

Abstract Expressionism:

The coinage of the term Abstract Expressionism was late, in 1952, in relation to the beginnings of the movement or its tendency.

“American-Type Painting” – **Clement Greenberg**.

It was deemed the quintessential “American-Type Painting” and enlisted in the **Cold War** as an efficient cultural battalion against Soviet Communism.

1926 – Museum of Living Art by A. E. Gallatin

1929 – Museum of Modern Art

1939 – Museum of Non-Objective Painting

1942 onwards – Art of This century; by Peggy Guggenheim

was championed for being emphatically American in spirit - monumental in scale, romantic in mood, and expressive of a rugged individual freedom.

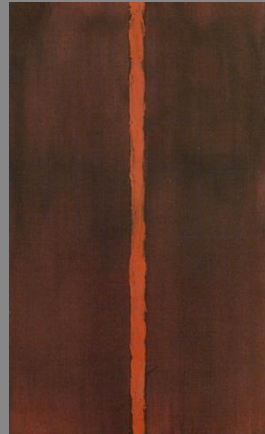
1947 and 1948 were the key years:

In late summer early fall of 1947 Pollock began to work in his all-over dripping technique

In January 1948 Newman painted *Ornament I* ----->

In 1948 April-May de Kooning had a triumphant first solo show.

Rothko realized his first mature canvases. ---->1949 ->



Gorky committed suicide in 1948. (Because he was left alone among his peers).

“These artists long for a means, a language, that will formulate as exactly as possible what is *Emotionally real* to them as *separate persons*... Art to them is ... the standpoint for a *private Revolt* against materialist tradition that does surround them.... Attached neither to a community nor to one another, these painters experience a *unique loneliness* of a depth that is reached perhaps nowhere else in the world.” - Harold Rosenberg, *Introduction to six American Painters*.

From the **automatic** to the **autobiographic**

Autographic Gesture, the inimitable, signature-like dribble of paint that would translate private feelings and emotions directly onto the material field of the canvas – without the mediation of the figurative content.

Between the “aspect of the freely made” and the work of art as an “ordered world” lies the shift from the automatic to the autographic.

The autographic unit grew in size from the simple gesture to the immediately recognizable trademark style – almost like the artist’s logo – filling the whole canvas.



“The Irascibles”, Life Magazine,
January 15, 1951





Jackson Pollock
Enchanted Forest, 1947
Oil on canvas, 87 1/8 x 45 1/8 inches
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, 76.2553

Pollock cathedral, 1947



Pollock eyes in the heat, 1946



Pollock, the she wolf, 1943



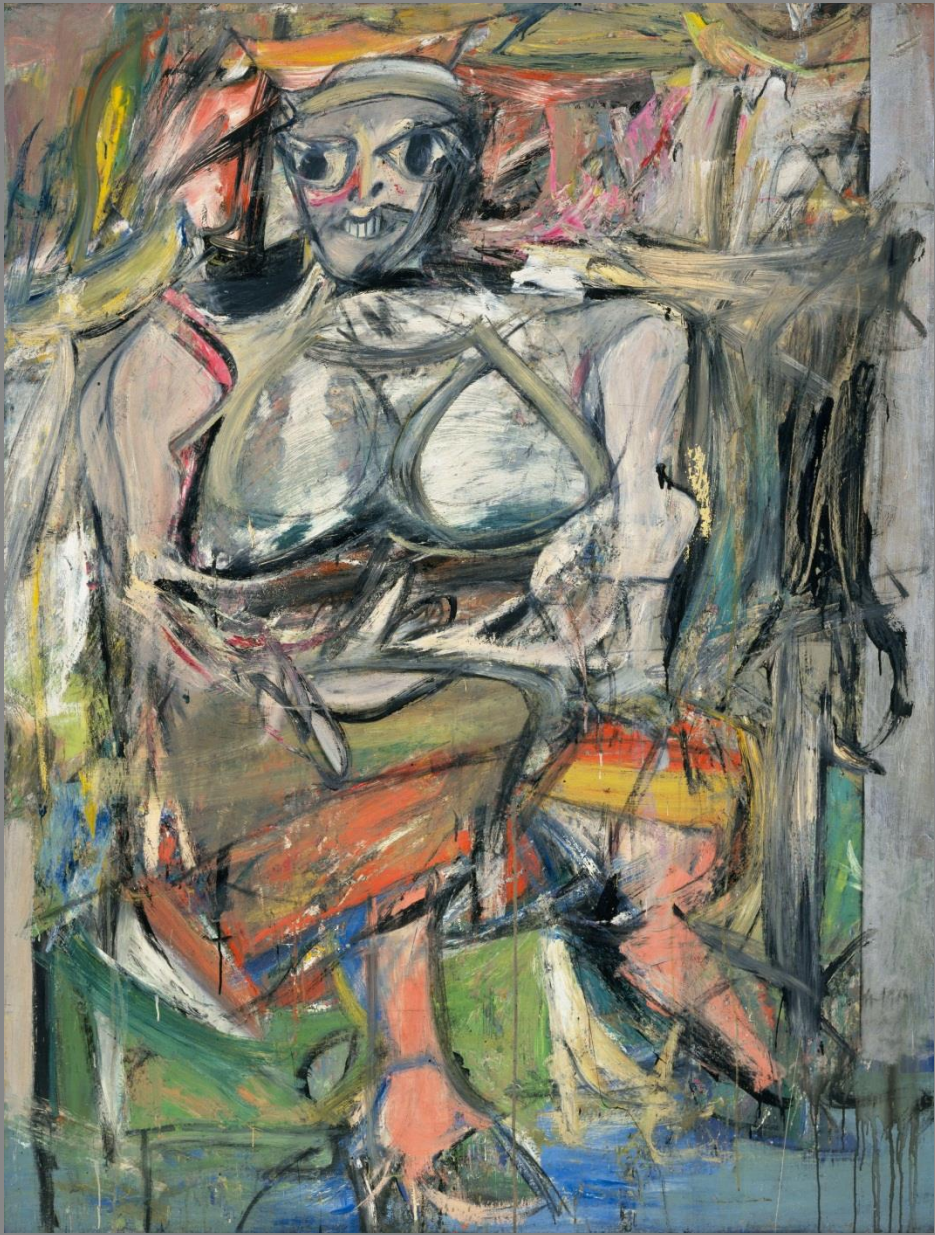
Pollock, blue poles, 1952



Barnett Newman, Onement I, 1948, oil on canvas



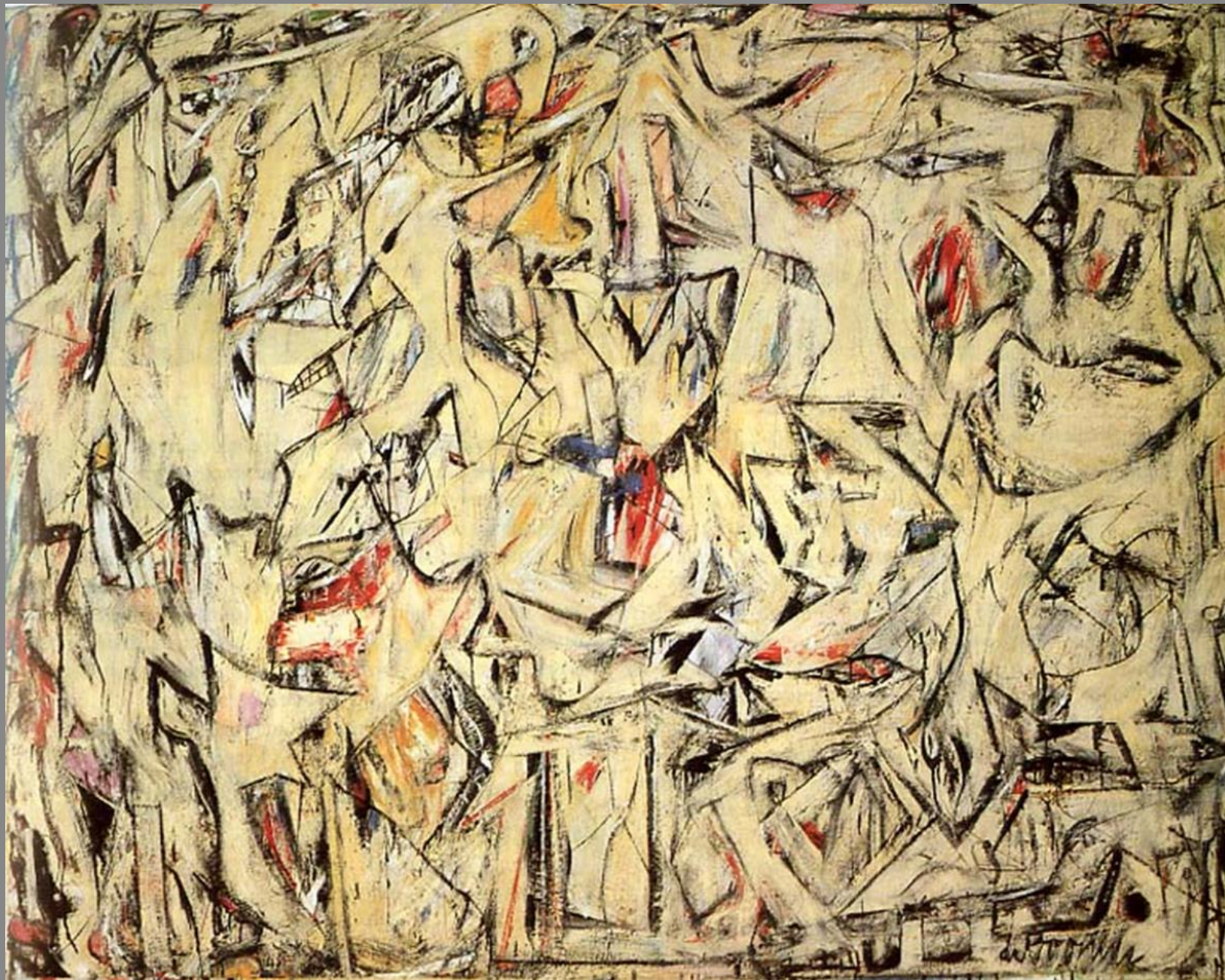
Willem de Kooning, Woman, 1948



Woman, 1949



Willem de Kooning, Asheville, 1948



Wilem de Kooning. Excavation. 1950



MARK ROTHKO, untitled, 1949



Mark Rothko, *Number 18*, 1949, oil on canvas



Wolfgang Paalen
Ciel de Pieuvre
1938, oil and fumage on canvas

Wolfgang Robert Paalen (1905 - 1959) was an Austrian-Mexican painter, sculptor and art philosopher. He joined the influential Surrealist movement in 1935 and was one of its prominent exponents until 1942. He travelled first to New York in May 1939.

It was in the 1940s that Paalen's art particularly played a major role in changing the conception of abstract art.

Due to his magazine DYN, his presence and exhibitions in New York City, 1940 Julien Levy, 1945 Peggy Guggenheim's *The Art of This Century gallery* and 1946 Galerie Nierendorf, he influenced significantly the genesis of Abstract Expressionism.



While the forms of *Betrothal I* derive from a combination of personal memory and surrealist automatism, they are not so specific that they can be conclusively identified; this ambiguity is part of Gorky's pictorial language.

One interpretation posits that the central elements of *Betrothal I* are animal, vegetal, and mineral forms that combine into a horseback bride and her groom; the horse's body recalls the shape of the boulder upon which the women of Gorky's ancestral Armenian village rubbed their breasts to ensure fertility, and the pointed peaks emanating from the betrothed refer to the traditional ceremonial crowns worn by the bride and groom.

Arshile Gorky, *Betrothal I*, 1947,
oil on paper, 51 x 40 in

Arshile Gorky (1904 – 1948) was an Armenian painter, who had a seminal influence on Abstract Expressionism.

In 1915 Gorky fled Lake Van during the Armenian Genocide and escaped with his mother and his three sisters into Russian-controlled territory. In the aftermath of the genocide, Gorky's mother died of starvation in Yerevan in 1919. Arriving in America in 1920.



Nighttime Enigma and Nostalgia, 1934



Portrait of Master Bill, 1929–1936. Oil



Arshile Gorky, *The Limit*, 1947, oil and paper

Arshile Gorky
The Liver is the
Cock's Comb
(1944),
oil on canvas



When Gorky showed his new work to André Breton in the 1940s, after seeing the new paintings and in particular *The Liver is the Cock's Comb*, Breton declared the painting to be "one of the most important paintings made in America" and he stated that Gorky was a Surrealist, which was Breton's highest compliment. The painting was shown in the Surrealists' final show at the *Galérie Maeghtin* Paris in 1947.



Arshile Gorky, Garden in Sochi, 1941, oil on canvas,



Roberto Matta Years of Fear 1941

Roberto Matta (1911 – 2002) was one of Chile's best-known painters and a seminal figure in 20th century abstract expressionist and surrealist art.

he studied architecture and interior design at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago, and graduated in 1935.

His travels in Europe and the USA led him to meet artists such as Arshile Gorky, René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, André Breton, and Le Corbusier.

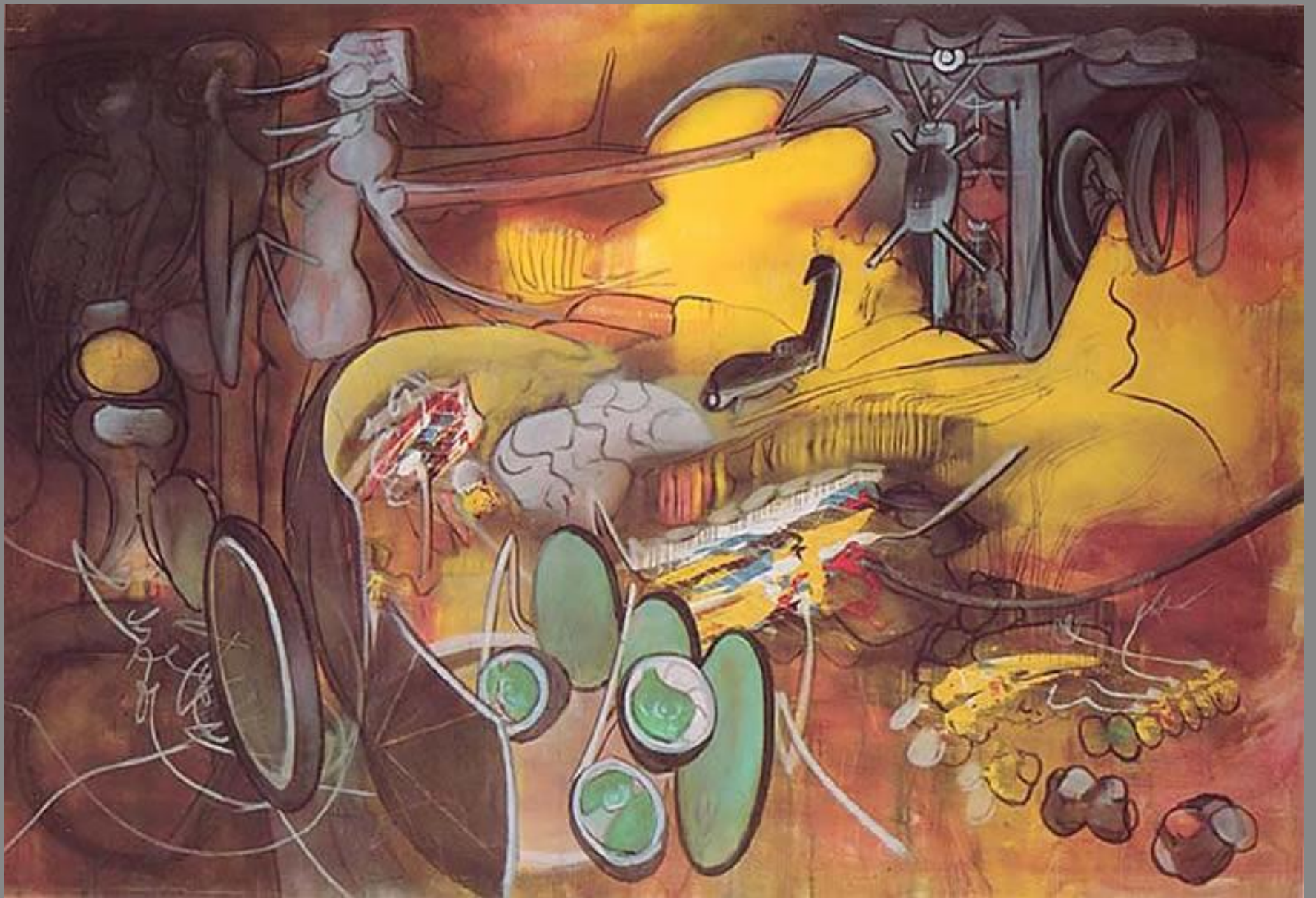
The first true flowering of Matta's own art came in 1938, when he moved from drawing to the oil painting for which he is best known. This period coincided with his emigration to the United States, where he lived until 1948.

"Matta's key ambition to represent and evoke the human psyche in visual form was filtered through the writings of Freud and the psychoanalytic view of the mind as a three-dimensional space".

Matta traveled to Spain to visit his Aunt and during his visit, became friends with fellow Chilean and poet Pablo Neruda. Through Neruda, Matta was introduced to Andre Breton and Salvador Dali—thus his lifelong love affair with Surrealist art began.



Roberto Matta, El dónde en marea alta. Del ciclo.El proscrito deslumbrante



Roberto Matta Blotti Sous L'escorpion 1970



André Masson The Fruitful Night, 1960.

André Masson (1896 -1987) was a French artist. He fought for France during World War I and was seriously injured.

was one of the most enthusiastic employers of automatic drawing, making a number of automatic works in pen and ink.

From around 1926 he experimented by throwing sand and glue onto canvas and making oil paintings based around the shapes that formed.

Under the German occupation of France during World War II, his work was condemned by the Nazis as degenerate.

Masson escaped the Nazi regime on a ship to the French island of Martinique from where he went on to the United States. Upon arrival in New York City, U.S. customs officials inspecting Masson's luggage found a cache of his erotic drawings. Denouncing them as pornographic, they ripped them up before the artist's eyes.

Following the war, he returned to France and settled in Aix-en-Provence where he painted a number of landscapes.



Automatic Drawing - Masson would often force himself to work under strict conditions, for example, after long periods of time without food or sleep, or under the influence of drugs. He believed forcing himself into a reduced state of consciousness would help his art be free from rational control, and hence get closer to the workings of his subconscious mind

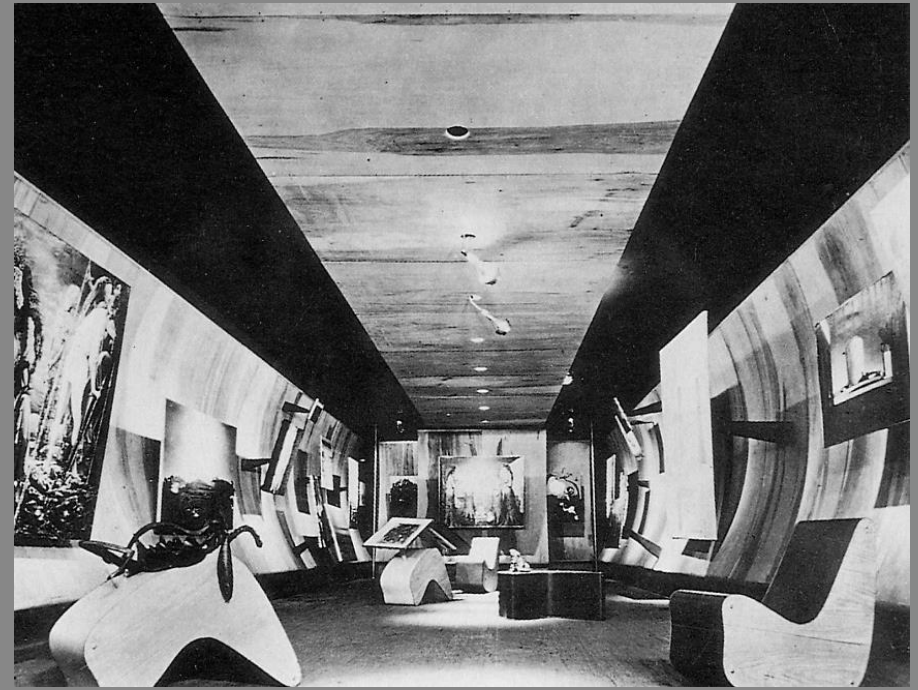
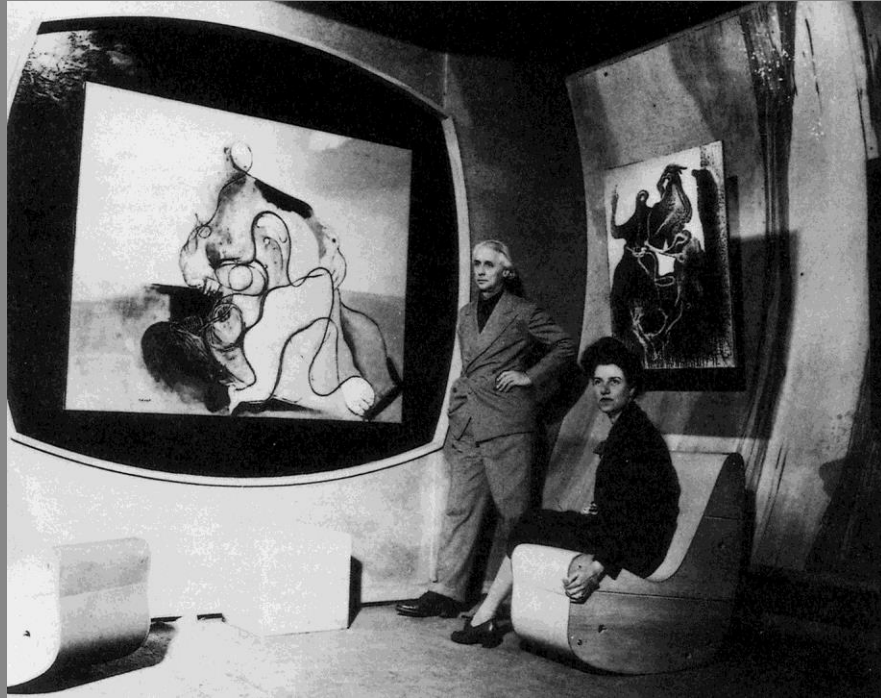
André Masson



Automatic drawing by André Masson (1896-1987), ink on paper made in Paris, France

Andre Masson Figure, Sand, gesso, oil, pencil, and charcoal on canvas

- Developments in modern art in Europe came to America from exhibitions in New York City such as the Armory Show in 1913. After World War II, New York replaced Paris as the center of the art world.



Art of This Century Gallery, New York
1942

Joan Miró
Ciphers and Constellations in Love
with a Woman
1941
oil on canvas



André Masson
Vegetable Delerium
1925
ink on paper





Max Ernst
Surrealism and Painting
1942
oil on canvas
77 x 92 in.

Arshile Gorky (Vosdanig Adoian)
The Artist and His Mother
1929-36
oil on canvas
60 x 50 in.



VISIONS DE GUERNICA EN FLAMMES

A Galdacano 22 trimoteurs allemands ont mitraillé la population

Un de nos photographes vient de rentrer de Guernica avec ces photographies qui montrent la ville historique en flammes et un vieillard de 81 ans que les bombes ont blessé. On lira dans la page 3 le récit de notre reporter photographe, les informations et les dépêches de notre envoyé spécial Mathieu Corman



Bombing of Guernica, Spain



Pablo Picasso
Guernica
1937 (May 1 to June 4)
oil on canvas
11 ft. 6 in. x 25 ft. 8 in.



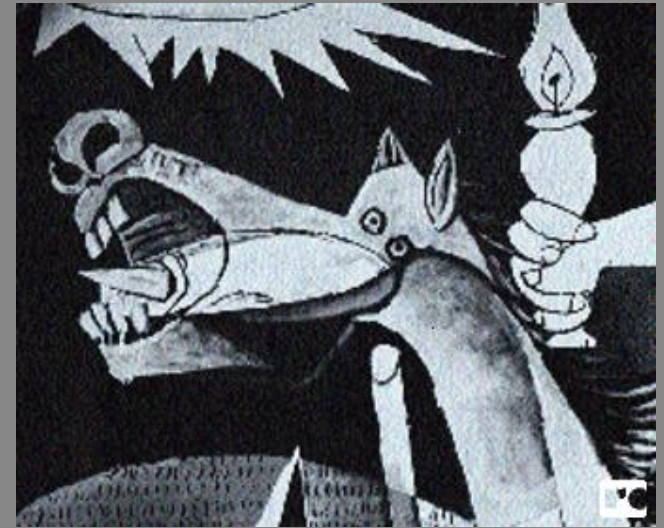
Pablo Picasso

Guernica

1937 (May 1 to June 4)

oil on canvas

11 ft. 6 in. x 25 ft. 8 in.



Pablo Picasso
Guernica
1937 (May 1 to June 4)
oil on canvas
11 ft. 6 in. x 25 ft. 8 in.

Jackson Pollock (1912–1956)

Willem de Kooning (1904–1997)

Franz Kline (1910–1962)

Lee Krasner (1908–1984)

Robert Motherwell (1915–1991)

William Baziotis (1912–1963)

Mark Rothko (1903–1970)

Barnett Newman (1905–1970)

Adolph Gottlieb (1903–1974)

Richard Pousette-Dart (1916–1992) and

Clyfford Still (1904–1980)



Arshile Gorky
Agony
1947
oil on canvas
40 x 50 1/2 in.

The Surrealists opened up new possibilities with their emphasis on tapping the unconscious. One Surrealist device for breaking free of the conscious mind was psychic automatism—in which automatic gesture and improvisation gain free rein.



Jackson Pollock
Going West
1934-35
oil on fiberboard
15 1/8 x 20 3/4 in.

Jackson Pollock
Masqued Image
1938-41
oil on canvas





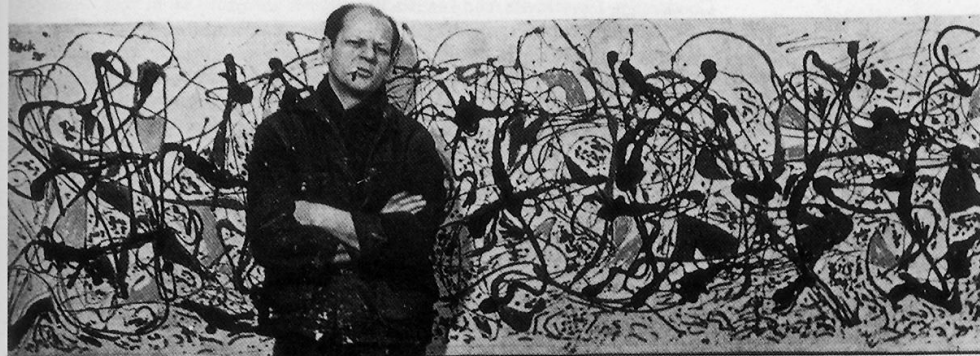
Jackson Pollock
She Wolf
1943
oil on canvas

Jackson Pollock
Shimmering Substance
1946
oil on canvas



Jackson Pollock
Number 3, 1949: Tiger
1949
oil on canvas
62 x 37 1/4 in.





JACKSON POLLOCK

Is he the greatest living painter in the United States?



"NUMBER TWELVE" reveals Pollock's liking for aluminum paint, which he applies freely straight out of the can. He feels that by using it with ordinary oil paint he gets an exciting textural contrast.

Recently a formidably high-brow New York critic hailed the brooding, puzzled-looking man shown above as a major artist of our time and a fine candidate to become "the greatest American painter of the 20th Century." Others believe that Jackson Pollock produces nothing more than interesting, if inexplicable, decorations. Still others condemn his pictures as degenerate and find them as unpalatable as yesterday's macaroni. Even so, Pollock, at the age of 37, has burst forth as the shining new phenomenon of American art.

Pollock was virtually unknown in 1944. Now his paintings hang in five U.S. museums and 40 private collections. Exhibiting in New York last winter, he sold 12 out of 18 pictures. Moreover his work has stirred up a fuss in Italy, and this autumn he is slated for a one-man show in *avant-garde* Paris, where he is fast becoming the most talked-of and controversial U.S. painter. He has also won a following among his own neighbors in the village of Springs, N. Y., who amuse themselves by trying to decide what his paintings are about. His grocer bought one which he identifies for bewildered visiting salesmen as an aerial view of Siberia. For Pollock's own explanation of why he paints as he does, turn the page.

"Jackson Pollock:
Is he the greatest living painter
in the United States?"
Life Magazine
August 8, 1949

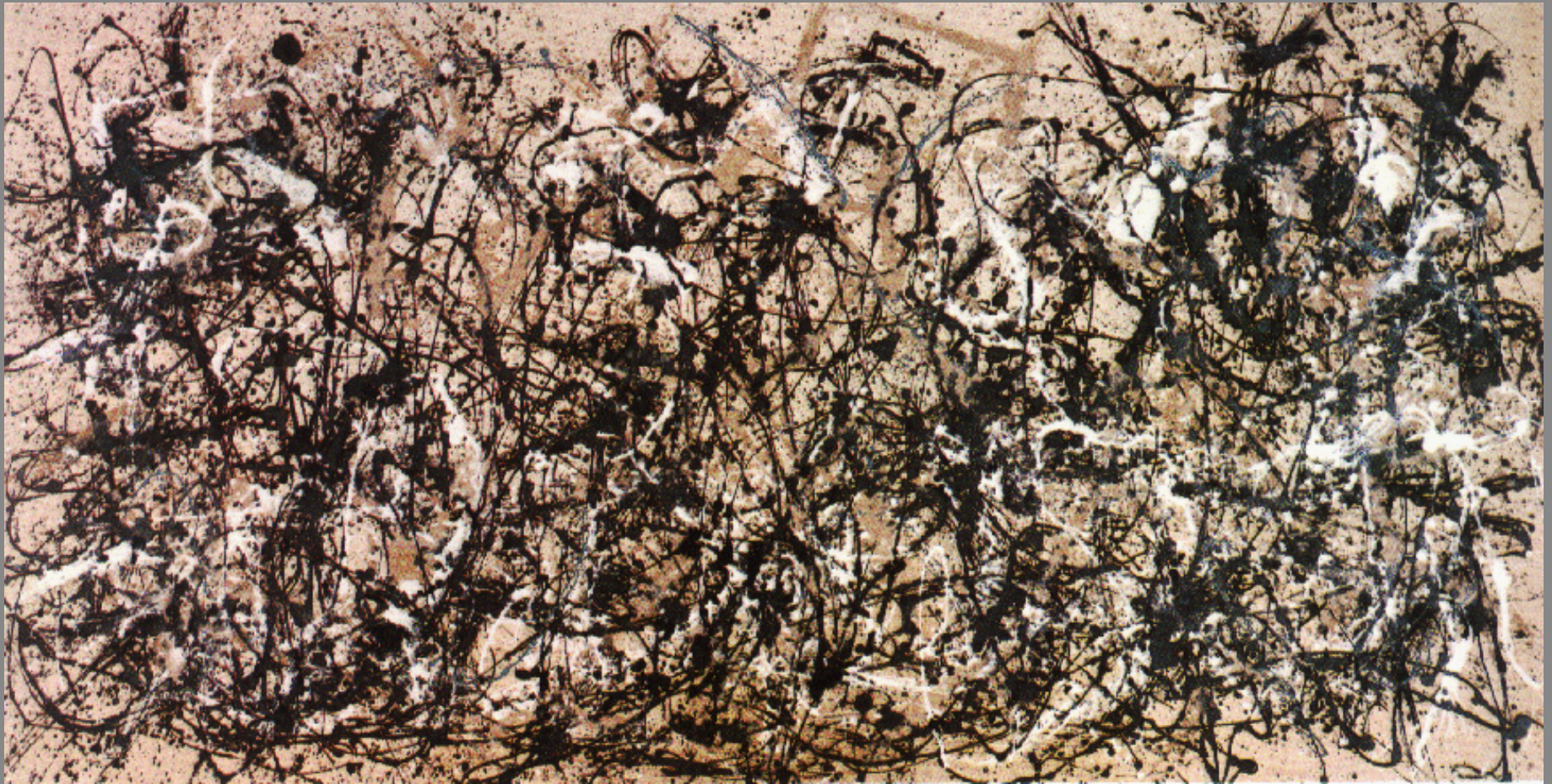
Harold Rosenberg coined the term “action painting” in 1952:

“At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act—rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze, or ‘express’ an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event.”





Jackson Pollock
Lavender Mist
1950
oil on canvas



Jackson Pollock
Autumn Rhythm
1952
oil on canvas



Jackson Pollock
Full Fathom Five
1952
oil on canvas





Jackson Pollock
Convergence
1952
oil on canvas
93 1/2 x 155 in.



Lee Krasner
Noon
1947
oil on canvas



Franz Kline

Untitled

ca. 1952

ink on telephone book paper

10 3/4 x 9 in.

Franz Kline
Untitled
1960
collage, ink and pastel on paper
12 3/4 x 11 in.



Franz Kline
New York, NY
1953
oil on canvas
79 x 51 in.





Franz Kline
Lehigh V Span
1959-60
oil on canvas
60 1/4 x 80 in.

Franz Kline
Zinc Yellow
1959
oil on canvas
93 x 79 1/2 in.





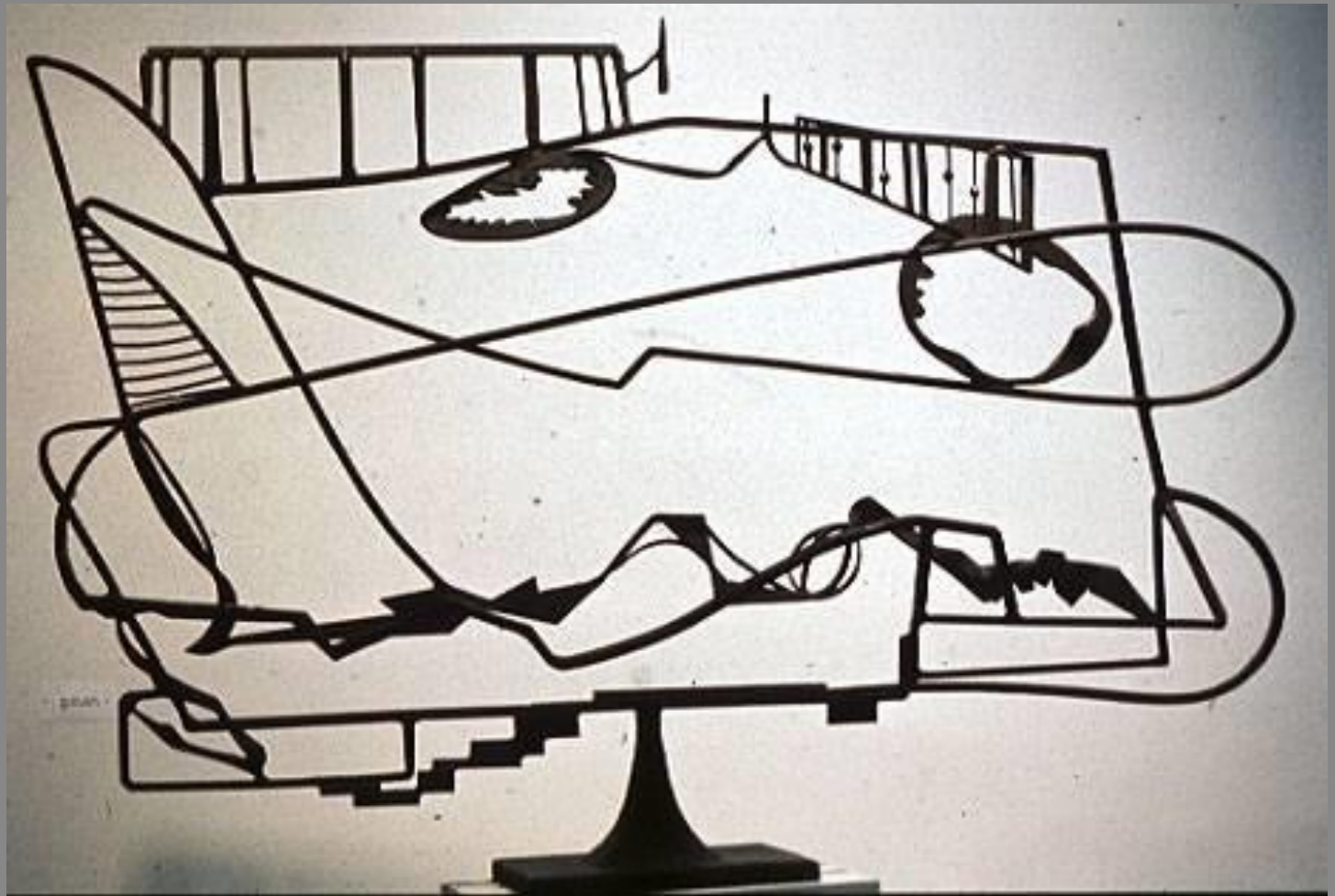
David Smith

Royal Bird

1947-48

steel, bronze and stainless steel

21 3/4 x 59 x 9 in.



David Smith
Hudson River Landscape
1951
stainless steel



David Smith
Cubi XXVI
1965
steel





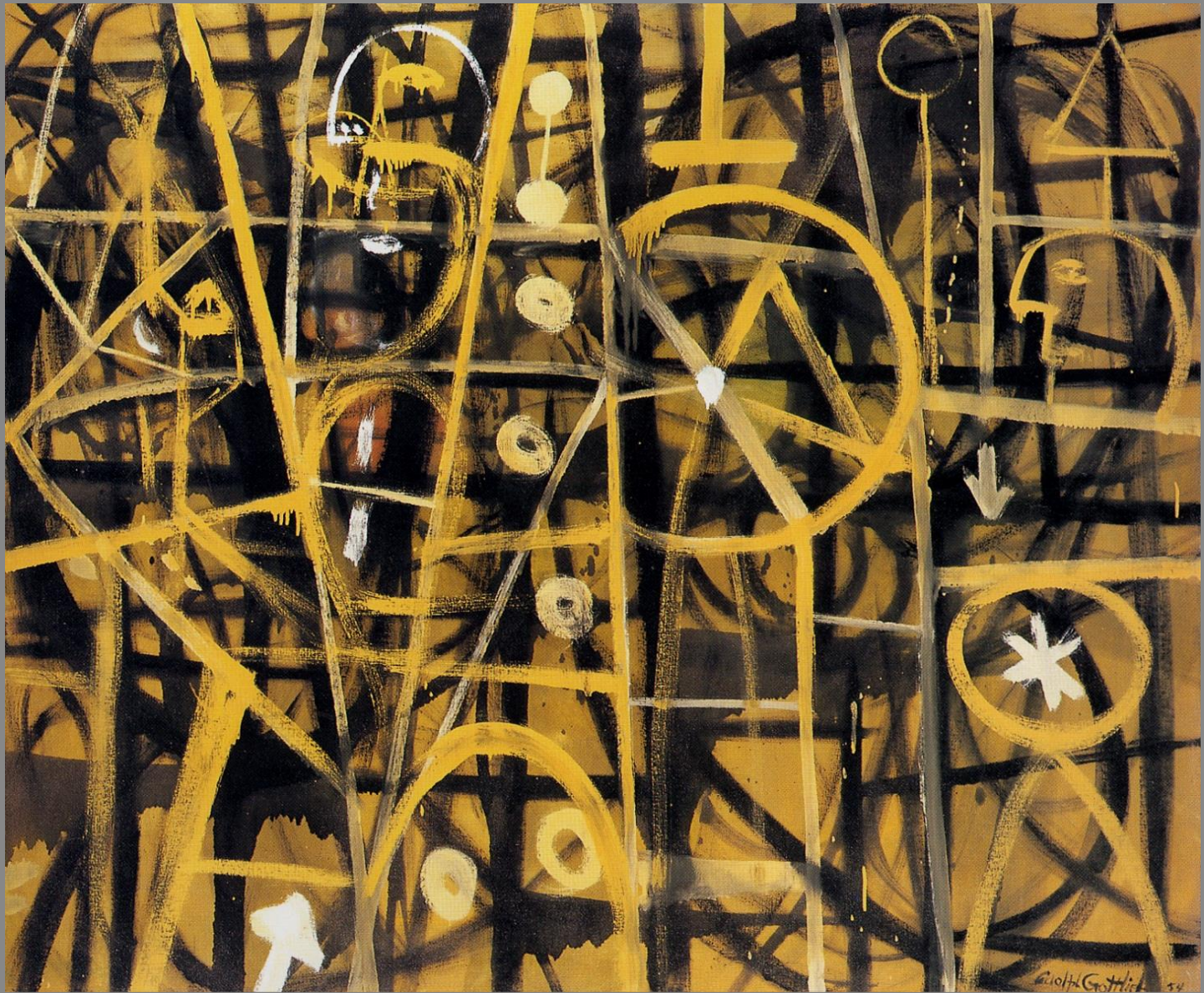
Mark di Suvero
Hank champion
1960
wood and chains

Mark di Suvero
Mother Peace
1969-70
steel

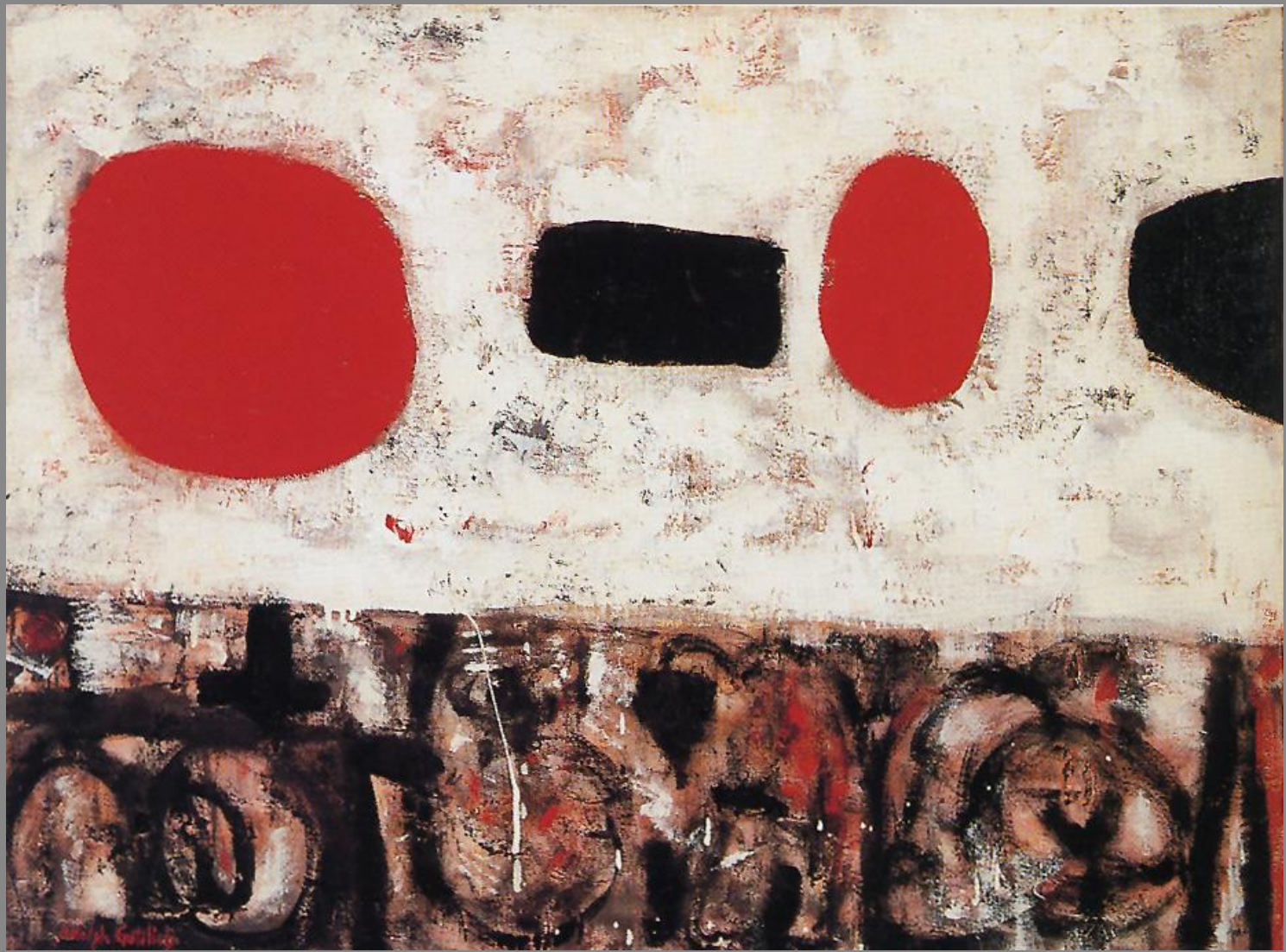




Adolph Gottlieb
Pictograph
1946
oil on canvas
36 x 48 in.



Adolph Gottlieb
The Cadmium Sound
1954
oil on canvas
60 x 72 in.



Adolph Gottlieb
Frozen Sounds II
1952
oil on canvas
36 x 48 in.

In a famous letter to the New York Times (June 1943), Gottlieb and Rothko, with the assistance of Newman, wrote:

“To us, art is an adventure into an unknown world of the imagination which is fancy-free and violently opposed to common sense. There is no such thing as a good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is critical.”

Adolph Gottlieb
Orb
1964
oil on canvas
7 ft. 6 in. x 60 in.



Adolph Gottlieb
Red Burst
1969
oil on canvas
241.6 x 201 cm



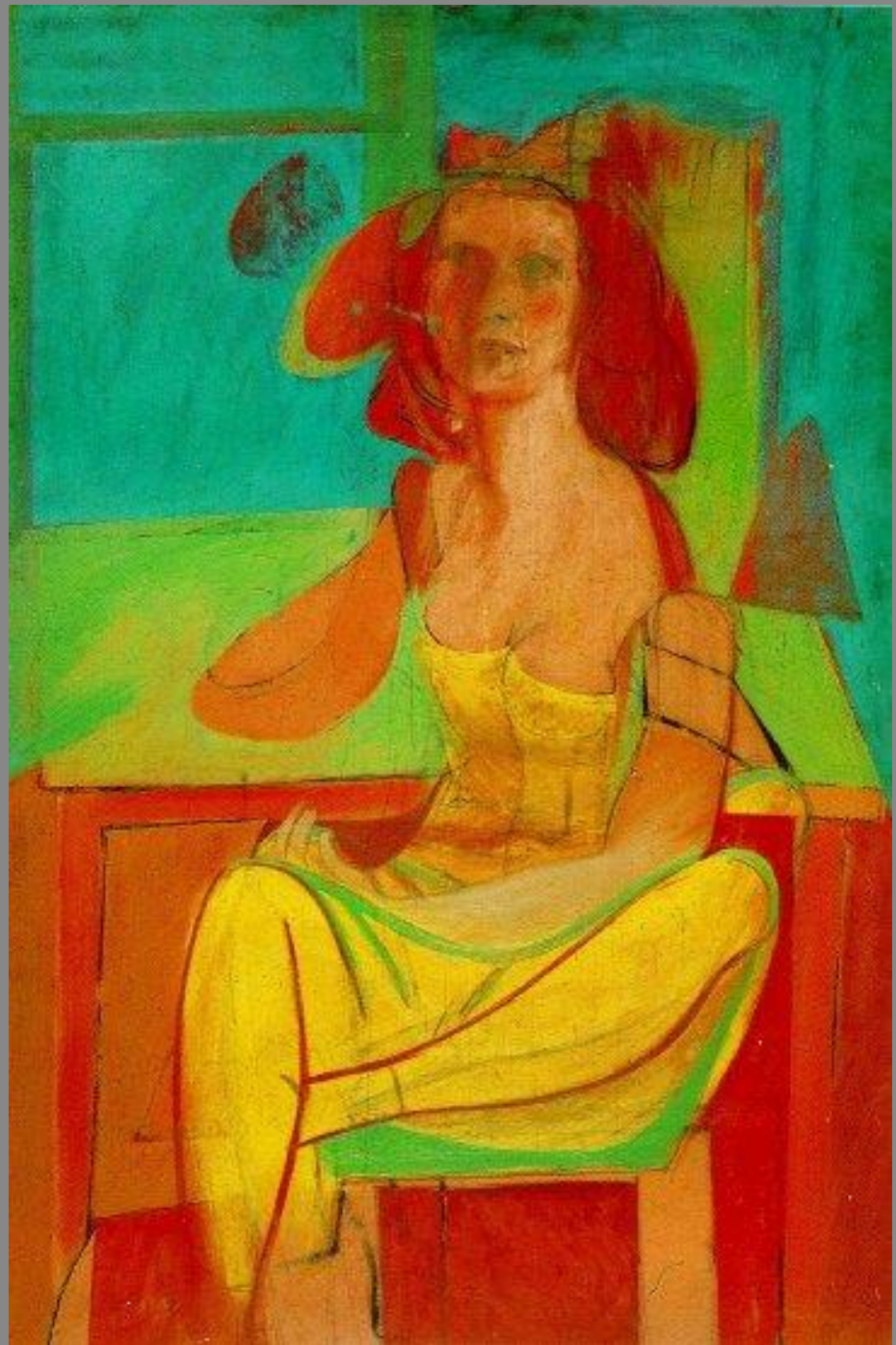
Philip Guston
Dial
1956
oil on canvas
72 x 76 in.

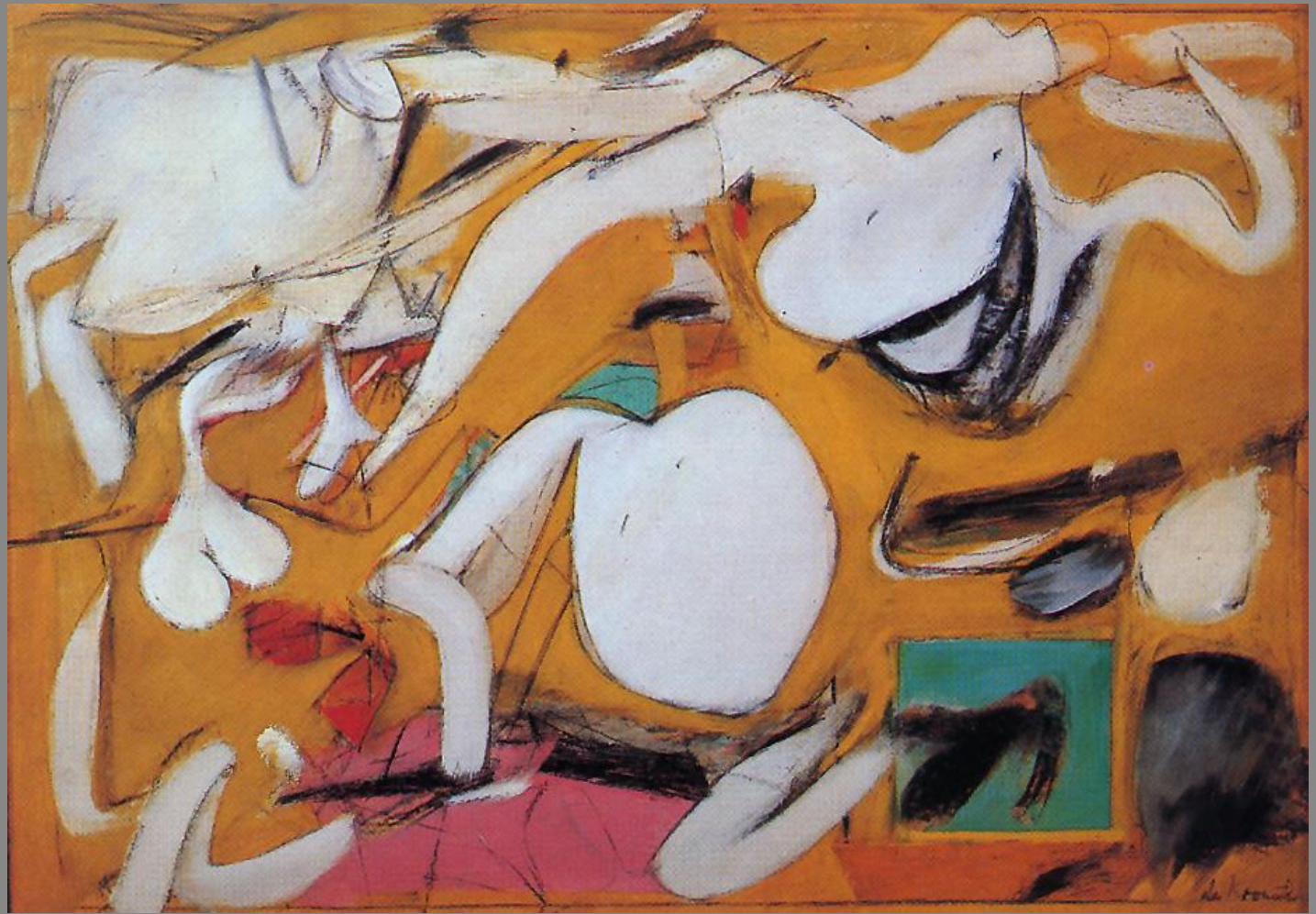




Philip Guston
Voyage
1956
oil on canvas
72 x 76 in.

Willem de Kooning
Seated Woman
ca. 1940
oil and charcoal on masonite
54 1/16 x 36 in.





Willem de Kooning
Fire Island
1946
oil on paper
19 1/2 x 27 1/2 in.



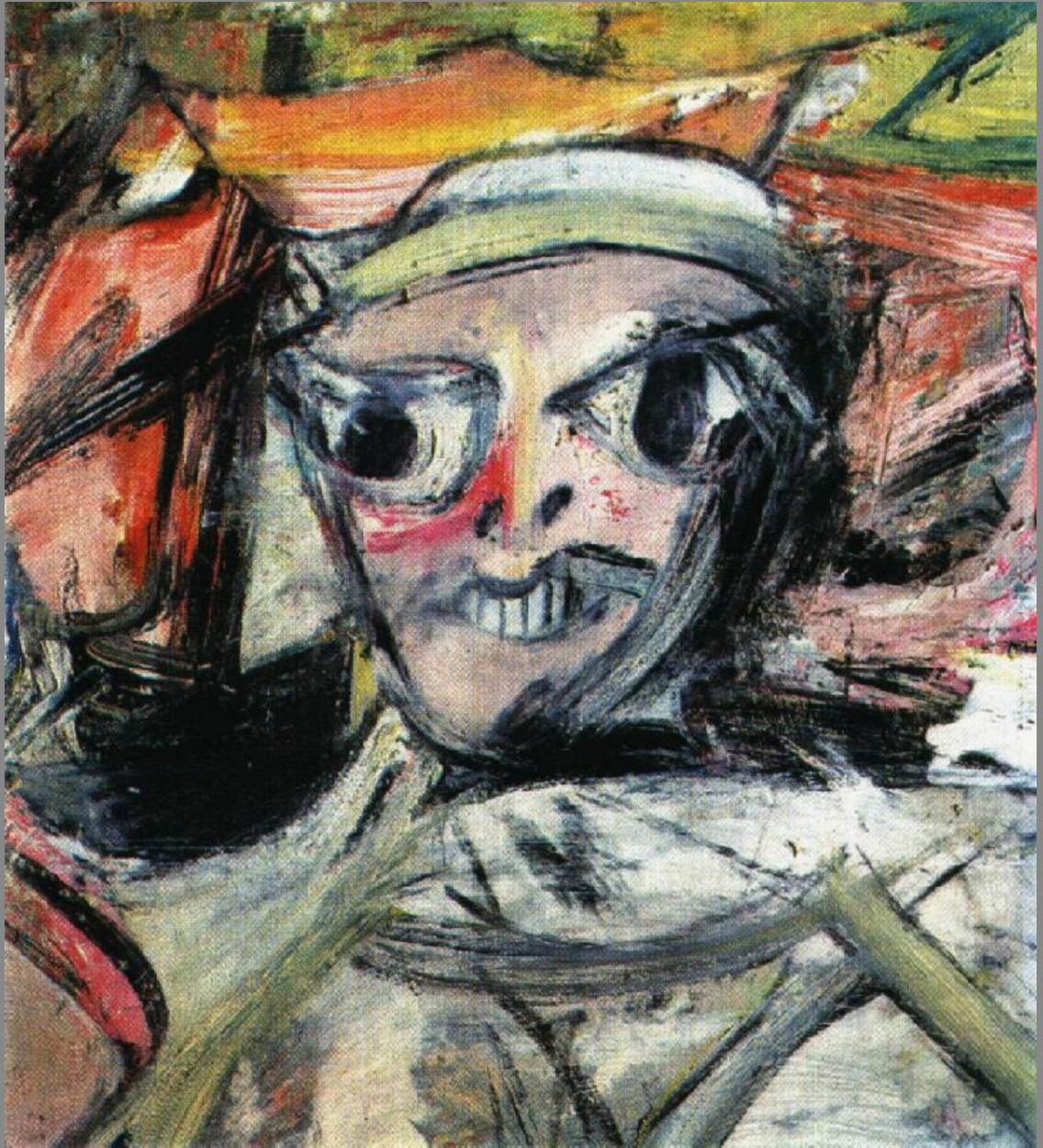
Willem de Kooning
Two Women
1954

pastel charcoal and pencil on paper
14 3/4 x 14 1/2 in.



Willem de Kooning
Woman I
1950-52
oil on canvas
6 ft. 3 7/8 in x 58 in.

Willem de Kooning
Woman I (detail)
1950-52
oil on canvas
6 ft. 3 7/8 in x 58 in.





Willem de Kooning
Gotham News
1955
oil on canvas
69 x 79 in.

Willem de Kooning
Woman
1949-50
oil on canvas
64 1/8 x 46 in.





Cedar Street Tavern



Robert Motherwell
Elegy to the Spanish Republic #34
1953-54
oil on canvas
80 x 100 in.

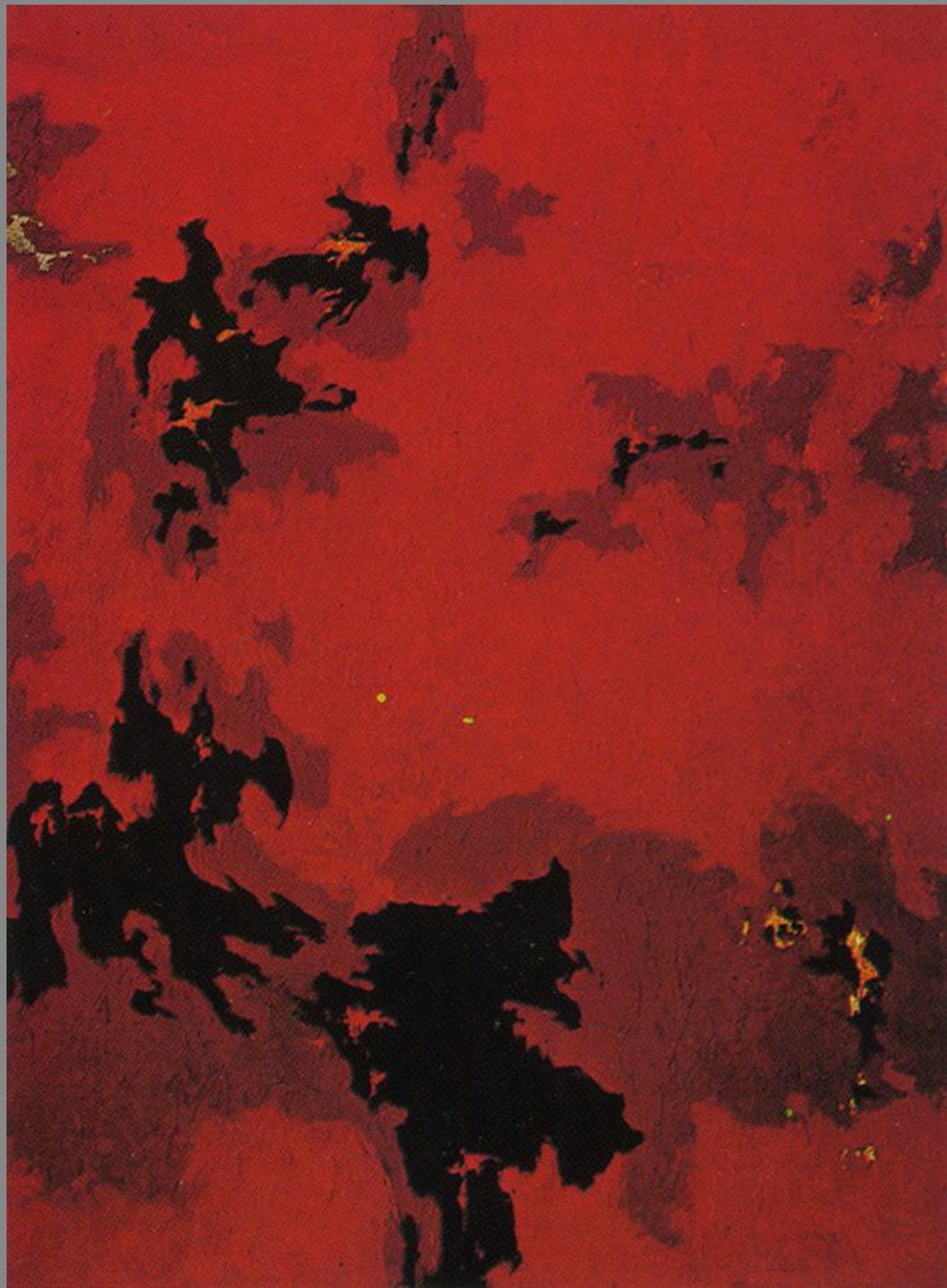


Robert Motherwell
Fishes with Red Stripe
1954
oil on paper

Clyfford Still
January 1947
1947
oil on canvas
62 x 45 in.

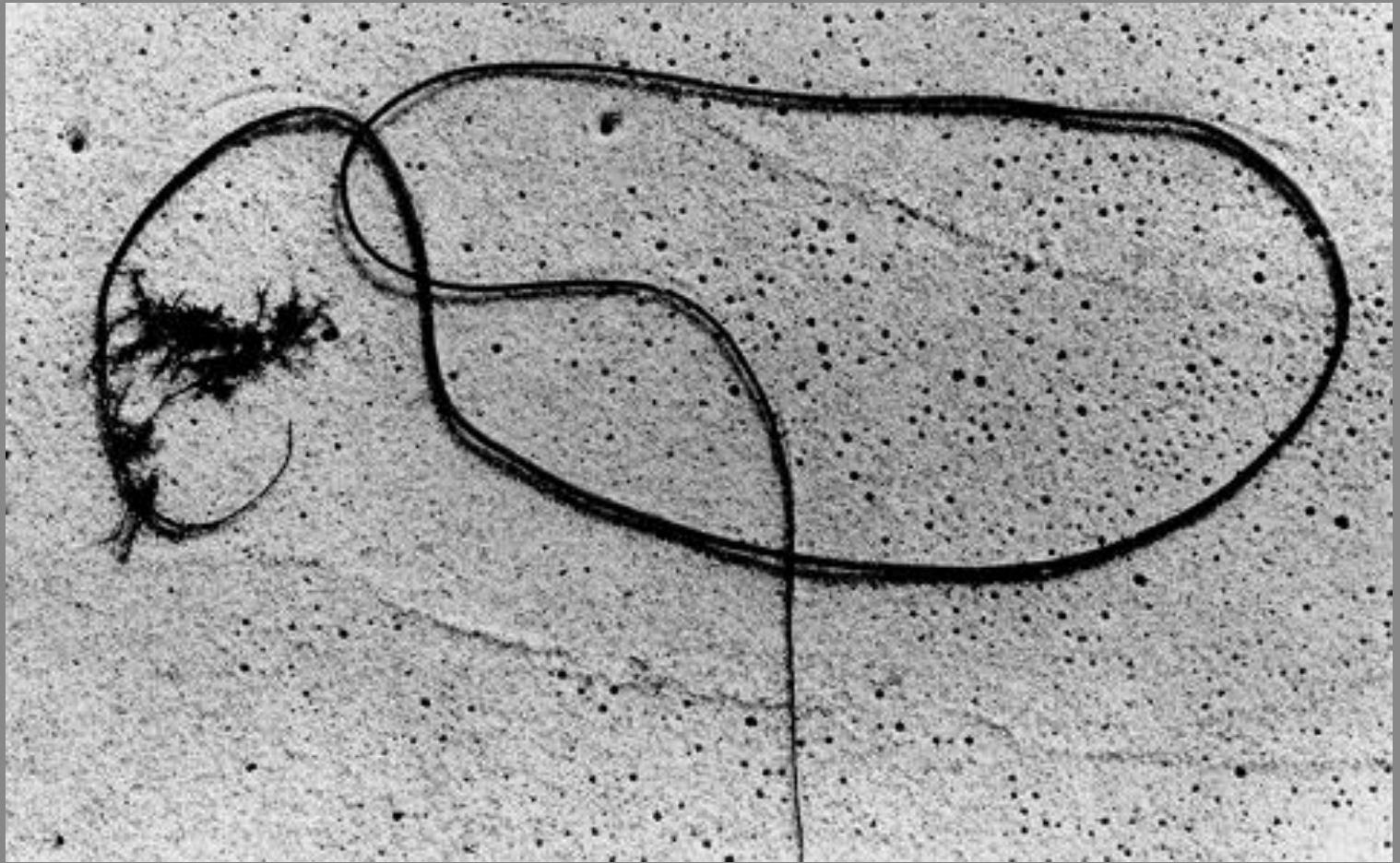


Clyfford Still
No. 2
1949
oil on canvas
7 ft. 8 in. x 67 in.





Clyfford Still
1957-D No. 1
1957
oil on canvas
113 x 159 in.



Aaron Siskind
Martha's Vineyard II
1947
gelatin-silver print

Aaron Siskind
Chicago #21
1952
gelatin-silver print





Aaron Siskind
Chicago #85
1960
gelatin-silver print



Barnett Newman
Pagan Void
1946
oil on canvas
83.8 x 96.5 cm



Barnett Newman
Genesis–The Break
1946
oil on canvas
24 x 27 in.

Newman –

“freeing ourselves of the obsolete props of an outmoded and antiquated legend ... freeing ourselves from the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia, legend, and myth that have been the devices of Western European painting.”

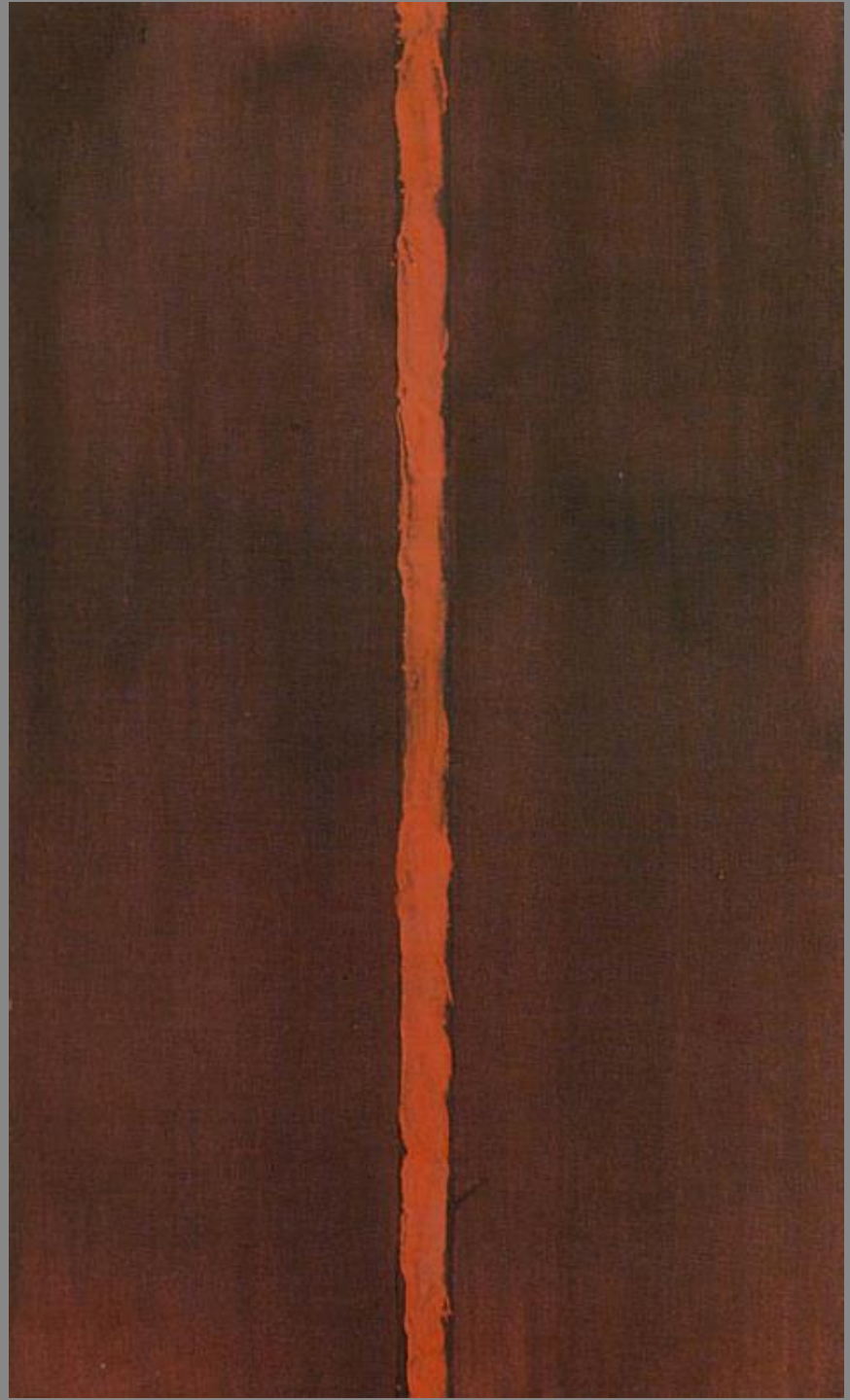
Barnett Newman

Onement I

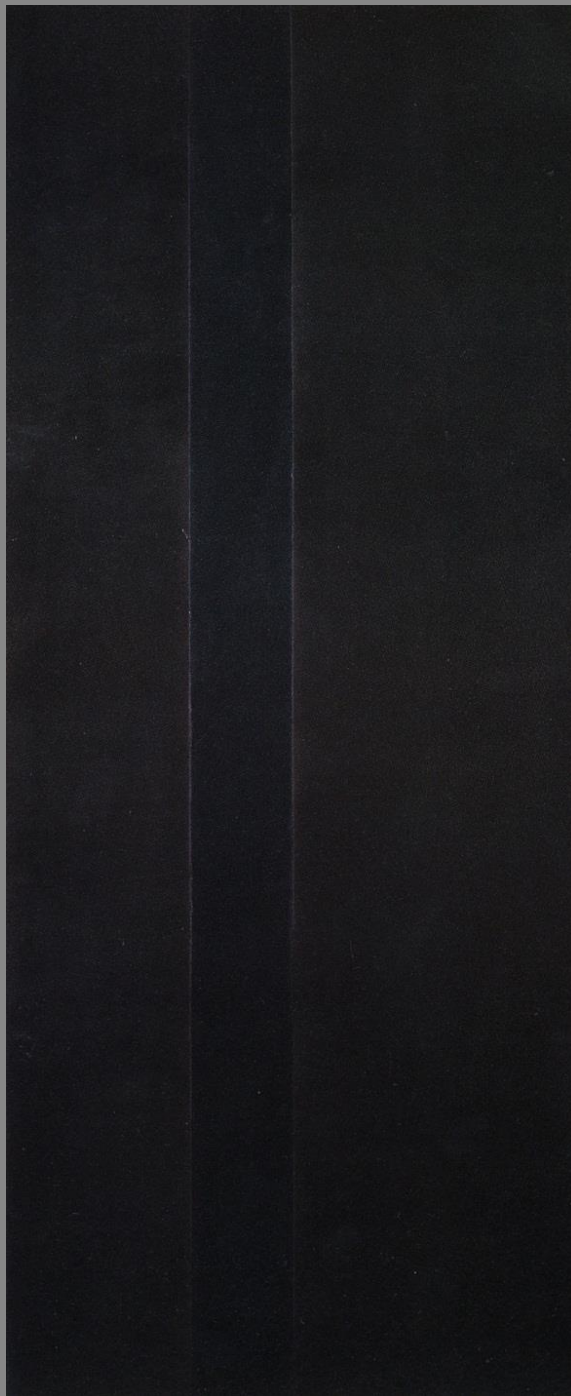
1948

oil and masking tape on canvas

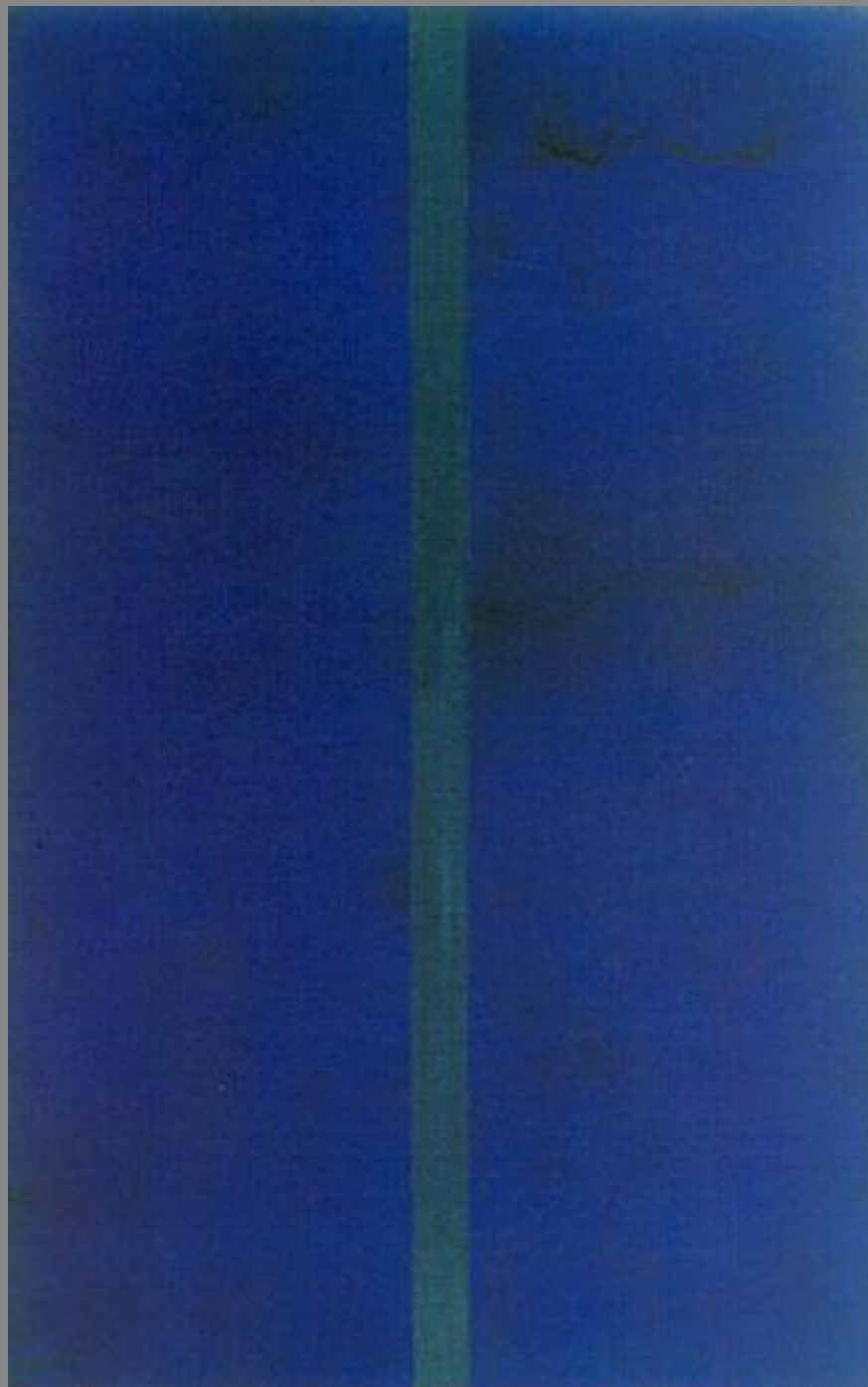
27 1/4 x 16 1/4 in.

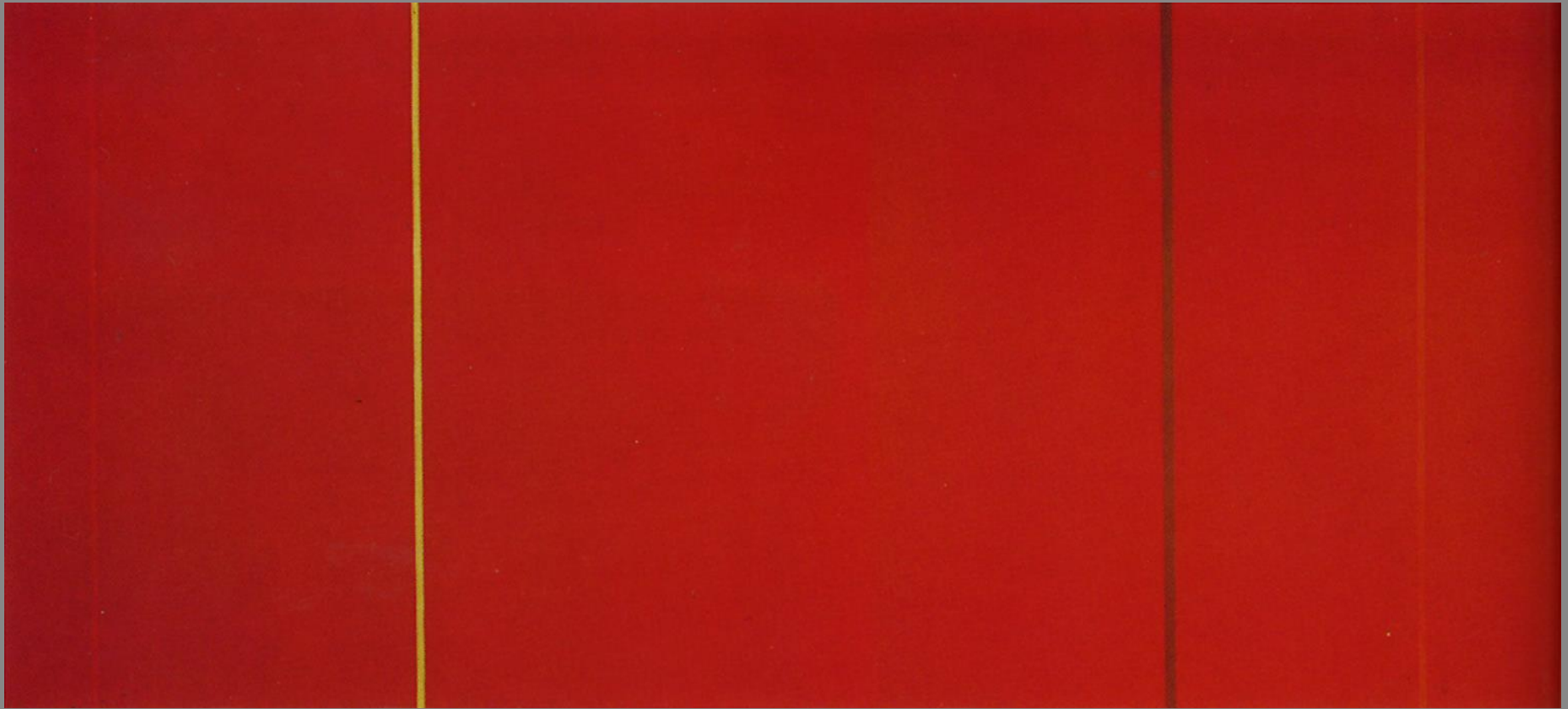


Barnett Newman
Abraham
1949
oil on canvas
82 3/4 x 34 1/2 in.



Barnett Newman
Onement V
1952
oil on canvas
60 x 38 in.





Barnett Newman

Vir Heroicus Sublimis

1950-51

oil on canvas

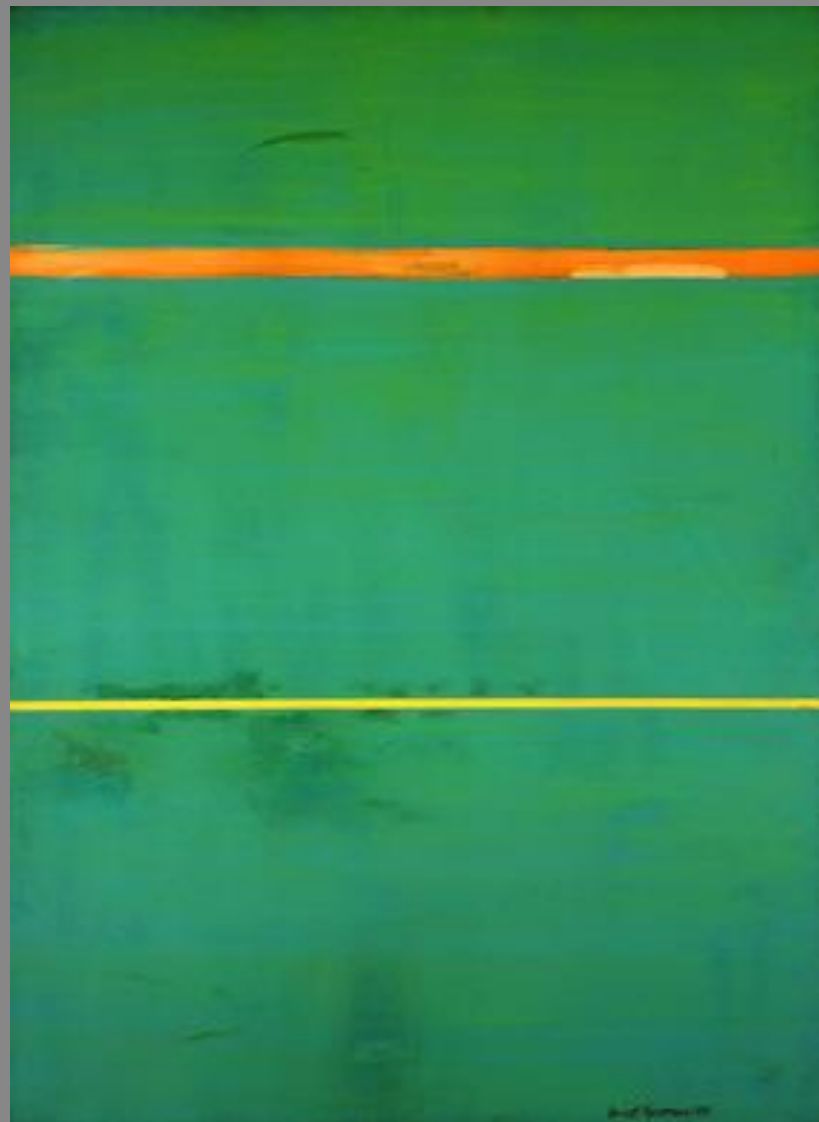
7 ft. 11 3/8 in. x 17 ft. 9 1/4 in.

Barnett Newman
Stations of the Cross: 1st Station
1958
magna on canvas
197.8 x 153.7 cm



Barnett Newman
Adam
1951-52
oil on canvas
242.9 x 202.9 cm



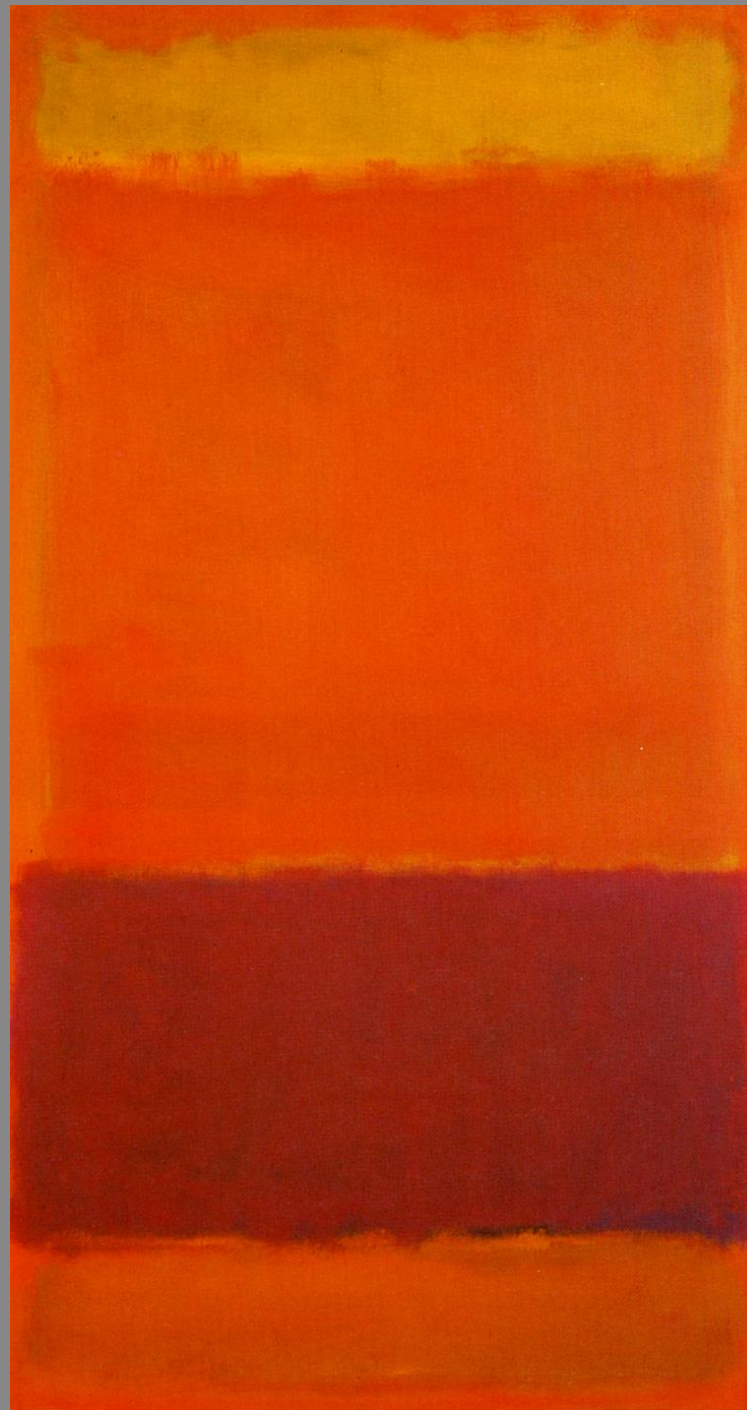


Barnett Newman
Dionysius
1949
oil on canvas
170.2 x 124.5 cm

Barnett Newman
Achilles
1952
oil and acrylic resin on canvas
241.6 x 201 cm



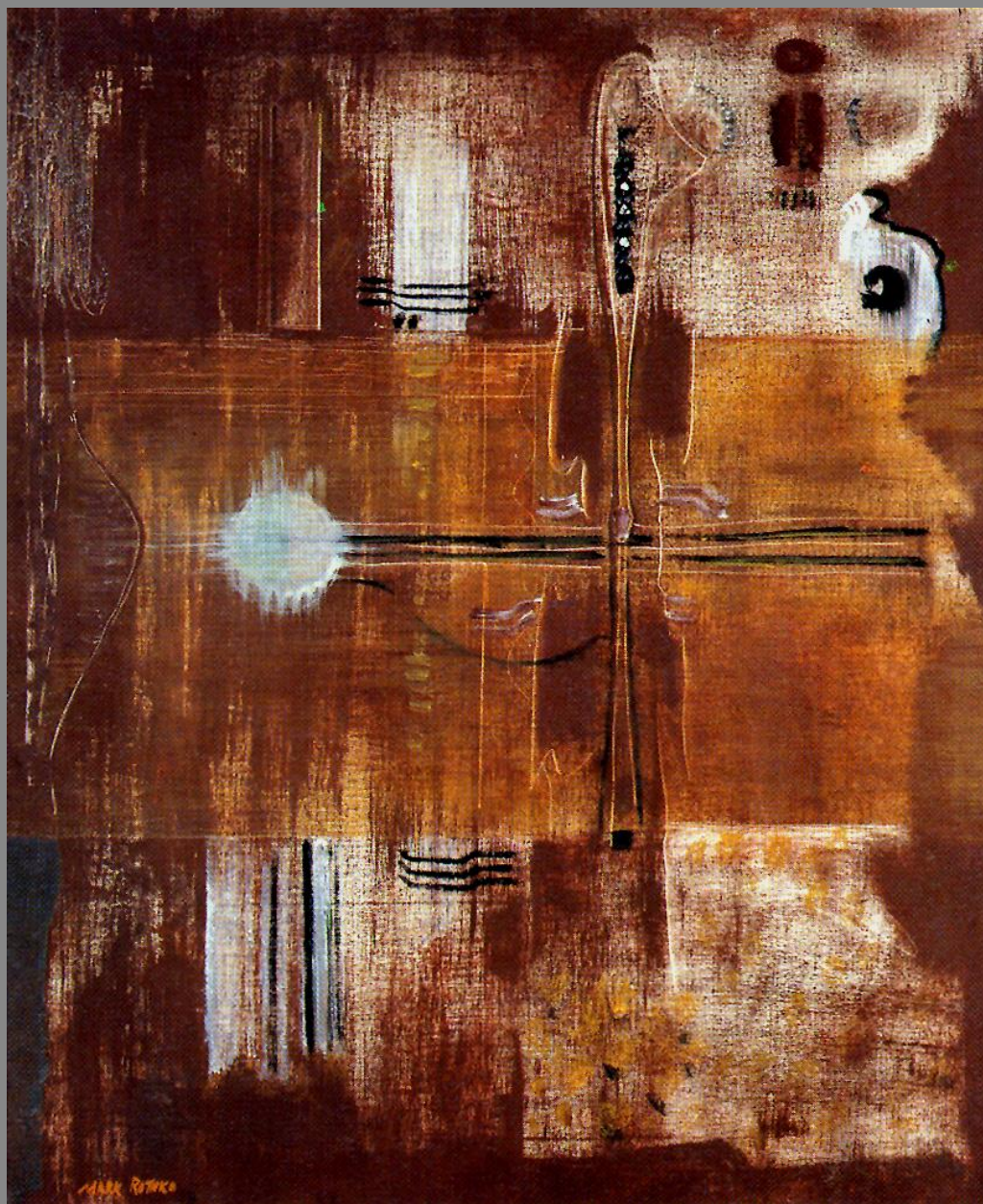
Mark Rothko
Number 18
1951
oil on canvas
81 3/4 x 67 in.





Mark Rothko
Subway Scene
1938
oil on canvas
35 x 47 1/4 in.

Mark Rothko
Untitled
1946
oil on canvas
37 7/8 x 30 1/2 in.



"If you are only moved by color relationships, you are missing the point. I am interested in expressing the big emotions - tragedy, ecstasy, doom."

Mark Rothko
Number 18
1949
oil on canvas
61 1/8 x 56 in.



Mark Rothko
Light Over Grey
1956
oil on canvas
67 3/4 x 50 in.



Mark Rothko
Painting
1961
oil on canvas
92 7/8 x 80 in.



Rothko - "I paint big to be intimate."

Mark Rothko

1959

1959

oil on canvas

79 1/2 x 69 1/2 in.





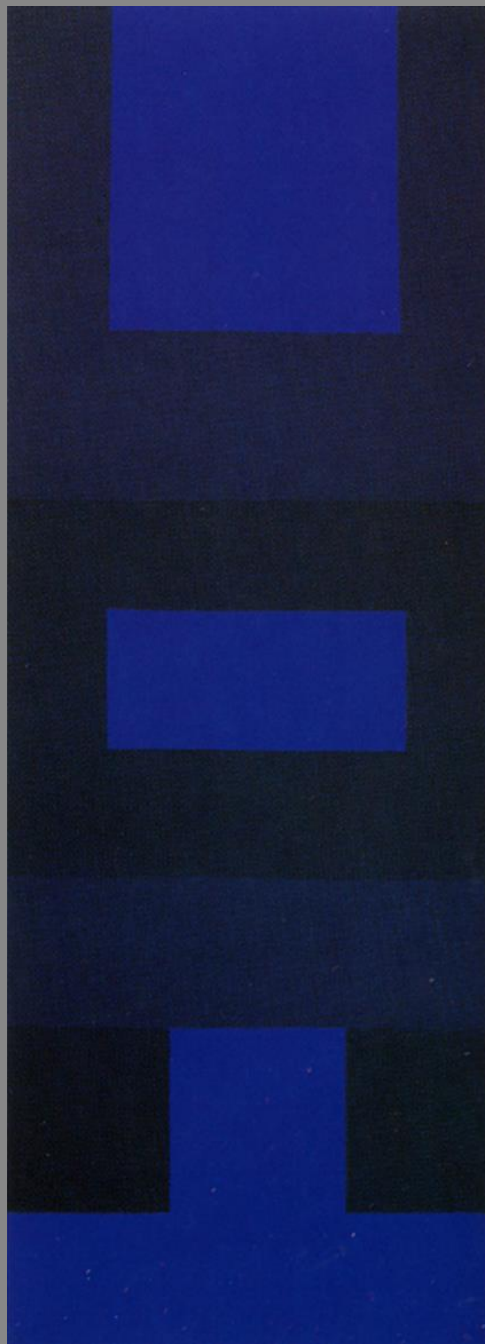


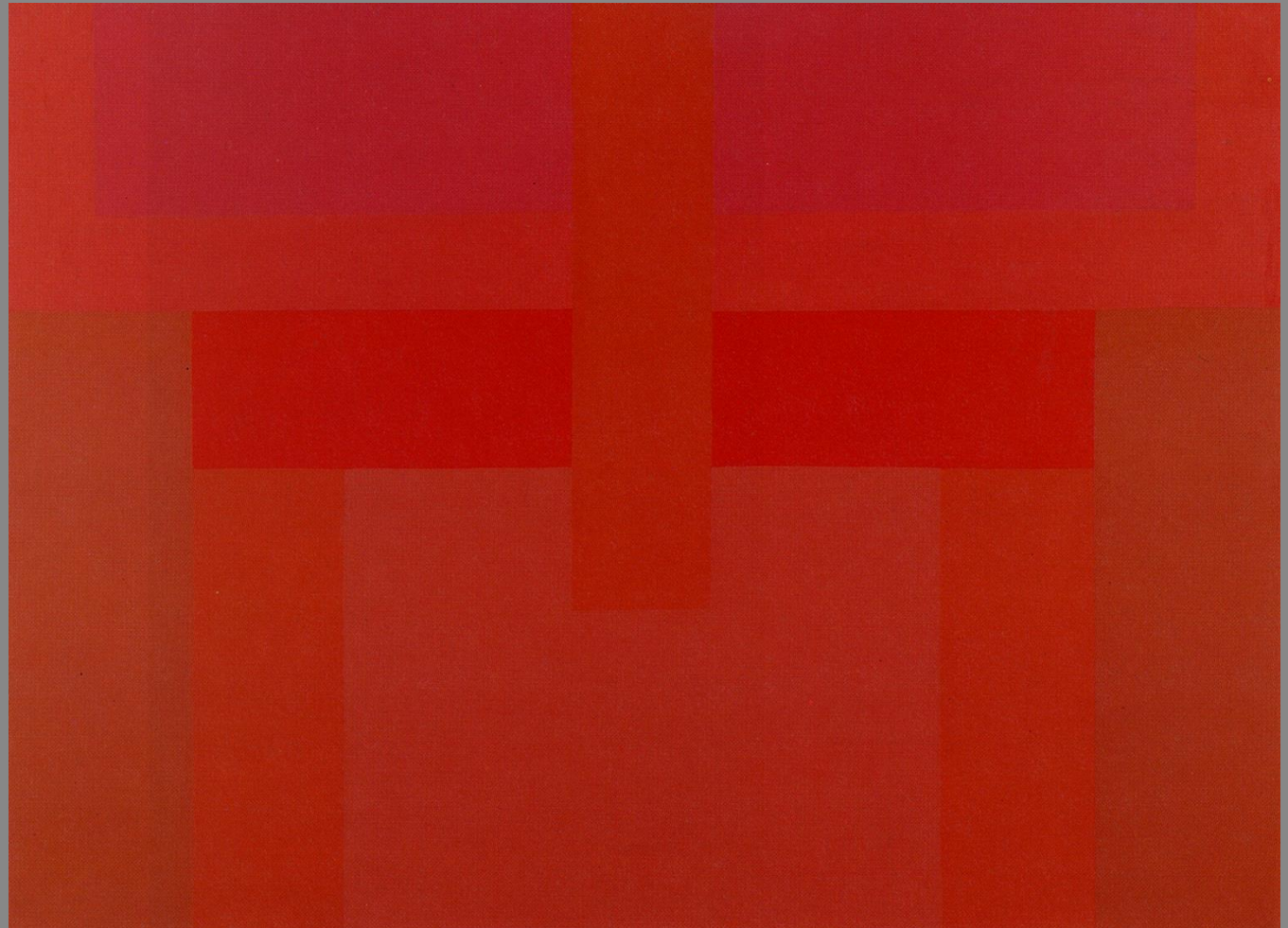
Rothko Chapel

Ad Reinhardt
No. 15, 1952
1952
oil on canvas
108 x 40 in.



Ad Reinhardt
Abstract Painting Blue
1952
oil on canvas
75 in. x 28 in.





Ad Reinhardt
Red Painting 1952
1952
oil on canvas
60 x 82 in.