Alfred Jensen

PAINTINGS AND WORKS ON PAPER

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Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

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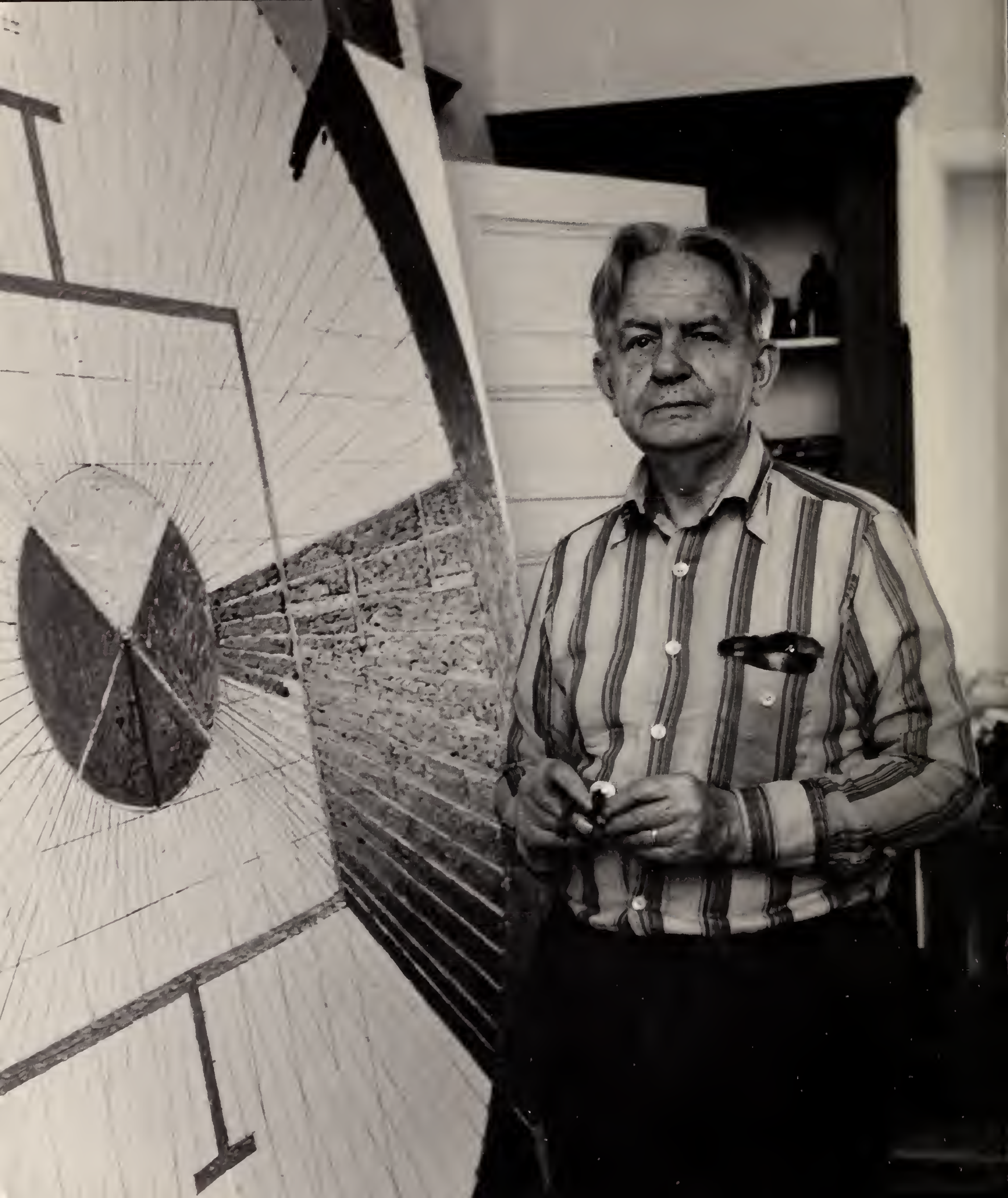

Preface and Acknowledgements

Alfred Jensen in his Glen Ridge studio with *The Sun Rises Twice*, 1973
Photo by Regina Bogat

Alfred Jensen was a man and an artist of extraordinary originality. His culture was broadly based and overlappingly humanistic, scientific and creative. It was profound enough to enable him to convey complex matters with simplicity through words, numbers, forms and images. Knowledge, often occult, was at the base of his art, and the desire to share and convey it motivated him as a painter.

Jensen's art therefore can be simultaneously clear and impenetrable, possessed of true depth and of seeming shallowness. The level at which his painting is met and the response it elicits are therefore largely determined by the viewer, as Jensen's public and his critics have repeatedly proven.

Given such attributes, it is not surprising that Jensen's style has never yet been fashionable. Even now, his pictorial systems are strangely out of step with prevailing sensibilities. When we showed his work in a two-man exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum almost a quarter of a century ago, we did so sparingly and, as it now appears, with needless timidity. Critical response was equally uncertain, hesitant, puzzled and, generally speaking, negative. Since then our convictions have become firmer as the time for Jensen has ripened.

The current exhibition is largely drawn from two subdivisions of the artist's estate, where much of his most important creative legacy resides. But the core selection so established was enriched by important loans that were secured from private collectors and museums.

In organizing this exhibition I have therefore benefited from the generosity of lenders who are gratefully acknowledged in a separate section of this catalogue. Individuals whose thoughtful guidance and scholarship have contributed to the articulation and the eventual selection of this exhibition are Maria Reidelbach, who had documented the works in the artist's estate, and Arnold Glimcher, Jensen's dealer during the artist's lifetime and, by choice of Regina Bogat, after her husband's death. Maria Reidelbach and Peter Schjeldahl have contributed valuable texts, for which I am deeply grateful. I also wish to thank Susan B. Hirschfeld for coordinating the show and Carol Fuerstein for editing the catalogue. Finally, acknowledgement is due to The Downe Foundation, which has made a generous grant in support of this catalogue.

Alfred Jensen: Paintings and Works on Paper may also be seen as a memorial gesture, since it is Jensen's first posthumous museum show; it is devoted to an artist whose following is only beginning to emerge and whose true importance for twentieth-century painting seems to us to be no more than foreshadowed.

Thomas M. Messer, *Director, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation*

Reading Alfred Jensen

Maria Reidelbach

Nowadays, the idea of decoding is extremely widespread: it is a significant part of the activity of astronomers, linguists, archaeologists, military specialists and so on. It is often suggested that we are floating on a sea of radio messages from other civilizations, messages we do not yet know how to decipher. And much serious thought has been given to the techniques of deciphering such a message. One of the main problems—perhaps the deepest problem—is the question, "How will we recognize the fact that there is a message at all? . . ." Douglas R. Hofstadter[1]

Alfred Jensen concocted many theories in his paintings and notes about such things as the Pythagorean Theorem, the appearance of the earth from space, the "true" color spectrum and the "correct" long-lost way to cast a fortune using the *I Ching*. When I began researching the systems of Jensen's art I thought I wanted to find out whether or not Jensen was "right," but the inevitable conclusion was that, of course, it really didn't matter, it's *how he got there* that was the important and interesting part.

It seems to me that Jensen's work relates very strongly to recent scientific research on the nature of human intelligence and consciousness, although the rather dubious goal of much of this research is the creation of artificial intelligence. It may seem to be linking antithetical thought patterns to discuss art in terms of scientific thought, but there are so many parallels between this research and Jensen's work that such a connection would be well made.

Hofstadter analyzes intelligence as:

the ability to respond to situations very flexibly; to take advantage of fortuitous circumstances; to make sense of contradictory messages; to recognize the relative importance of different elements in a situation; to find similarities between situations despite differences which may separate them; to draw distinctions between situations despite similarities which may link them; to synthesize new concepts by taking old concepts and putting them together in new ways; and to come up with ideas which are novel.[2]

Granted, these are qualities that apply to all good art, but in Alfred Jensen's work they are particularly well-defined: It may be said that these qualities are the point of his work. Jensen's methods have been compared to Kandinsky's, and they are in fact closely related in the sense that Jensen shared Kandinsky's belief that reason and conscious composition were what distinguished modern art from art of the past.[3]

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[1] Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Godel, Escher, Bach*, New York, 1977; reprint ed., New York, 1980, p. 162.

[2] Ibid., p. 26.

[3] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art and Painting in Particular*, M. T. H. Sadler, trans., London, Constable and Co., 1914; reprint ed., New York, 1977, p. 57.

But more important than these elements are the roles of symbolism and correlation in the scientific effort to understand intelligence and consciousness. It is thought that it is our ability to symbolize that differentiates mere awareness from consciousness.[4] For example, a symbol is used by a computer to mean only one specific piece of information: 3 means III. However, for humans the number three carries many connotations: a lucky number, a tripod, a crowd;[5] for Jensen, it may be odd, male and white. As Jensen puts it: "This idea that things resonate with or energize each other has guided me in producing my paintings . . . lovely things summon others among the class of lovely things. . . ."[6] It is at this level, a sort of critical mass of correlation, that scientists feel consciousness is born.

One step up from symbolism is the idea of isomorphism, the mapping of one system of symbols over another so that the structures of each system correspond. In an excellent article on Jensen's work,[7] Peter Perrin rejected the idea that Jensen's paintings are abstract. He understood them as the opposite, the fleshing out of an abstraction, and I agree. Perrin called for a word that describes this event. I think the word he was searching for is isomorphism. Jensen in his art somehow makes systems concrete. Hofstadter relates a similar phenomenon this way:

> *The standard line is "you must learn to* think in Chinese." *But in what does this consist? Anyone who has experienced it will recognize this description: the sounds of the second language pretty soon become "unheard"—you hear right through them as you see right through a window, rather than seeing the window . . . (it would be interesting to try to apply this kind of analysis to the hearing of music, where the distinction between hearing bare sounds and hearing their "meanings" is far less understood, yet seems very real).*[8]

What this means is that rather than taking one system, thinking it over and comparing it to another system, as self-conscious beginners speak a foreign language, Jensen superimposes two or more systems with no intermediate translation. His fluency in five languages must have made this kind of thinking very familiar. Jensen described this process as going "from phenomenal color to mental color"[9]: the systems themselves become the mental arena for all experience.

Jensen was a connoisseur of the systems created by many different peoples to give beauty and meaning to their own lives. The systems that he chose to incorporate into his art are particularly rich in complexity, history and symbolism. For instance, the Pythagoreans felt that all things, including reason, justice and marriage, were best expressed as numbers. The Maya calendar is repeated only once every fifty-two years, and each day is considered to be a god personified, each with a different name and specific attributes. The *I Ching* or *Book of Changes* documents and interprets a system of sixty-four symbols of lines and dashes called hexagrams that many Chinese use to guide their spiritual lives.

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[4] Richard Restak, "Is Free Will a Fraud?," *Science Digest*, vol. 91, October 1983, p. 54.

[5] James Gleick, "Exploring the Labyrinth of the Mind," *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, August 21, 1983, p. 87.

[6] Quoted in Leila Hadley, "Alfred Jensen: Metaphysical and Primitive," unpublished manuscript, 1975, p. 2.

[7] Peter Perrin, "All the Beautiful Systems: Alfred Jensen," *Artscanada*, vol. 36, May–June 1979, p. 41.

[8] Douglas R. Hofstadter, Notes to John R. Searle, "Minds, Brains, Programs," in *The Mind's I*, Douglas R. Hofstadter and Daniel C. Dennett, eds., New York, 1981; reprint ed., New York, 1982, p. 379.

[9] Quoted in Hadley, p. 14.

Once we are inside Jensen's systems, the paintings seem like puzzles. Through this comparison I do not mean to diminish the work to mere play. Since the beginning of civilization games have been used to handle the biggest problems, problems too complex for full-scale analysis or problems so important that direct consideration of them would be impossible. Games and puzzles have been commonly used as models to explore the problems of economics, sociology, psychology, politics and war. The playful context allows the mind free reign, obviating the need to worry about the end result. And, indeed, the puzzles of Jensen's paintings do not necessarily have solutions; it is the game itself that is the point.

So an understanding of how Jensen used systems and what systems he used provides an enlightening, albeit unusual, path into his art. My intention is to offer an analysis of several of Jensen's paintings in terms of specific iconography. As I researched his often arcane sources, I discovered that they are only starting points for Jensen's even more personal, idiosyncratic and mysterious manipulations. I ended up with more questions than when I started. Jensen's process of isomorphism became most interesting to me: what systems he chose to correlate and how he fit one system over another, symbol for symbol. Another aspect of this process was how he worked within the systems themselves, altering, completing or "correcting" them.

Goethe's *Theory of Colours* was the most important and long-standing influence on Jensen's work. Jensen first read Goethe's treatise in 1938, and he continued to reread it—by 1975 he had done so over twenty times—always in the original German.[10] Most readers have a hard time deciding what to make of this little-known book by an important author. Like Jensen's own work, it has been appreciated primarily for its breadth of vision rather than for its content. Although the main body of the text is made up of minutely rendered observations of phenomena, Goethe's interpretation of the meaning of these observations was very much in the Romantic spirit of the times. For this reason his theory has been described as "subjective and rather mystical" or "modernist in character since he was concerned with color as it depended on the condition of the eye," and it has been said that "where Newton sought origin Goethe sought meaning."[11] Goethe wrote his treatise as a correction of Newtonian color theory. At the time, Newtonian theory was widely misunderstood as a purely objective explanation of the origin of colors, based on the idea that perception of color could be explained entirely by wave theory. Goethe rightly felt that this did not explain any subjective color phenomena, such as colored afterimages. He decided that Newtonian theory not only omitted an important aspect of the phenomenon of color, but also that it elevated an incidental result to an important principle. Since Goethe's theory was an entirely subjective view of color and did not recognize wave theory, his conclusions were summarily rejected by the scientific community.

Goethe's theory must have appealed to Jensen because of its elegance, thoroughness and balance. A primary element of the theory is the idea of the duality of color, according to which all color springs from black and white and colors are in opposition to one another, rather than in sequence.[12] Doubtless, Jensen felt a particular affinity with this aspect of the theory, because the idea of duality is manifested again and again in his paintings. Jensen's early work, dating from 1952 until 1958, was based mainly on explorations of Goethe's theory. The paintings were preceded by studies which were diagrams interpreting Goethe's theory. The final canvases contain no writing and are composed of brightly colored overlapping abstract forms. They resemble the work of the Orphists, who also drew on Goethe's writings.

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[10] Hadley, p. 10.

[11] Deane B. Judd, Introduction to *Theory of Colours* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Charles Lock Eastlake, trans., London, John Murray, 1840; reprint ed., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, p. xi. Paul C. Vitz and Arnold Glimcher, *Modern Art and Modern Science*, New York, 1984, p. 97. Rupprecht Matthaei, Notes to *Goethe's Color Theory* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Charles Lock Eastlake, trans., London, John Murray, 1840; reprint ed., New York, 1971, p. 4.

Around 1957, encouraged by Mark Rothko, Jensen began to make the color diagrams themselves the subject matter of his paintings. After this transition, as Marcia Tucker notes, "no linear progression can be traced in the work, no 'evolution' of style as is usually the case with artists. Jensen's paintings increase in theoretical complexity through the years, but their form remains relatively stable. . . ."[13]

In 1959 Jensen began to interpret another system, that of electromagnetism, a subject suggested by his readings of Goethe. The idea of polarity and duality implicit in the earlier works became explicit through the use of diagrams of electricity and magnetism. In 1960 Jensen discovered Maya and Chinese systems, which resulted in a series of works investigating the Maya calendar, deity structure and architecture, and the Chinese *I Ching*, magic squares and mathematics. The symbolic qualities of odd and even numbers were developed and incorporated with other dualities: yin and yang, male and female, circle and square. A series begun in 1962 explores Greek systems of architecture, color theory and mathematics, including the Pythagorean concepts that emphasize odd and even numbers.

In the mid-sixties Jensen returned to a more abstract rendering of systems. The correlations of systems are still present, but they are more conceptual and less literal, as in the *Acroatic Rectangle* series (see cat. no. 20) and the *Aperspective Structure of the Square* series (see cat. nos. 21, 22). Inspired by his additional research into electromagnetics and light in the mid-seventies, Jensen produced works that emphasized the cyclic as well as the dual nature of electricity. In the late seventies he reworked the themes of many of the cultural systems he had used in the early sixties, but he concentrated on an overview rather than on the specifics of the systems. He introduced several new systems, among them a study of the structure of DNA and growth hormones, perhaps in an attempt to come to grips with the cancer that was to end his life.

Entoptic Color

Light and Darkness engage each other in continuous contest. Action and reaction of both cannot be denied. Light hastens from sun to earth with enormous flexibility and speed and ousts darkness. . . . But as soon as this indescribable action ceases,

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[12] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, Charles Lock Eastlake, trans., London, John Murray, 1840; reprint ed., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, p. 30.

[13] Marcia Tucker, "Mythic Vision: The Work of Alfred Jensen," in *Alfred Jensen: Paintings and Diagrams from the Years 1957–1977*, exh. cat., Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 1978, p. 15.

darkness demonstrates its power by quickly reasserting itself in shadow, twilight, and night. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe[14]

Goethe's spectrums appear within the crosses at the four corners of the painting *Entoptic Color* of 1959 (cat. no. 5). Typically, Goethe thought Newton had been wrong in allowing the spectrum to be cast on a surface by light coming through a prism. Goethe's alternative was to mainline the spectrum straight into the eye, by looking *through* a prism at a contrasted edge. Goethe names two spectrums of color, one generated by observing a white bar on a black background, the other by a black bar on a white background. The colors are as follows:

white on black	black on white
red	blue
yellow	violet
green	purple
blue	red
violet	yellow

Jensen called these the "white prism" and the "black prism."

The next clue for reading this work is its title. Goethe used the word entoptic to describe a type of polarized light produced by a rather peculiar experiment noted in a supplement to his *Theory of Colours*. In the experiment daylight is reflected from black-backed polished glass panes held at certain angles, which results in the appearance of points of light at each corner of the glass; when the pane is rotated a quarter of a turn, the points of light are replaced by points of darkness. If the angle of reflection is further adjusted, these points extend and merge in the center and become a cross or, more accurately, an x.[15]

Jensen seems to elaborate on this effect by placing the x in each corner of his painting, making an x with the x's, creating a self-referent within the work. He filled the x's with the colors of Goethe's two spectrums, representing each color in its correct relative proportion. The color order is inverted in one of each pair of crosses, a manipulation that is an example of a compositional device Jensen called "double mirroring." In double mirroring not only is a mirror image used to form a bilateral symmetry, but the image is also mirrored along a horizontal axis to make a quadrilaterally symmetrical image. This enables the display of a diagram from four "angles" in one pictorially unified image.

The space between the x's, a cross itself, seems to be a more expressive interpretation of the event. The red, yellow, violet and blue at the bottom and top are the first colors to appear when an image is mildly refracted by a prism. Yellow and violet are described by Goethe as "border" colors, blue and red as "edge" colors.[16] The circles may be a reference to the points of light first seen in Goethe's experiment, and the angled lines suggest the tilt of the pane of glass.

[14] Goethe, in Matthaei, 1971, p. 20.

[15] Eastlake, Notes to Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, 1970, p. 394.

[16] Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, 1970, p. 88.

West Sun. Perpetual Motion

When I write about color I liken its energies to the discovery of circulations of fluids similar in nature to the study of electricity and magnetism. . . . Perpetually reoccurring is the sequence of systole and diastole . . . it mystifies my imagination. . . .
Alfred Jensen[17]

Jensen drew on the researches of several early physicists for his work. Most important among them is Michael Faraday (1791–1867), who invented the dynamo and discovered that electricity can be produced from magnets and that a magnetic field will rotate the plane of polarized light. Another major source was James Clerk Maxwell (1831–79), who translated Faraday's discoveries into mathematical notation and was the first to assert that light and magnetic waves were of the same identity. Other physicists who influenced Jensen were Hans Christian Oersted (1777–1851) and Hendrick Antoon Lorentz (1853–1928). These scientists in particular attracted Jensen because they each attempted to find the unity of certain natural phenomena. Jensen joined their search and extended their correlations to include Goethe's color theory and other systems. I have found this area of Jensen's work quite opaque, and several physicists I have queried are equally perplexed.

In *West Sun. Perpetual Motion* of 1962 (cat. no. 15) a rectangle in the center of the painting is surrounded by a circle. The rectangle is a diagram of a bipolar bar-magnet. In the canvas directional arrows indicate that force emanates from the positive end of the magnet, converges on the negative end and flows down through the magnet, forming a continuous circuit. Jensen's diagram diverges slightly from the usual scientific representation of the subject (see fig. 1). Here Jensen may be likening the progression of colors to the directions of magnetic force. In the inside of the magnet, force moves from positive to negative, and it is portrayed with blue, violet, purple, red and yellow: the "black prism." In the outer circle, force moves from positive to negative, and is represented by two consecutive white spectrums showing red, yellow, green, blue and violet on each side.

Seeking to advance the study of the polarity of color, Goethe provides a table of opposites in his *Theory of Colours*:

Plus	*Minus*
yellow	blue
action	negation
light	shadow
brightness	darkness
force	weakness
warmth	coldness
proximity	distance
repulsion	attraction
affinity with acids	affinity with alkalis[18]

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[17] Hadley, p. 11.

[18] Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, p. 276.

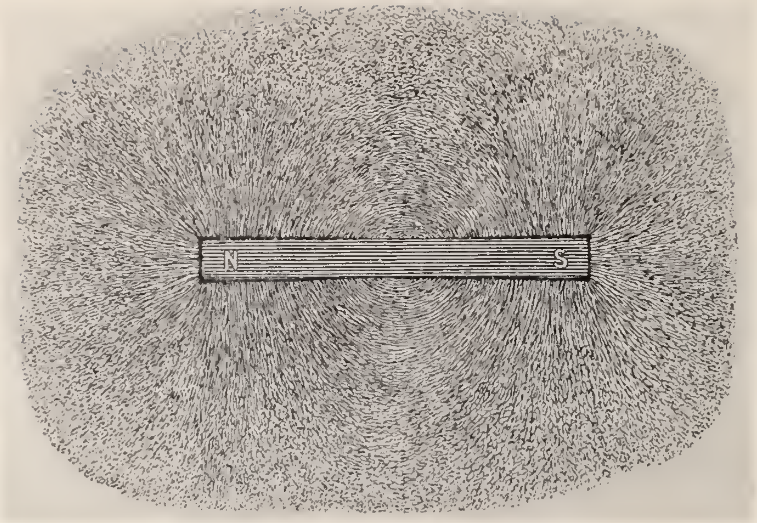

fig. 1
A bipolar magnet showing lines of force. Picture Collection, The Branch Libraries, The New York Public Library

Given that Goethe's table contains some seemingly conflicting elements (plus-action, repulsion, minus-negation, attraction), Jensen has chosen to place red and yellow at the negative end of the magnet and blue and violet at the positive end. He has, however, accurately reflected Goethe's formulation by painting the plus signs and the outline of the positive end of the magnet white and the minus signs and the outline of the negative end of the magnet black.

Alternatively, the diagram may represent a simple electricity-generating dynamo of the sort Faraday invented, which can be seen as a kind of perpetual-motion machine. This would explain the two positives (one in the magnet, one above the circle) at the top of the painting and the two negatives at the bottom: the positives repel each other and are attracted to the negatives, setting the disc spinning. But why is there a plus and a minus on each side of the circle, and why do the arrows showing rotation collide at its bottom?

Magic Square

This was the time of the ruler Wu-ting (1339 to 1281 B.C.) and on the inscribed bones of his reign there are mentions of stars. Of greatest importance were Niao Hsing, the Bird Star or Constellation, to be identified with Chuchhiao (the red bird) . . . —the Huohsing, the Fire Star or Constellation, to be identified with Antares. . . . Chu Ko-Chen plausibly infers from these names that the scheme of dividing the heavens along the equatorial circle into the four main palaces (the Blue Dragon in the east, the Vermillion Bird in the south, the White Tiger in the west, and the Black Tortoise in the north) was growing up already at this time. Joseph Needham[19]

Magic Square of 1960 (cat. no. 8) is one of the first paintings in which Jensen used numbers. In general, magic squares are arrangements of numbers in

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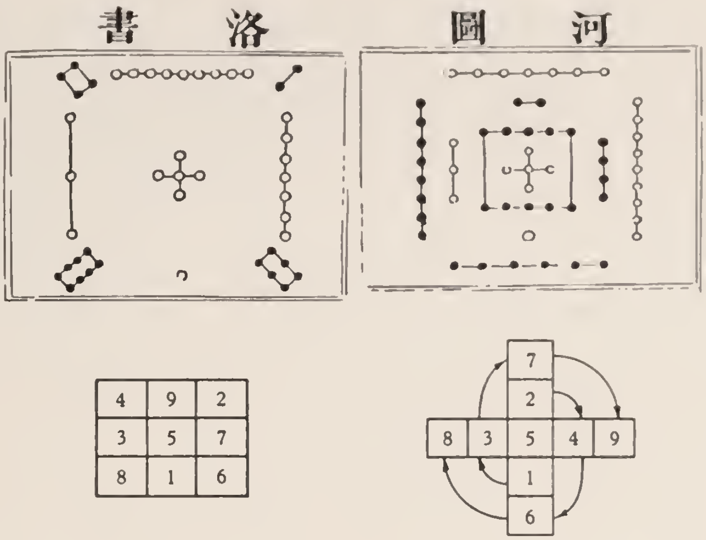
[19] Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 4 vols., Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 1956–71, vol. 3, p. 242.



4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

fig. 2
The Lo Shu diagram and the Ho Thu diagram.
From Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 4, p. 57

squares, organized so that every column, every row and each of the two diagonals add up to the same total, the sum being called the constant. According to Joseph Needham, magic squares were probably first developed in ancient China.[20] The most famous Chinese magic squares are the Lo Shu diagram and the Ho Thu diagram (fig. 2). Legend has it that these two were presented to the Emperor Yu by a creature with the head of a dragon and the body of a horse.

The magic squares Jensen has designed for this painting are of two types. If we divide the work into modules, with each of the four outer corners comprising one rectangle, and the interior cross comprising twenty rectangles, the work becomes easier to understand. The outer sixteen rectangles that make up the arms of the cross are all simple magic squares like the Lo Shu diagram. However, I have never seen a diagonal composition that uses a central diamond rather than squares, and this may be Jensen's own invention. Each square is either of an odd order (using consecutive odd numbers) or of an even order, and the orders alternate. The magic squares of the odd orders add up on the diagonals to either fifteen or forty-five, and the evens add up to twenty or fifty. The same four magic squares make up each outer quadrant, but the numbers surrounding each diamond are rotated a quarter turn in a clockwise direction in each quadrant.

The four rectangles in the center make up their own magic square of a more complex type, which resembles the Ho Thu diagram: here, odd numbers 1 through 19 and even numbers 2 through 20 each add up to one hundred and ten.

Jensen has added to this diagram of magic squares both prismatic and symbolic Chinese color. The prismatic color development begins in a diamond at the very center of the painting, in the inner corners of the four central rectangles. Here are the four prismatic edge and border colors, red, blue, yellow and violet. They are flanked by green and purple, the central colors of the light and dark spectrums. Added to these in the outer rectangles are white and black. These colors are the grounds for particular numbers. Jensen has assigned the even

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[20] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 343.

numbers cool colors (violet, blue, green) or white, and the odd numbers warm colors (red, yellow, purple) or black. The four basic border and edge colors always contain the same numbers, and in the outer rectangles take the center diamond of each square. The secondary colors and black and white are assigned to different numbers in each square. Each quadrant of outer rectangles is colored the same way. A second color system occurs in the numbers themselves and in the four large rectangles in the corners. The odd numbers are always painted in white and the even numbers in black. This accords with Jensen's own notes and the symbolic coloring of the Lo Shu and Ho Thu diagrams. The outer four rectangles bearing the names of the cardinal points may be colored according to this ancient Chinese system of associations:

wood	spring	east	Azure Dragon	stars	green (blue or purple)
fire	summer	south	Vermillion Bird	sun	red
earth		centre	Yellow Dragon	earth	yellow
metal	autumn	west	White Tiger	Hsiu const.	white
water	winter	north	Sombre Warrior	moon	black[21]

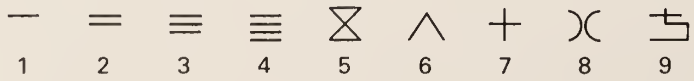
However, Jensen has transposed the black with the white, and the purple with the red for reasons that remain unclear.

Square Beginning – Cyclic Ending

The heavens are round in shape like an open umbrella, while the earth is square like a chessboard. Chin Shu[22]

The painting *Square Beginning–Cyclic Ending, Per 1, 80 Equivalent Squares of Value 5*; *Per II, 48 Equivalent Squares of Value 5*; *Per III, 24 Equivalent Squares of Value 5*; *Per IV, 9 Equivalent Squares of Value 5*; *Per V, 1 Square Area of Value 5* of 1960 (cat. no. 9) also uses magic squares. Peter Perrin has identified the sources for much of the subject matter of this five panel work,[23] to which I have made a few additions.

The symbols within the squares are archaic Chinese numerals from Shang oracle bones of the fourteenth to eleventh centuries B.C. They are:



The fourth panel is the Lo Shu diagram mentioned earlier, and panels *I*, *II* and *III* are also magic squares of the fifth, seventh and ninth orders. Jensen must have known of the formulas that exist for generating magic squares, but, for some reason, sums of numbers along the vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines of the

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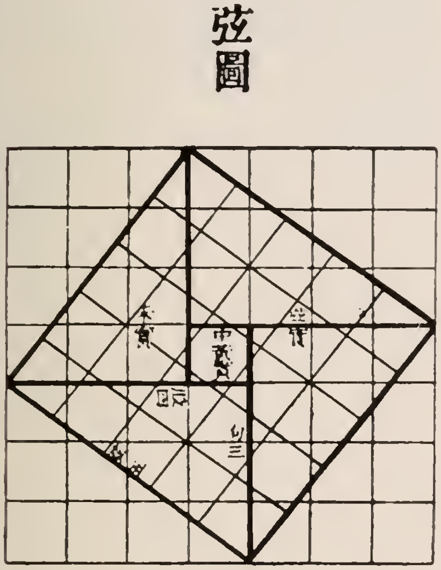
[21] Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 262–263.

[22] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 323.

[23] Perrin, p. 41.

fig. 3
The Hsun Thu diagram.
From Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 4, p. 22



magic squares are not equal. Taking the black and white design in the center to be equal to five in all equations, in *Per III* the sums are all odd and within the range of twenty-three to thirty-one, and the center horizontal and center vertical are both equal to twenty-five. In *Per II* the sums are both odd and even and range from thirty-four to thirty-six except for the diagonals, which both equal twenty-five, and the center horizontal and vertical each equals thirty-five. In *Per I* each horizontal and vertical equals forty-five, the diagonals each equal forty-four. *Per V* contains only the number 5.

Here, as in the painting *Magic Square*, Jensen has used both prismatic color and symbolic color. From his notes of the period we learn that odd numbers are yang and cool: white (1, 7), green (3), violet (5) and blue (9), and that even numbers are yin and warm: purple (2), red (4), yellow (5), orange (8) and black (6). In all the panels orange is changed to yellow; it keeps the colors within a prismatic vocabulary. His notes do not explain why 5 is seen here as both odd and even. This may have something to do with the Ho Thu diagram, where the number 5 is both black and white, a conjecture borne out by the fact that the central squares are both black and white. In any case, coloring the central 5s black and white allowed them to become images of opposing sets of white prisms and black prisms, a pun on Jensen's own terminology.

The diagonal grid, superimposed on the magic squares in the first four panels in blue, green, yellow and white, is the Hsuan Thu diagram from the third-century commentary of Chao Chun-Chhing (fig. 3). It was developed by the Chinese to calculate the relationships between sides of triangles and is the same as the Pythagorean Theorem, which it probably predates.[24] Jensen encircles the square in an allusion to the Chinese symbols for heaven and earth, and he colors the circle and square in their traditional blue and yellow. The circle in the square is the form of the ancient Chinese diviner's board.

A Quadrilateral Oriented Vision

> *The rhythm of time enchanted the Maya; the never ending flow of days from the eternity of the future into the eternity of the past filled them with wonder.* J. Eric S. Thompson[25]

The year 1960 found Jensen again voracious for new material for his paintings. He later said, "I had been painting phenomena, but I wanted to paint a mental image, and so I looked around for material."[26] Coincidentally, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing* by J. Eric S. Thompson had just been published. The book attracted Jensen because he felt strong ties to his birthplace in Guatemala, territory that had once belonged to the Maya, and he had fond childhood memories of his Maya nurse. Jensen's interest was held by the Maya calendar, one of the most complex and subtle calendar systems ever devised.

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[24] Needham, vol. 3, pp. 95–96.

[25] J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1954, p. 13.

[26] Hadley, p. 14.

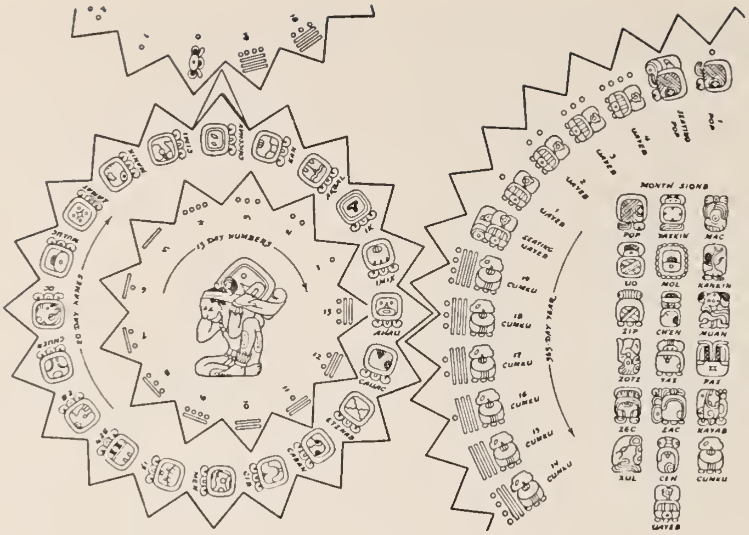

13 DAY NUMBERS
20 DAY NAMES
IK
AKBAL
KAN
CHICCHAN
CIMI
MANIK
LAMAT
MULUC
OC
CHUEN
EB
BEN
IX
MEN
CIB
CABAN
ETZNAB
CAUAC
AHAU
IMIX
1 POP
SEATING POP
4 UAYEB
3 UAYEB
2 UAYEB
1 UAYEB
SEATING UAYEB
19 CUMKU
18 CUMKU
17 CUMKU
16 CUMKU
15 CUMKU
14 CUMKU
365-DAY YEAR
MONTH SIGNS
POP
UO
ZIP
ZOTZ
ZEC
XUL
YAXKIN
MOL
CH'EN
YAX
ZAC
CEH
UAYEB
MAC
KANKIN
MUAN
PAX
KAYAB
CUMKU

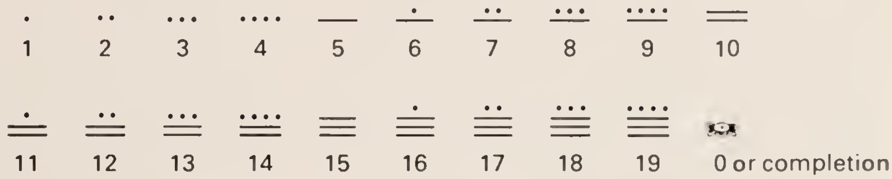
fig. 4
Thompson's diagram of the mechanics of the Maya calendar. It shows on the right the months and days of the three-hundred-and-sixty-plus-five-day year, on the left the two cycles of the two-hundred-and-sixty-day sacred almanac and at the top left the sprocket of the twenty-year count. The gears are aligned at the day 13 Ahau 18 Cumku.
From Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, p. 176

This system is of great antiquity: the earliest known inscription relating to it is on a monument dated by the Maya 8.12.14.8.15, or July 6, A.D. 292. The calendar was devised and kept by priests in villages and cities throughout the entire Maya territory, what is now the Yucatán Peninsula and Guatemala. It was important to the Maya because they believed that the days themselves were influential gods, and in order to be able to control their own lives they must know which day each god occupied. The system is based on the combination of repeating number counts of different lengths, not unlike our combination of the days of the week with the days of the months. However, the Maya employed more cycles than we do—briefly: the sacred almanac of two hundred and sixty days, the vague year of three hundred sixty and five extra days, the Venus year of five hundred and eighty-four days, the lunation of twenty-nine days, plus a cycle of nine days for the gods of the night and seven days for the gods of the day. Each of these periods has its own subdivisions and multiples. The Maya used their calendar to calculate dates thousands of millions of years into the past and over four millennia into the future, possibly in an attempt to find the beginning and end of time.

Thompson gives a diagram showing the mechanics of the Maya calendar (see fig. 4), but he takes care to note that the Maya would have been horrified to see it depicted in such a way. This is an important point: the Maya did not think of their calendar as a machine; to them it was subtle and fluid, like a living organism. In their records of the counting of the days any particular numeral may be rendered in a variety of ways, usually with an accompanying pictograph or portrait of the god it manifested. Each day was invested with individuality.

Although the Maya seem never to have depicted their calendar system as a whole, Jensen strove to do so. *A Quadrilateral Oriented Vision*: *Per I, The Kin*; *Per II, Uinal of 20 Kin, 0–9*; *Per III, Uinal of 20 Kin, 0–19*; *Per IV, Pair of Tuns*; *Per V, The Katun*; *Per VI, 520 Kin Cycle* of 1960 (cat. no. 7) represents his attempt to give the calendar a pictorial form that is in keeping with Maya attitudes and uses Maya motifs and structure. Jensen called it "a mental image of the calendar system."[27] I have come to think of it as a portrait.

The mural is made up of six panels with a consistent vocabulary of numerals and colors. Jensen uses the simplest form of Maya numerals:



The Maya number system was vigesimal, or based on twenty as ours is based on ten. Maya scholars have never agreed upon the meaning of the Maya 0. Some think that 0 means zero, in the Western sense of the word, in the calendar as it certainly did in Maya arithmetic. Others propose that 0 stands for the first day of a cycle, or for a day not yet completed. Still others feel that 0 marks the end of a cycle, or completion to the next higher unit.[28]

In *A Quadrilateral Oriented Vision* Jensen colored the numerals themselves either black or white and determined the prismatic color equivalent for the ground for each number, using warm colors for even numbers and cool colors for odd numbers. The equivalents are as follows:

purple	2,16	cool black	1,19
red	4,14	cool white	7,13
yellow	8,10	green	3,17
warm white	0,18	blue	9,11
warm black	6,12	violet	5,15

The colors were assigned on the magic-square premise: each even pair of numbers equals eighteen, the odd pairs equal twenty.[29] The diagrams in the first and last panels are bordered with red, black, white and yellow, the Maya symbolic colors for the cardinal points.

The six panels of the mural read from left to right. The first is subtitled *Per I, The Kin*, the Maya word for day. The diagram's internal shape is a diamond, perhaps a reference to a Maya hieroglyph for day, the four-petaled flower. It is divided into four quarters and also into ten concentric quadrilaterals. The cool colors and odd numbers are on the right side, the warm colors and even numbers on the left. The four numbers in each quadrilateral equal thirty-eight, or twice nineteen, the last number of the vigesimal system, and, if 0 is added (counted as the system completed), a Maya month of twenty days. In true magic-square fashion, the numbers can also be added from the center outward in quadrants, yielding the sums ninety, one hundred, one hundred, and ninety, with a combined total of three hundred and eighty, and if 0 as completion is added, a count of four hundred is reached, beginning a new cycle of the vigesimal system.

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[27] Hadley, p. 14.

[28] J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, 2nd ed., Norman, Oklahoma, 1960, p. 119.

[29] Alfred Jensen, notebook, ca. 1960, n.p.

In *Per IV, Pair of Tuns*, or three-hundred-and-sixty-day years, the numbers are arranged in a different kind of magic-square format. Jensen derived the pattern of graduated areas from the Maya cosmology. The Maya believed the sky to be divided into thirteen compartments, each with its own number, and that these were arranged in steps, with six ascending, one at the top and six descending. The underworld was similarly divided into nine compartments or steps. Thompson thought that the gods who resided on these steps were placed in numerical order: thus the sky gods in steps 1 and 13 would be on the same level, those in 2 and 12 would be on the next and so on, with 7 at the apex.[30] In his notes Jensen rearranges and balances the configuration by placing odd numbers on one side, even on the other, and ordering them so that the sums of numbers on adjacent steps are equal to the highest number, 13, which is at the apex: for example, 1 and 12 and 3 and 10 are adjacent pairs.[31] Jensen has divided *Pair of Tuns* into two square halves, and has filled each half with two sets of steps turned in on themselves. The top half of the painting contains the odd numbers and the bottom the even. When adjacent numbers are added in the top half the total is twenty, and the nine horizontal sums combined with the nine vertical sums equal three hundred and sixty (days) or one tun. Adding adjacent numbers on the bottom half, we arrive at twenty sums of eighteen, another total of three hundred and sixty, the second tun.

The four remaining panels, each of which depicts a different unit of the calendar, are as complex as the two that have been analyzed here. In fact, *A Quadrilateral Oriented Vision* is the most complicated of Jensen's paintings I have studied. Several times, in the midst of working it out, mentally surrounded by the systems and cycles that Jensen reversed, inverted and sometimes even turned inside out, I had a feeling I can describe only as vertigo. I think it was the beginning of the experience that Hofstadter describes as seeing *through* the systems. What had at first appeared to be frustratingly arbitrary manipulations by Jensen emerged as a remarkable display of the enormous flexibility of seemingly rigid systems. Working through Jensen's metamorphic and isomorphic processes revealed a new dimension. It must be comparable to the experience of the isolated tribesman who was shown a photograph for the first time. The tribesman had never seen an image "realistically" rendered in two dimensions, and at first it looked abstract to him. He had to learn to decipher the shapes, and then to go further and see through them to the image they comprised. It was then that the photo acquired meaning for him.

There is a phenomenon that cognitive scientists call the "strange loop." It is what happens when, in moving up or down through the levels of a system, you find yourself unexpectedly at your starting point. In analyzing Jensen's art in terms of scientific thought, we find ourselves in a strange loop, right back where Jensen began, at a synthesis of science and art. I think Jensen himself may have enjoyed the coincidence.

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[30] Thompson, *Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, p. 260.

[31] The Pace Gallery, *Alfred Jensen: The Late Works*, exh. cat., New York, 1983, pp. 9, 10.

Jensen's Difficulty

Peter Schjeldahl

There are all sorts of difficulty in modern art, some of them easier than others. Alfred Jensen's difficulty—a plexus of subject and method remarkably esoteric, gnarled and obscure—is among the easiest of all. It is *pure* difficulty, in a way. It is generous: perplexity galore. The ultimate coherence, if any, of Jensen's teeming systems has eluded his most informed and patient students. This is not to say that studying those systems is pointless: Pleasure and instruction reward any effort to understand Jensen, and great pleasure and instruction reward a great effort. He could be farfetched, but he was not frivolous. By saying that his difficulty is easy, I mean that it is not in the least bit coercive or overbearing. There is about Jensen's night-journeys into the arcane an ebullience that enchants and reassures. He was the most companionable of sphinxes.

On the occasion of this catalogue, I will make no exegesis of Jensen's difficulty, leaving that to Maria Reidelbach (whose expert guidance through the Jensen labyrinth I gratefully acknowledge). I will be interested in it less as a phenomenon than as a metaphor: difficulty as such, and specifically the difficulty—the ordeal—of the modern mind, of which Jensen's seems to me more and more a paradigmatic case. I am also concerned to confront Jensen's paintings as paintings, as units of sensuous experience. There is a notably awkward gap in Jensen's art between the matter-of-fact physicality of its means and the speculative ethereality of its ends. To leap this gap is to enjoy a sensation practically unique, Jensen's definitive contribution to the range of art's possibilities. But a firm footing in the empirical is required first, if the leap is to be made.

Autodidact and polymath, willful and self-inventing, amateur in the best sense, Jensen's mind simmered for half a century in a rich stew of experience and learning before reaching mature expression in the late fifties. The form of the expression, when it came, had the completely uncalled-for quality of the true—even the absolute—original. Its mixture of quirkiness and erudition suggested the norm of some other era, if not of another planet. In fact, however, Jensen continued and extended several deep themes of modernism. He was, perhaps, the last hero of a tradition that may be approximated by making an intersection of Ezra Pound's *Cantos* and Vasily Kandinsky's transcendental geometries: the mystique of lost civilizations and the mystique of pure mentality. Ironically, this tradition—generalist, synthetical, grandiose—was being destroyed at the exact moment of Jensen's first public impact, making way for the specialized, analytical, laconic zeitgeist of the sixties. Moribund, the tradition could not assimilate him, and Jensen thus appears far more isolated in history than the facts warrant.

The irony is Jensenesque. To advance a tradition in the moment of its eclipse was the fitting gesture of an artist whose life was a chronicle of paradox and exile, the stuff of modern myth. All writers on Jensen compulsively retell his biography, whether they make anything of it or not. It's irresistible, a great yarn. (By all accounts, Jensen told no more than the truth, but in a way it doesn't matter: His stories *function* as legends.) There is a dated, even discomfiting aspect to some elements of Jensen's tale, such as the colonial-era exoticism of a Northern European born in steamy Central America and nursed by an Indian woman. And a slight mustiness has clouded the glamour, spattered with Great Names, of Jensen's cosmopolitan travels and associations in the thirties and forties. But the stories retain appeal because they are redeemed by Jensen's mature art, which telescoped the fascinations of a life and certain meanings of the century into a jerrybuilt but brilliant portmanteau. Indeed, it is possible to conceive of the totality of Jensen's art as a modernist portmanteau work, akin to *The Cantos* or *Finnegans Wake.*

Was Jensen a primitive? Many observers, including me, have felt a strong tug toward treating him as a kind of *naïf*—an Henri Rousseau of arithmetic, perhaps, or the avatar of a tradition of solipsistic geniuses like Raymond Roussel, Joseph Cornell and H. C. Westermann. The urge to regard Jensen as an encapsulated spirit, the prisoner of his own eccentricities, runs into trouble, however. In my own experience of thinking about him, whenever I fancy that I have Jensen surrounded I sense him looking over my shoulder, *anticipating* my judgment, forcing me to yield to the power of his self-consciousness: He knew what he was doing. The only sense in which Jensen can be termed "primitive" is a dictionary one: "original or radical, as distinguished from derivative." This, too, is a modernist ideal. The "primitive" as a category of first-order knowledge—unpolluted by refinement, thus literally incomparable on a level of *style*—has been a recourse of minds homeless not only in space but in time, deprived of an acceptable heritage. The radical degree (and the eerie humor) of Jensen's "primitivism" is summed up for me in Jean Dubuffet's remark to him in the early fifties, which Jensen delighted in quoting: "Now I know what puzzles me so much about your work. You have no taste. That's good!"

What does it mean to make an art without taste? Many modern artists—Dubuffet prominent among them—thought they were finding out, but none went further in this regard than Jensen. He did it by the relentless imposition of his optical and numerical systems on the aesthetic field. It might as well have been with Jensen in mind, though it wasn't, that Sol LeWitt wrote, "Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically." The effect of Jensen's abstract logics, functioning quasi-mechanically to generate designs and colors, is to contradict the operation of taste—the consistency, that is, of decisions based on pleasure and measure, on *preference*. Of course, Jensen's pictures are full of preferential decisions. Nothing in Goethe or Pythagoras prescribes buttered-on impasto; and the particular colors that Jensen chose to employ, like the infectious quality of his handwriting, radiate self-gratification. But precisely the presence of taste makes the constant disruption of it—its humiliation, almost—palpable. The sensuous and the cerebral have a nonstop squabble in Jensen's art, and the friction between them is the very engine of his enterprise: to drive consciousness far afield of present phenomena, off into precincts of the cosmic.

The best formal analysis yet made of Jensen's painting took Donald Judd just three sentences in one of his miraculously terse reviews of the early sixties: ". . . many of Jensen's paintings are thoroughly flat, are completely patterns. Jensen's paintings are not radical inventions but this aspect is. There are no other paintings completely without space." That categorical judgment was true when Judd made it, in 1963, and it remains true today. Even Robert Ryman, say, is a Claude Lorrain of spatial illusion when his work is compared to Jensen's "completely patterns." So "thoroughly flat" is a Jensen painting that we might feel reluctant to call it a painting at all, our reluctance being the measure of a risk that it would never occur to any other painter to take. Jensen's utter discouragement of our conditioned urge to look *into* a painting may be part of what makes us want to label him "primitive": It is as if he simply misunderstood what painting is and, in Western civilization, must be. And here we glimpse the Cheshire smile of his audacity.

In fact, Jensen's works are less paintings than *diagrams*, or they introduce a new, diagrammatic use for painting. What are diagrams? They are a graphic medium of pure reference. The word comes from the Greek for "that which is marked out by lines." So a diagram is defined not by its lines but by what they "mark out": an idea for or about something that is *not there*. To look at a diagram with appreciation of its scale, composition, color or any other formal quality is to misuse it—a perversity into which Jensen routinely tricks us as viewers of painting. Jensen did not "paint diagrams." Rather, he made diagrams with paint, annexing the chromatic and material qualities of the medium as another set of means, in addition to line, for "marking out" ideas. The result, considered as painting, is very strange: a sensuous and prepossessing surface *whose meaning is elsewhere*. Gleefully (I like to imagine), Jensen did everything practicable to deepen and exacerbate this strangeness, which is his keynote as an artist. His commanding scale, luscious textures, eventful compositions and clarion colors excite expectations of an aesthetic resolution which the identity of what they add up to—*diagrams*—mockingly deflects.

The clearest instance of Jensen's intention to go against painting's grain, and persuasive evidence that the intention was fully conscious, is his use of color, among the most bizarre in the history of art. Derived from Goethe's prism-based theories—which are at once chastely reliant on empirical observation and boundlessly romantic in interpreting it—Jensen's use of color flies in the face of common sense, which in Western practice recognizes a distinction between *hue*, as a function of the three or four primaries, and *tone*, as a function of light and dark. Not so for Jensen, who conflated the distinction not only by including light and dark—white and black—within the spectrum of hues but also by conceiving the spectrum itself as a function of them. Hues, he wrote, are "the children, as it were, of black and white." That is a flabbergasting statement. It amounts to a repeal of the fundamental rule of light in Western painting, which is that of tone. (In common sense, black and white are the parents of an only child: gray, the one color Jensen never used.) Jensen's paintings are deliberately the visual equivalent of tone-deaf, and the visual music that results is a startling, barbarous clangor.

"There are no other paintings completely without space," Judd declared, and the reason for this is found in Jensen's conception of color. First, by demoting black and white from their tonal role Jensen eliminated the creation of illusion by gradation of light. Second, by giving black and white new offices as drill sergeants of the spectrum he broke up the standard conspiracy of the other colors to make space by combining in the eye. What we witness in nearly every abutment of colors in a Jensen checkerboard is a surrogate opposition of light and dark, a binary this/that, and/or, yes/no. (Extrapolating symbolically, Jensen liked to add "male/female," an idea that eludes me.) The flow of color sensation across a canvas—uniformly high-keyed in saturation and in literal, slathered quantity of medium—may change temperature here and there, between warm and cool, but that isn't enough to rupture the flatness. Almost never is there an optical jangle between a primary and its complementing secondary (red/green, blue/orange, yellow/purple). (I don't quite see *how* Jensen avoided this, but he did.) The colors go by with the stately exactitude of ducks in a shooting gallery, with the effect that we are never lost in a Jensen painting. Even up close to a big, complicated one, we are conscious of the overall scheme, the shooting gallery, the diagram.

We are conscious, that is, of a field united by a (and on) purpose: the purpose of referring. Made aware of Jensen's conceptual logic by its constant effect of apparent visual arbitrariness, we are nudged constantly and everywhere—even by every square inch of a painting—toward thought. Some of us may find this nudging resistible. I sometimes do. We all have personal uses for painting, and precisely the suspension of abstract speculation is one of mine: I like to immerse myself in a play of sensation and association, and Jensen's insistent codes can affect me like the smack of a ruler across the knuckles. But a little effort on my part has been rewarded with an empathetic sense of the temperament, so alien to me, that informs Jensen's brand of play. Above all, I have become aware, with growing awe, of Jensen's supreme consciousness in the game, his mental passion. There is a heat to his art that is violently—and dynamically—at odds with its clockwork machinations, as if he were Dionysos wearing the mask of Apollo.

So the pleasure principle, not some pedagogical mania, is at the controls of Jensen's art, after all. This becomes ever clearer as, little by little, one gets a grasp on some of his intellectual systems. Jensen's mathematics are witty! They are also convoluted, hard to follow (even for mathematicians, I have learned with relief) and high-handed. Numbers do whatever Jensen wants them to, as he slyly acknowledged: "My arithmetic is a little unconventional," he wrote to Allan Kaprow, "but I find it useful as a painter." This remark comes at the end of a stunningly complex demonstration of the "hidden meaning" of the Pythagorean Theorem (usually given as "the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides"), a postulate that one would have thought crystal-clear—proof, if there is any, that Truth is Beauty—and immune to tampering. But nothing was immune to Jensen's celerity. He went after intellectual fixities like termites go after wooden houses. He dealt with ideas exactly as he dealt with colors, forcing the black and white of Truth and Falsity (or, anyway, Probability and Improbability) into a common spectrum. He didn't cheat, exactly. He played by rules. It's just that the rules had a way of changing. Jensen made no bones about his sense of license, a necessity for his pursuit of "a vision worthy of an Artist."

In the best essay I've read on Jensen, "All the Beautiful Systems," Peter Perrin identifies *correlation* as Jensen's most typical mental pattern: "Jensen is particularly partial to correlative systems, ways of hanging things together in an attempt to keep meaninglessness out of the universe. . . . Making things hang together by will and imagination, and sometimes by any way that can be made to work." Today—when for most of us meaninglessness is at least a next-door neighbor, if not a household resident—that ambition is bound to seem quixotic. It is, in truth, old-fashioned in a way that shows how old-fashioned modernism itself is now. To correlate fragmented meanings, especially across time, was a characteristic project of modernist masters. Nowadays, we must set our end-of-the-century disillusionments to one side in order to recover a sense of the project's original grandeur. Jensen is a good test case for such imaginative recovery, being relatively close to us in time. Coming at the end of an epoch, he was a kind of Byzantine to modernism's Rome.

Jensen was also a born expatriate, homeless everywhere. (English was his fifth language, after Spanish, Danish, German and French.) As such, he made an ideal New Yorker at a time that saw the end of American artistic provincialism in the activity of a few other displaced spirits in Manhattan. It is interesting that his best friend among the Abstract Expressionists was Mark Rothko, that correlator of another kind who made a desperate wager that color sensation, properly scaled, could communicate "basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom." Rothko's misfortune was to find out that, by and large, it couldn't. (Which is not to deny that Rothko's best work can *cause* feelings of great intensity.) Jensen, for all his explanatory zeal, strikes me as having been less optimistic about the prospect of communication, as if he rather despaired of it in advance—then somehow discovered, in that despair, the wellspring of a philosophical insouciance. In the choreography of his art, the *gesture* of communication, like that of correlation, defined the dancer and the dance. Jensen's peculiar stylization of belief (belief for belief's sake) is what makes me think of Byzantium: the late, ornate efflorescence of a perishing doctrine.

By yet another Jensenesque irony, this one posthumous, Jensen's very quality of lateness and disinheritance guarantees his contemporaneity and makes this exhibition a timely one. Many of his tropes are still freshly relevant. For example, his linkage of himself to Goethe and early Romanticism—a conjunction that brackets the modern era—is a pattern being followed by some of the present's most compelling artists. (Think of Anselm Kiefer and Caspar David Friedrich, and of Francesco Clemente and William Blake.) Few intelligent people today can believe in the kind of magic Jensen ascribed to Mayan counting and the like—the implied patronization of alien cultures makes us uncomfortable, for one thing—and fewer still could support the afflatus of Jensen's claim that he was "engaged in the reestablishment of man's lost ties with the universal laws of nature. Today, forgotten and ignored, these values of former times, now misunderstood, must come back." If, however, we substitute for "universal laws of nature" the phrase "particular truths of history," the statement will meet with plenty of agreement. And the *form* of it—the metaphor of a yearning—is a template of feelings well-known to contemporary hearts. The "difficulty" of Alfred Jensen continues to mirror our civilization. We are nearly all Byzantines now.

Works in the Exhibition

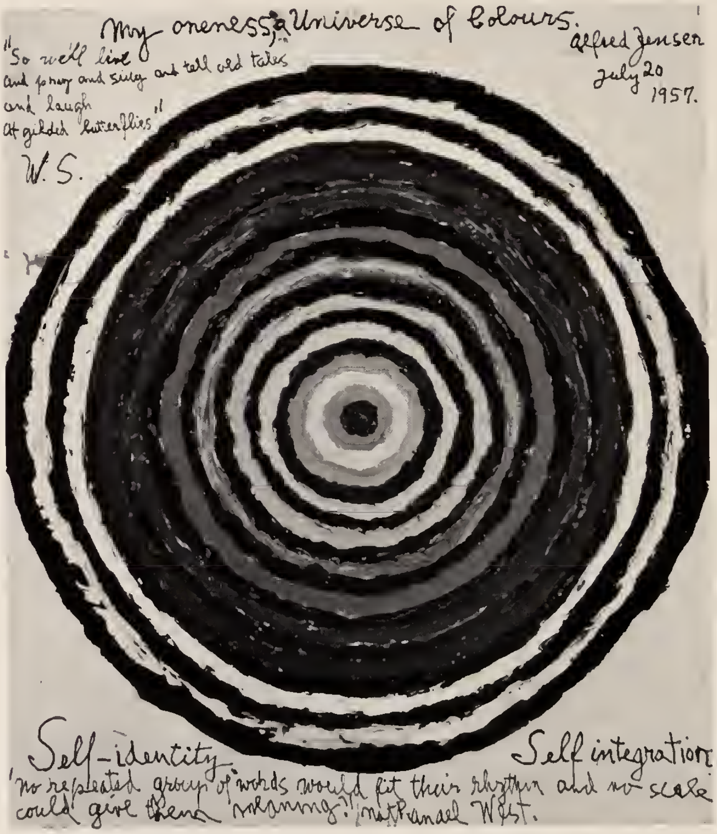
Unless otherwise noted, loans for this exhibition derive from the former estate of the artist.

Dimensions are given in inches; height precedes width.

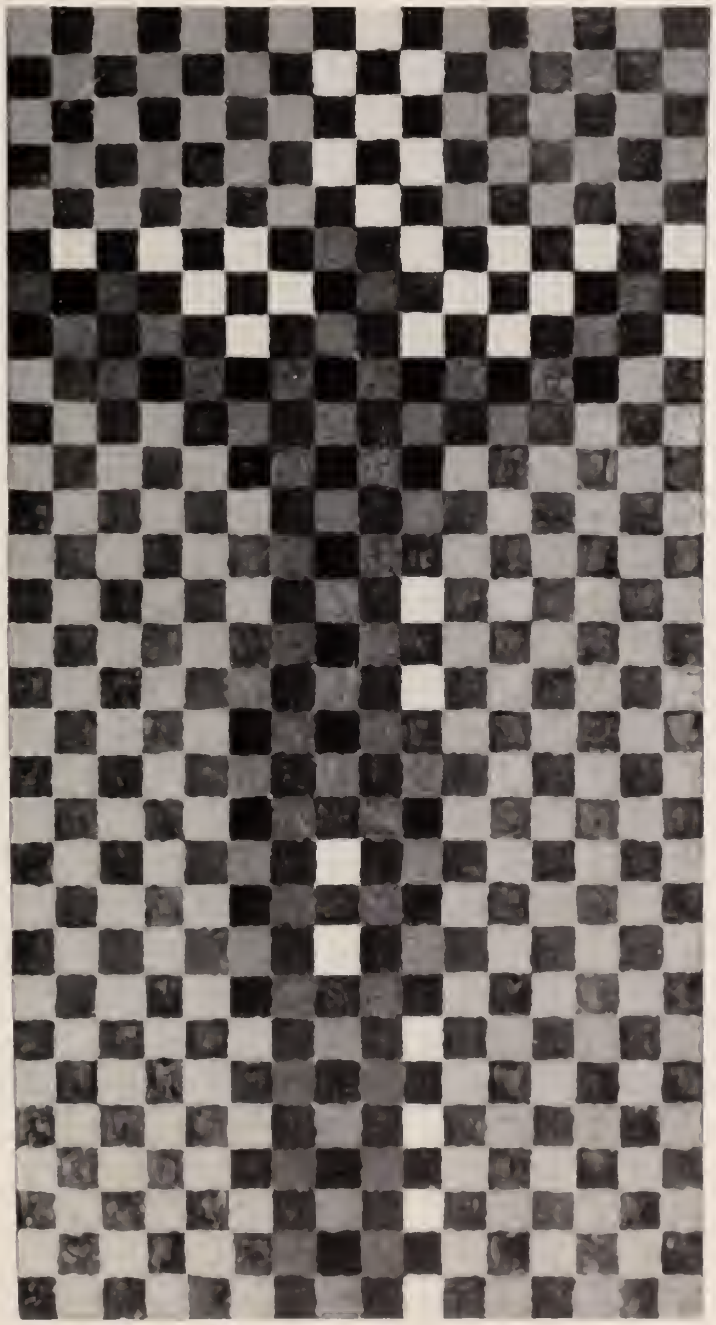
† Indicates not illustrated

Paintings

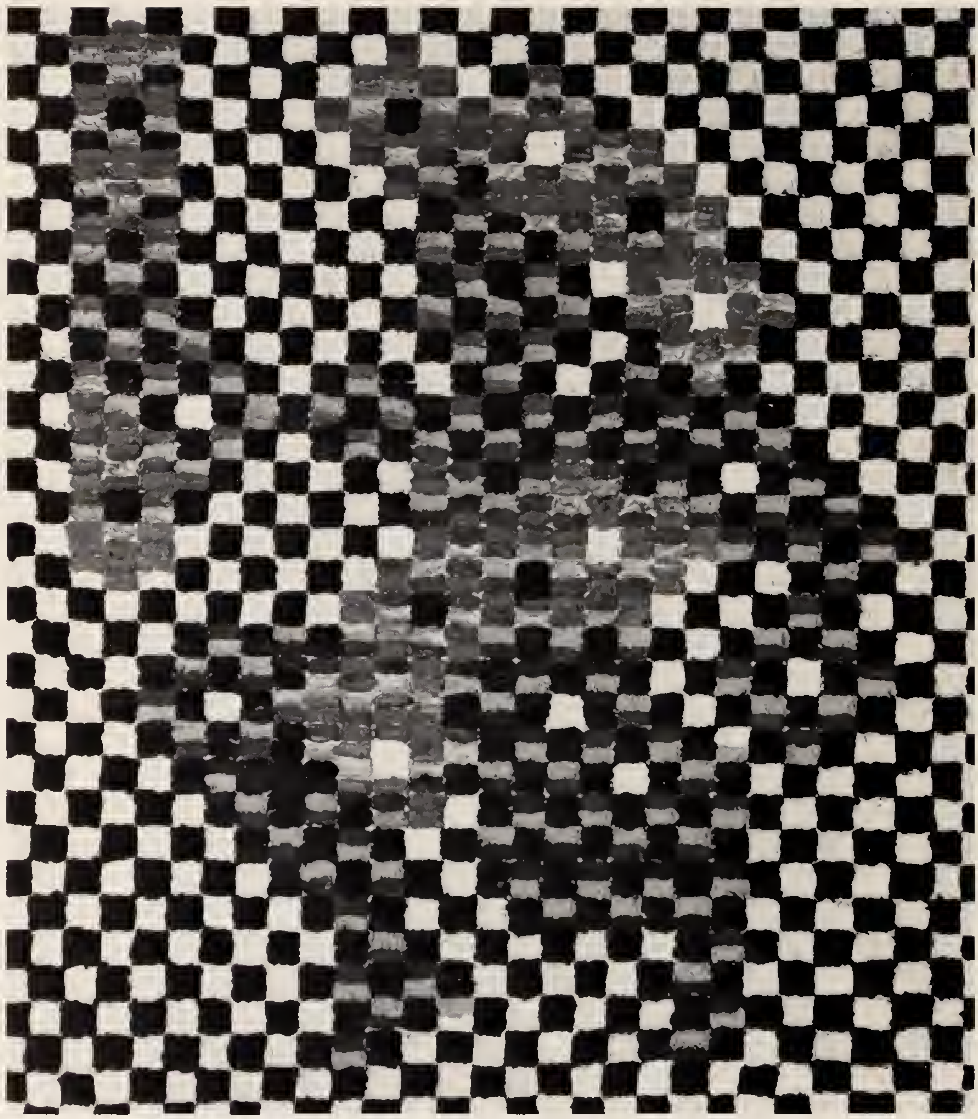
1 **My Oneness, A Universe of Colours.**
July 20, 1957
Oil on canvas, 26 x 22"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.


My oneness, a Universe of Colours.
Alfred Jensen
July 20
1957.
"So we'll live
and pray and sing and tell old tales
and laugh
at gilded butterflies"
W. S.
Self-identity
Self integration
"no repeated group of words would fit their rhythm and no scale
could give them meaning." Nathanael West.

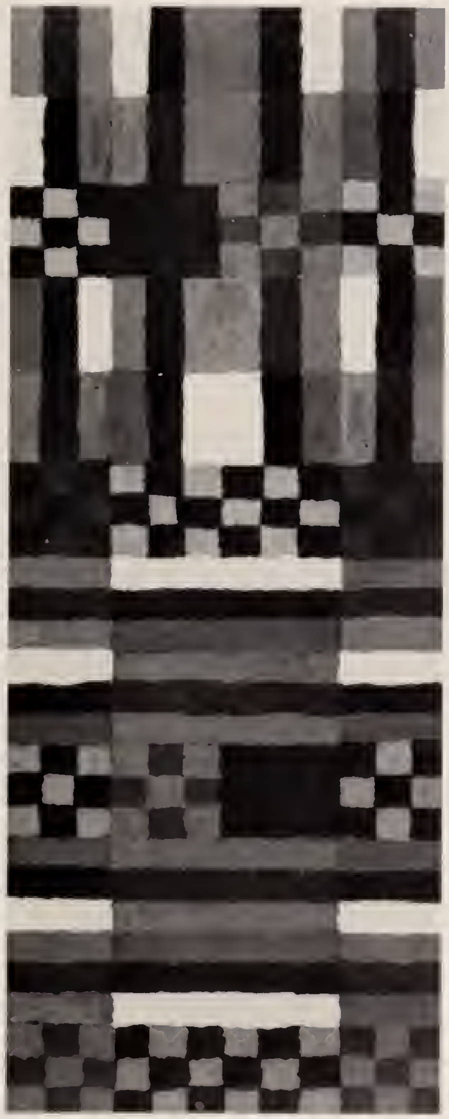
2 **Forsaken.** *1957*
Oil on canvas, 75 x 40"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luce III



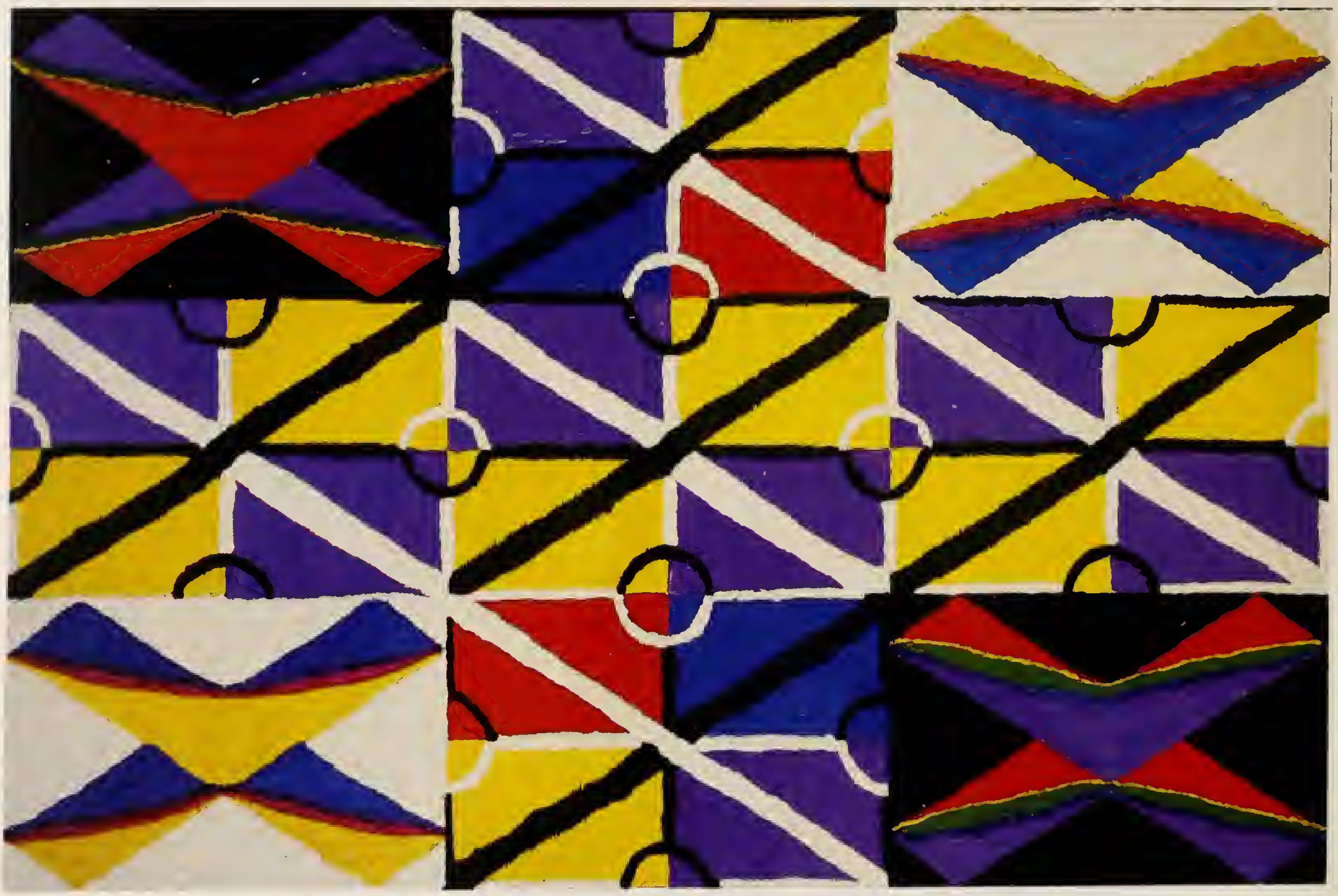
3 **Peruvian Dancer.** *1958*
Oil on canvas, 48 x 42"



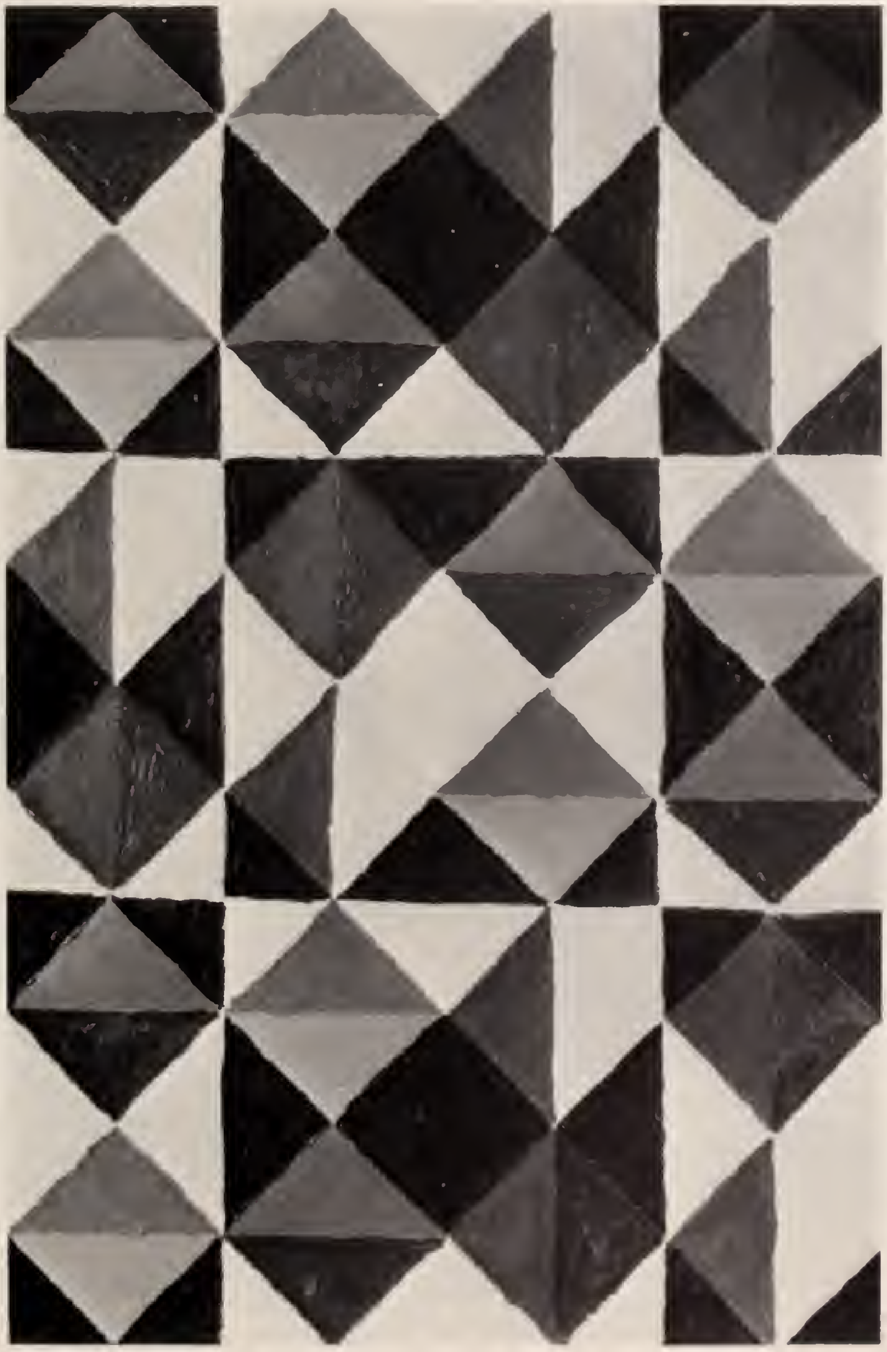
4 **Magic Colors**. *1959*
Oil on canvas, 50 x 20"

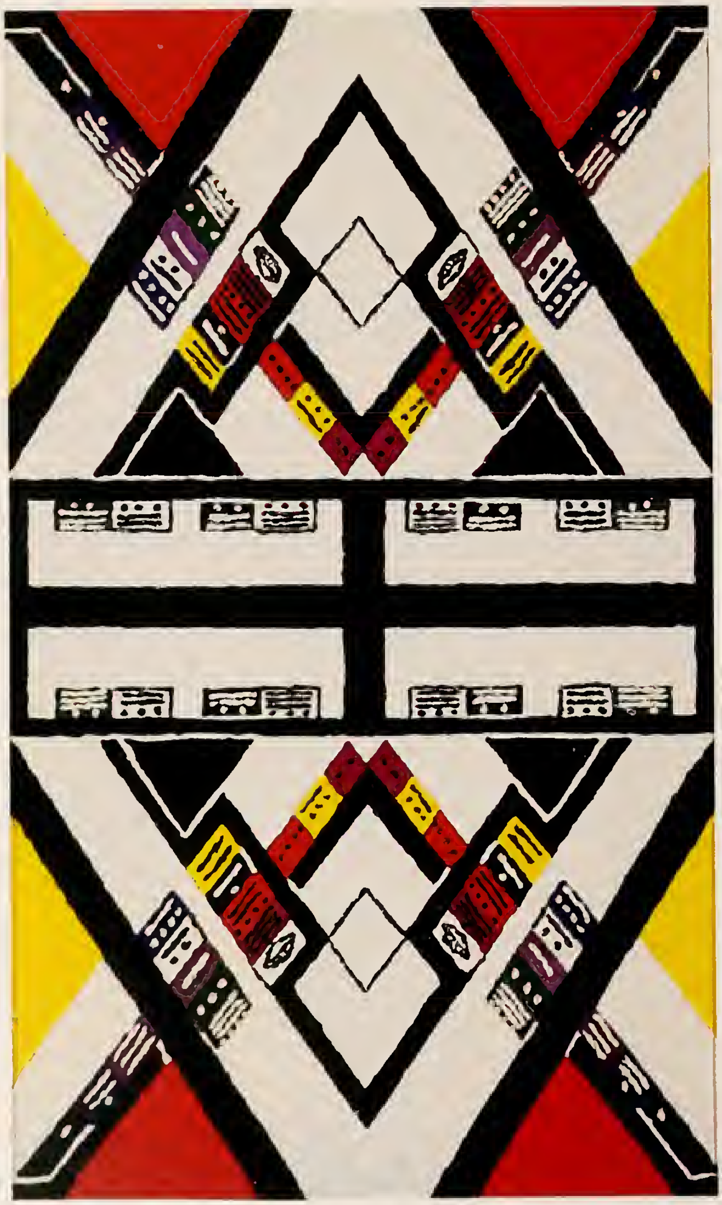


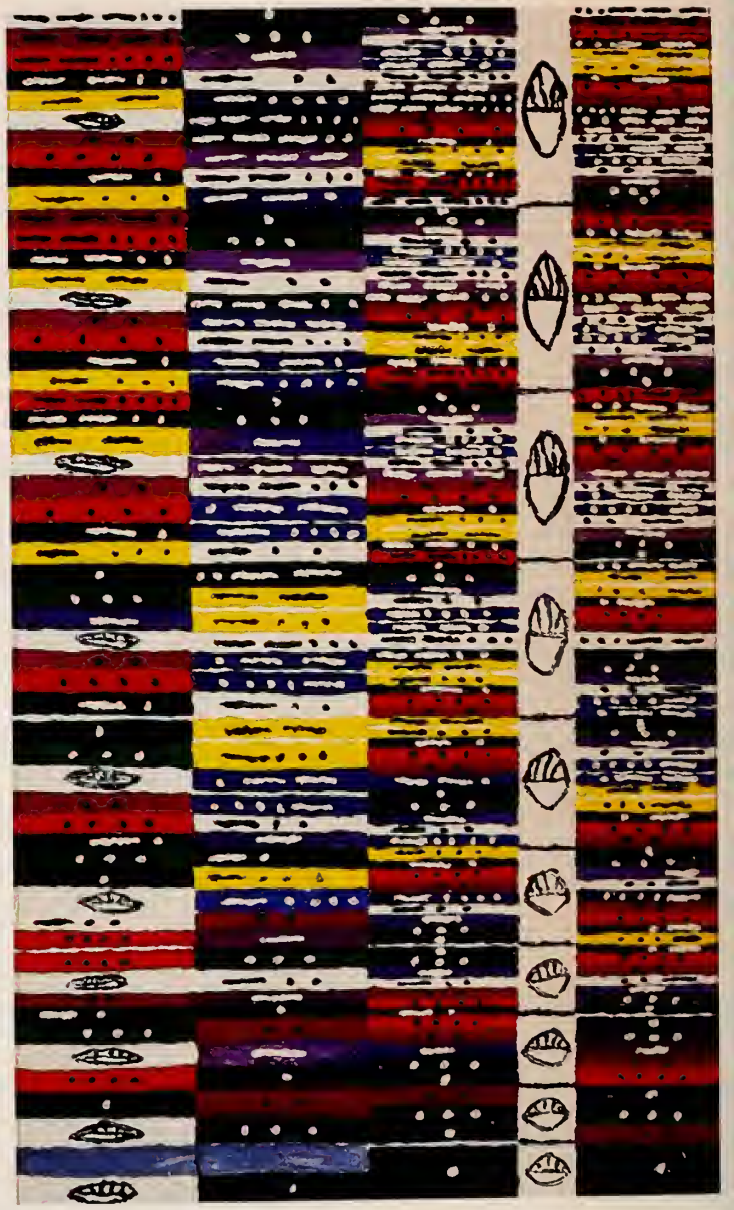
5 **Entoptic Color.** *1959*
Oil on canvas, 50 x 75"

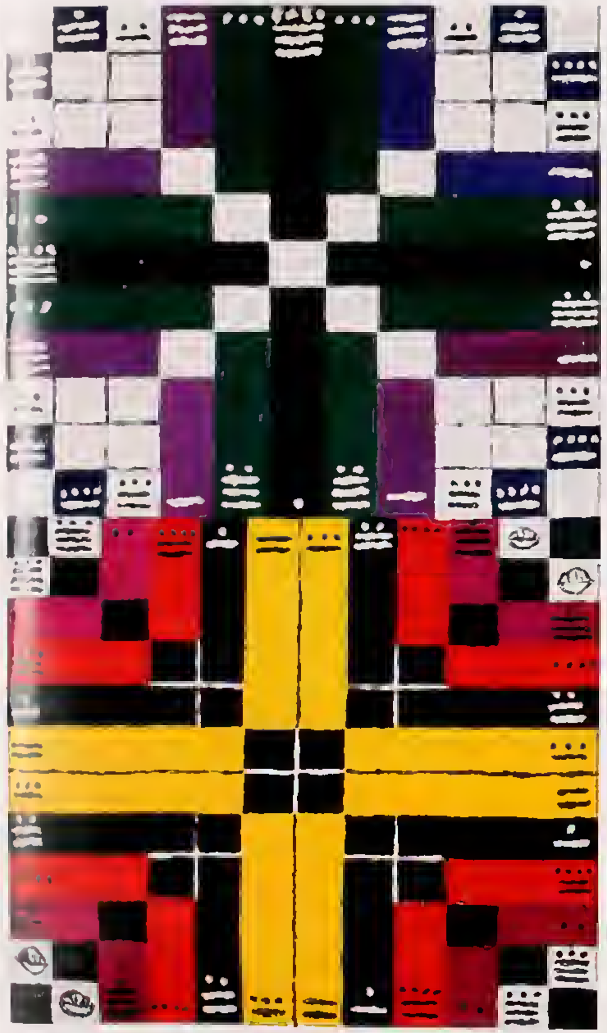


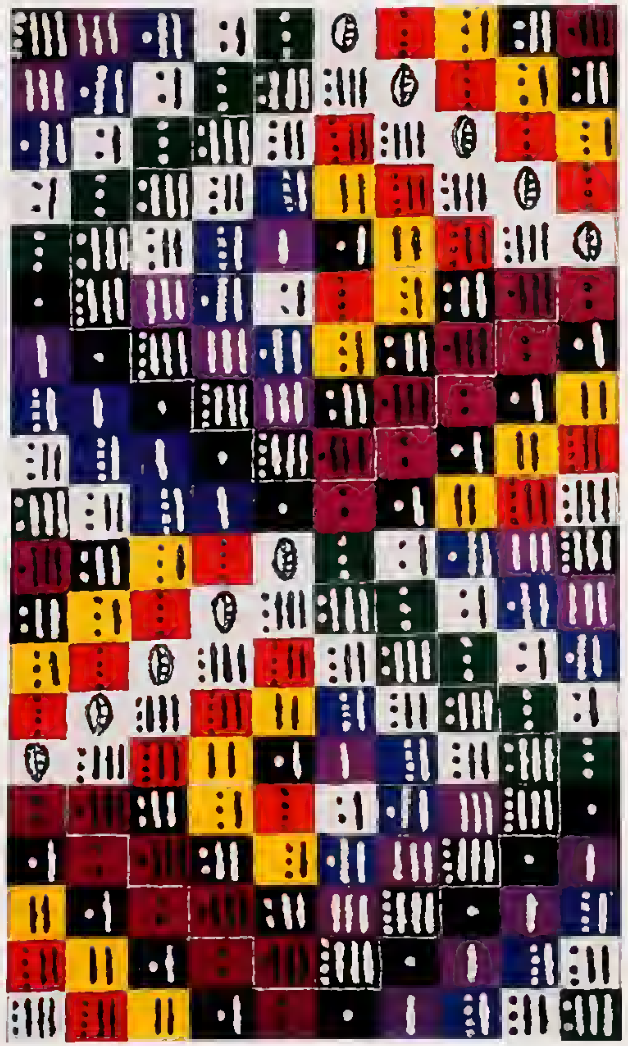
6 **Clockwork in the Sky**. *1959*
Oil on canvas, 72 x 46⅛"
Collection The Museum of Modern
Art, New York. Gift of Henry Luce III

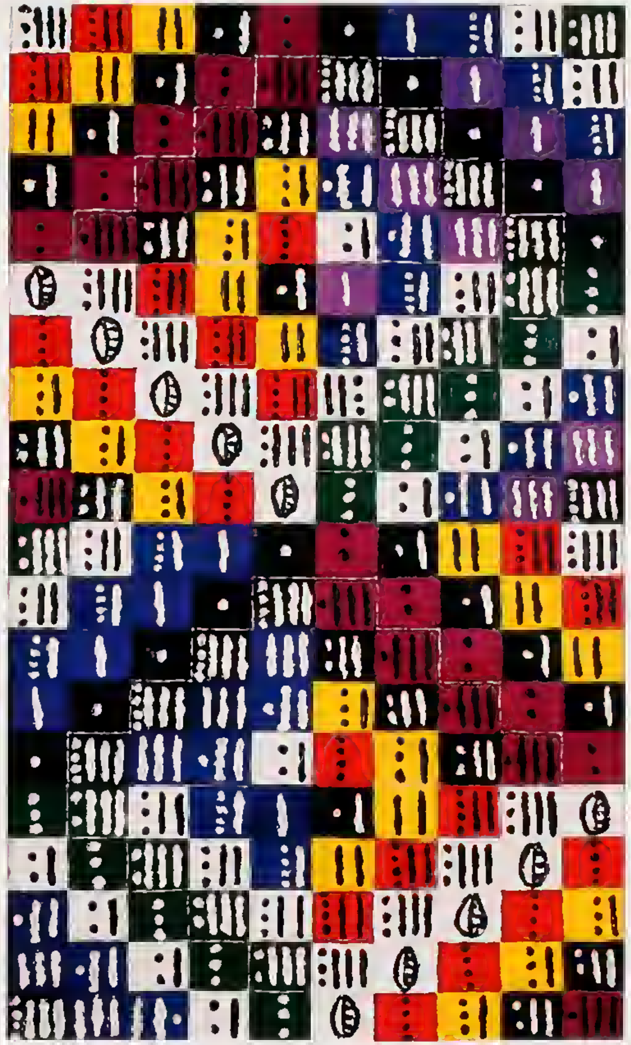


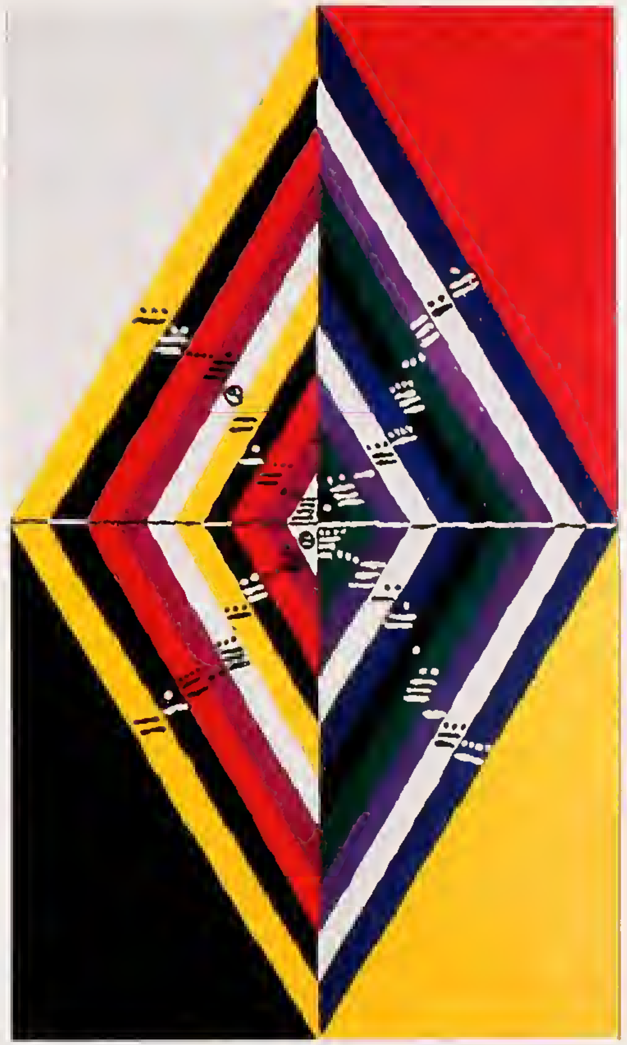




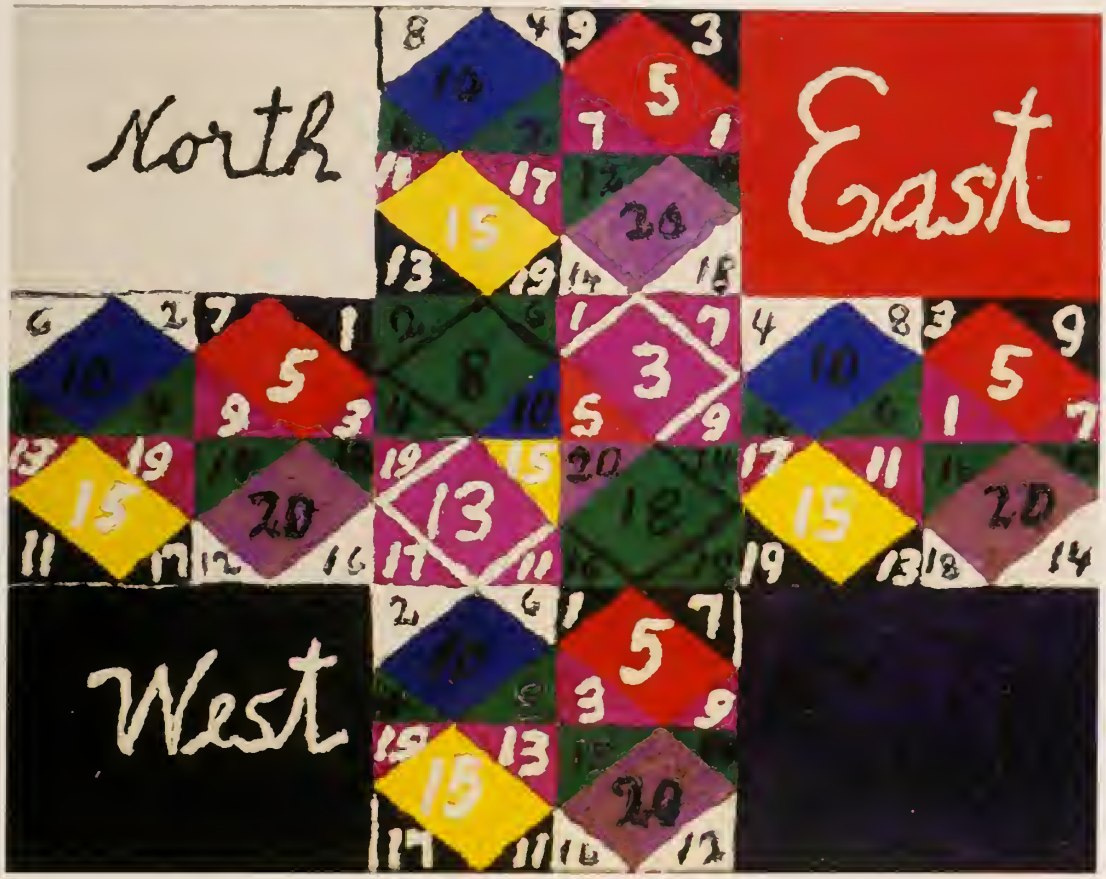


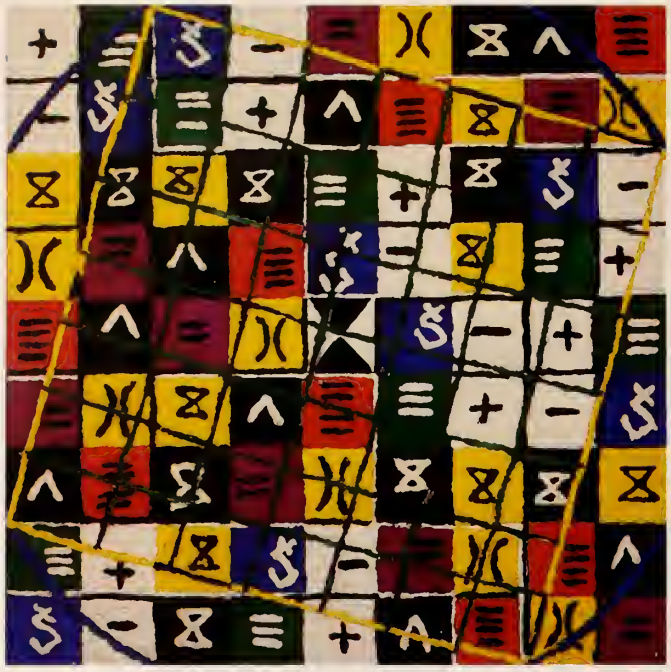


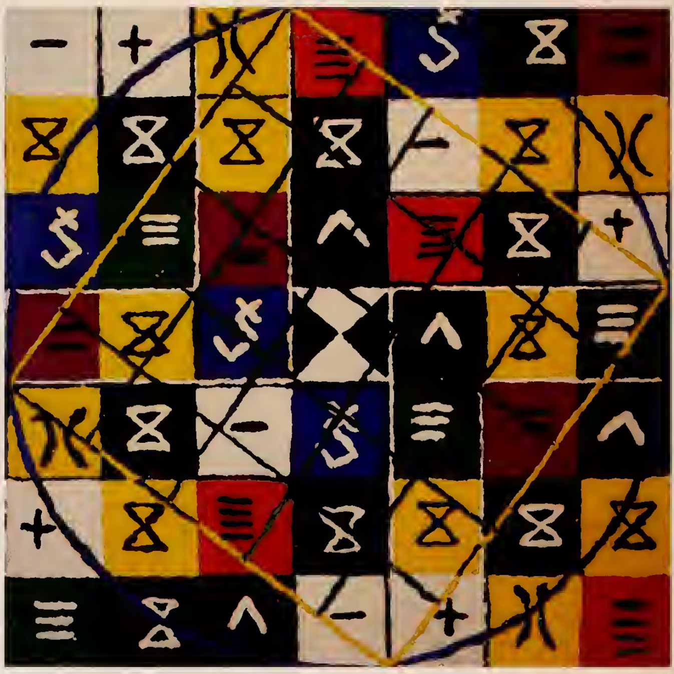


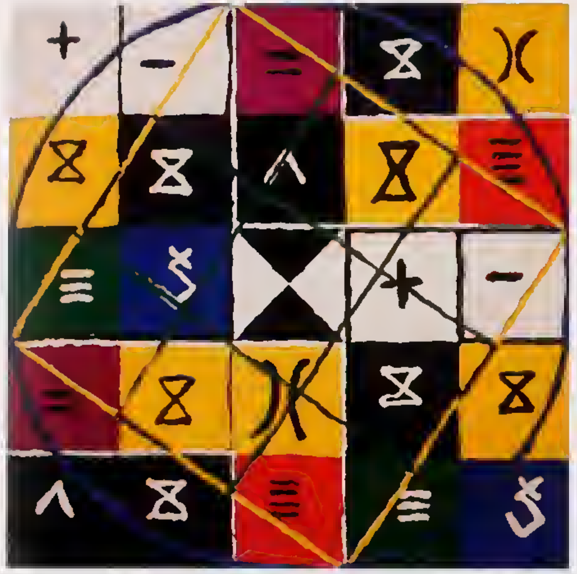


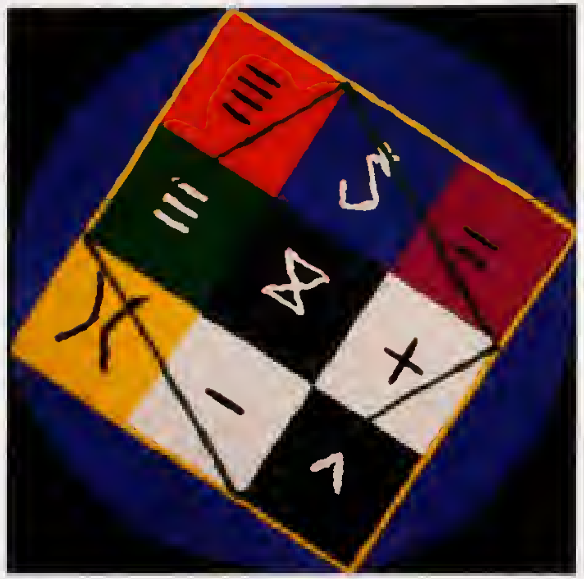
8 **Magic Square.** *1960*
Oil on canvas, 38 x 48"

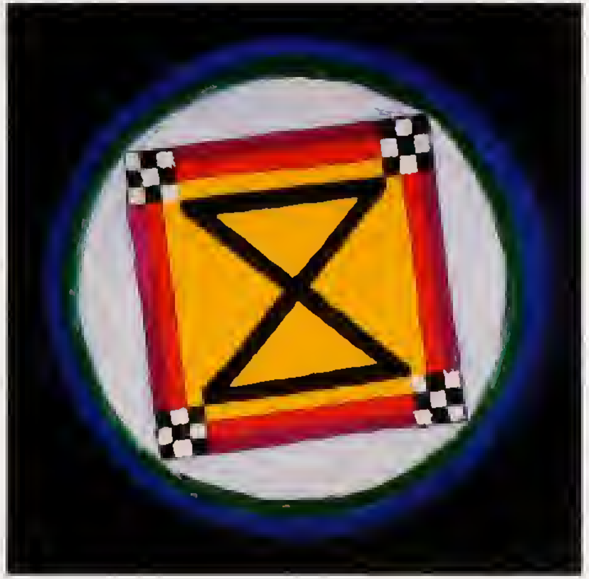

North
East
West



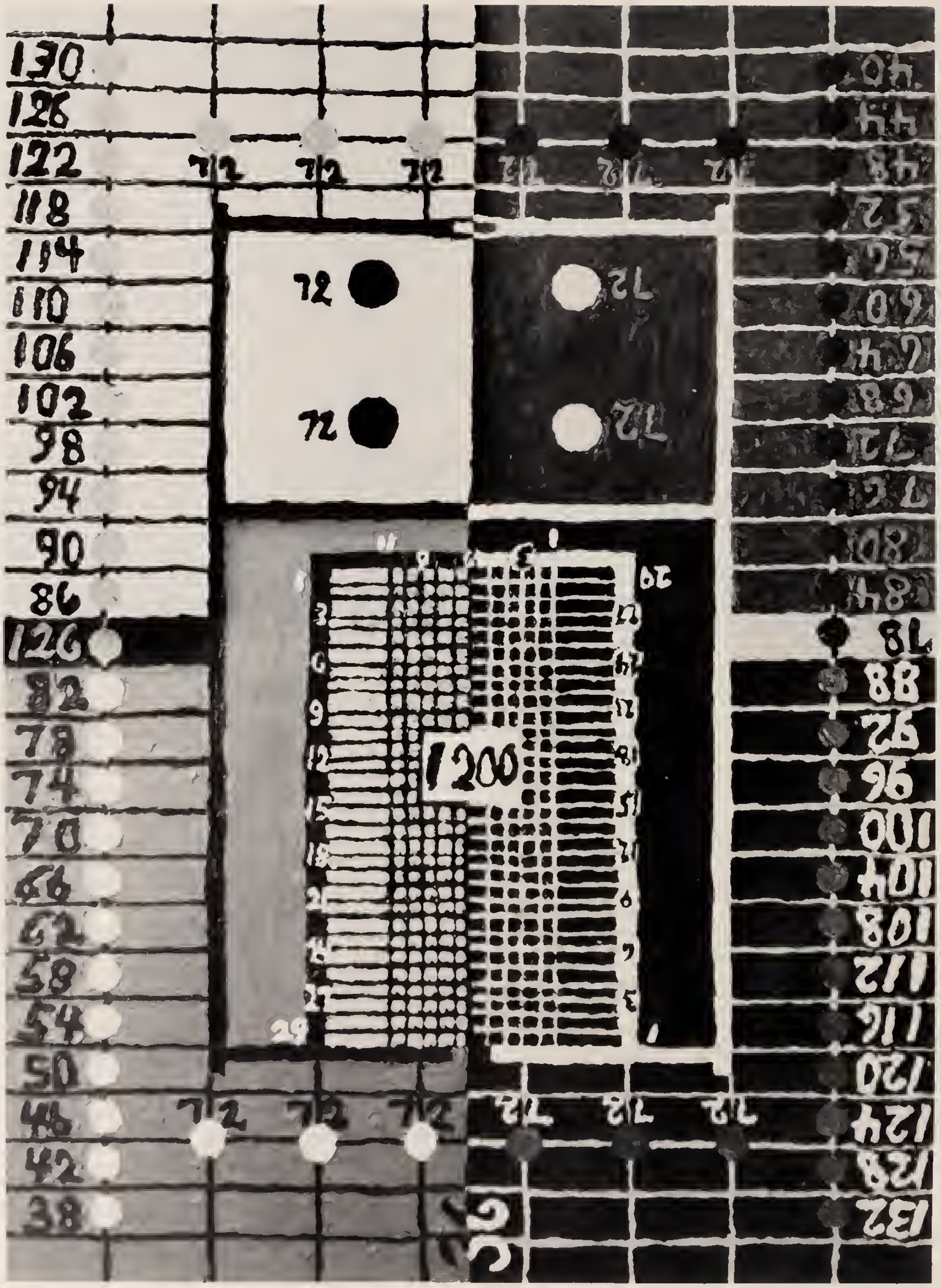








10 **Parthenon**. *1962*
Oil on canvas, 74 x 50"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.


130
126
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74
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58
54
50
46
42
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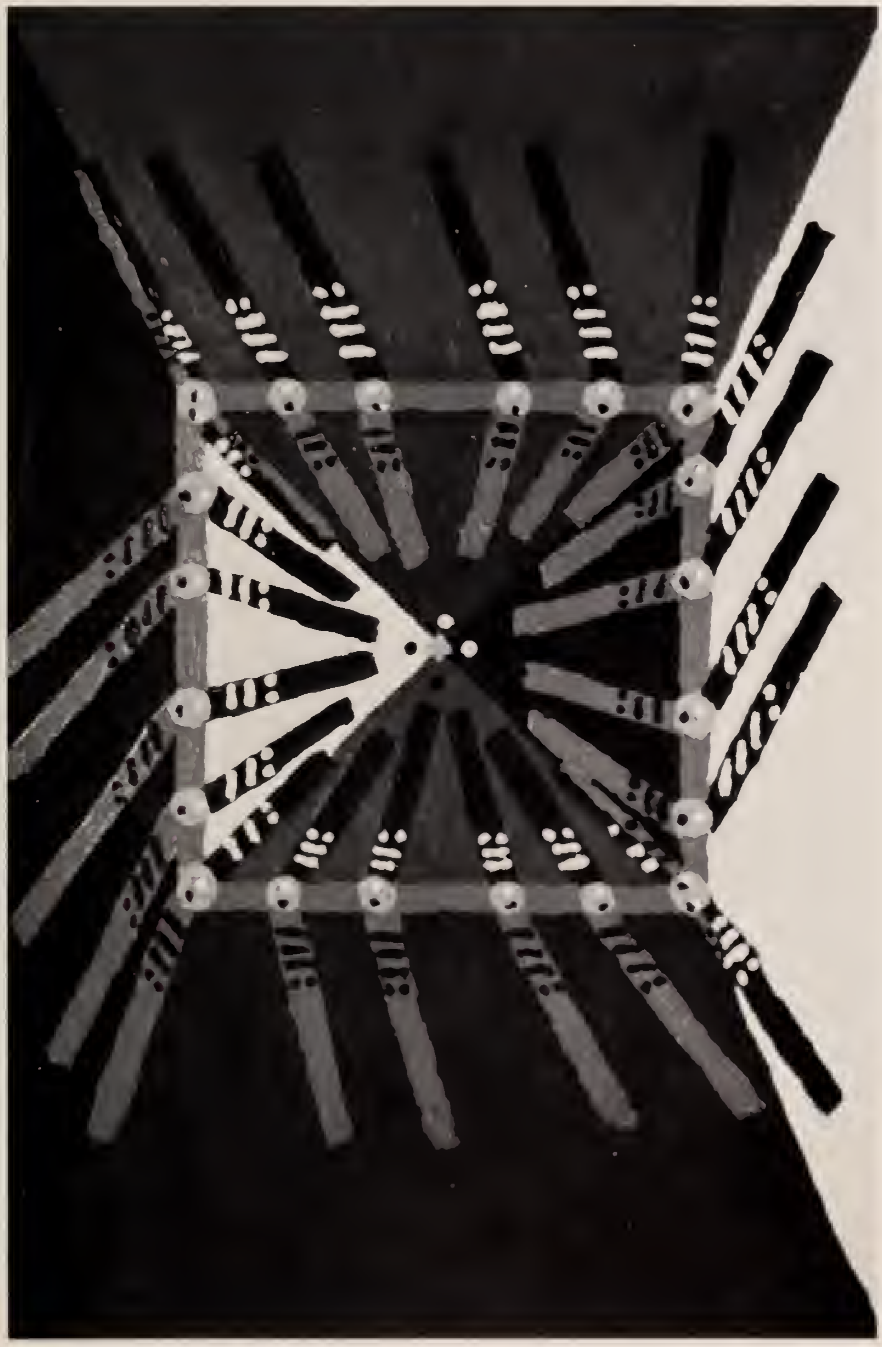
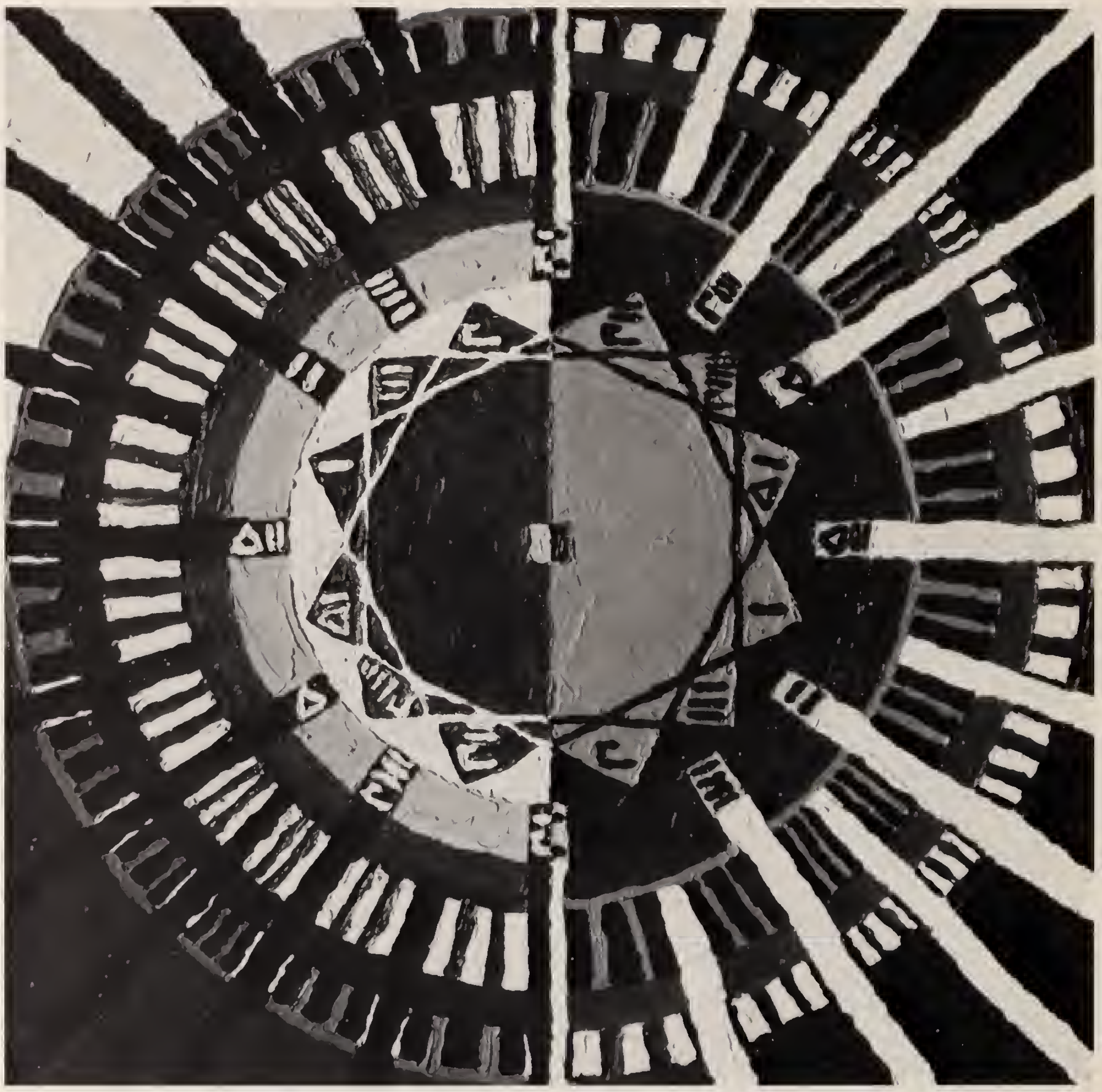
72
1200

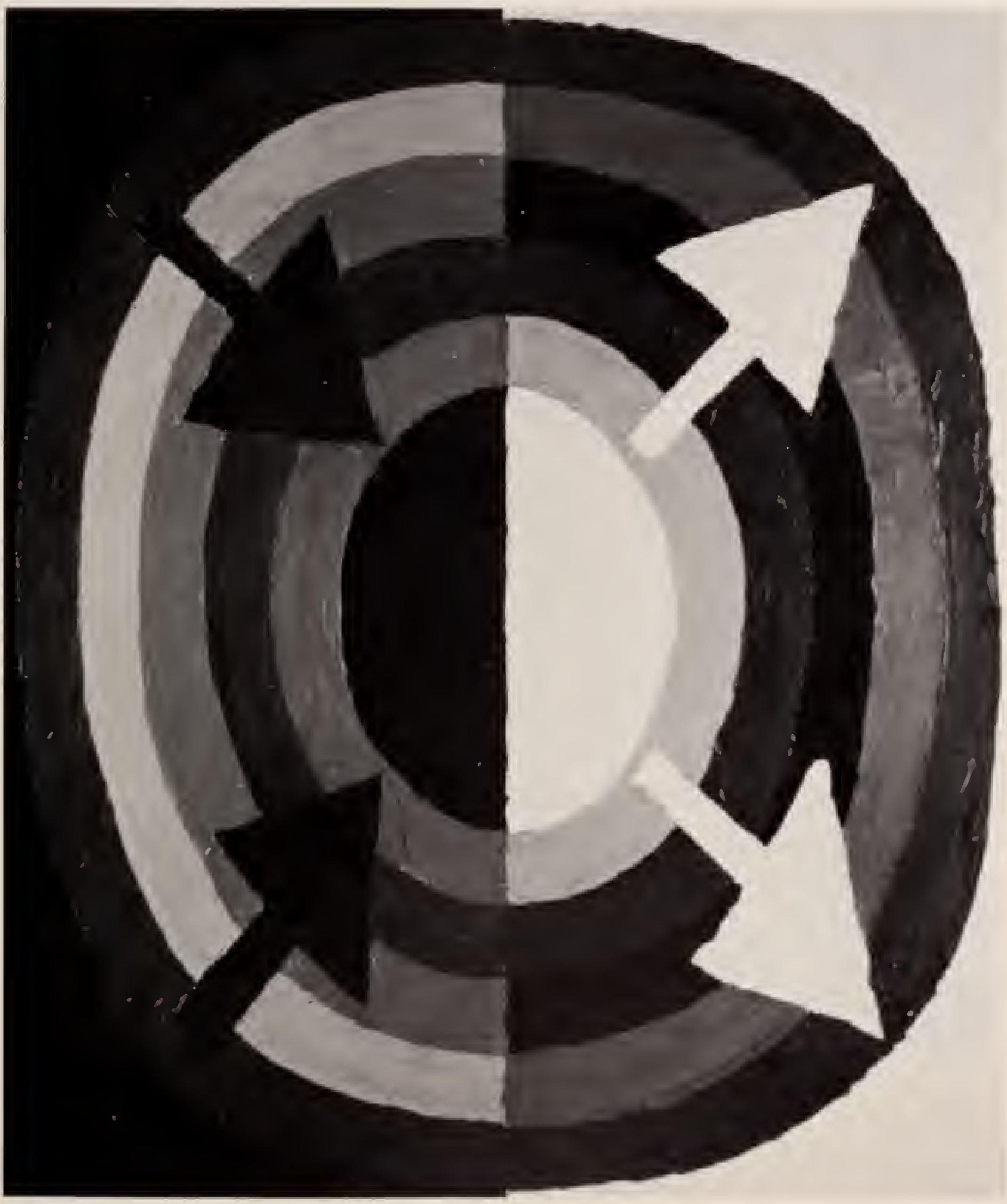
11 **Mayan Temple, Per IV, Teotihuacan.**
1962
Oil on canvas, 76 x 50"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.



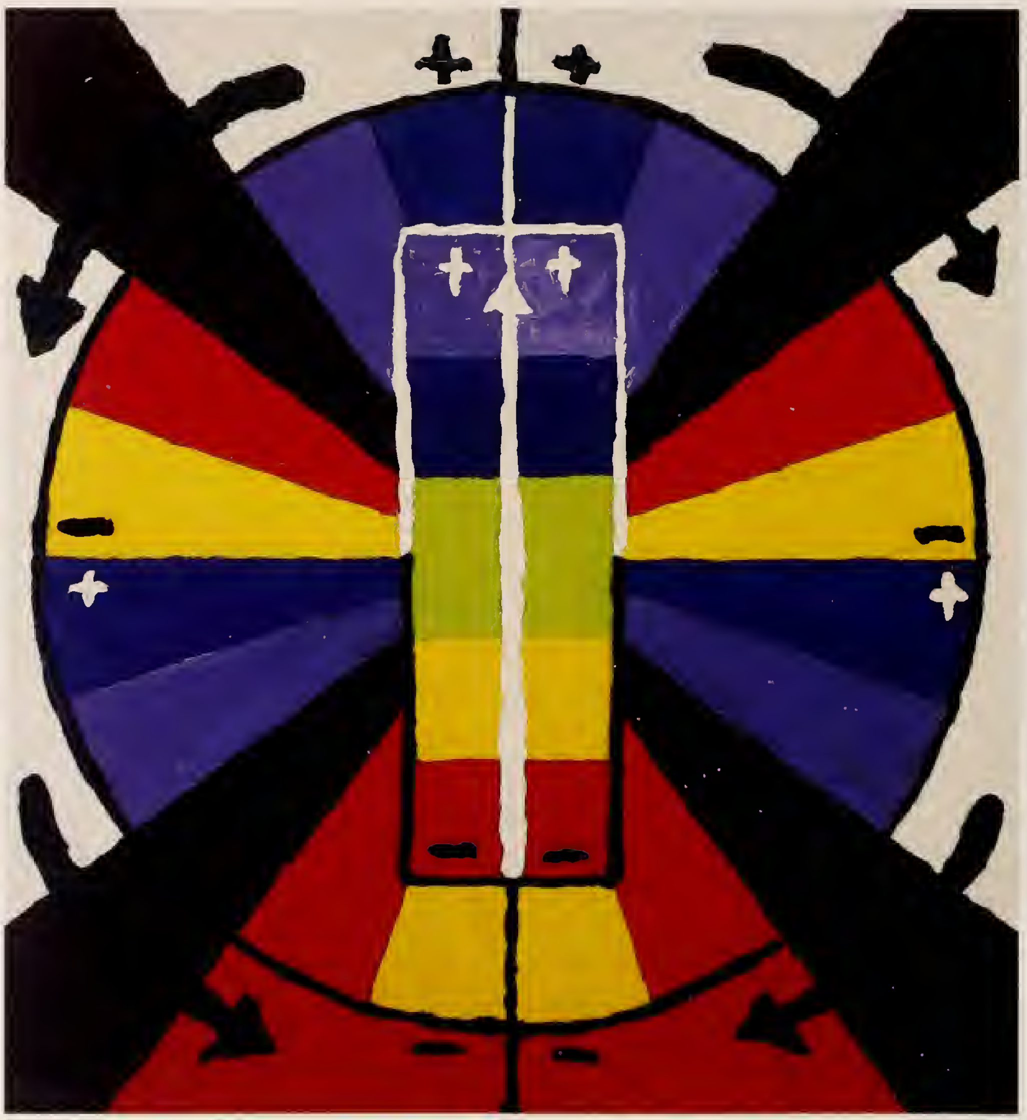
12 **The Virginity of Numbers.** *1962*
Oil on canvas, 54 x 54"
The Nan and Stephen Swid Collection



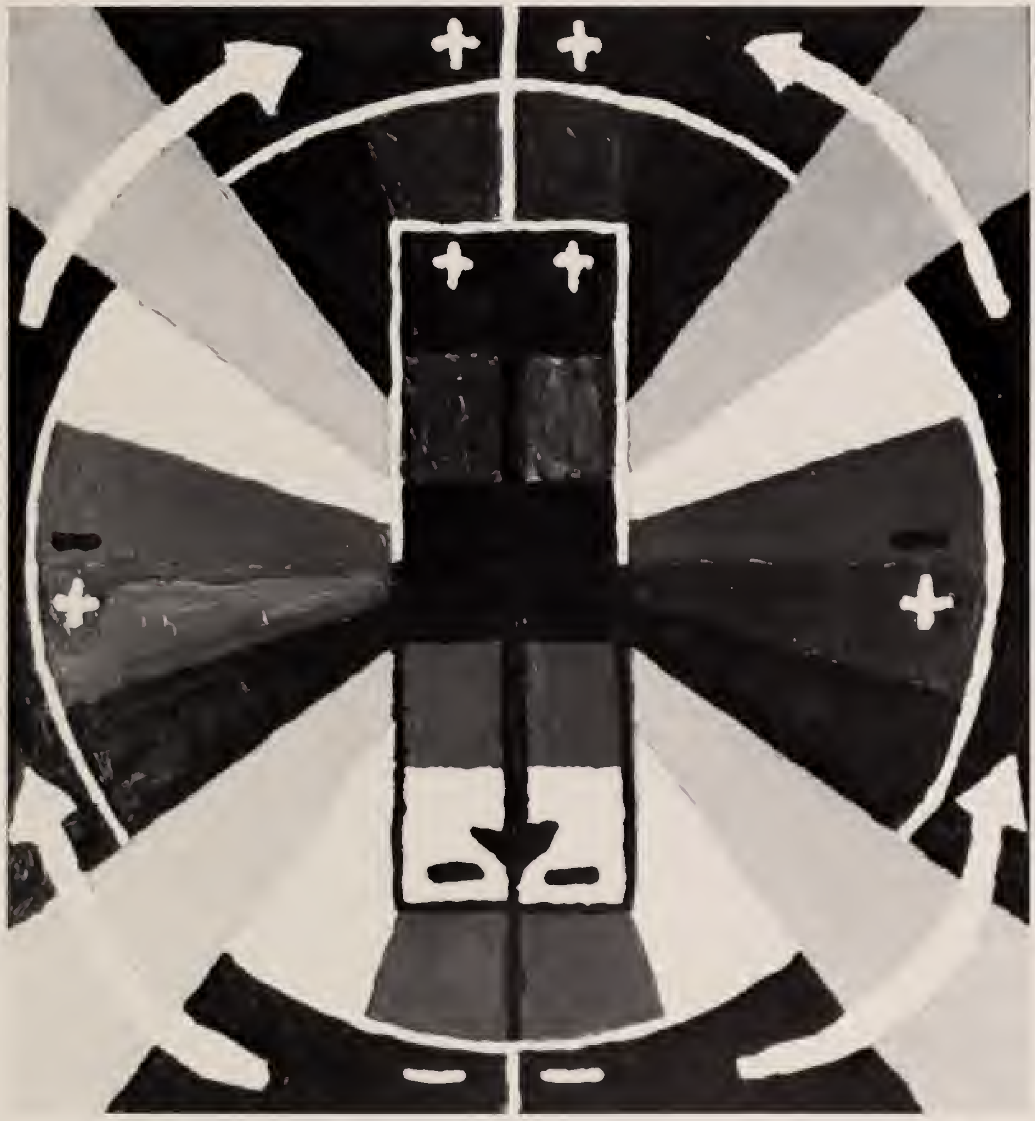
13 **Color's Direction**. *1962*
Oil on canvas, 64¼ x 53¾"
Collection William J. Hokin,
Chicago



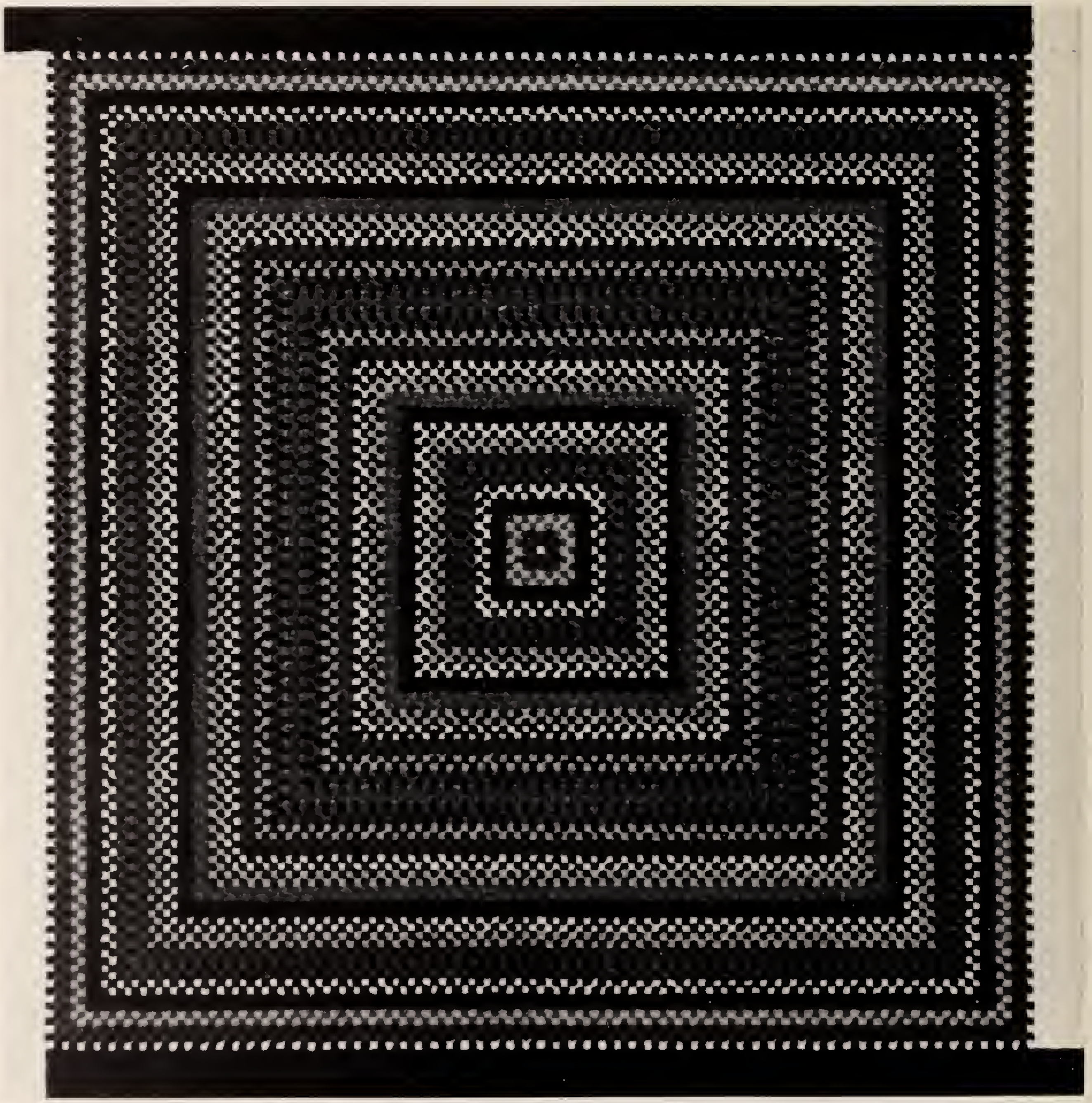
14 **East Sun. Perpetual Motion.**
December 29, 1962
Oil on canvas, 51 x 46"



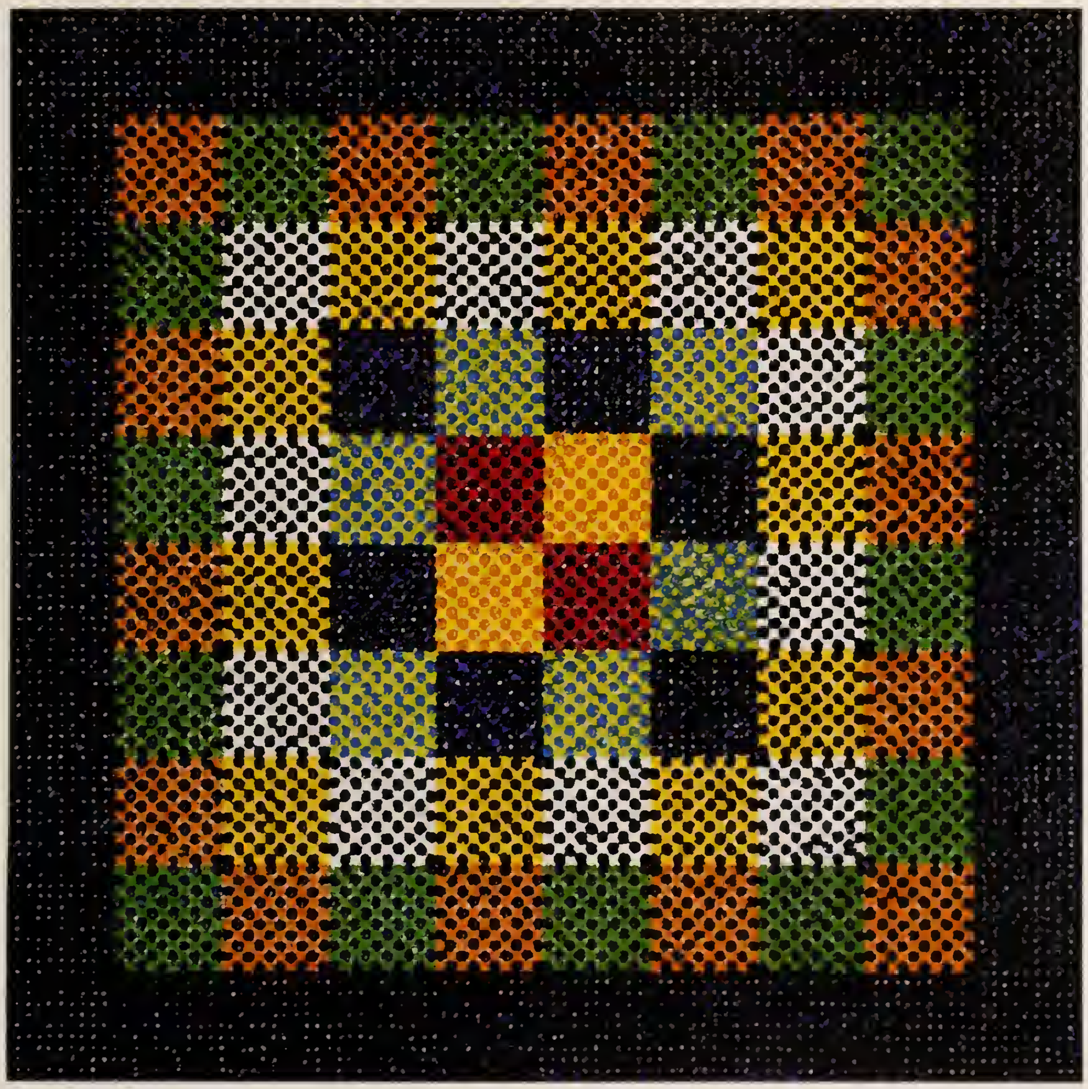
15 **West Sun. Perpetual Motion.** *1962*
Oil on canvas, 51 x 46"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.

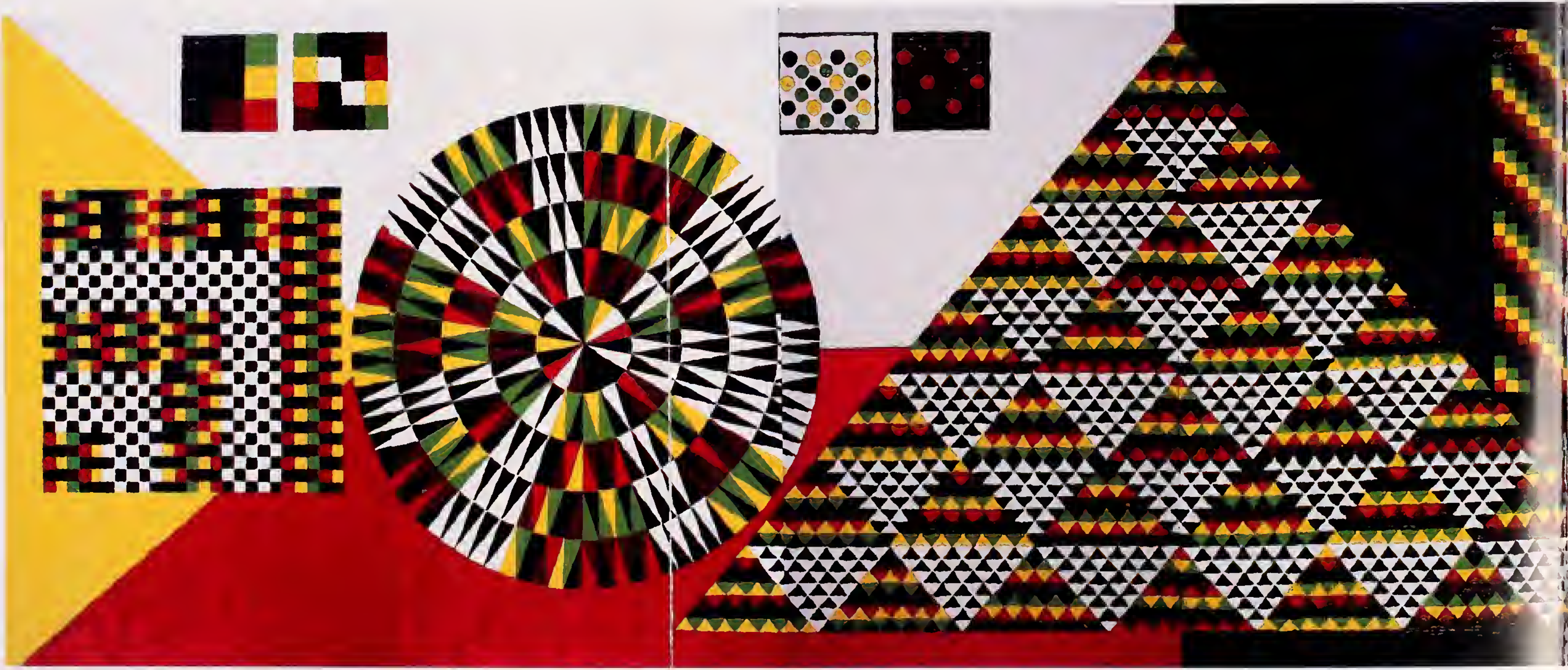


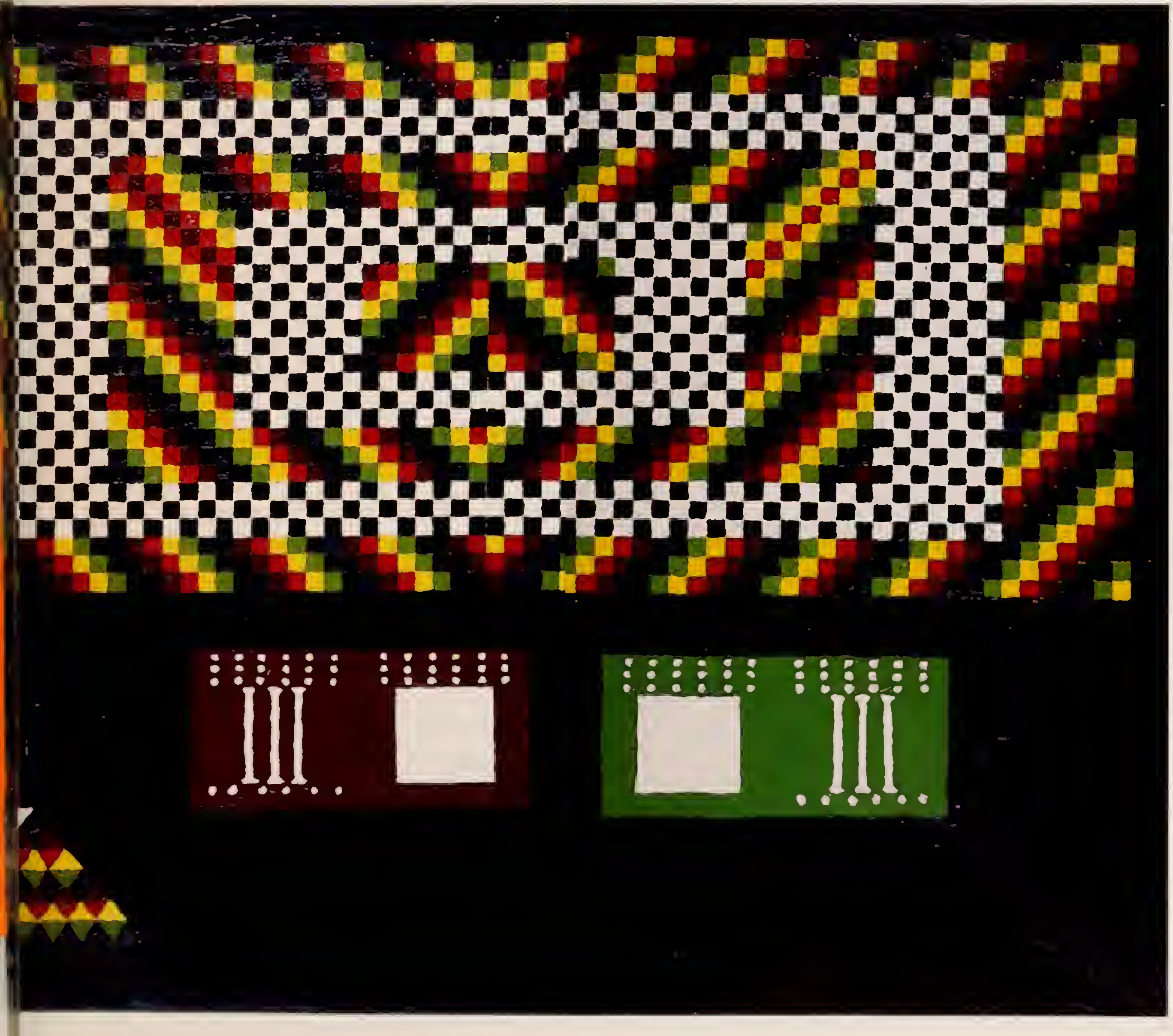
16 **Reciprocal Relation, Per I, Per II.** *1969*
Oil on canvas, 71 x 71"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.



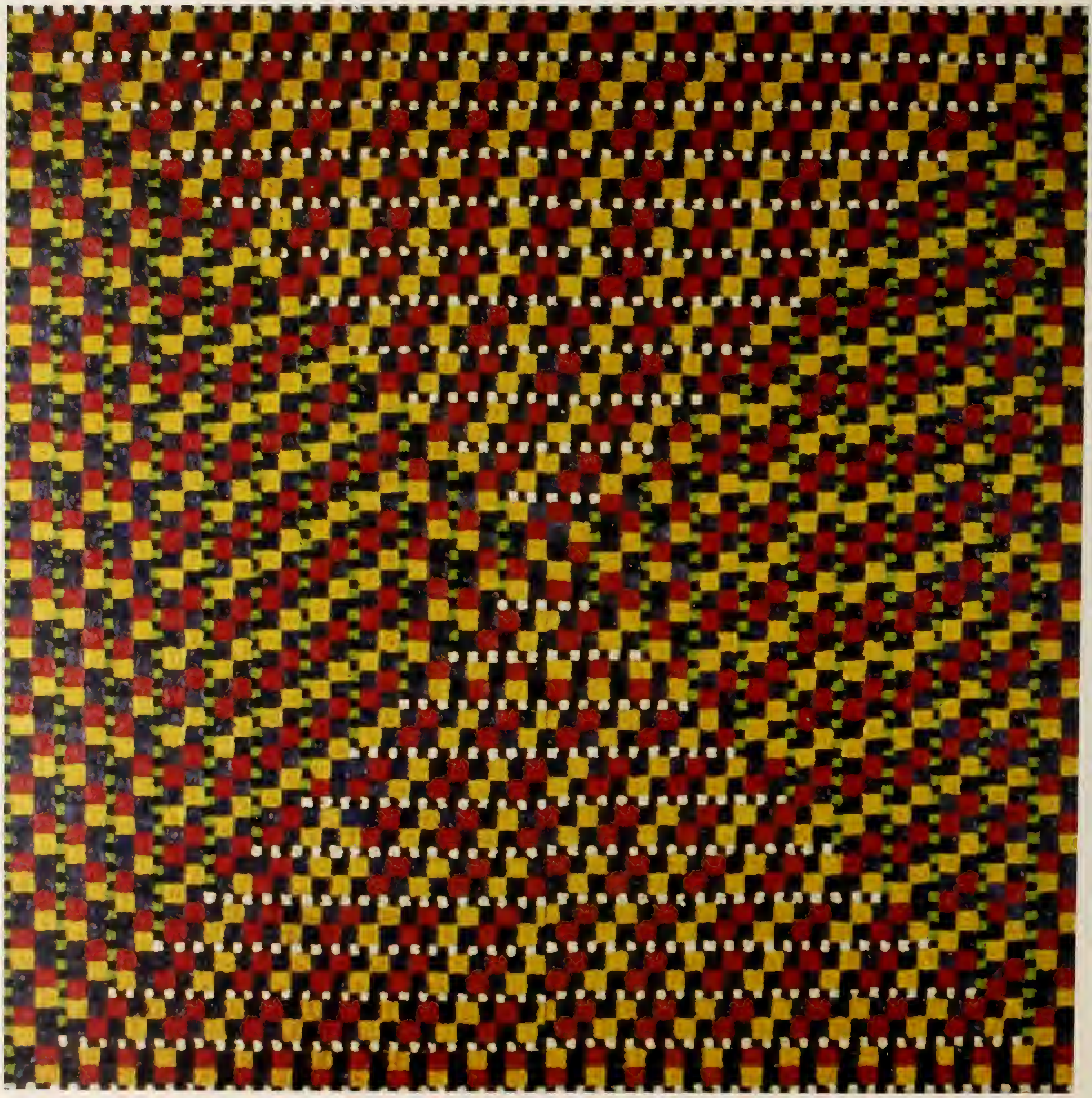
17 **Uaxactun**. *1964*
Oil on canvas, 50¼ x 50¼"
Collection Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum, New York



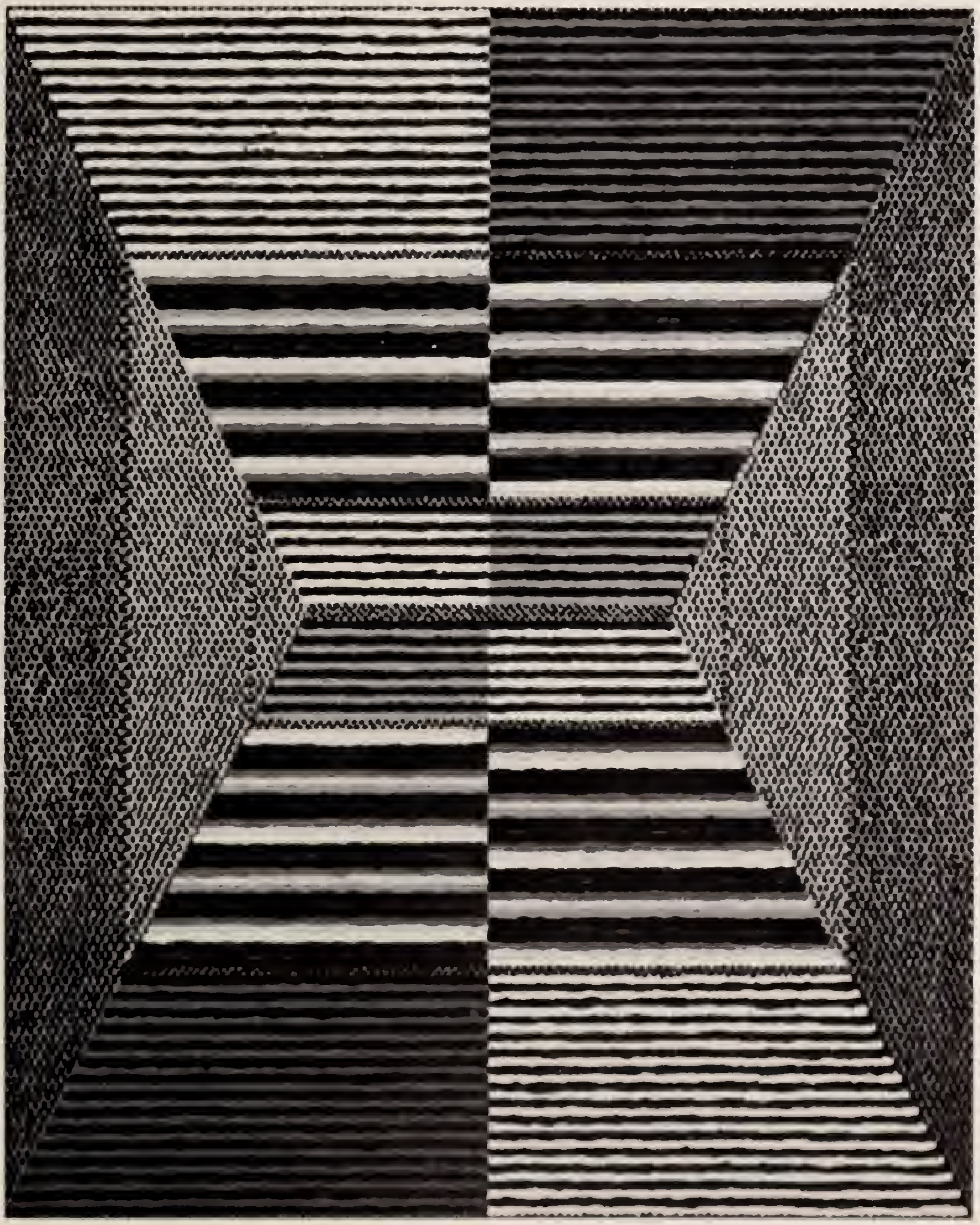




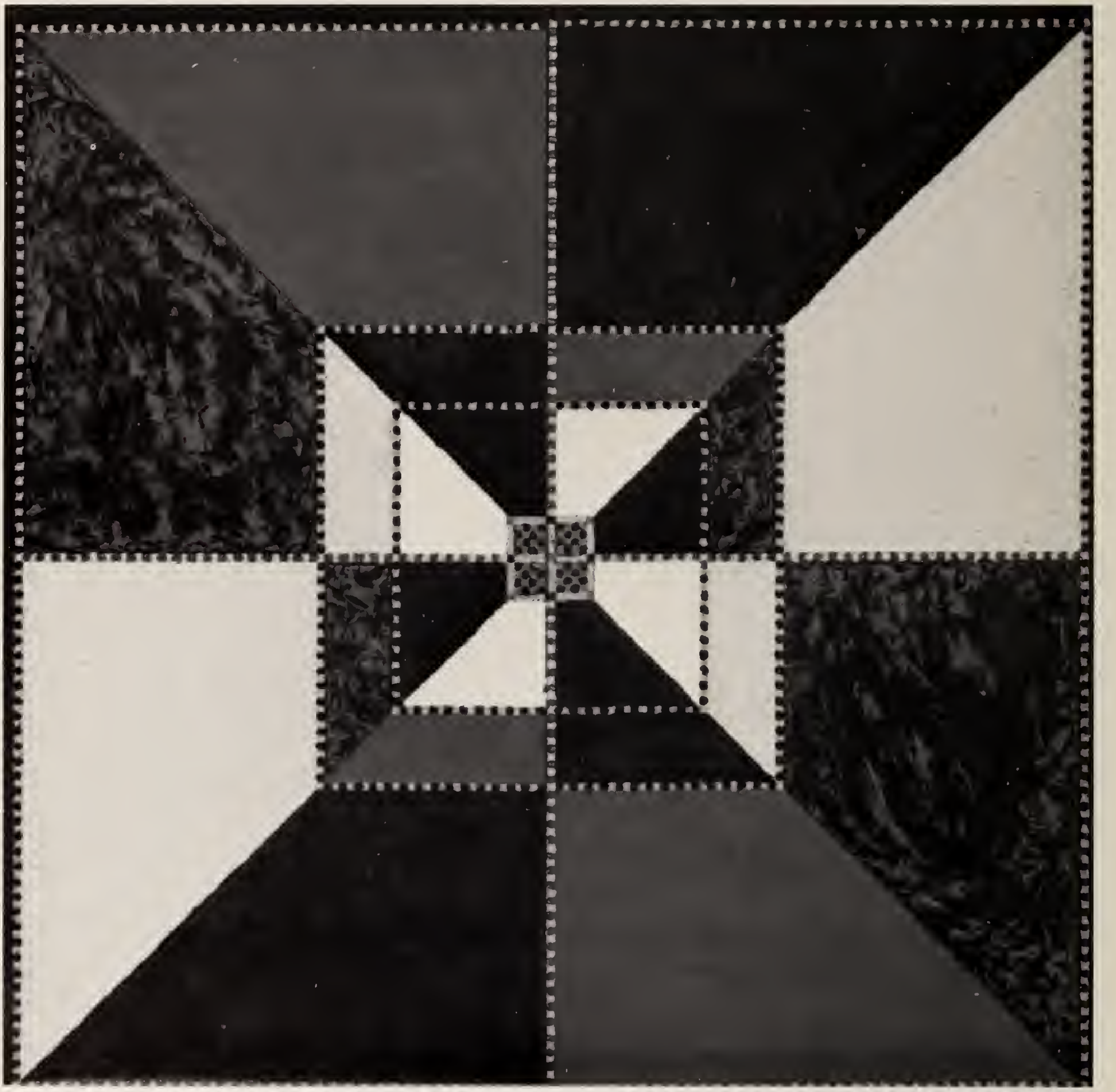
19 **Das Bild der Sonne: The Square's Duality, Progression and Growth.** *1966*
Oil on canvas, 2 panels, each 84 x 42"
Collection Michael Ovitz, Los Angeles



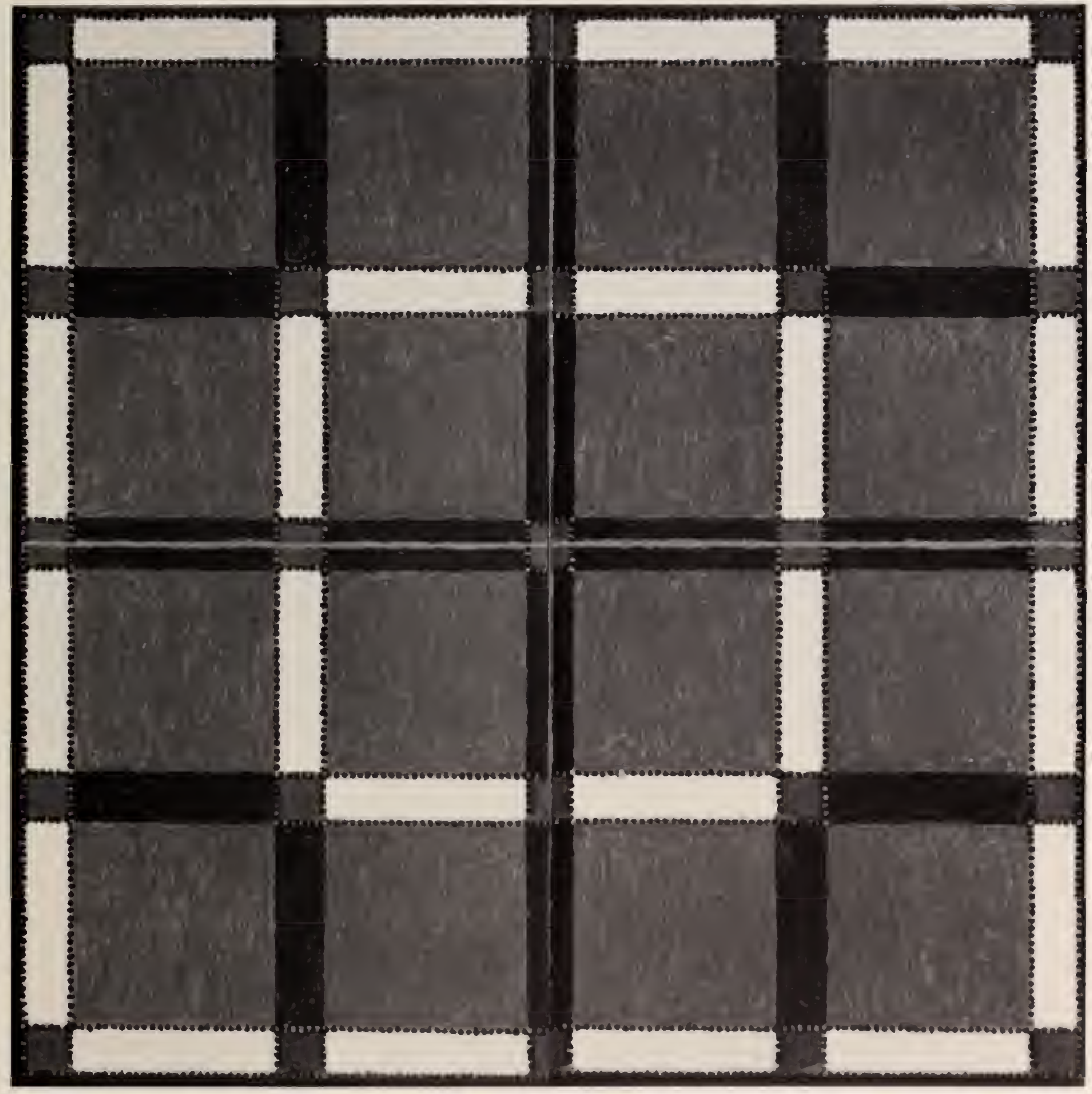
20 **Acroatic Rectangle, Per XIII.** *1967*
Oil on canvas, 74 x 59"



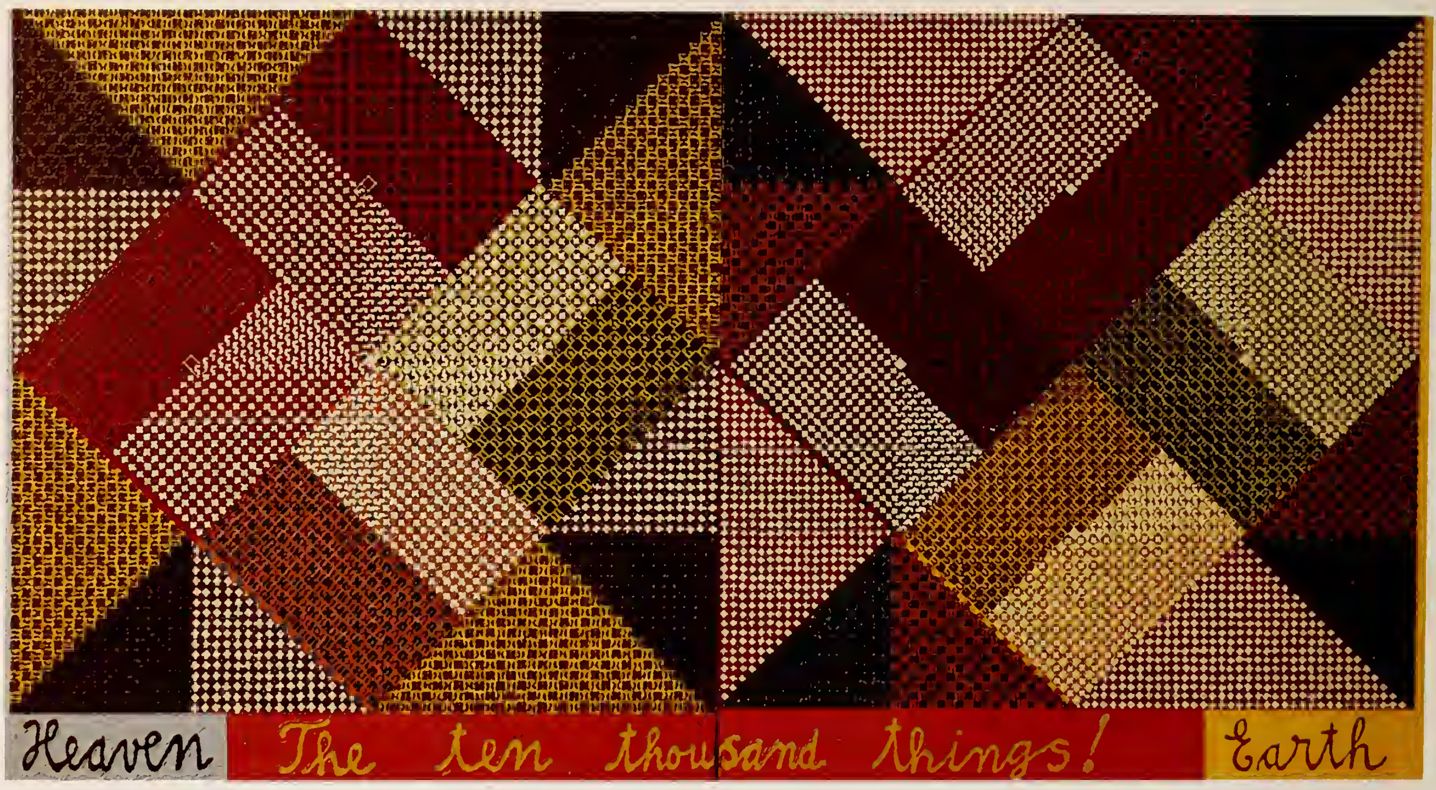
21 **Square II Growth.** *1968*
Oil on canvas, 72 x 72"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery



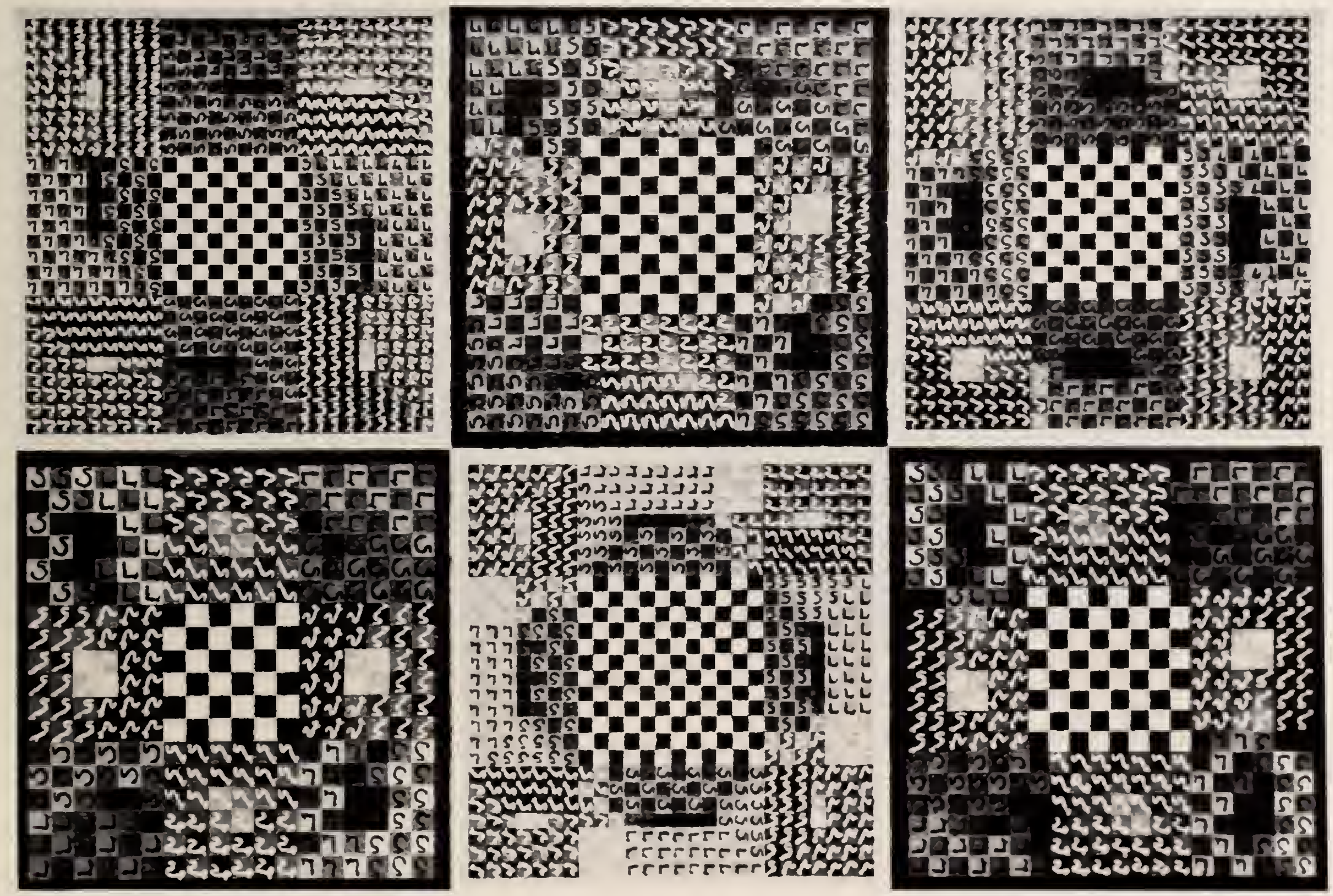
22 **Unity in the Square 13**. *1968*
Oil on canvas, 2 panels, each 70 x 35"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery



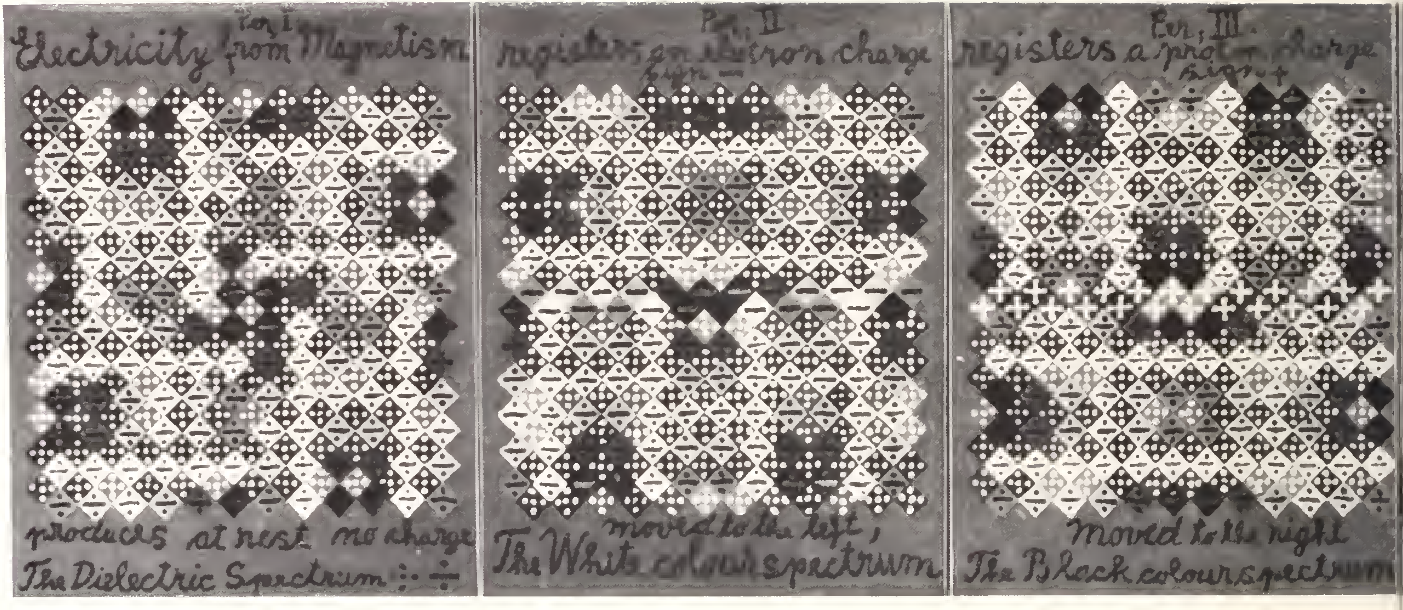
23 **The Ten Thousand Things**. *1972*
Oil on canvas, 2 panels, each 63½ x 69"
Collection Elizabeth B. Blake

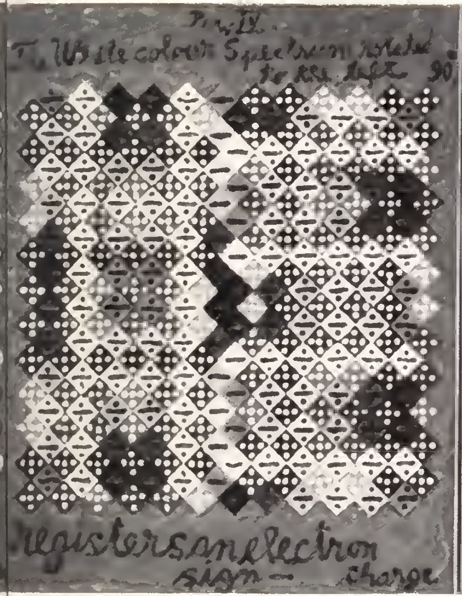

Heaven
The ten thousand things!
Earth

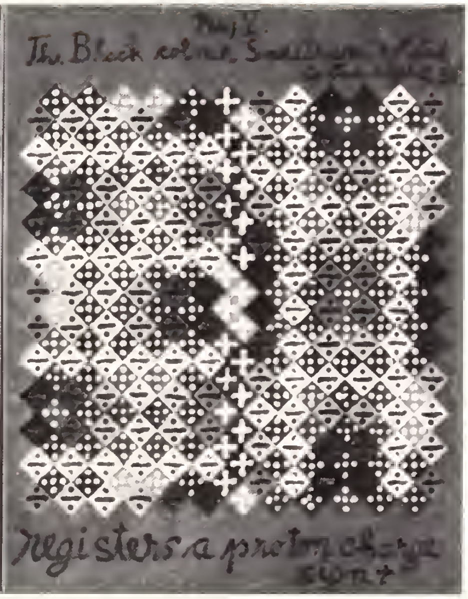
24 **The Doric Order.** *1972*
Oil on canvas, 78 x 117"
Collection Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Fellows of the Museum of Art Fund



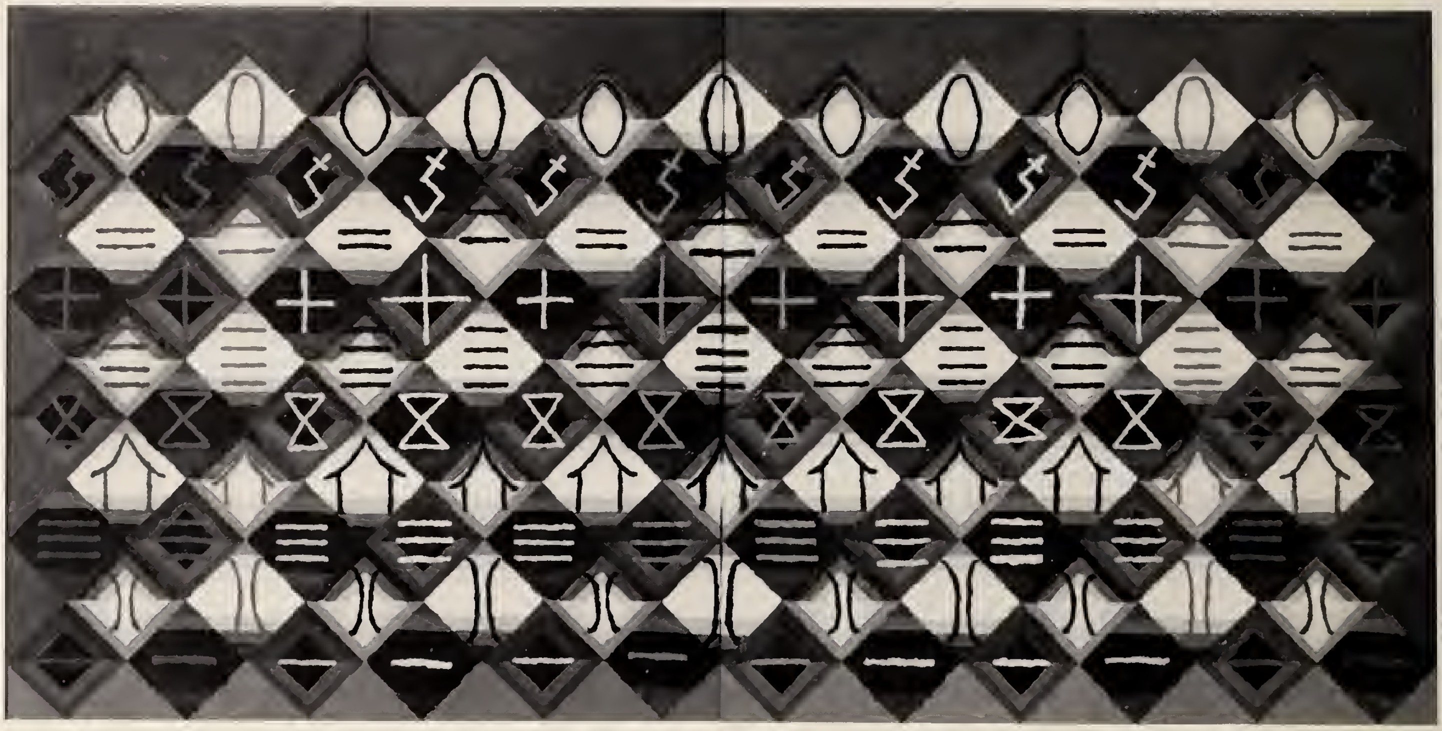
25 **Oscillating Spectrum.** *1975*
Oil on canvas, 5 panels, each 51 x 40"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.


Per, I.
Electricity from Magnetism
produces at rest no charge
The Dielectric Spectrum ÷ ÷
Per, II.
registers an electron charge
sign —
moved to the left;
The White colour spectrum
Per, III.
registers a proton charge
sign +
moved to the right
The Black colour spectrum

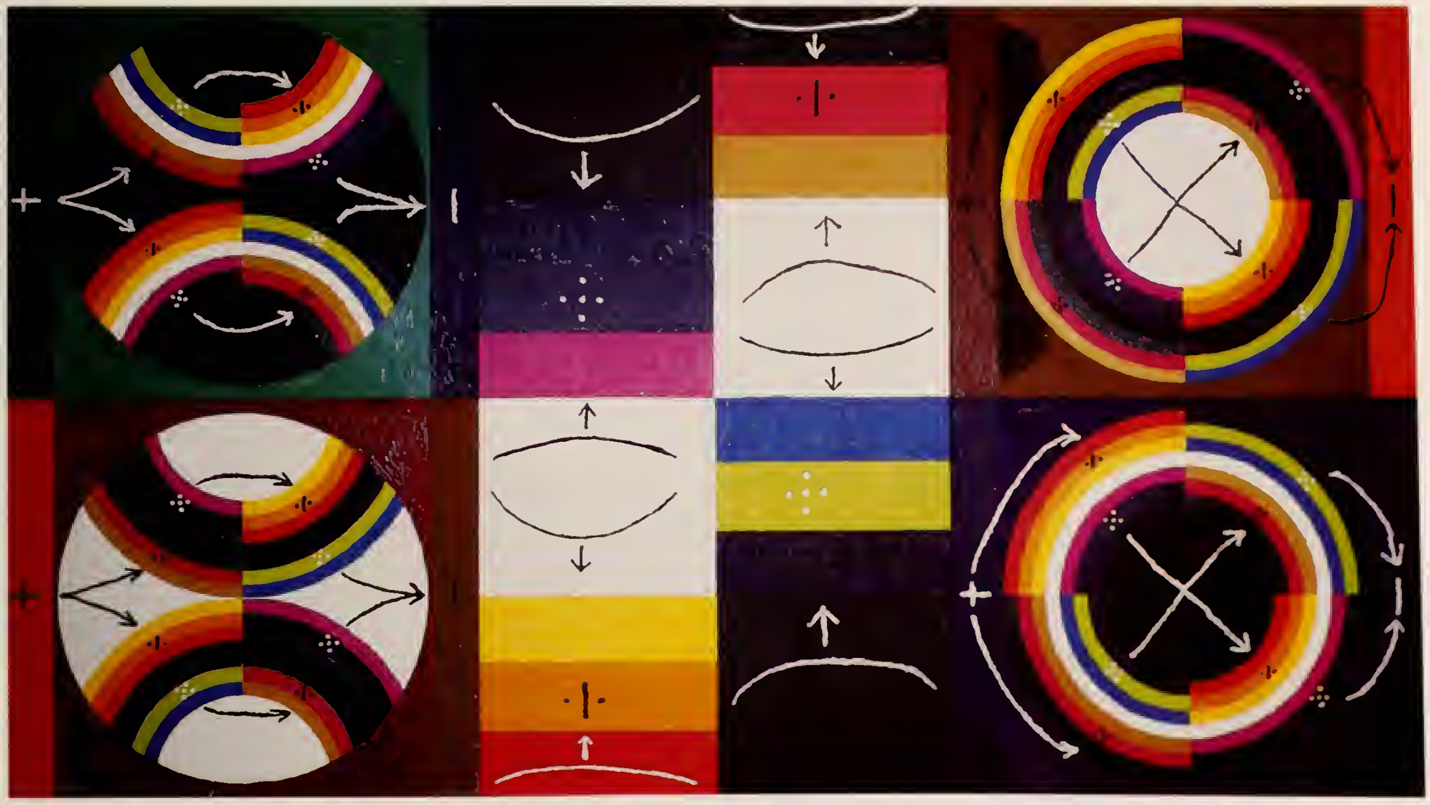

Pl. IX.
The White colour Spectrum rotated
to the left 90°
registers an electron
sign – charge


Pl. X.
The Black colour Spectrum rotated
registers a proton charge
sign +

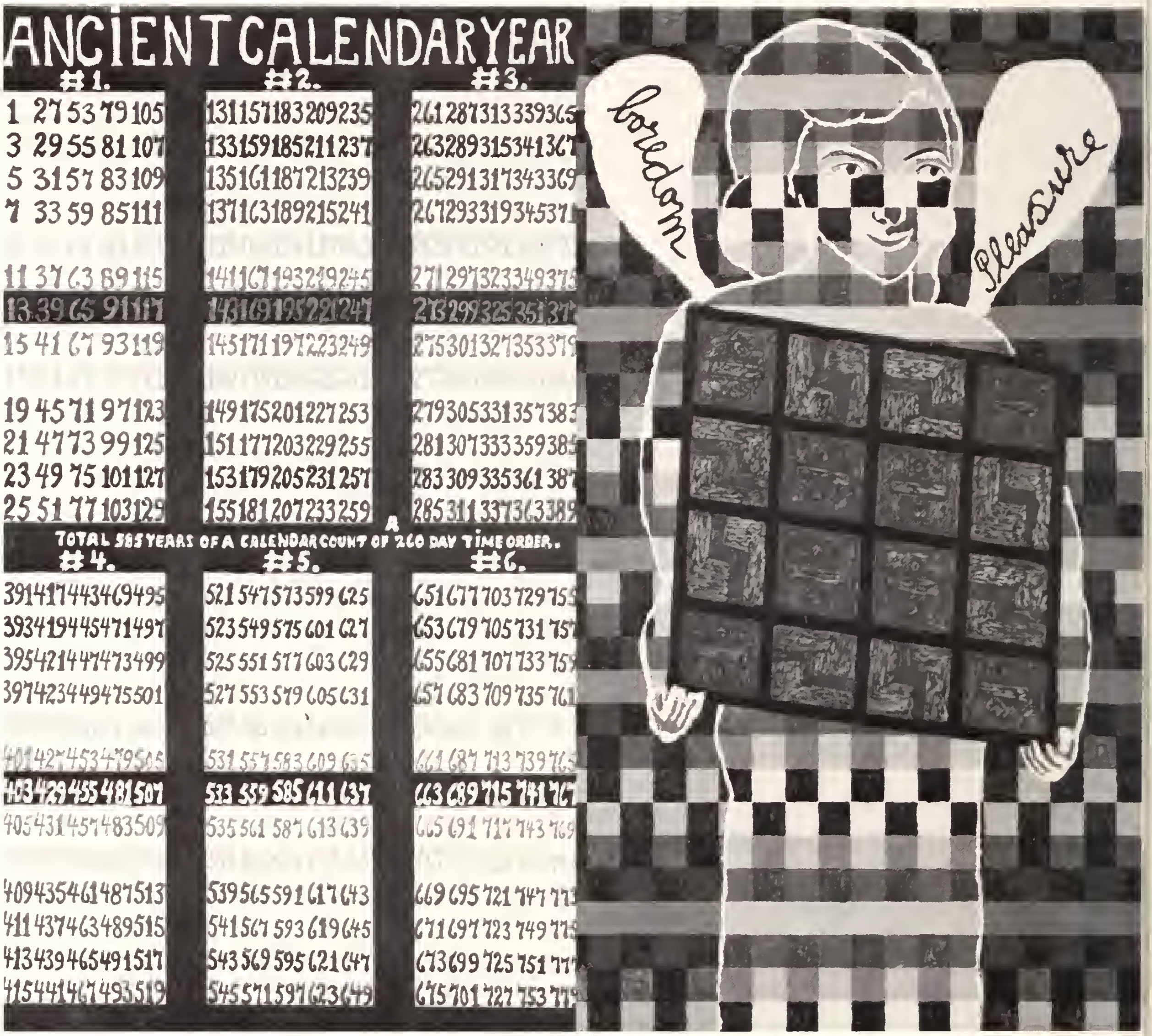
26 **A la fin de l'automne.** *1975*
Oil on canvas, 2 panels, each 74 x 74"

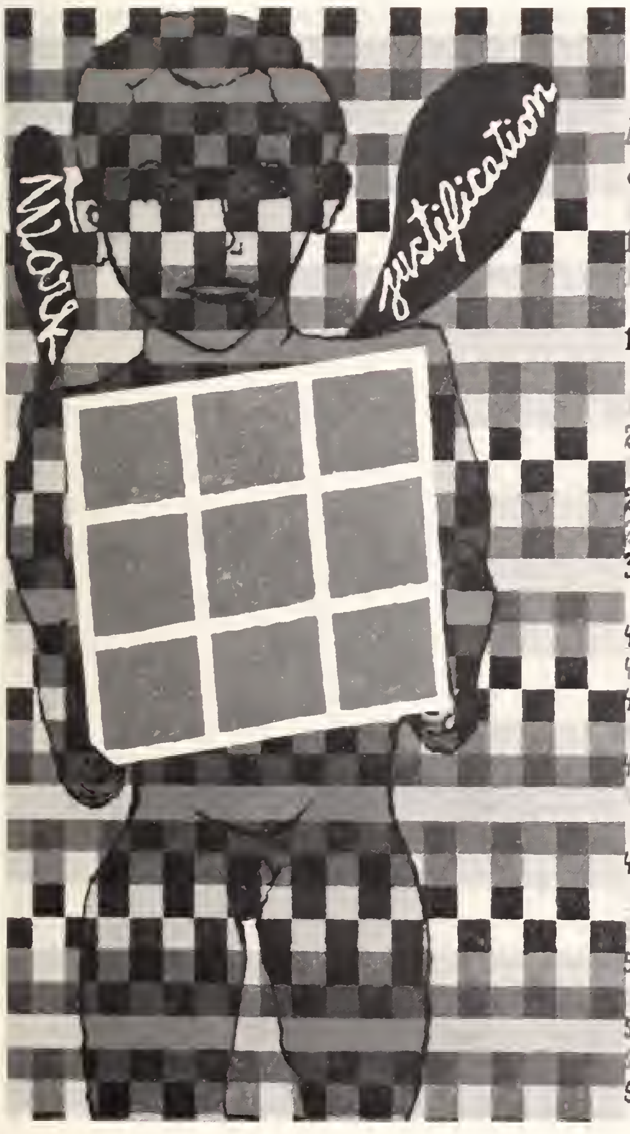


27 **Physical Optics**. *1975*
Oil on canvas, 3 panels, each 86 x 51"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery



28 **Girl and Boy and Numbers**. *1978*
Oil on canvas, 4 panels, each 86 x 48"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery


ANCIENT CALENDAR YEAR
#1.
#2.
#3.
1 27 53 79 105
3 29 55 81 107
5 31 57 83 109
7 33 59 85 111
11 37 63 89 115
13 39 65 91 117
15 41 67 93 119
19 45 71 97 123
21 47 73 99 125
23 49 75 101 127
25 51 77 103 129
131 157 183 209 235
133 159 185 211 237
135 161 187 213 239
137 163 189 215 241
141 167 193 219 245
143 169 195 221 247
145 171 197 223 249
149 175 201 227 253
151 177 203 229 255
153 179 205 231 257
155 181 207 233 259
261 287 313 339 365
263 289 315 341 367
265 291 317 343 369
267 293 319 345 371
271 297 323 349 375
273 299 325 351 377
275 301 327 353 379
279 305 331 357 383
281 307 333 359 385
283 309 335 361 387
285 311 337 363 389
A
TOTAL 585 YEARS OF A CALENDAR COUNT OF 260 DAY TIME ORDER.
#4.
#5.
#6.
391 417 443 469 495
393 419 445 471 497
395 421 447 473 499
397 423 449 475 501
401 427 453 479 505
403 429 455 481 507
405 431 457 483 509
409 435 461 487 513
411 437 463 489 515
413 439 465 491 517
415 441 467 493 519
521 547 573 599 625
523 549 575 601 627
525 551 577 603 629
527 553 579 605 631
531 557 583 609 635
533 559 585 611 637
535 561 587 613 639
539 565 591 617 643
541 567 593 619 645
543 569 595 621 647
545 571 597 623 649
651 677 703 729 755
653 679 705 731 757
655 681 707 733 759
657 683 709 735 761
661 687 713 739 765
663 689 715 741 767
665 691 717 743 769
669 695 721 747 773
671 697 723 749 775
673 699 725 751 777
675 701 727 753 779
boredom
pleasure



SOLAR CALENDAR YEAR

TOTAL 613 YEARS AND 80 DAYS OF A 360 DAY TIME ORDER.

# 1.

2	32	62	92	122	152	182	212
4	34	64	94	124	154	184	214
6	36	66	96	126	156	186	216
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10	40	70	100	130	160	190	220
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
16	46	76	106	136	166	196	226
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
22	52	82	112	142	172	202	232
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
26	56	86	116	146	176	206	236
28	58	88	118	148	178	208	238
30	60	90	120	150	180	210	240

# 2.

242	272	302	332	362	392	422	452
244	274	304	334	364	394	424	454
246	276	306	336	366	396	426	456
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
250	280	310	340	370	400	430	460
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
256	286	316	346	376	406	436	466
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
262	292	322	352	382	412	442	472
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
266	296	326	356	386	416	446	476
268	298	328	358	388	418	448	478
270	300	330	360	390	420	450	480

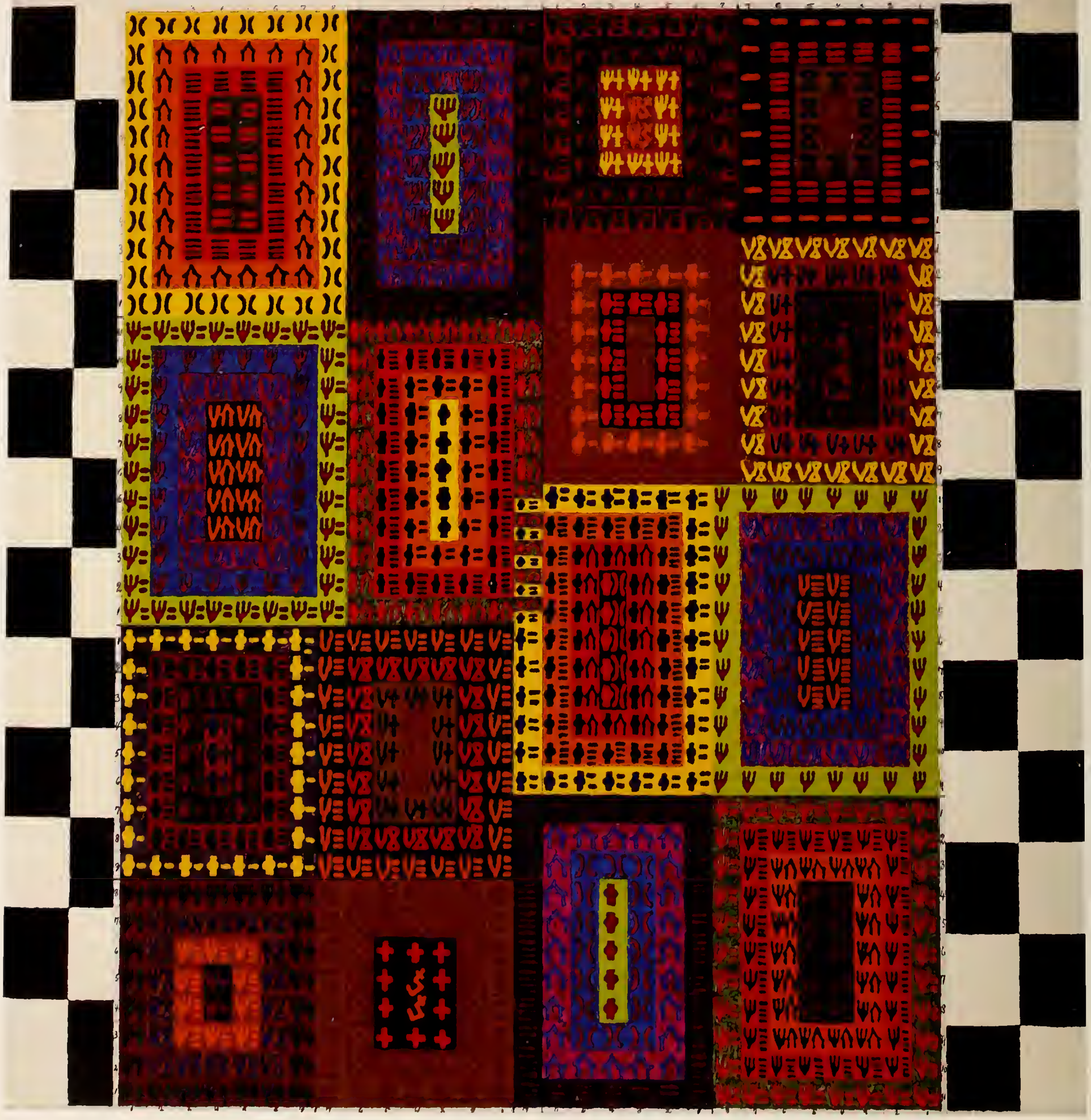
# 3.

482	512	542	572	602	632	662	692
484	514	544	574	604	634	664	694
486	516	546	576	606	636	666	696
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
490	520	550	580	610	640	670	700
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
496	526	556	586	616	646	676	706
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
502	532	562	592	622	652	682	712
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
506	536	566	596	626	656	686	716
508	538	568	598	628	658	688	718
510	540	570	600	630	660	690	720

# 4.

722	752	782	812	842	872	902	932
724	754	784	814	844	874	904	934
726	756	786	816	846	876	906	936
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
730	760	790	820	850	880	910	940
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
736	766	796	826	856	886	916	946
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
742	772	802	832	862	892	922	952
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
746	776	806	836	866	896	926	956
748	778	808	838	868	898	928	958
750	780	810	840	870	900	930	960

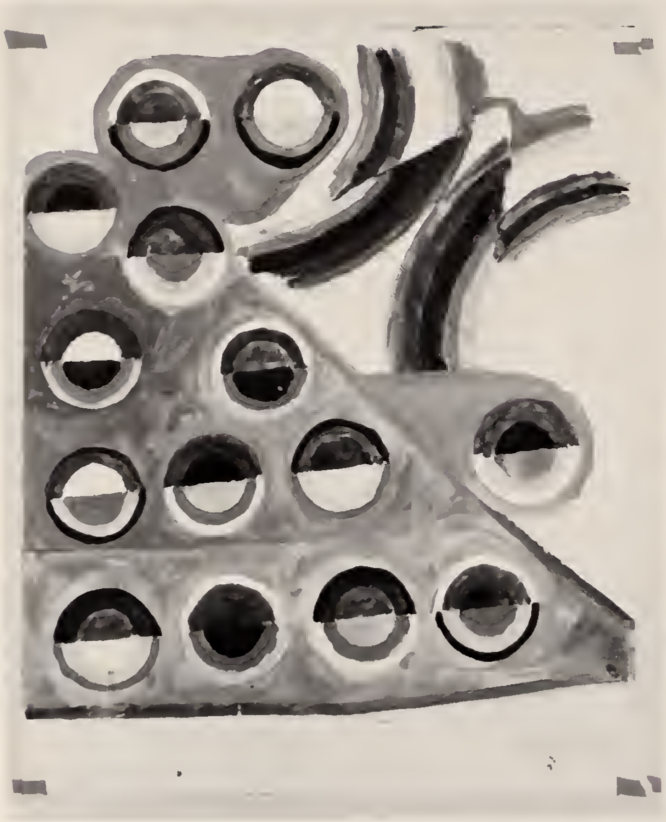
Research in a Growth Hormone.



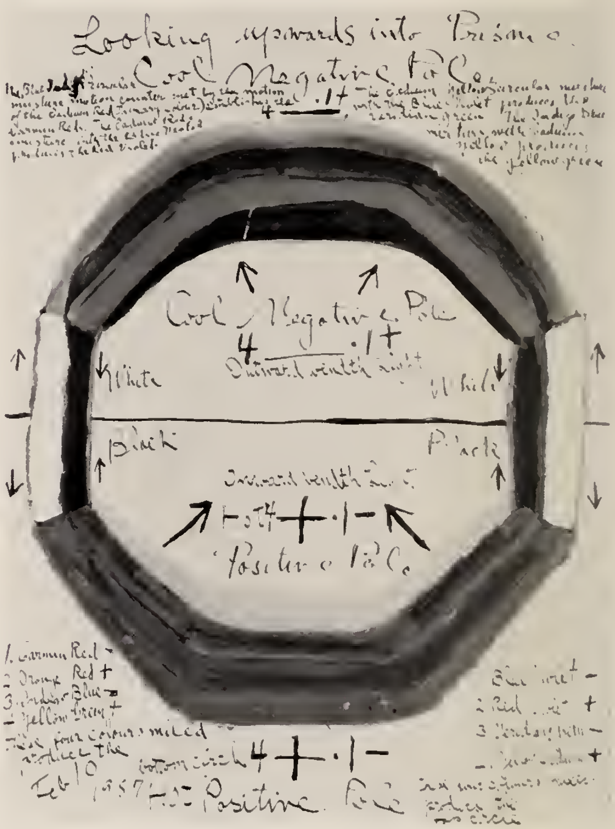
29 **Research in a Growth Hormone.** *1978*
Oil on canvas, 4 panels: 2 lower panels, each 86 x 48"; 2 upper panels, each 28 x 48"; total 114 x 96"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery

Works on Paper

30 **Untitled.** *January 1, 1953*
Gouache and pencil on paper, 29 x 23"

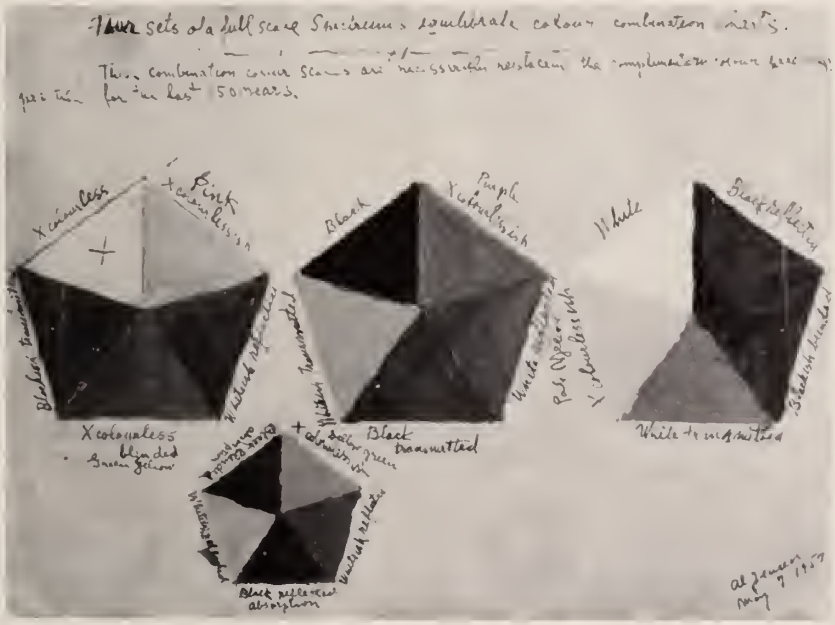


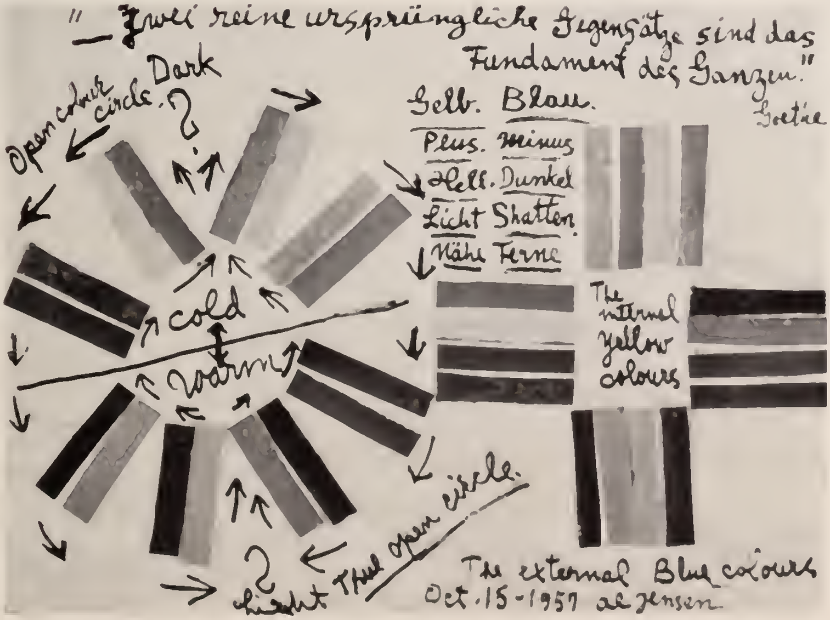
31 **Looking Upwards Into Prisme.**
February 10, 1957
Oil, pencil and ink on paper, 30 x 22"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.


Looking upwards into Prisme.
Cool Negative Pole
4 .1+
Cool Negative Pole
4 .1+
White
White
Black
Black
Positive Pole
1. Carmin Red –
2 Orange Red +
3. Indigo Blue –
4 Yellow Green +
these four colours mixed
Feb 10 1957
4 + .1 –
Positive Pole

32 **Four Sets of a Full Scale Spectrum's Equilibrate Colour Combination Charts.** *May 7, 1957*
Oil, pencil and ink on paper, 22 x 30"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.

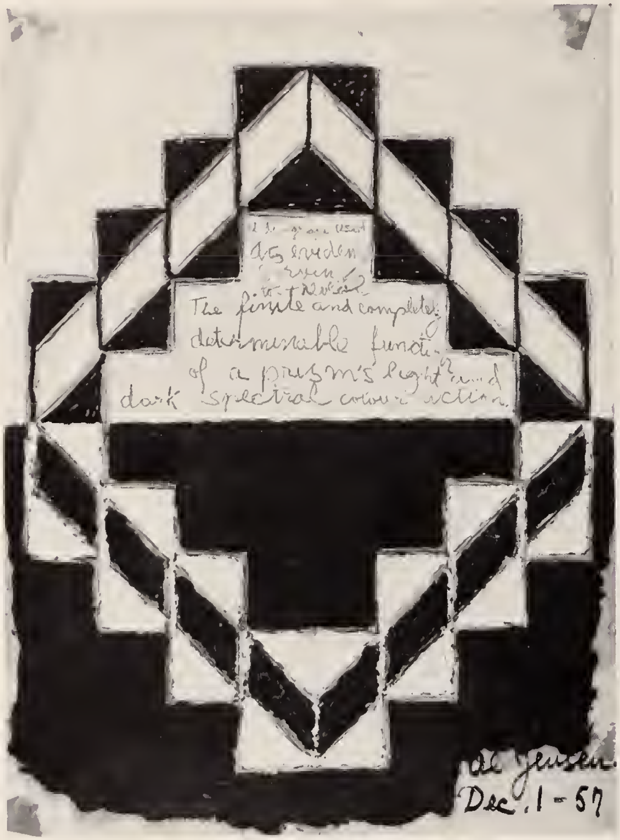
33 **Goethe.** *October 15, 1957*
Oil, ink and pencil on paper, 22 x 30"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.

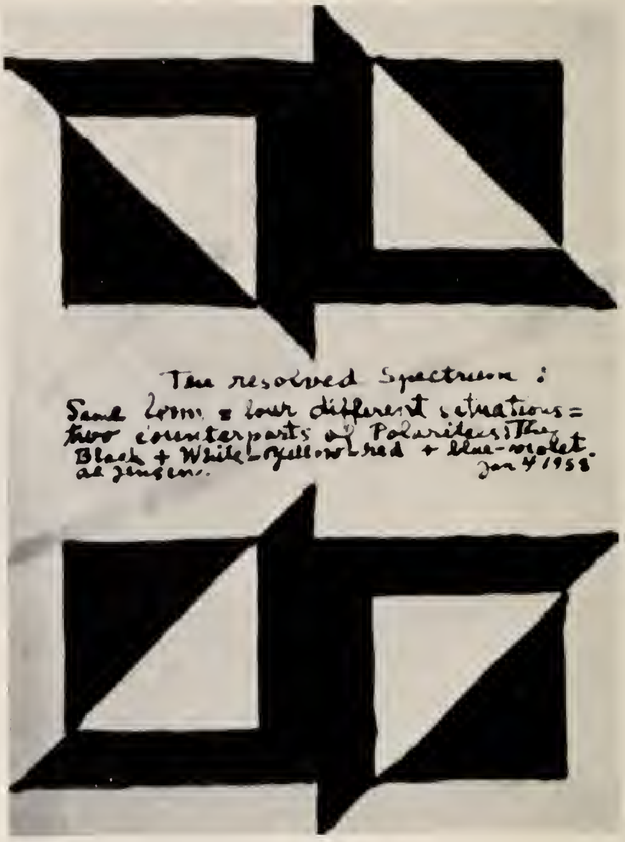

Four sets of a full scale Spectrum's equilibrate colour combination
50 years.
X colourless
Pink
X colourless
Black
Purple
X colourless
White
Whitish reflected
Whitish transmitted
Pale yellow
X colourless
Blackish blended
X colourless
blinded
Green Yellow
Black
transmitted
Yellow green
White transmitted
Whitish reflected
Black reflected
absorption
al Jensen
May 7 1957


"— Zwei reine ursprüngliche Gegensätze sind das Fundament des Ganzen."
Goethe
Gelb. Blau.
Plus. Minus
Hell. Dunkel
Licht Shatten
Nähe Ferne
Open colour circle.
Dark
?
cold
warm
The internal yellow colours
The open circle.
?
Light
The external Blue colours
Oct. 15 - 1957 al Jensen

34 **A Prism's Light and Dark Spectral Color Action**. *December 1, 1957*
Oil and pencil on paper, 30 x 22"

35 **The Resolved Spectrum**. *January 4, 1958*
Ink, gouache and oil on paper, 30 x 22"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery


The finite and completely
determinable functi-
of a prism's light and
dark spectral colour action.
al Jensen
Dec. 1-57


The resolved Spectrum :
Same form = four different situations =
two counterparts of Polarities: The
Black + White - yellow - red + blue-violet.
al jensen.
Jan 4 1958

†36 **Demonstration I.** *1960*
Ink on paper, 29 x 23"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery

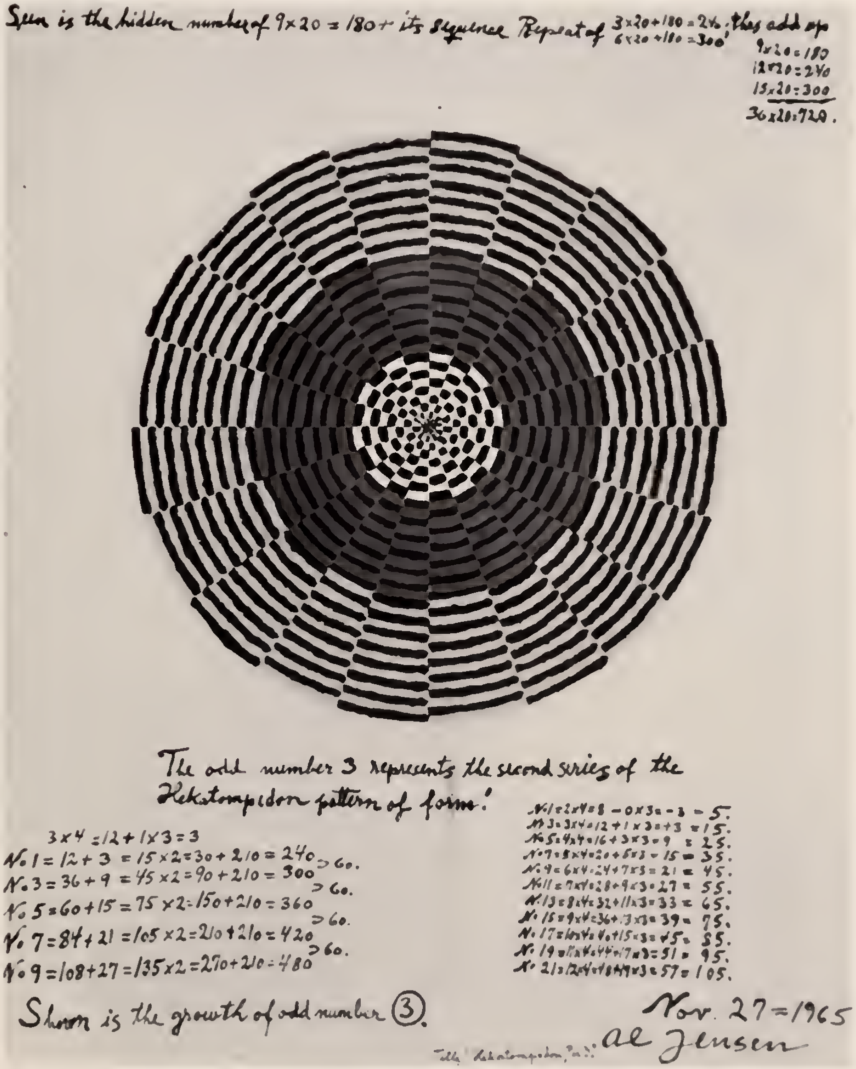
†37 **Demonstration II.** *October 20, 1960*
Ink on paper, 28 x 22"
Courtesy The Pace Gallery

†38 **A Visit to the Outside and Inside of the Great Pyramid—Eternal Abode of Cheops and His Queen.** *1963–80*
Marker on paper, sight 39 x 29½"

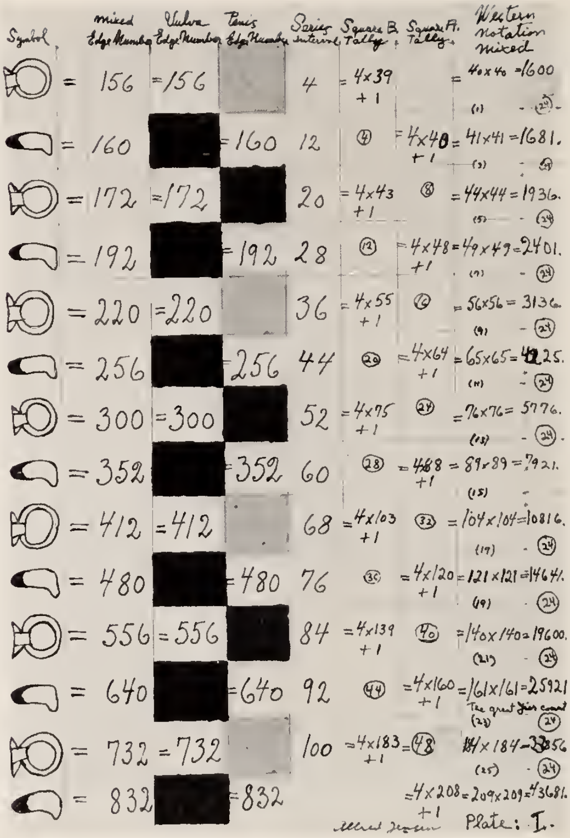
39 **Hekatompedon Per 3.** *November 27, 1965*
Gouache on board, 50 x 40"

†40 **Hekatompedon Per 9.** *December 9, 1965*
Gouache on board, 50 x 40"

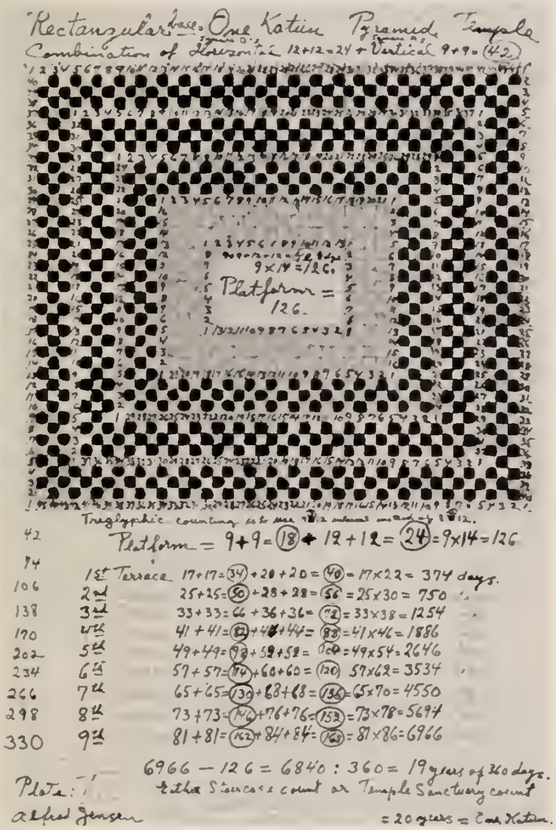
†41 **Hekatompedon Per 10.** *December 11, 1965*
Gouache on board, 50 x 40"


Seen is the hidden number of 9x20 = 180+ its sequence Repeat of 3x20+180=240; they add up
6x20+180=300
9x20=180
12x20=240
15x20=300
36x20=720.
The odd number 3 represents the second series of the Hekatompedon pattern of form!
3x4 =12+1x3=3
No.1=12+3 =15x2=30+210=240 >60.
No.3=36+9 =45x2=90+210=300 >60.
No.5=60+15=75x2=150+210=360 >60.
No.7=84+21 =105x2=210+210=420 >60.
No.9=108+27=135x2=270+210=480
N.1=2x4=8 −0x3=−3 = 5.
N.3=3x4=12+1x3=+3 =15.
N.5=4x4=16+3x3=9 = 25.
N.7=5x4=20+5x3 = 15 = 35.
N.9=6x4=24+7x3=21 = 45.
N.11=7x4=28+9x3=27 = 55.
N.13=8x4=32+11x3=33 = 65.
N.15=9x4=36+13x3=39 = 75.
N.17=10x4=40+15x3=45 = 85.
N.19=11x4=44+17x3=51 = 95.
N.21=12x4=48+19x3=57=105.
Shown is the growth of odd number ③.
Nov. 27=1965
Al Jensen

42 **Untitled (Plate I).** *ca. 1965*
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"


Symbol
mixed Edge Number
Vulva Edge Number
Penis Edge Number
Series interval
Square B. Tally
Square A. Tally
Western notation mixed
= 156 =156 4 = 4x39 +1 = 40x40 =1600 (1) - ㉔ -
= 160 =160 12 ④ = 4x40 +1 = 41x41 =1681. (3) - ㉔
= 172 =172 20 = 4x43 +1 ⑧ = 44x44 = 1936. (5) - ㉔
= 192 =192 28 ⑫ = 4x48 +1 = 49x49 = 2401. (7) - ㉔
= 220 =220 36 = 4x55 +1 ⑯ = 56x56 = 3136. (9) - ㉔
= 256 =256 44 ⑳ = 4x64 +1 = 65x65 = 4225. (11) - ㉔
= 300 =300 52 = 4x75 +1 ㉔ = 76x76 = 5776. (13) - ㉔.
= 352 =352 60 ㉘ = 4x88 +1 = 89x89 = 7921. (15) -
= 412 =412 68 = 4x103 +1 ㉜ = 104x104 = 10816. (17) - ㉔
= 480 =480 76 ㊱ = 4x120 +1 = 121x121 = 14641. (19) - ㉔
= 556 =556 84 = 4x139 +1 ㊵ = 140x140 = 19600. (21) - ㉔
= 640 =640 92 ㊹ = 4x160 +1 = 161x161 = 25921 The great Jin count (23) ㉔
= 732 =732 100 = 4x183 +1 = ㊽ 184x184 = 33856 (25) - ㉔
= 832 =832 = 4x208 +1 = 209x209 = 43681.
Alfred Jensen
Plate: I.

43 **Rectangular Base = One Katun Pyramid Temple (Plate XII).** *ca. 1965*
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"


Rectangular Base = One Katun Pyramid Temple
Combination of Horizontal 12+12=24 + Vertical 9+9=(42)
9×14=126
Platform = 126.
Platform = 9+9=18 + 12+12=24 = 9×14=126
1st Terrace 17+17=34 +20+20=40 = 17×22 = 374 days.
6966 − 126 = 6840 : 360 = 19 years of 360 days.
Either Staircase count or Temple Sanctuary count
= 20 years = One Katun.
Plate:
Alfred Jensen

44 **Cheops's Tomb Secret Resolved! (Plate Q̄).** *ca. 1965*
Ink on illustration board, 20 x 30"

†45 **Rectangle A's Build Up in Dated Year Temples (Plate XIV).** *ca. 1965*
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"

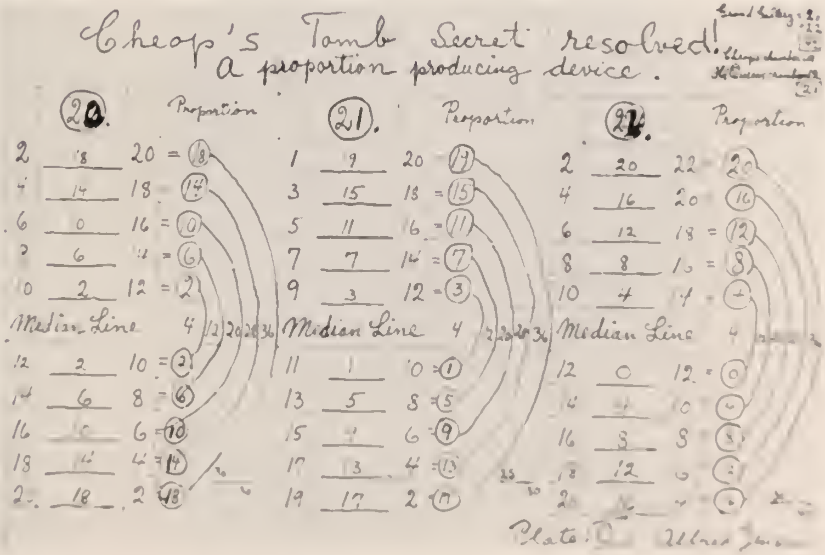
†46 **Beginning with Proportion 7 The Count of the Great Platonic Year (Plate IV).** *ca. 1965*
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"

†47 **Beginning with Proportion 9 The Count of the Great Year of 144 Years of 260 Days (Plate V).** *ca. 1965*
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"

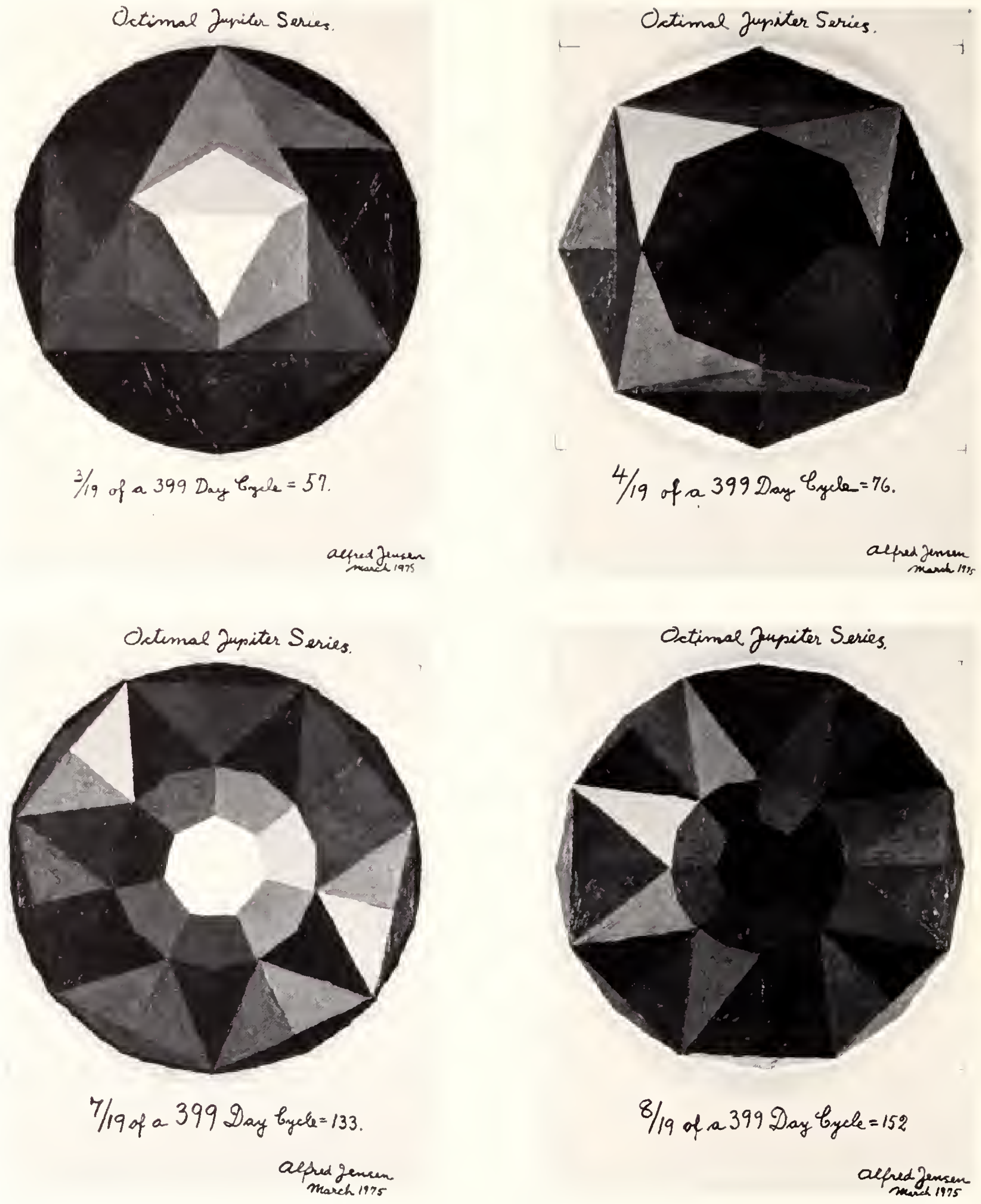
†48 **The Sun Temple/Image of the 360 Day Calendar Square A (Plate IX).**
ca. 1965
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"

†49 **The Sun Temple/Image of the 260 Day Calendar Square B (Plate XI).**
ca. 1965
Ink and oil on illustration board,
30 x 20"

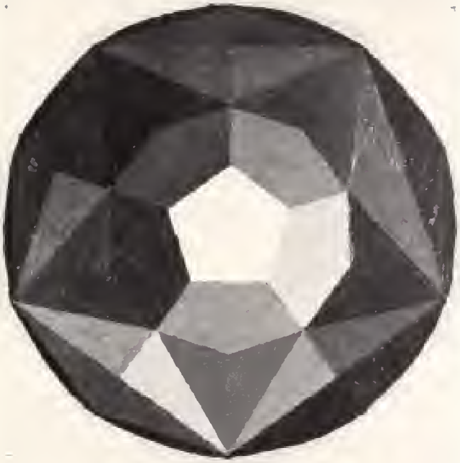
†50 **The Earthly Plate.** *January 10, 1973*
Oil on paperboard, 40 x 30"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Singer


Cheop's Tomb Secret resolved!
a proportion producing device.
20.
21.
Proportion
Median Line
Plate:
Alfred Jensen

51 **Octimal Jupiter Series.** *March 1975*
Oil on paper, 8 sheets, each 40 x 30"
Collection Edward R. Downe, Jr.


Octimal Jupiter Series.
3/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 57.
Alfred Jensen March 1975
Octimal Jupiter Series.
4/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 76.
Alfred Jensen March 1975
Octimal Jupiter Series.
7/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 133.
Alfred Jensen March 1975
Octimal Jupiter Series.
8/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 152
Alfred Jensen March 1975

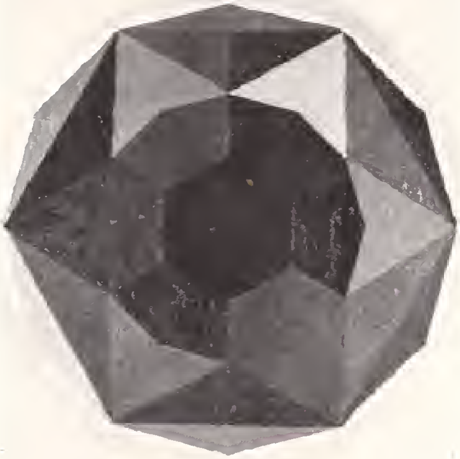
Octimal Jupiter Series.



5/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 95.

Alfred Jensen
March 1975

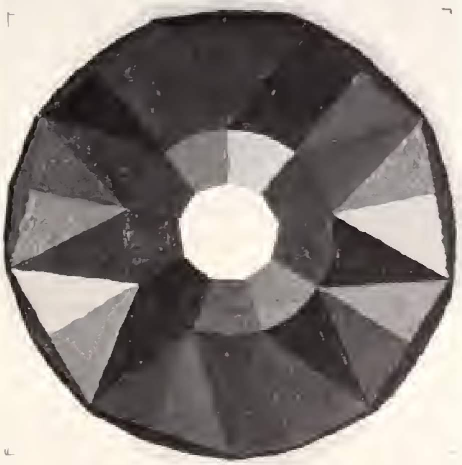
Octimal Jupiter Series.



6/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 114.

Alfred Jensen
March 1975

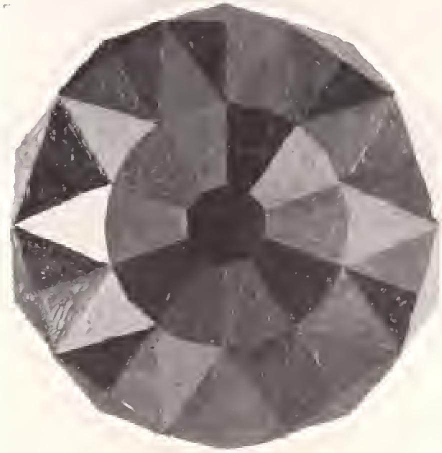
Octimal Jupiter Series.



9/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 171.

Alfred Jensen
March 1975

Octimal Jupiter Series.



10/19 of a 399 Day Cycle = 190.

Alfred Jensen
March 1975

Sketchbook Material

†52 **Spiral-bound Sketchbook.** *ca. 1959*
Mixed media on paper, 8½ x 5½"

†53 **Untitled Sketchbook Page (Study for "Magic Square").** *ca. 1960*
Marker and colored ink on paper, 16½ x 17¼"

†54 **Notebook.** *ca. 1961*
Mixed media on graph and found paper, 11 x 8½"

†55 **Spiral-bound Sketchbook.** *1975*
Mixed media on paper, 24 x 18"

†56 **Spiral-bound Sketchbook.** *1975*
Mixed media on paper, 24 x 18"

†57 **Untitled Sketchbook Pages (Study).** *1975*
Oil, ink and marker on paper, 8 sheets, each 18 x 7½"

†58 **Spiral-bound Sketchbook,** *ca. 1975*
Mixed media on paper, 24 x 18"

†59 **Untitled Sketchbook Page.** *ca. 1975*
Marker and ball point pen on paper, 18 x 24"

†60 **Untitled Sketchbook Page.** *ca. 1975*
Marker and ball point pen on paper, 18 x 24"

Alfred Jensen in Paestum, Italy, 1964
Photo by Regina Bogat

Chronology

1903
December 11
Alfred Julio Jensen born in Guatemala City, Guatemala, to Danish father and German-Polish mother.

1910
Upon mother's death, is sent to live with relatives in Horsholm, Denmark, where he attends local school. Begins to draw portraits of classmates.

1917
Unable to pay tuition, leaves school and works as cabin boy on ship, traveling extensively in Australia and Malaysia. Draws portraits of crew members and passengers.

1919–1921
On news of father's death in 1919, leaves ship in San Francisco and begins walking to Guatemala. Unable to cross Mexican border, remains in California and works as cowboy and chicken farmer. Paints, now using chickens as subjects.

1922–1923
With small inheritance from father, buys farm and orchard with his brother in Guatemala.

1924–1925
Sells business interests and travels to California. Attends San Diego High School at night and works as lumber salesman during the day. Receives scholarship to study painting at San Diego School of Fine Arts, Balboa Park. Learning of Hans Hofmann's painting school in Munich, hires on German ship.

1926
Mistakenly attends Moritz Heymann's school in Munich. Meets Carl Holty and Vaclav Vytlacil, students of Hofmann, and enrolls in the artist's school, where he meets Sadie A. May, American art student and collector. Concentrates on drawing after Old Masters, particularly Brueghel and Dürer.

1927–1928
In fall of 1927 breaks with Hofmann, who he feels is limiting his artistic growth. May offers her patronage to Jensen, enabling him to continue his studies.

1929
May and Jensen enroll at Académie Scandinave, Paris. Jensen studies sculpture with Charles Despiau and painting with Othon Friesz and Charles Dufresne; the latter encourages Jensen to paint with thick impasto.
Jensen becomes May's traveling companion and adviser in the formation of her collection of modern art. With May visits North Africa and Spain and paints there.

Early 1930s
Jensen and May travel to major European cities, using Paris as their base; visit New York yearly. Copies Old Masters.

1934
Establishes permanent residence in United States, but travels intermittently with May to Europe. Together they visit studios, where May purchases works directly from artists. Begins correspondence with Jean Dubuffet.

1938
Meets André Masson at Lyon-la-Forêt, France. Encouraged by writings of Auguste Herbin, undertakes intensive, lifelong study of Goethe's *Zür Farbenlehre*. Returns to United States with May, who starts purchasing contemporary American paintings from Rose Fried, Sidney Janis and Leo Castelli.

1939–1944
During war years Jensen and May travel to North Carolina, California and Chicago, visiting artists' studios; May acquires very little art.

1944
Begins to make diagrams in form of drawings and paintings on paper from notes on his readings. Considers diagrams to be investigations into light and color.

1946
Introduced by Castelli to Naum Gabo; briefly experiments with Constructivist sculpture.

Early 1950s
Paints portraits, landscapes, still lifes and figures in an Abstract Expressionist style, with large areas of heavily impastoed color.

1951
May dies. Following a brief trip to California, Jensen settles in New York and devotes his time to painting. Introduced by Ulfert Wilke to James Johnson Sweeney, Director of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, who visits his studio.

1952
First one-man show at John Heller Gallery, New York; exhibits series of twelve canvases based on Goethe's color theories. Meets and forms close friendship with Mark Rothko.

1953
Moves to studio on East 10th Street.

1955
Meets Sam Francis, with whom he exchanges ideas. Dubuffet visits his studio. Invited to participate in Stable Gallery, New York, annual group show, in which he is included again in 1956 and 1957, exhibiting with artists such as Franz Kline, Joseph Cornell, Willem de Kooning and Robert Rauschenberg. One-man exhibition, Tanager Gallery, New York.

1956
Joins Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York.

1957
Begins painting murals incorporating checkerboards and prismatic colors Abandons expressionistic, gestural mode

and begins to use calligraphy and diagrams from earlier studies in his paintings. Develops mature style based on color theories of Goethe, writings of Leonardo da Vinci, numerical systems, Pythagorean geometry and astronomical theories of ancient Central American cultures. Henry Luce III acquires *Forsaken*, 1957 (cat. no. 2), from Bertha Schaefer Gallery. Introduced by Francis to Arnold Rüdlinger, Director of Kunsthalle Basel.

1958
Teaches painting during summer session of Maryland Institute, Baltimore.

1959
Commissioned by Henry Luce III to paint mural, *The Title Makers,* for Time-Life building, Paris; mural destroyed by fire in 1969. Martha Jackson visits studio and invites Jensen to join her gallery. Begins to study theories of Michael Faraday, nineteenth-century physicist and chemist.

1960
Begins to exhibit in important group shows in galleries and museums in United States. Produces *A Quadrilateral Oriented Vision* (cat. no. 7), major work comprised of six canvases. Reads *I Ching*, Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization in China* and J. Eric S. Thompson's *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*. Develops friendship with Allan Kaprow.

1961
Produces series of sixteen paintings relating to Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's flight into space, which are exhibited at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, his first major museum show.

1962
Joins Kornfeld & Klipstein gallery, Bern.

1963
Marries painter Regina Bogat in New York. One-man show at Graham Gallery, New York. First European exhibition at Kornfeld & Klipstein, Bern. Produces series of paintings in which he superimposes figurative elements over checkerboard pattern.

1964
One-man exhibition at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Two-man exhibition with Franz Kline at Kunsthalle Basel, in which retrospective selection of sixty works is shown. Participates in Venice Biennale. Jensens travel for six months in Italy, Egypt, Greece, France and Switzerland.

1964–1970
Works based on planetary, mathematical structures. Motifs include bands, bars and checkers. Applies color directly from tube.

1965
First child Anna born. Spends summer as fellow at Tamarind Workshop, Los Angeles, executing set of twenty lithographs, *A Pythagorean Notebook*. Paints gouaches, *Hekatompedon*, based on ancient Greek religious rituals.

1966–1967
Executes paintings inspired by travels in Europe, in particular Greece.

1968
Travels to Guatemala, Yucatán and Mexico by plane; paintings inspired by sky and by aerial views of landscape. One-man exhibition at Cordier & Ekstrom, New York. Studies physics and astronomy.

1970
Son Peter born.

1972
Moves from 10th Street studio to thirty-six-foot square house in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, where he lives and works until his death. Joins Pace Gallery, New York, and shows works based on themes of *I Ching* and teachings of Delphic Oracle.

1973
One-man show of works from 1957–72, organized by Wieland Schmied, Director, Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover; travels to Humlebaek in Denmark, Baden-Baden, Düsseldorf, Bern. One-man show at Pace Gallery, New York.

1974
Studies ancient quinary number systems and seasonal effects of the planets.

1975
Continues studies of Faraday's theories. Paintings display interest in numerical systems and dual and cyclic phenomena.

1976
Exhibition of works from 1961–74 at Pace Gallery, New York.

1977
Travels to Brazil and Peru. Represents United States at São Paulo Bienal, Brazil; exhibition travels in United States in 1978.

1980
His mural *Changes and Communication* installed in Lister Center, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland.

1981
April 4
Dies near his home, in Livingston, New Jersey.

Exhibitions and Reviews

I. Group Exhibitions

Stable Gallery, New York, *Third Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, 1954

Stable Gallery, New York, *Fourth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, 1955

Stable Gallery, New York, *Fifth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, 1956

Tanager Gallery, New York, *Painters/ Sculptors on Tenth Street*, 1956

Stable Gallery, New York, *Sixth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, 1957

Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, *The Image Lost and Found*, 1960. Catalogue with text by Thomas M. Messer

Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, *Segunda Bienal Interamericana de Mexico, 1960*, 1960. Catalogue

The City Art Museum of St. Louis, *Collector's Choice*, 1960

Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco, *Jensen and Schwitters*, 1960

The Art Institute of Chicago, *65th American Exhibition: Some Directions in Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, 1961. Catalogue

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists*, 1961. Catalogue with text by H. H. Arnason

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *100 Paintings from the G. David Thompson Collection*, 1961. Catalogue with text by G. David Thompson

The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, *New Accessions U.S.A., 1962*, 1962. Catalogue with text by Fred Bartlett

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Geometric Abstraction in America*, 1962. Catalogue with text by John Gordon

Graham Gallery, New York, *Banners*, 1963

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Annual Exhibition 1963: Contemporary American Painting*, 1963

San Francisco Museum of Art, *Recent Trends*, 1963. Catalogue

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., *The 28th Biennial Exhibition 1963*, 1963. Catalogue with text by Hermann Williams, Jr.

National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., *Paintings from The Museum of Modern Art, New York*, 1963. Catalogue with texts by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., René d'Harnoncourt and John Walker

Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, *documenta III: Internationale Ausstellung*, 1964. Catalogue with texts by Arnold Bode and Werner Haftmann

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Post Painterly Abstraction*, 1964. Catalogue with texts by James Elliott and Clement Greenberg

Venice, *XXXII Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte Venezia: Selections from the Collection of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, 1964. Catalogue with text by Thomas M. Messer

American Federation of Arts Gallery, New York, *A Decade of New Talent*, 1964–65

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, *Kane Memorial Exhibition*, 1965

San Francisco Museum of Art, *Colorists 1950–1965*, 1965. Catalogue with text by Anita Ventura

San Francisco Museum of Art, *Highlights of 1964–65*, 1965. Catalogue

Metropolitan Art Gallery, Tokyo, *The 8th International Art Exhibition of Japan*, 1965–66

Graham Gallery, New York, *The Rainbow Room*, 1967

Kunstmuseum Basel, *Sammlung Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach*, 1968

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, *Plus by Minus: Today's Half Century*, 1968. Catalogue with text by Douglas MacAgy

Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, *4. documenta: Internationale Ausstellung*, 1968. Catalogue with texts by Günther Gercken and Werner Spies

Das Modern Art Museum, Munich, *Neue Kunst U.S.A. Barock-Minima*, 1968

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, *109 Obras de Albright-Knox Art Gallery*, 1969. Catalogue with texts by Seymour H. Knox, Samuel F. Oliver and Gordon M. Smith

Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania, *Black-White*, 1969

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Tamarind: Homage to Lithography*, 1969. Catalogue with texts by Virginia Allen and William S. Lieberman

Indianapolis Museum of Art, *Painting and Sculpture Today*, 1970. Catalogue with texts by Richard L. Warrum and Carl J. Weinhardt, Jr.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, *American Painting 1970*, 1970. Catalogue with text by Peter Selz

The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, *Highlights of the 1969–1970 Art Season*, 1970. Catalogue with text by Larry Aldrich

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *The Structure of Color*, 1970–71. Catalogue with texts by the artists and Marcia Tucker

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, *Recent American Painting and Sculpture in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery*, 1972

Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, *documenta 5: Internationale Ausstellung*, 1972. Catalogue with texts by Eberhard Roters, Harald Szeemann et al.

The Gallery of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, *Exhibition of Works by Contemporary Artists Who Are Not Members of the Institute*, 1972

Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, *Grids Grids*

Grids Grids Grids Grids Grids, 1972. Catalogue

University of Maryland Art Gallery, College Park, *The Private Collection of Martha Jackson*, 1973. Traveled to The Finch College Museum of Art, New York, and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Catalogue with texts by David Anderson, Adelyn Breeskin, Richard Klank, George Levitine and Elayne Varian

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *1973 Biennial Exhibition*: *Contemporary American Art*, 1973. Catalogue with text by John I. H. Bauer

University Art Gallery, State University of New York, Albany, *Selections from the Martha Jackson Gallery Collection*, 1975

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, *The Martha Jackson Collection at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery*, 1975. Catalogue with text by Linda L. Cathcart

Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, *Color*, 1975. Catalogue with text by Kynaston McShine

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Acquisition Priorities*: *Aspects of Postwar Painting in America*, 1976. Catalogue with text by Thomas M. Messer

Philadelphia College of Art, *Time*, 1977. Catalogue with text by Janet Kardon

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Collectors, Collecting, Collection*: *American Abstract Art Since 1945*, 1977. Catalogue with texts by Barbara Haskell, Patterson Sims and Marcia Tucker

Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, *Aspects of the 70's*: *Mavericks*, 1980

II. One-Man Exhibitions and Reviews

John Heller Gallery, New York, *Alfred Jensen*: *Experiments in Color*, March 17–29, 1952. Catalogue

Henry LaFarge, "*Alfred Jensen*," *Art News*, vol. 51, March 1952, p. 54

Martin Zwart, "Alfred Jensen," *Art Digest*, vol. 26, March 1952, p. 22

Tanager Gallery, New York, *Al Jensen*: *Paintings*, October 21–November 10, 1955

C. L. F., "Alfred Jensen," *Arts*, vol. 30, November 1955, p. 53

James Schuyler, "Alfred Jensen, Tanager," *Art News*, vol. 54, December 1955, p. 57

Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York, Recent Oils by Alfred Jensen, November 11–30, 1957

James Schuyler, "Alfred Jensen, Schaefer," *Art News*, vol. 56, November 1957, p. 14

Dorothy Seckler, "Alfred Jensen," *Arts*, vol. 32, November 1957, p. 60

Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, *First Exhibition of Murals*, April 22–May 18, 1959

Martica Sawin, "Alfred Jensen," *Arts*, vol. 33, June 1959, pp. 62–63

Irving H. Sandler, "Alfred Jensen, Jackson," *Art News*, vol. 58, Summer 1959, p. 17

Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, *Alfred Jensen and the Image of the Prism*, November 24–December 19, 1959. Catalogue with text by the artist

George Dennison, "Alfred Jensen," *Arts*, vol. 34, December 1959, pp. 57–58

James Schuyler, "Alfred Jensen: Jackson," *Art News*, vol. 58, December 1959, p. 17

Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, *Magic Square*, January 17–February 11, 1961

Hubert Crehan, "Alfred Jensen: Jackson," *Art News*, vol. 59, January 1961, pp. 11–12

Martica Sawin, "Alfred Jensen," *Arts*, vol. 35, January 1961, p. 61

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Alfred Jensen*, August 30–October 8, 1961. Pamphlet

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