



**STANLEY TWARDOWICZ**

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**STANLEY TWARDOWICZ**

**APRIL 7-MAY 26, 1974  
Heckscher Museum  
Huntington, New York**



6.

## FORWARD

The artist in the community is always an enriching element. The Town of Huntington and the Village of Northport are fortunate to have Stanley Twardowicz as an honored resident. His gentle manners and subtle paintings which grace the walls of a number of houses in the area have enriched us all.

It is with both pleasure and pride that the Heckscher Museum presents this exhibition of the work of an artist who has spent nearly twenty years of his productive life in our midst.

Eva Ingersoll Gatling



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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



1.

Stanley Twardowicz was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1917. He grew up there and attended Polish parochial school and then the public schools where his chief interests were sports and art. One of his teachers gave him a set of oil paints and his first painting, a still life, was done on an old window shade for lack of canvas.

He went to work in the Kelsey - Hayes Wheel Company at an early age. Then he tried semi-pro baseball and boxing. Finally, the pull to art was inevitable and he began night courses at the Meinzing Art School, a school primarily oriented towards commercial art. There he was encouraged to seek a career in photo retouching, but through a class in life drawing, found his own way to serious painting.

Detroit in the 1940's did not present a stimulating climate for an unknown young man seeking to move into the main stream of art. He had only one artist, Zubel Kachadoorian, for a friend. Between working and studying, he had little time for seeing art exhibitions, and the war years were a time of few and modest exhibitions throughout the country.

There was no focal point for artists in Detroit, no commercial galleries. The Meinzing Art School, with its preoccupation with commercial art, did not provide such a focal point. The artists' community around Cranbrook Academy of Art, twenty miles north of Detroit, seemed far away and elitist.

He saw his first Picasso in Detroit, but did not understand it. The prime examples upon which he might model his early style were in the tradition of romanticized genre.

He began to exhibit in Detroit in the annual Michigan Artists show of the Detroit Art Institute and in an exhibition of Polish Art at the same museum.

The big change for Stanley came in the summer of 1946, when he went to the Skowhegan School of Pointing and Sculpture in Maine. This school offers a program in July and August. The students live on campus, are taught by artists and visiting artists provide extra stimulus. For the first time, Stanley was among artists soaking up ideas and living art twenty-four hours a day. There he met important painters, including: Kuniyoshi, Jack Levine and Phillip Guston. They were a diverse group stylistically, but being with them and talking with them had a great influence.

After the summer at Skowhegan, Twardowicz received an appointment to teach at Ohio State University at Columbus. There he was teaching with fellow artists and formed a close friendship with Roy Lichtenstein. He was beginning to seek color and richness in his work and experimented with encaustic and casein.

His teaching duties left him free to travel, and exposure to a new culture brought great changes in his work. In 1947, he traveled in Mexico with Tracy Atkinson, then one of his students. They covered about five thousand miles, taking many photographs and soaking in the experience. On a second trip to Mexico, he stayed in one place and there was able to paint.

At this time, his painting underwent a dramatic change. The low keyed romanticized realism was left behind. The painting, though not yet fully abstract, took on the distortion and patterning of a more expressionistic idiom. His color, which had begun to emerge from the low keyed palette of his early student days, took on new vibrancy.



8.

1951 was again a turning point. He left Ohio State and with his wife, Anne, traveled in Europe for six months, spending time in Sicily, Italy, Spain and France. He made many drawings on this trip and upon his return to America his paintings became quite different from his former work in style, medium and color.

The Twardowicz moved to Plainfield, New Jersey, where Anne taught and Stanley had time for painting. At this time he felt the need for the companionship of other artists and the stimulation of their discussions. The Cedar Bar was a place where New York artists of the 1950's congregated for exchange of ideas mixed with conviviality. There Stanley knew de Kooning and Franz Kline, who he credits with having the greatest influence upon his thinking at that time. Stanley never imitated the painting of his mentors, but rather was moved "by the spirit of the guy." During the New York days his closest friend was Matsuki Kanemitsu.

In 1946 while at Skowhegan, Stanley had gotten Maine into his blood. After his return from Europe, there was a strong pull to Maine. He spent every summer there for about ten years. They were very productive years. It was in a large barn in Maine that Stanley perfected his flowing technique. He would lay out an unstretched canvas on the floor, and saturate it with turpentine, to which color had been added.

He would then pour enamel paint onto the canvas, being conscious of the way in which the flow of color would create one shape against another shape. These paintings represent a total physical involvement with the act of painting and produce a spontaneity which comes with a painting done in one session.

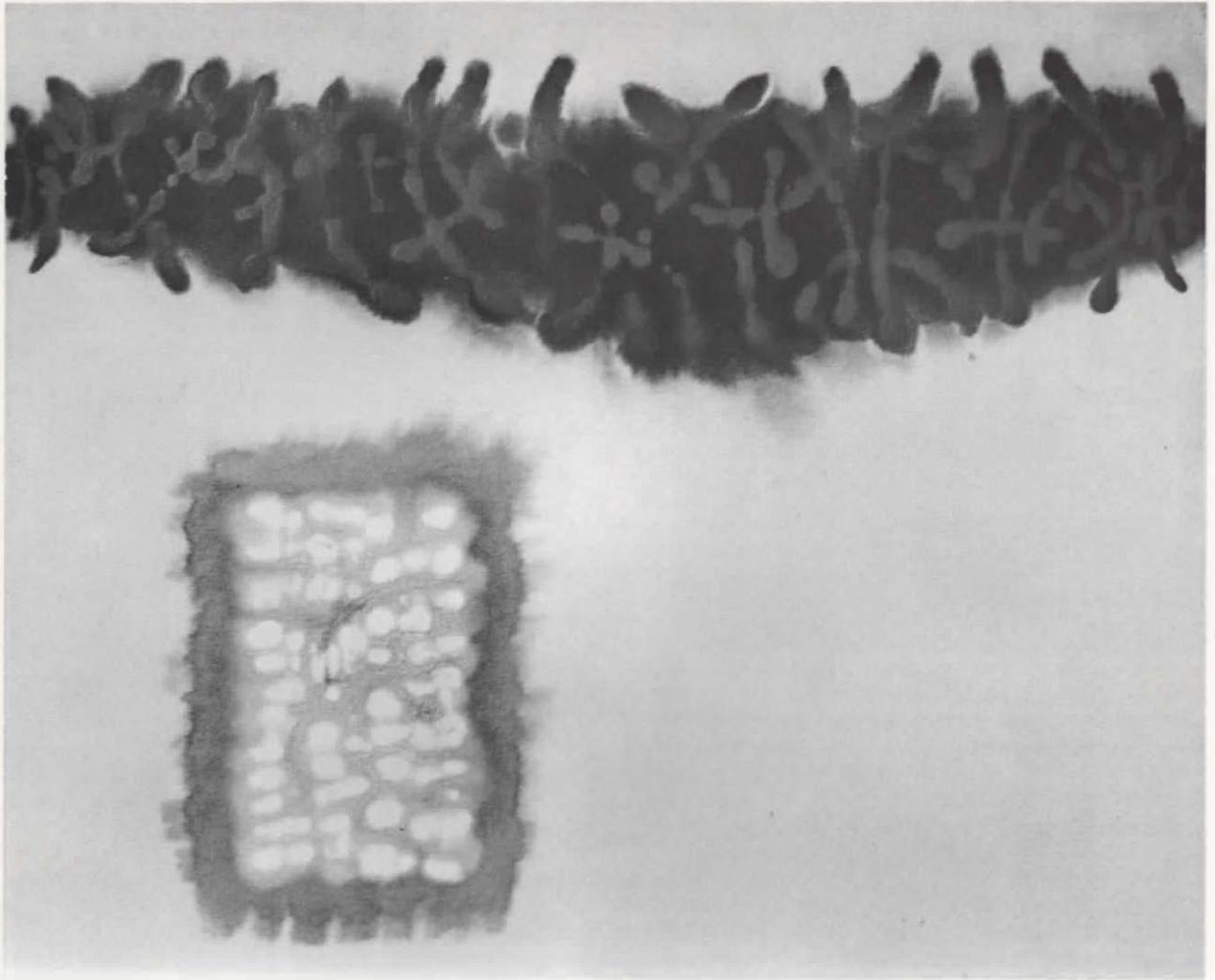
In 1955, Kenzo Okada also spent the summer in Maine. With him, Stanley explored Zen Buddhism deeply. They took long early morning walks on the beach discussing the philosophy and observing its relation to nature. On one occasion Okada said, "Stanley, you have a very good Zen eye."

During this time, Stanley took many photographs, becoming completely involved with the camera as a means of expression. For him the camera was an experience in itself and the act of taking the picture produced the joy of creativity. He feels that his photographs were a result of his way of painting rather than a forerunner of his painting.

The Maine experience was a good one and he likes to tell the story of one of the village characters who sat quietly watching him paint one of his flowing pictures. When the job was finished, this man said to him, "I don't know what you're doing, but the way you go about it, it must be alright."



10.



The period of the fifties was enormously productive and brought many honors. There were one man shows at Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana; University of Kentucky; Ohio Wesleyan University; Contemporary Arts Gallery in New York City; and Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles. There was inclusion in the major group shows: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; Whitney Museum; Chicago Art Institute; Guggenheim Museum; Carnegie International; University of Illinois; and in the Museum of Modern Art traveling exhibition "Young American Painters." At this time, too, his work began to be acquired by museums and distinguished private collectors. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1956-1957.

In 1956, the Twardowicz moved to Northport, New York, where Stanley continues to live. Northport was far from an artists' colony, but

11.

Jules Olitski lived there and the two artists became close friends.

In the Huntington area at that time, George Grosz was to a number of people THE artist. Stanley had a small show of drawings at the Vera Lazuk Gallery, then in Fort Salonga. Grosz liked the drawings and bought three of them. Much to Stanley's surprise, Grosz called on him and the two artists, whose work was so dissimilar, enjoyed long talks together and drank together and provided each other with artist companionship so necessary for creativity.

In the early 1960's there was a period of serious illness with its attendant depression. From this time came some of the most moving of his paintings, the black pictures. In these, he thinned

## 1955 Poured Enamel. MOMA Purchase - 1956



12.

the enamel until its glossy quality was suppressed. Later, he discovered that a new product, Magna, was better adapted to the effect he wanted. He continued to use the flowing technique producing a stained canvas effect. Color, when introduced, is subtle and very dark. These pictures represent a period of unhappy introspection which culminated, on a personal level, with his divorce from Anne.

It was also a period of continuing recognition with annual one man shows at the Peridot Gallery (1958-1970) and he continued to be represented in major group shows. He was included in the Art Dealers Association "Review of the Season," at the Whitney Museum of American Art; in "Abstract American Water Colors," circulated internationally by the Museum of Modern Art; in two of the Museum of Modern Art's "Art in Embassies," in Warsaw and The Hague; and in "The New American Painting and Sculpture, the First Generation," Museum of Modern Art.

In 1964, he was invited to teach at Hofstra University, where he is now an Assistant Professor.

Late in the sixties, the dark period ended. Happiness had come with his marriage to Lillian Dodson, and Stanley began to work with the air brush. His color was light and intense, first in stripes and later in large pulsating ovals. The ovals were carefully planned with the color sprayed on one color at a time until finally the need for flowing color, which had been such an important part of his work for so long, made itself more and more apparent. Now the work, which can be seen at O. K. Harris Gallery in New York City, is again a flow of color accomplished in one session as color changes subtly and dramatically on long narrow horizontal panels. He is, today, following the description of his close friend, the late Jack Kerouac, who said, "Stanley, you paint with kissing colors."

Eva Ingersoll Gatling



14.

## 1956 Poured Enamel. Vassar Museum - Gift of Philip Johnson



17.

## CATALOGUE

Unless otherwise noted, the paintings are lent by the artist. Measurements are given in inches with height preceding width.

1. SELF PORTRAIT AND DRESSER  
oil on canvas, 1944, 40 x 30  
Lent by Lillian Dodson
2. FACTORY  
oil on canvas, 1944, 12 x 16
3. NIGHT WASH  
oil on canvas, 1945, 24 x 36  
Lent by Mrs. Jack Kerouac
4. LITTLE WILLIE  
oil on canvas, 1946, 24 x 20  
Lent by Lillian Dodson
5. SKULL  
oil on canvas, 1947, 16 x 20
6. SELF PORTRAIT  
encaustic wax on canvas, 1947, 18 x 14  
Lent by Art Gallery, Ball State University
7. VIOLIN SHOP  
encaustic wax on canvas, 1947, 44 x 30
8. MEXICAN FISH NETS  
oil - enamel on canvas, 1951, 44 x 36



7.

Beginning in 1952, the artist adopted a method of titling in which the first number indicates its order in the year in which the work was created.

9. #15 - 1952 (SPANISH LANDSCAPE)  
oil - enamel on canvas, 40 x 30

10. # 1 - 1953  
oil - enamel on canvas, 50 x 42

11. #16 - 1953 (WHITE ON BLUE)  
oil - enamel on canvas, 42 x 50

12. #11 - 1955  
oil - enamel on canvas, 72 x 50

Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase, 1956

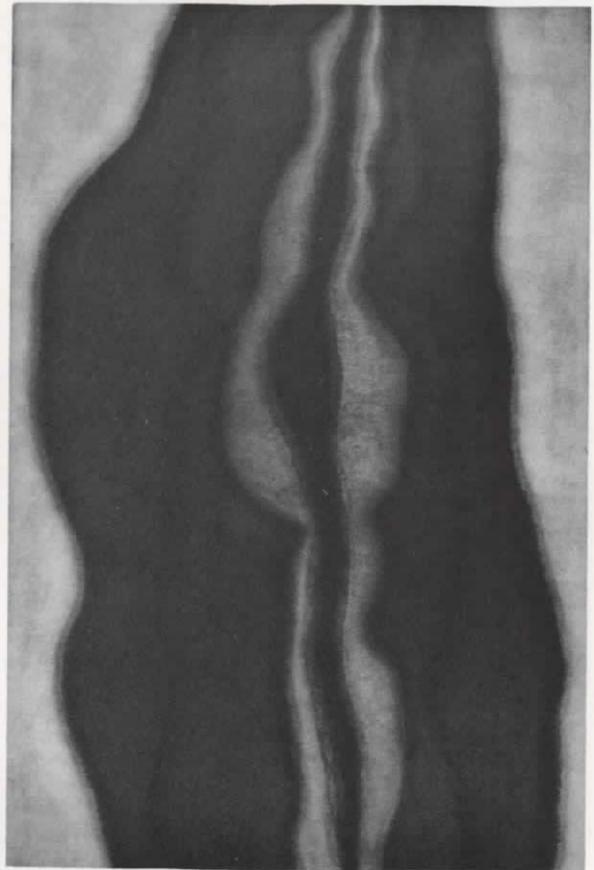
13. # 8 - 1956  
oil - enamel on canvas, 70 x 42

14. # 9 - 1956  
oil - enamel on canvas, 70 x 42  
Lent by Vassar College Art Gallery, Gift of Philip Johnson

15. #25 - 1960 (BLACK MINUS BLACK)  
Magna on canvas, 41 1/2 x 31 1/2

16. #32 - 1960 (FETISH)  
oil - enamel on canvas, 71 1/2 x 48 1/2  
Lent by Columbus (Ohio) Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio: Howald Fund

17. #12 - 1961  
Magna on canvas, 32 x 43  
Heckscher Museum Collection, Gift of Huntington Township Art League

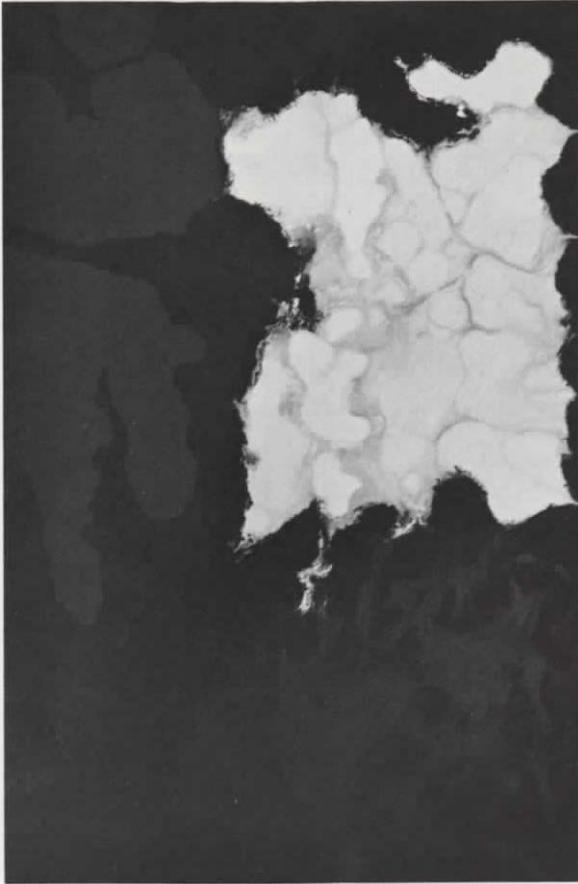


23.

18. #30 - 1961  
Magna on canvas, 60 1/4 x 43 1/4

19. #35 - 1961  
Magna on canvas, 60 x 42 1/2

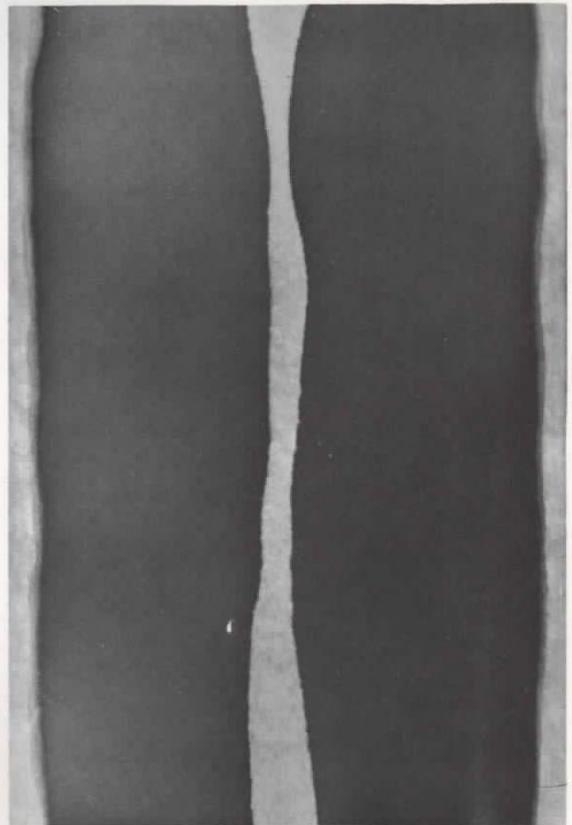
**Poured Enamel, 1960.  
Columbus Art Gallery**



16.

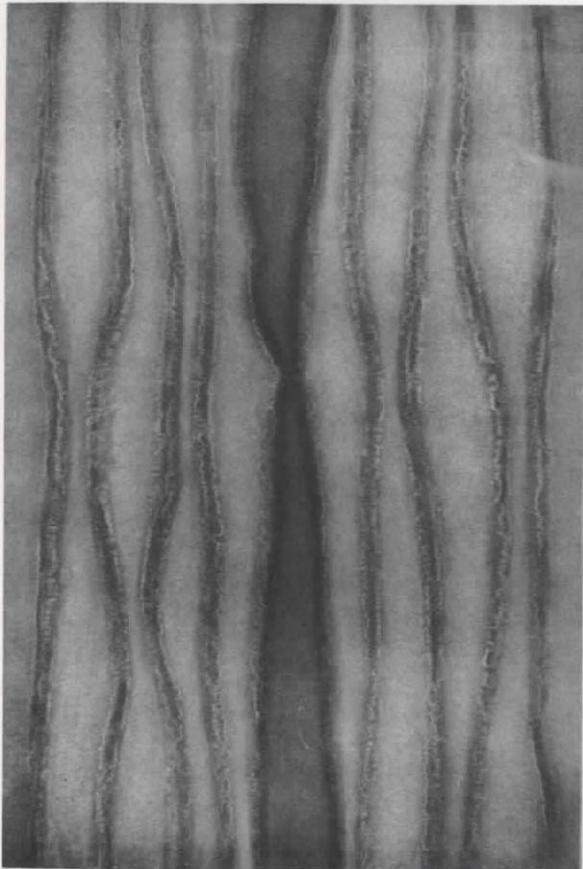
- 20. #43 - 1961  
Magna on canvas, 56 x 42
- 21. #25 - 1962 (POLISH DELIGHT #3)  
Magna on canvas, 56<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 36  
Lent by Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gift of Susan Morse Hilles
- 22. #28 - 1962 (BLUE SKIN)  
Magna on canvas, 60 x 40
- 23. #32 - 1962 (POLISH DELIGHT)  
Magna - oil on canvas, 71 x 48  
Lent by Milwaukee Art Center
- 24. # 1 - 1963 (BLUE DILDO)  
Magna on canvas, 70<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 48
- 25. # 1 - 1964  
Magna on canvas, 70<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 48

- 26. # 7 - 1967 (O.P.R.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 60 x 40  
Lent by Eva Ingersoll Gatling
- 27. #20 - 1967 (B.O.D.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 83 x 46
- 28. #28 - 1967 (L.O.R.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 83 x 46
- 29. #16 - 1968 (Y.U.P.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 72 x 48
- 30. #18 - 1968 (P.R.P.O.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 72 x 48
- 31. #46 - 1968 (P.B.Y.O.O.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 72 x 48
- 32. #48 - 1968 (W.O.U.B. #2)  
Aquatec on canvas, 72 x 48
- 33. # 1 - 1970 (R.P.B.G.)  
Aquatec on canvas, 72 x 48

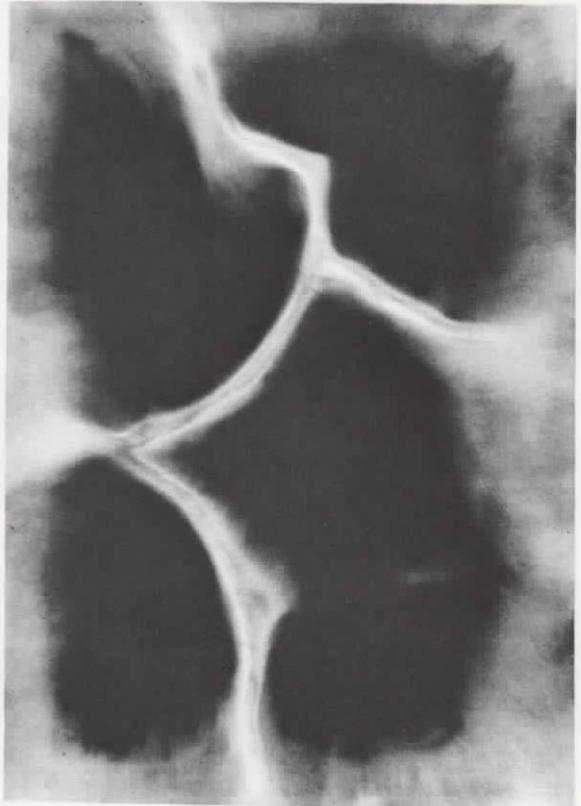


25.

- 34. #18 - 1971  
Aquatec on canvas, 40 x 90
- 35. #21 - 1971  
Aquatec on canvas, 40 x 90
- 36. # 6 - 1973  
Aquatec on canvas, 30 x 90
- 37. #10 - 1973  
Aquatec on canvas, 30 x 90
- 38. # 3 - 1974  
Aquatec on canvas, 20 x 80
- 39. # 5 - 1974  
Aquatec on canvas, 30 x 100
- 40. # 6 - 1974  
Aquatec on canvas, 20 x 80



22.



18.

**LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION**

- Art Gallery, Ball State University
- Columbus (Ohio) Gallery of Fine Arts
- Lillian Dodson
- Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University
- Eva Ingersoll Gatling
- Mrs. Jack Kerouac
- Milwaukee Art Center
- The Museum of Modern Art
- Vassar College Art Gallery

