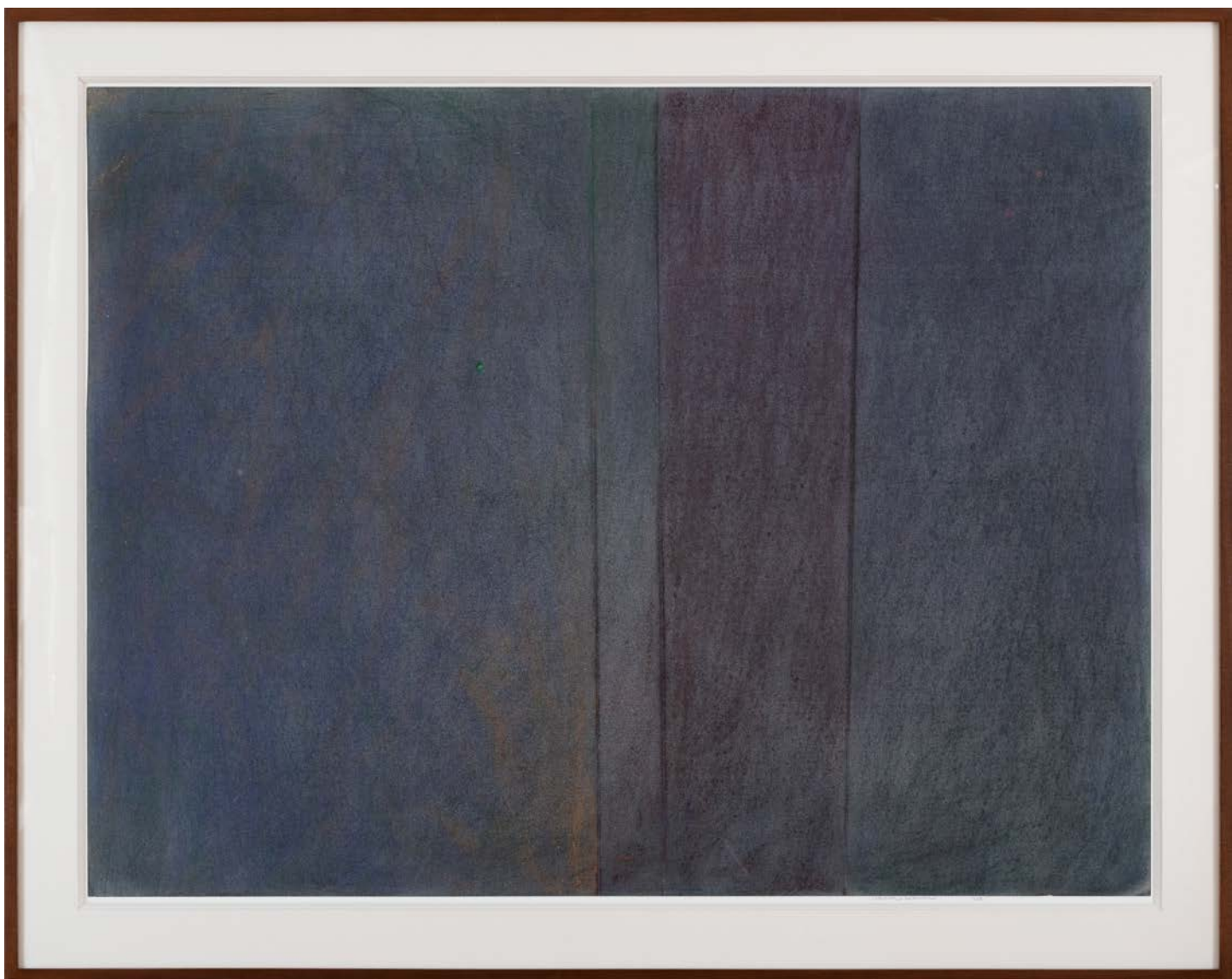
UNTITLED VI  
 1969  
 Dry pigments with oil and  
 acrylic mediums on paper  
 43 x 52 in.



UNTITLED IX  
1971  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
53 x 42 in.







UNTITLED IV  
1968  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
42 x 53 in.



UNTITLED III  
1968  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
43 x 52 in.





UNTITLED XI  
1971  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
53 x 42 in.



UNTITLED VII  
1970  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
53 x 42 in.





UNTITLED XIII  
1971  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
53 x 42 in.



UNTITLED XIX  
1973  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
48 x 39 in.





UNTITLED XVIII  
 1973  
 Dry pigments with oil and  
 acrylic mediums on paper  
 48 x 39 in.



UNTITLED XX  
 1973  
 Dry pigments with oil and  
 acrylic mediums on paper  
 48 x 39 in.



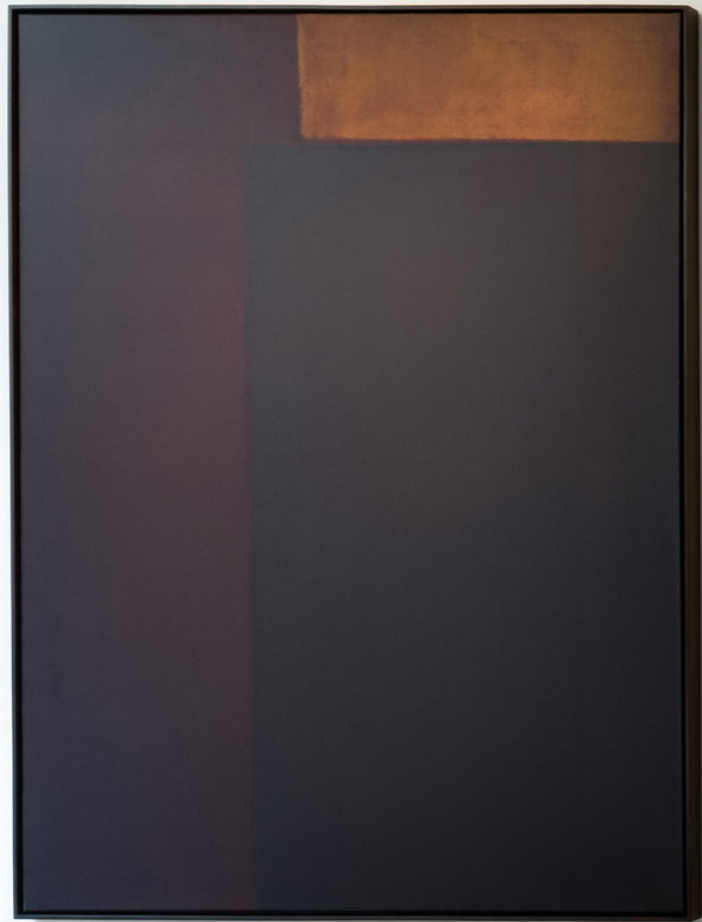
UNTITLED XXI  
1973  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
48 x 39 in.







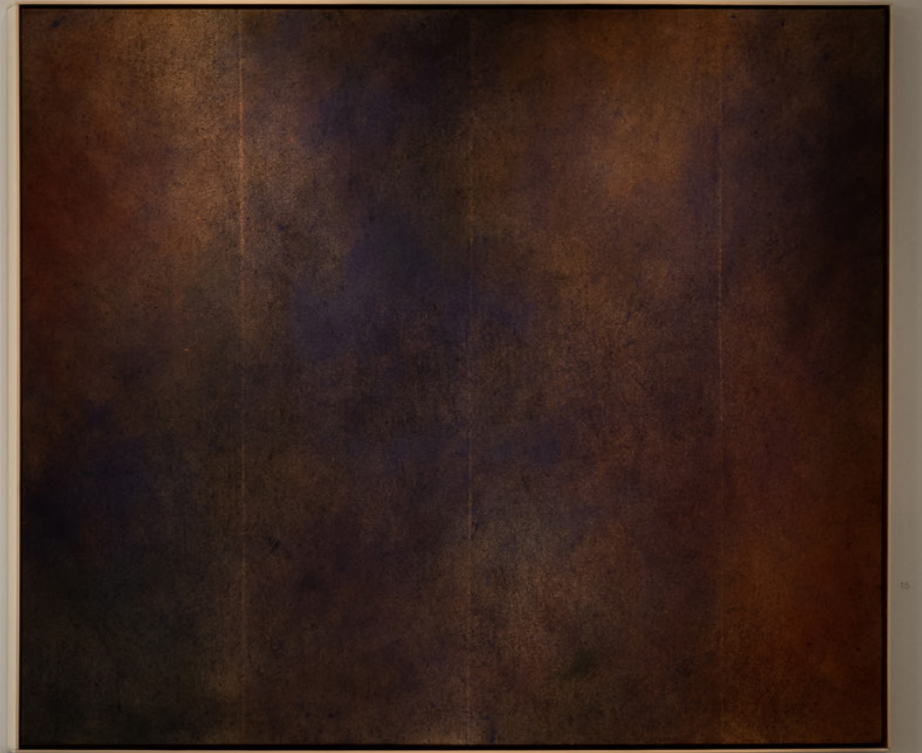




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14



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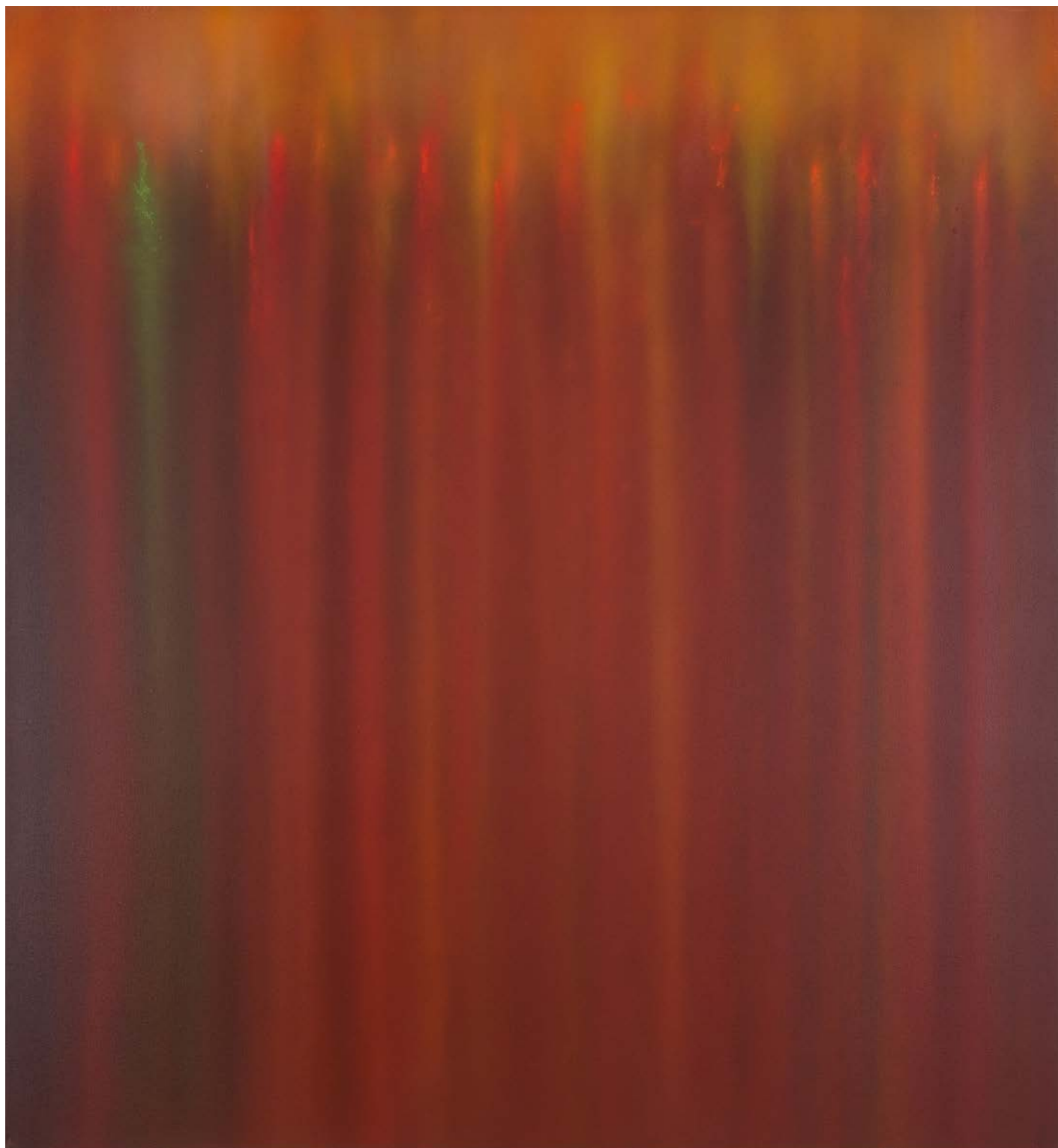
# **SUBLIME LIGHT**

July 18th — August 8th, 2020

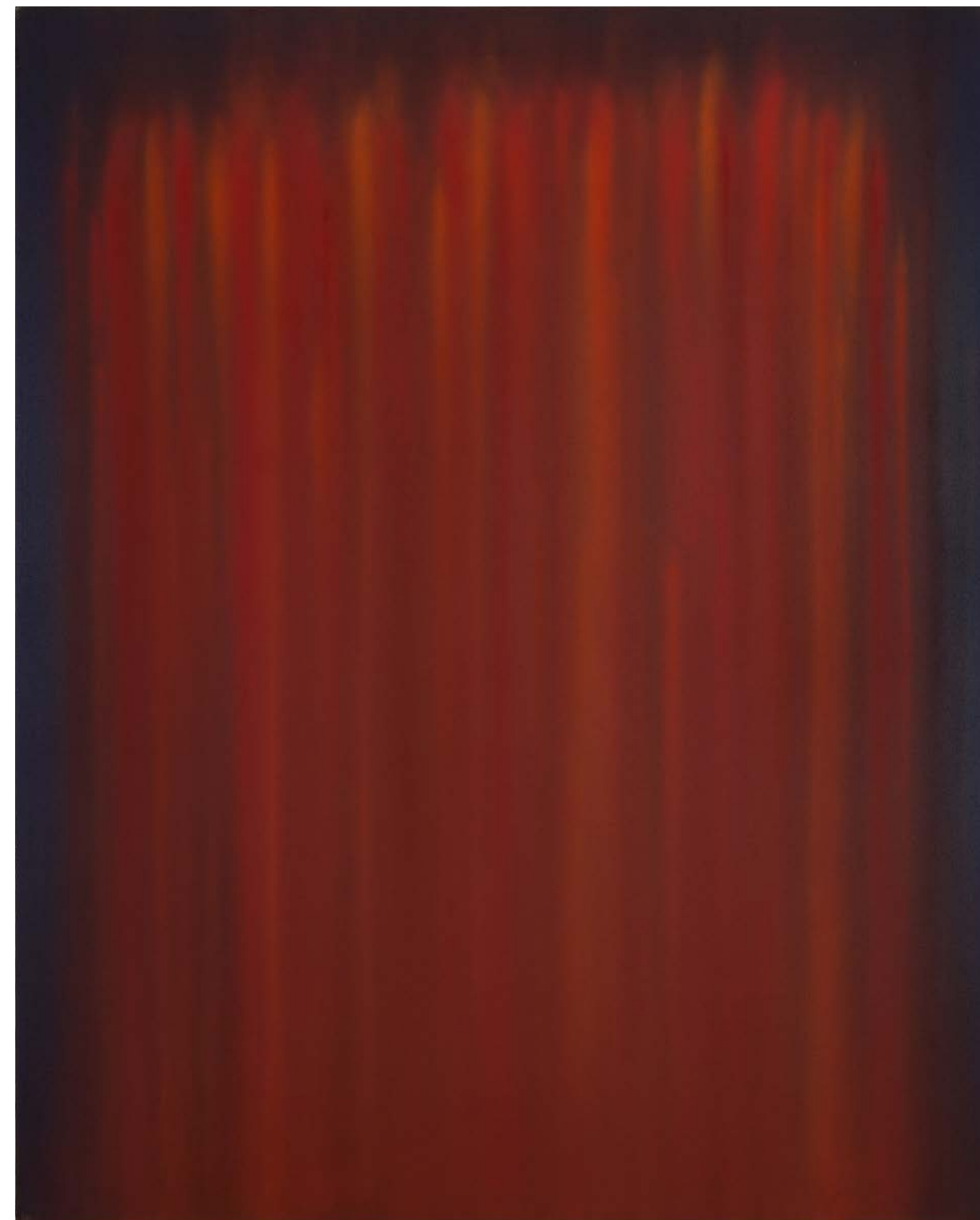








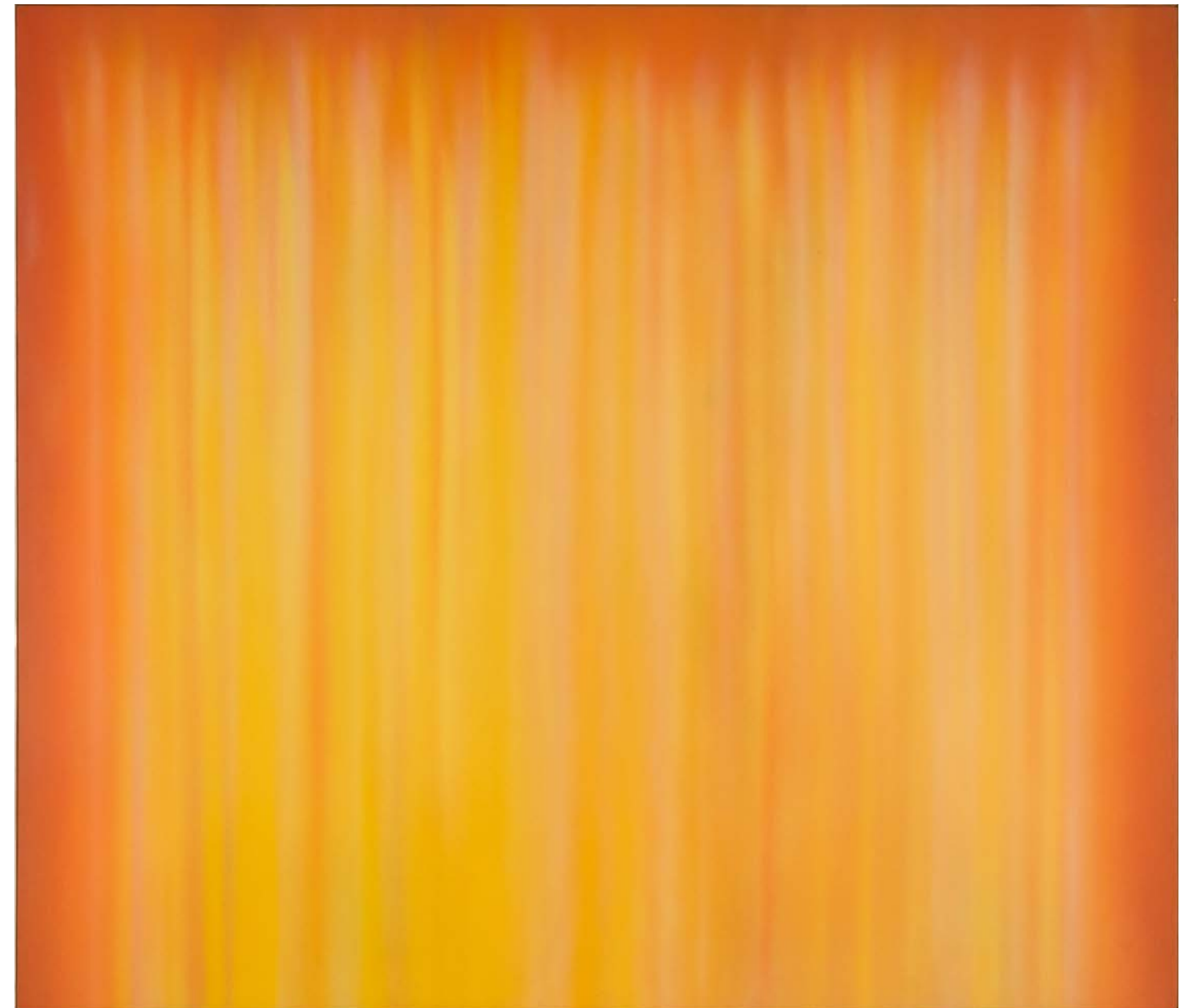
ARCHAN  
1980  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
74 x 68.5 in.



BHRUGU  
1980  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
84.5 x 68.5 in.



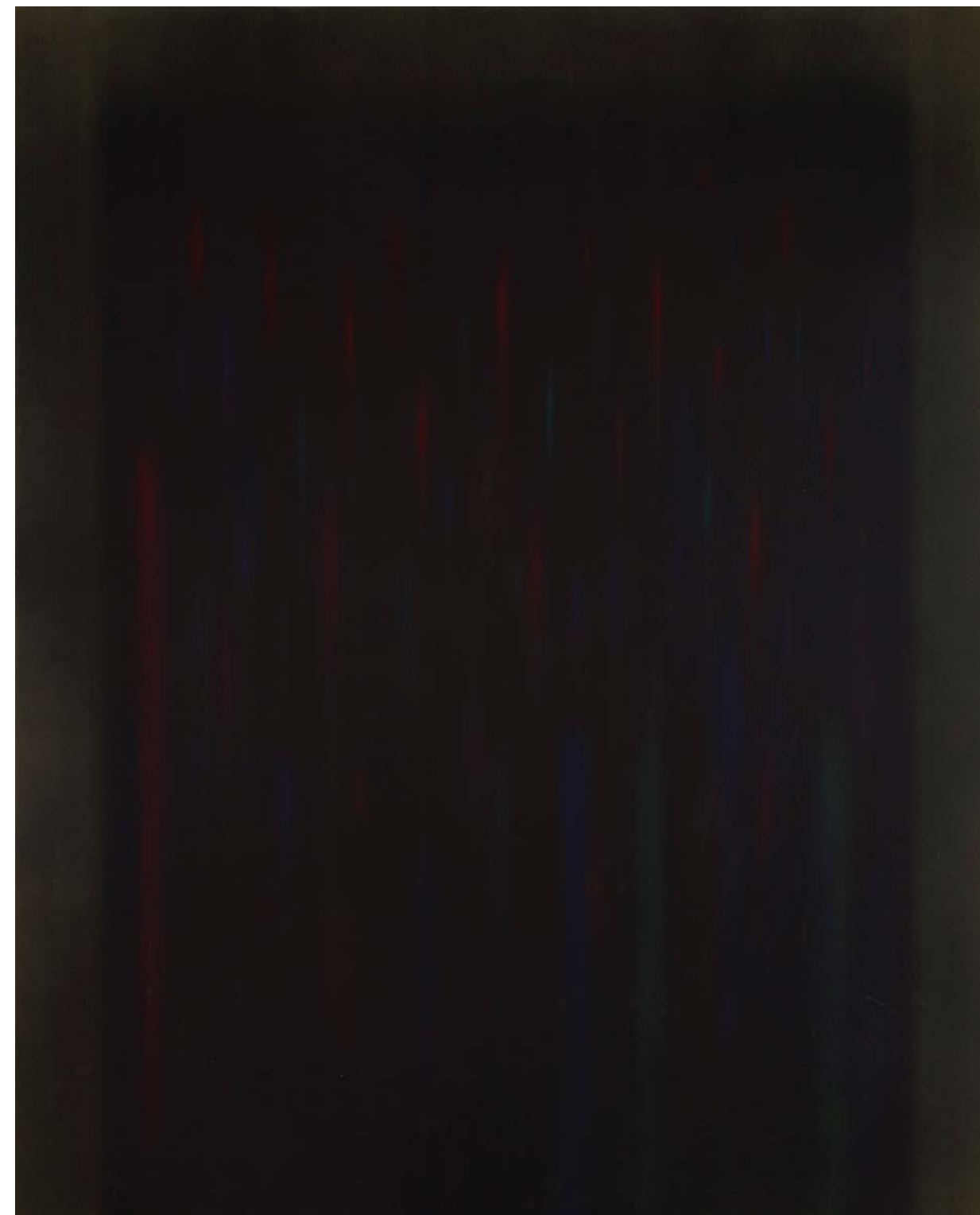
AMER  
1977  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
57 x 66 in.







OORVSEE II  
1985  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
84.5 x 68.5 in.



OORVSEE  
1985  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
84.5 x 68.5 in.





MRINA  
1978  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
66 x 60 in.



SHAMANA  
1984  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
68.5 x 84.5 in.



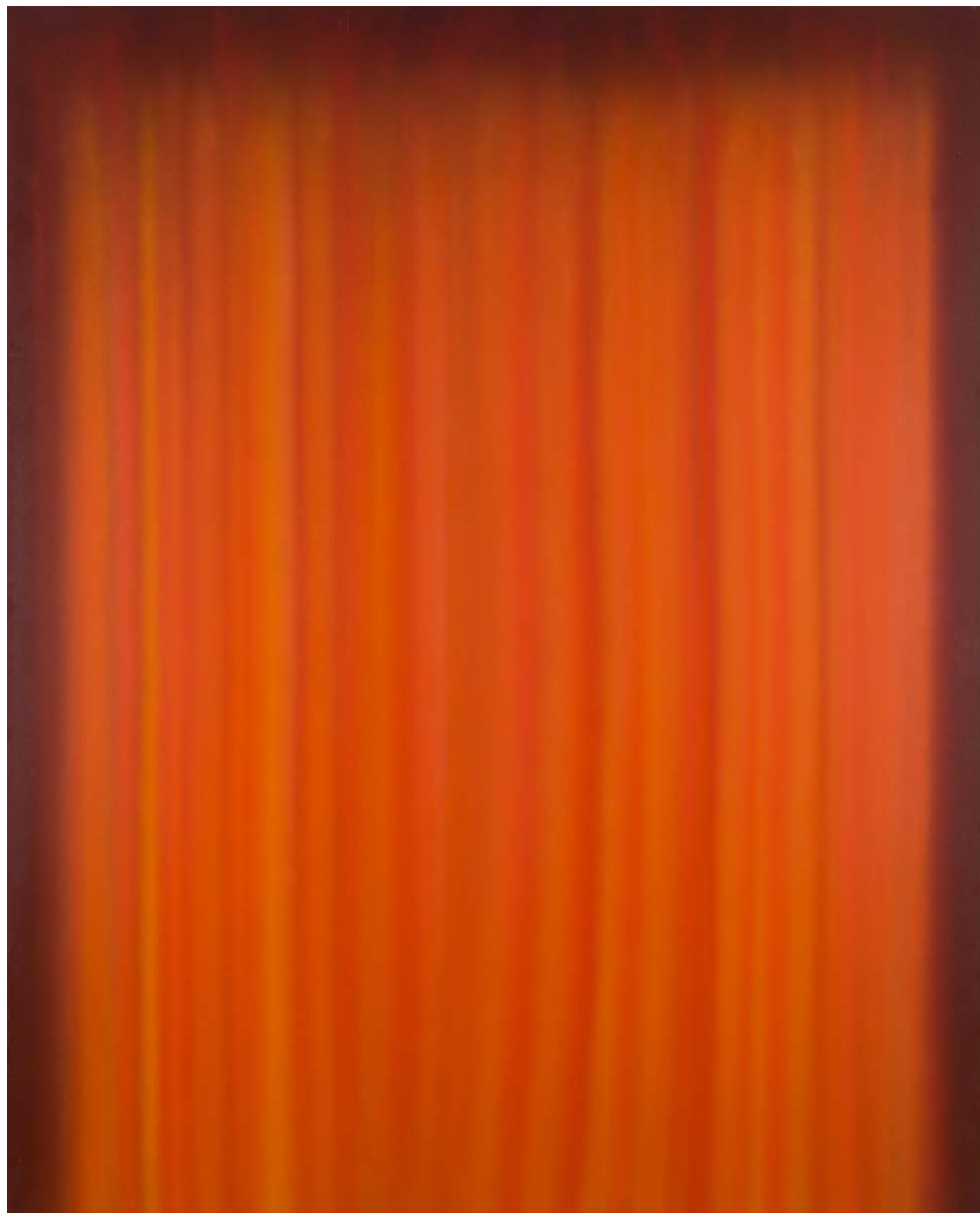


ARCHAN III  
1980  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
74 x 68.5 in.

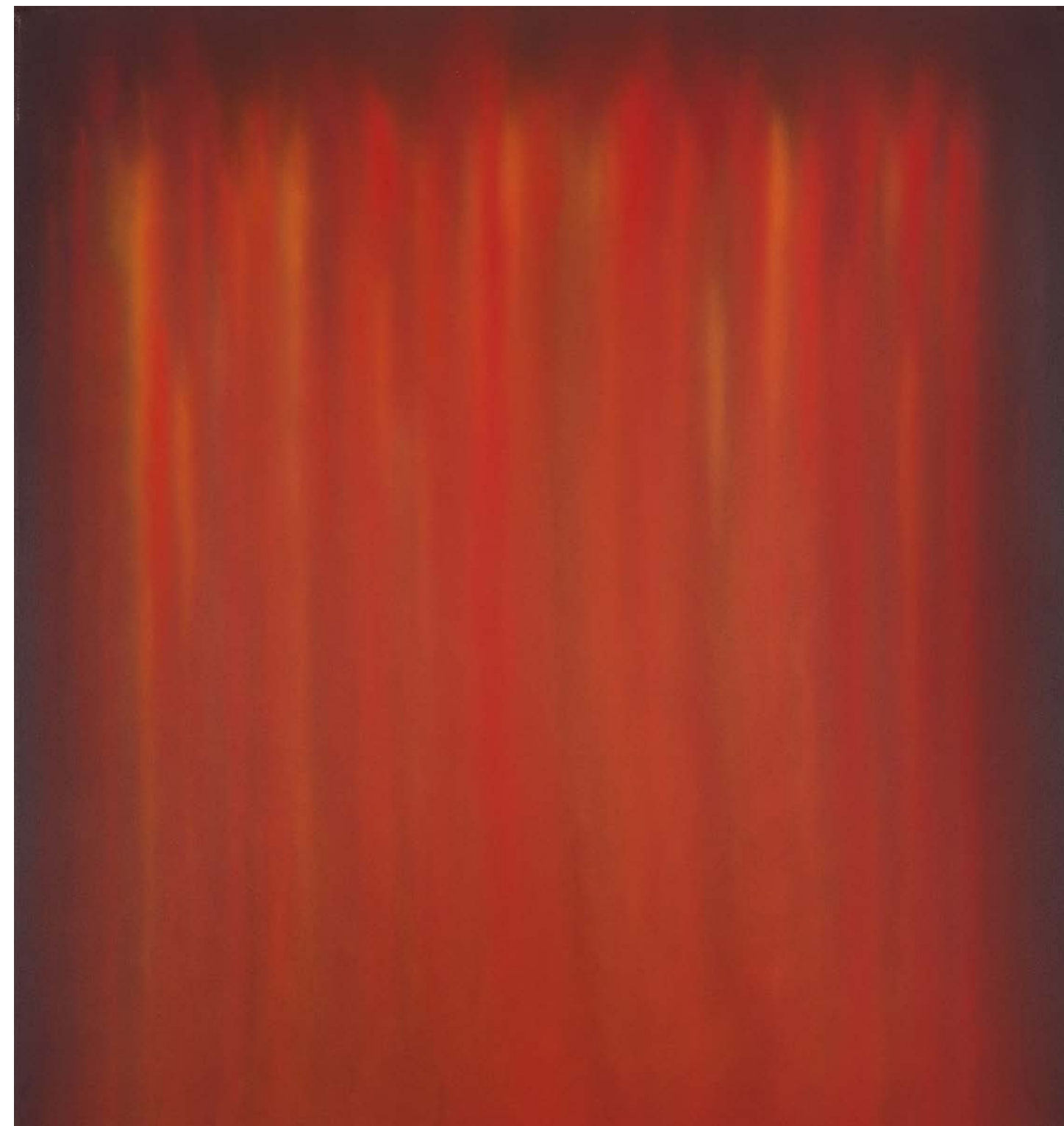


ARCHAN IV  
1980  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
74 x 68.5 in.



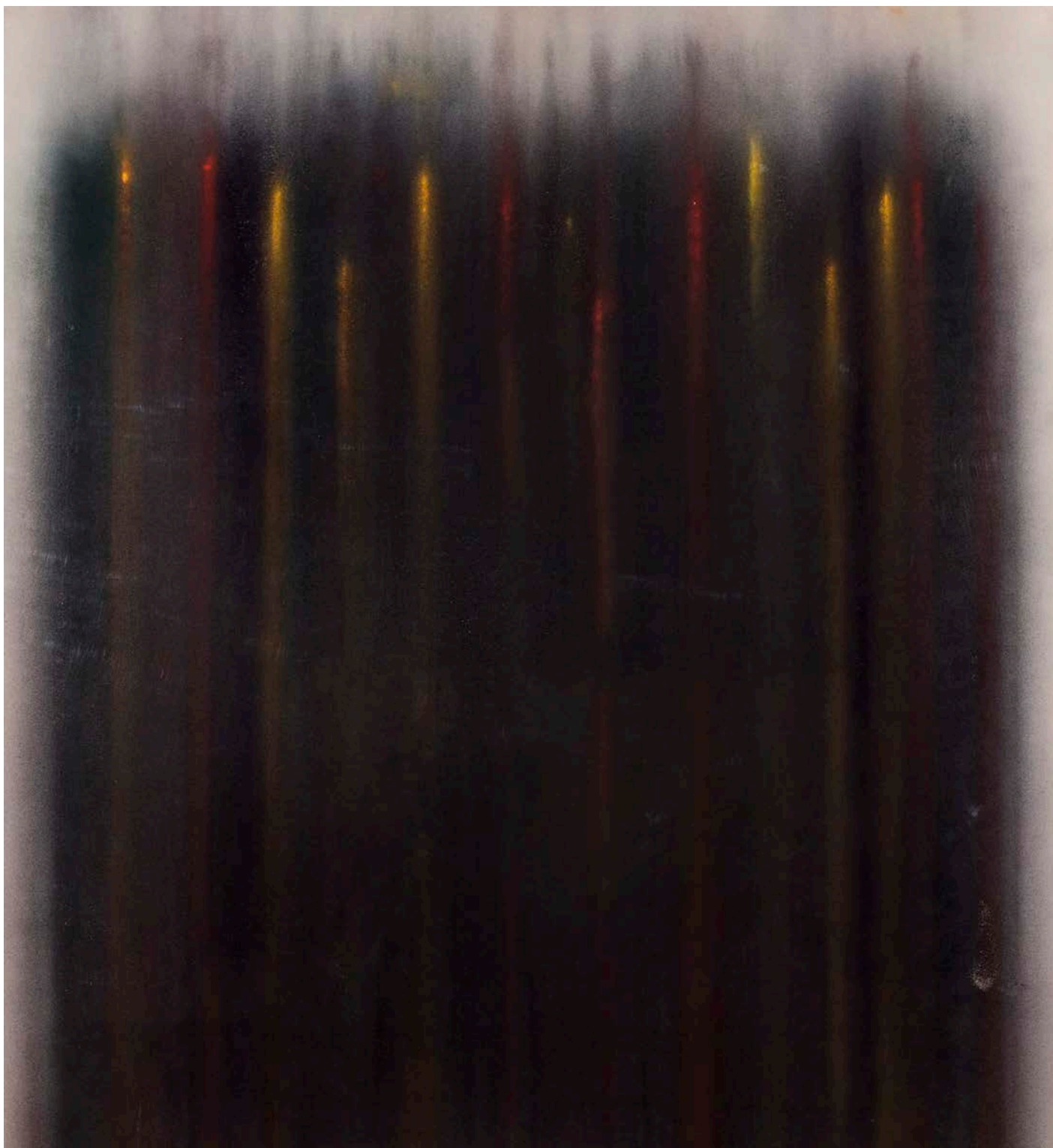


VALABHEE  
1980  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on canvas  
84.5 x 68.5 in.



ARCHAN II  
1980  
Dry pigments with oil and acrylic  
mediums on canvas  
74 x 68.5 in.





AJANTA VII  
1987  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on paper  
49.5 x 45 in.



AMBH II  
1983  
Dry pigments with oil and  
acrylic mediums on canvas  
74 x 68.5 in.

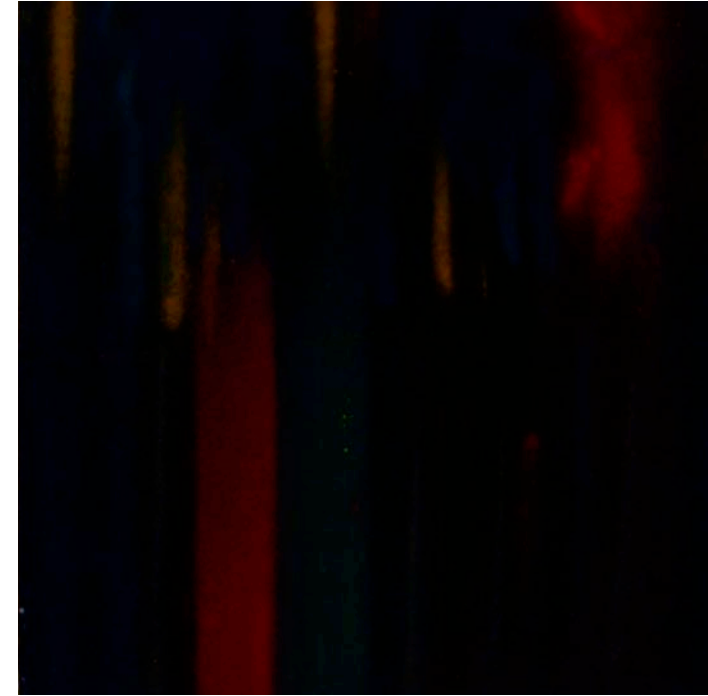




AA-KASH IIX  
1987  
Pastel on paper  
21 x 17 in.



AA-KASH IX  
1987  
Pastel on paper  
21 x 17 in.

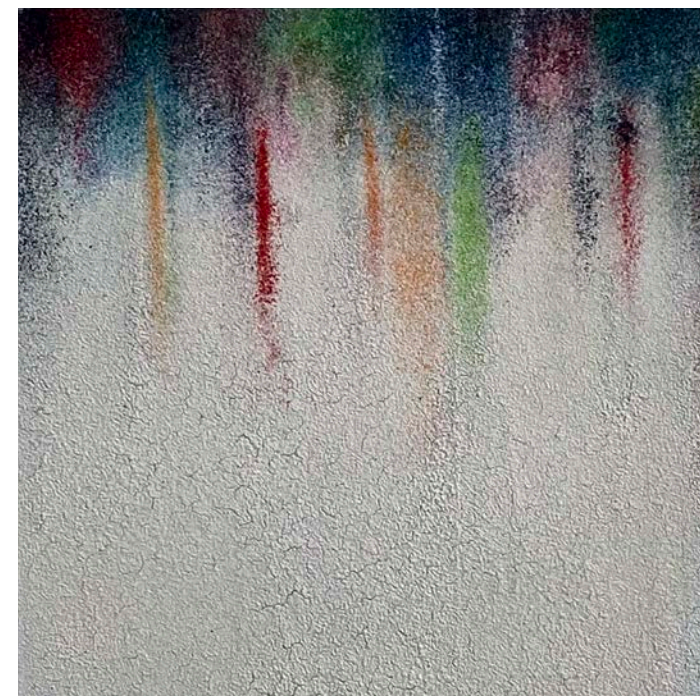


AA-KASH IV  
1983  
Pastel on paper  
21 x 17 in.

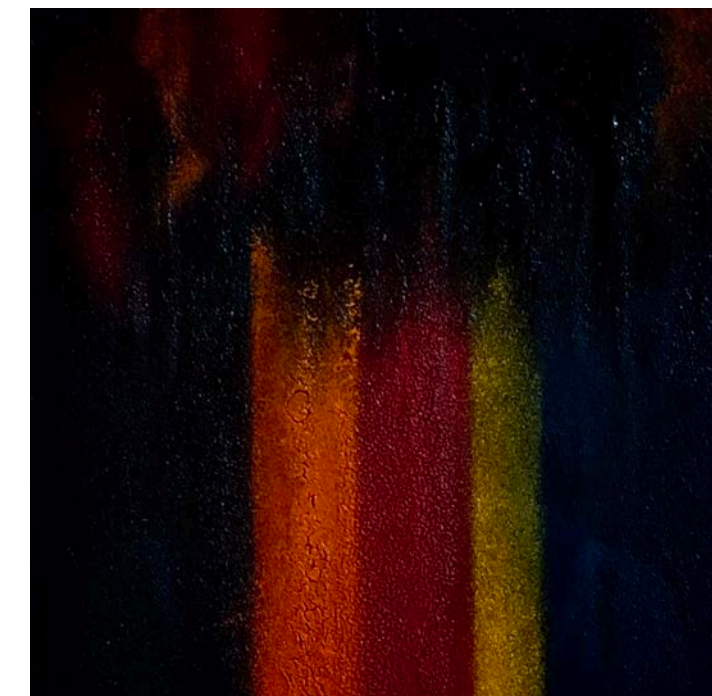


AA-KASH V  
1984  
Pastel on paper  
21 x 17 in.



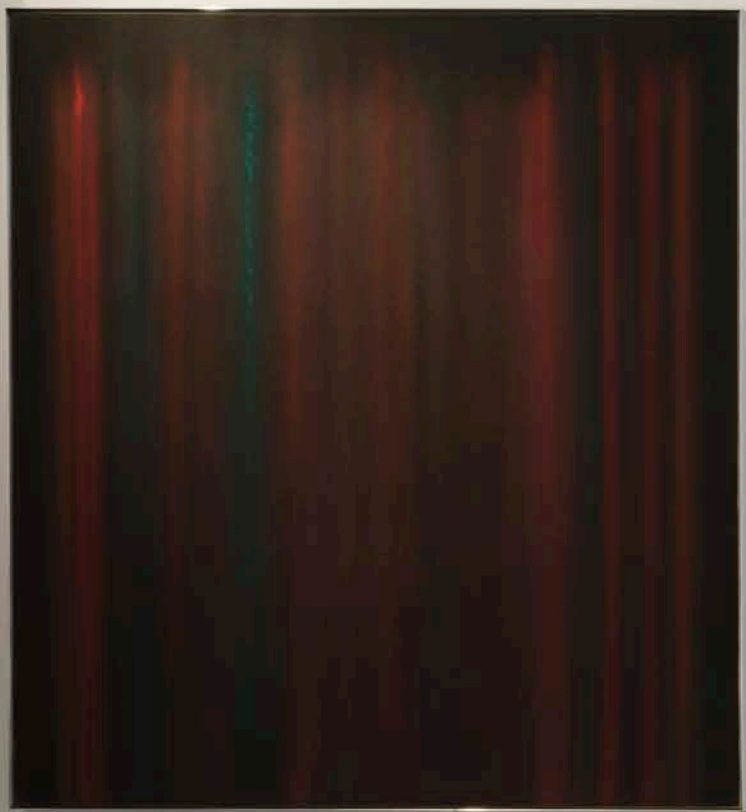


UNTITLED I  
1987  
Pastel on paper  
21 x 17 in.

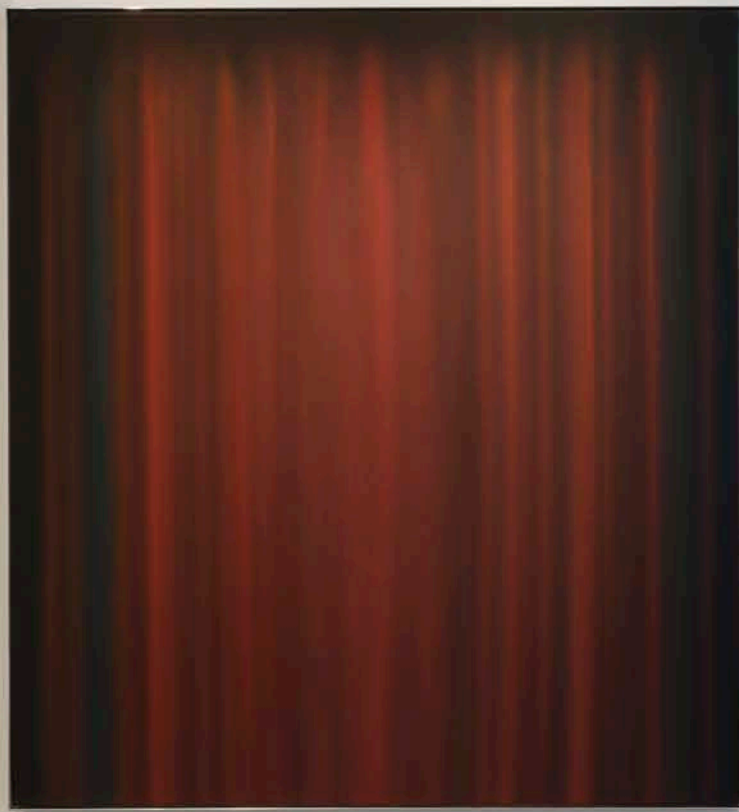


UNTITLED I  
1983  
Pastel on paper  
21 x 17 in.

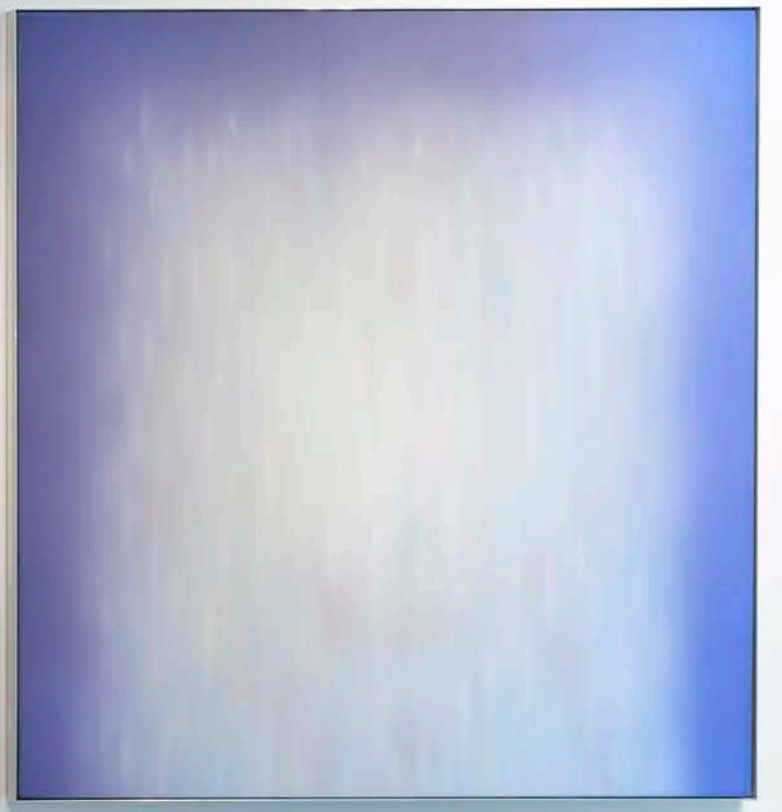




15



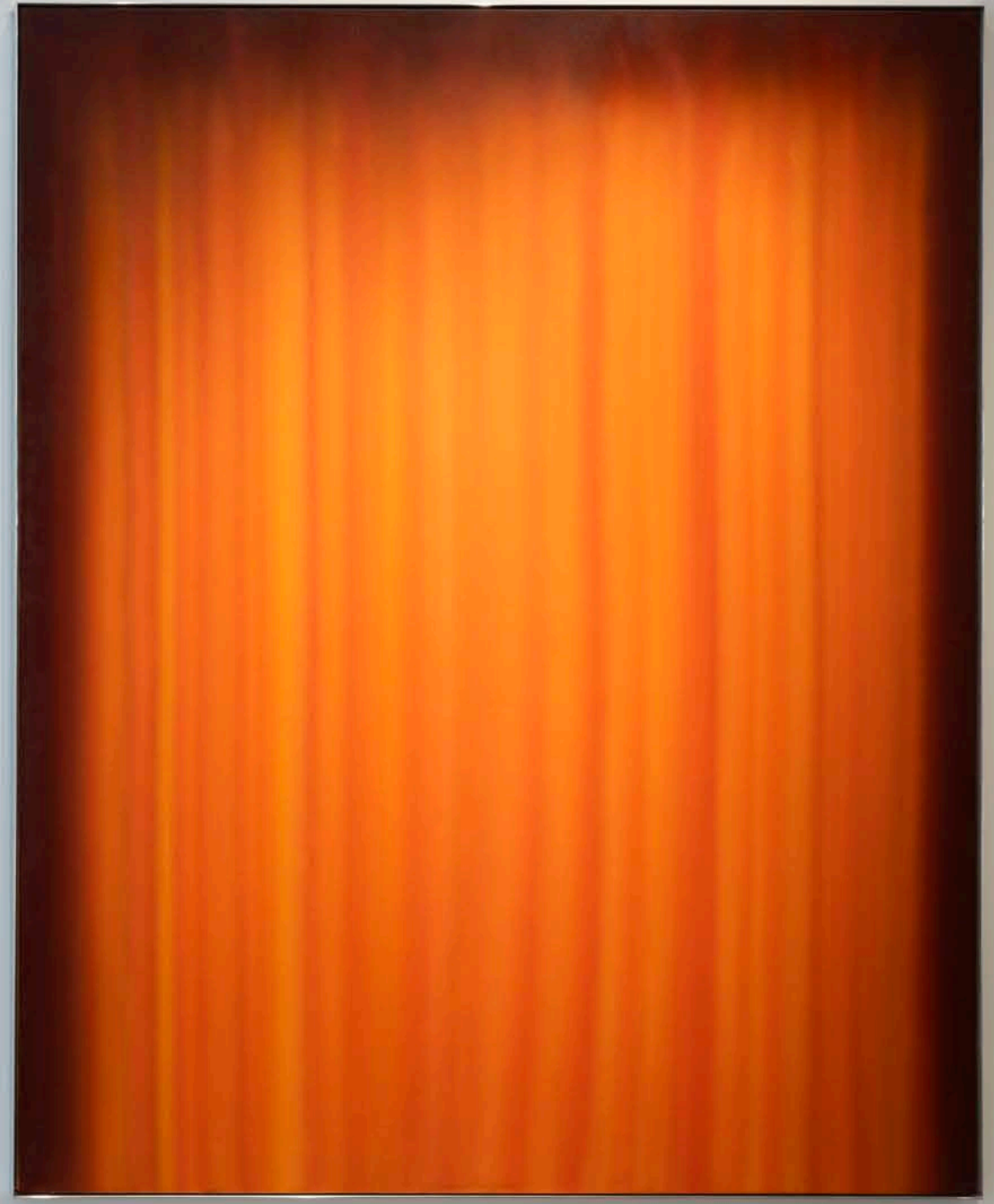
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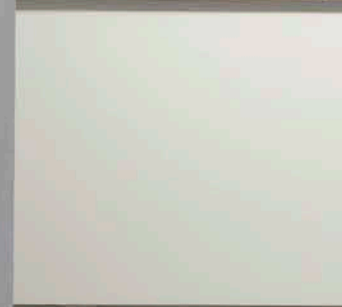
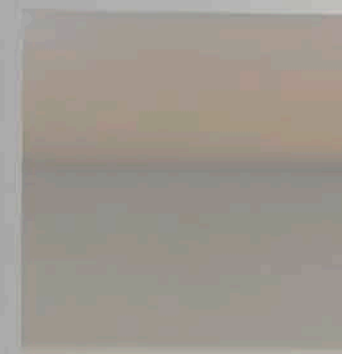


17





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8

# ABOUT

Claiming ‘color’ as his medium, Natvar Bhavsar has explored the sensual, emotional, and intellectual resonance of color for over 50 years. Born in 1934, Gothava, India, Natvar Bhavsar studied at the Seth CN College of Fine Arts in Ahmedabad. At the same time, he obtained a degree in English Literature from Gujarat University. He continued his education in America, at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Fine Arts, where he received his MFA in 1965. Upon graduating, Bhavsar received a John D. Rockefeller III Fund Fellowship, after which he taught for a few years at the University of Rhode Island. Bhavsar has shown widely in New York where he has been a longtime resident and central figure in the art world – one of the few remaining

original artists from the SoHo school – along with a variety of gallery and museum exhibitions internationally. His paintings evince influences from his childhood in India, surrounded by vivid textiles, practicing rangoli, and witnessing the Holi Festival, and adulthood in New York in the 1970s.

The artist is included in numerous public collections and institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and the National Gallery of Australia. He also features in notable private collections in the US, Germany, France, India, Australia and the Middle East.

## Select Solo Exhibitions

- 2020**  
*Natvar Bhavsar: Sublime Light*, Aicon Art, New York, NY
- 2019**  
*Natvar Bhavsar: Beginnings*, Aicon Art, New York, NY
- 2018**  
*Elements of Color*, HG Contemporary, Madrid, Spain
- 2017**  
DAG Modern, London, UK  
*Phenomenon*, HG Contemporary, New York, NY
- 2016**  
*Natvar Bhavsar: The Dimension of Color*, Museum of Art DeLand, DeLand, FL
- 2015**  
*Natvar Bhavsar: Five Decades*, Cara Gallery, New York, NY
- 2014**  
*RANG RASA (Transcendent Color)*, Tower 49 Gallery, New York, NY
- White Symphonies and Red Flowers*, Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS

- Color Immersion*, Sponder Gallery, Boca Raton, FL
- 2013**  
*Color Immersion*, Sponder Gallery, Miami, FL
- Energy of Color*, Freedman Art, New York, NY
- 2012**  
*Resonance of Color*, Contessa Gallery, Cleveland, OH
- 2010**  
*RANG*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Hong Kong, China
- 2009**  
*RANG*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA
- 2008**  
*RANG*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2007**  
*The Dimensions of Color*, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick, NJ
- 2006**  
*Poetics of Color*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2005**  
*Small Scale Paintings*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

- Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto, Canada
- 2004**  
*Small Scale Paintings*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003-2004**  
ACP Viviane Ehrli Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
- Art-Garage, Zug, Switzerland
- 2003**  
Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2002**  
Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2001**  
Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY
- 2000**  
Art-Garage, Zug, Switzerland
- World Economic Forum, Annual Meeting 2000, Davos, Switzerland
- Celebration Colors: Three Decades of Painting*, Dialectica Gallery, New York, NY
- 1997**  
*Paintings*, ACP Viviane Ehrli Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
- 1996**  
*Pastels and Paintings on Paper*, Bose-Pacia Modern Gallery, New York, NY
- 1992**  
*Paintings*, Gloria Luria Gallery, Bay Harbor, FL
- 1988**  
*Pastels - Paintings on Paper*, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai, India
- Pastels - Paintings on Paper*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Ahmedabad, India

- 1985**  
Pembroke Gallery, Houston, TX
- Twenty Years of Work on Paper*, The Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS
- 1984**  
Getler/Pall/Saper Gallery, New York, NY
- 1979**  
*Color Experiences*, The Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS
- 1978**  
  
Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
- Max Hutchinson Gallery, Houston, TX
- Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami, FL
- 1977**  
Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
- Kingpitcher Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
- Suzette Schochet Gallery, Newport, RI
- 1974**  
Kenmore Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
- 1972**  
Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
- Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- 1971**  
Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
- 1970**  
Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
- Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, India



**1969**  
Obelisk Gallery and Parker 470, Boston, MA

**1968**  
Obelisk Gallery, Boston, MA

**1967**  
University of Delaware, Newark, DE

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

**1964**  
Art Alliance of Philadelphia YM-YMHA Art Council, Philadelphia, PA

**1963**  
Kenmore Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

**Select Group Exhibitions**

**2018**  
*Staff Favorites*, Alpha 137 Gallery, New York, NY

*Abstraction 18: Further a-Field, 1970s*, Charles Nodrum Gallery, Richmond, Australia

*Grand Opening HG Contemporary Napa Valley*, HG Contemporary, Napa Valley, CA

**2017**  
*Abstract Expressionist Paintings, Sculptures and Works on Paper*, Alpha 137 Gallery, New York, NY

*Memory and Identity, Indian Artists Abroad*, DAG Modern, New Delhi, India

**2016**  
*Memory and Identity, Indian Artists Abroad*, DAG Modern, New York, NY

*Split Visions Abstraction In Modern Indian Painting*, Aicon Gallery, New York

**2015**  
*Don't Shoot the Painter, Paintings from the UBS Art Collection*, Galleria D'Arte Moderna Di Milano, Milan, Italy

**2014**  
Hoerle-Guggenheim Gallery, New York, NY

*Storytelling: Highlights and Insights from the Wichita Art Museum Collection Sept...ongoing*, Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS

**2012**  
*Abstract Expressionism*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia

**2011**  
*Facing East*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*Forces of Nature*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA

**2010**  
*RASA Contemporary Asian Art*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Hong Kong, China

*Mirrors of Continuous Change*, Seonhwa Art and Culture Foundation Gala, Seoul, South Korea

*75 Years of Collecting American Art*, Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS

**2009**  
*Infinitum*, Museo Fortuny, Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, Venice, Italy

Gallery A, Campbelltown Arts Center, New South Wales, Australia

*The Third Mind*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY

*Late 20th Century Abstraction from the Collection*, Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL

**2008**  
*Dimensions of Color*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA

*In Your Mind's Eye*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*East/West: Grand Opening Group Show*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Hong Kong, China

*Drishiti: Pan-Asian Group Show*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*Midnight Full of Stars*, Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Summit, NJ

**2007**  
*Colors*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*Inner Journey*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY  
*Back to the Future: Contemporary American Art from the Collection*, Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA

**2006**  
*Next Level*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*East/West*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

**2005**  
Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

**2004**  
*Time and Material*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

**2003**  
*Continuous Connection*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*Seeing Red*, Hunter College Times Square Gallery, New York, NY

Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

**2002**  
*India: Contemporary Art from Northeastern Private Collections*, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

*Compass Points*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

**2001**  
*The Inner World*, Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, NY

*The Inner World*, Asian American Art Center, New York, NY

ACP Vivane Ehrli Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

**1998**  
ACP Viviane Ehrli Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

*3 Immerzeit 3*, ACP Viviane Ehrli Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

**1997**  
*Abstraction INDEX*, Condeso/Lawler Gallery, New York, NY

**1995**  
*La Raccolta D'Arte Contemporanea*, Le Nuove Donazioni, Museo Civico, Taverna, Italy

**1991**  
*Nel Piu'Ampio Cerchio, Angolazioni E Prospettive Della Visione Nell'Arte Contemporanea*, Centro Museografico, Taverna, Italy

*Il Sud del Mondo, l'Altra Arte Contemporanea*, Galleria Civica D'Arte, Pizzo, Italy

**1981**  
*Fifth Triennial*, New Delhi, India

**1979**  
*Works on Paper, U.S.A.*, Rockland Center for the Arts, West Nyack, NY

**1978**  
*Painting and Sculpture Today*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN

**1974**  
Ruth S. Schaffner Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

*Eight from New York*, Reed College, Portland, OR

**1973**  
*Works on Paper*, Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY

American Academy of Arts and Letters Art Gallery, New York, NY

**1971**  
*New York Survey*, Purdue University, Lafayette, IN

*Beaux Arts*, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, OH

*Aspects of Current Painting*, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

**1970**  
*Insights – 1970*, Parker Street 470 Gallery, Boston, MA

*Some New York Painting*, Reese Paley Gallery, San Francisco, CA

*Selections by Guest Curator*, School of Visual Arts Art Gallery, New York, NY

*Beautiful Painting and Sculpture*, Jewish Museum, New York, NY

*Whitney Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

*Painting and Sculpture Today*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN

*Highlights of the Season*, Larry Aldrich Museum of Art, Ridgefield, CT

*Recent Acquisitions*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

*Two Generations of Color Painting*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, PA

*Recent Acquisitions*, Power Institute, University of Sydney, Australia

**1969**  
*Concept*, Vassar College of Art Gallery, Poughkeepsie, NY

**1966**  
*Contemporary Indian Arts*, American Society for Eastern Arts, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

*Fifteenth Biennial Print Exhibition*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY

**1964** *Regional Painting and Sculpture*, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia, PA

**1961**  
*National Art Exhibition*, Amritsar, India

*Progressive Painters of Amdavad*, Ahmedabad, India

*Gujarat State Art Exhibition*, Ahmedabad, India

*Gujarat Sahitya Sabha*, Ahmedabad, India

*Rabindra Shatabdi Exhibition*, Kolkata, India

**1960**  
*Bombay Art Society Annual Art Exhibition*, Mumbai, India (Special Mention)

**1956**  
*Bombay State Art Exhibition*, Mumbai, India (Prize)

**Collections**

Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY Whitney Museum of American Art, NY Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia Bermuda National Gallery, Hamilton, Bermuda UBS Art Collection, Zurich, Switzerland



**Thank you**

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