

PRESS RELEASE

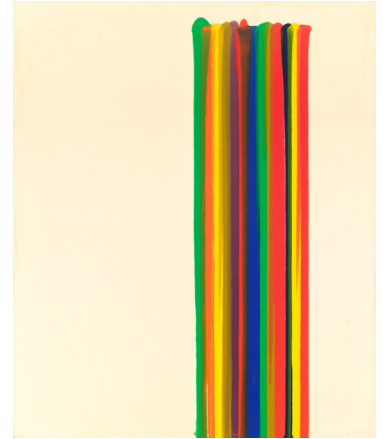
MORRIS LOUIS

SPECTRUM

YARES ART

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Number 9, 1961. Magna on canvas, 87 x 72 in. (221 x 182.9 cm). Private Collection

YARES ART presents *MORRIS LOUIS: SPECTRUM* on view in New York, November 3, 2018–January 12, 2019. The exhibition features a selection of major works by Morris Louis (1912–1962), one of the most renowned and influential abstract painters of the twentieth century, whose work continues to inspire new generations of artists and collectors. In a career spanning less than a decade, shortened by the artist's untimely death, the Washington, DC-based artist expanded the boundaries of abstract painting by creating mural-scale compositions with infinite spaces and pure, translucent color. The sumptuous canvases in this exhibition envelop and enrapture viewers with the mysterious and ethereal luminosity characteristic of Louis's work. On view here are iconic examples from all of Louis's most celebrated series, including "Veils," "Stripes," "Unfurled," and "Themes and Variations."

During his lifetime, Louis was known and respected by a small group of critics, curators, collectors, and likeminded artists, including Kenneth Noland and Helen Frankenthaler. Louis's fame, though, is largely posthumous. In the 1950s, until the time of his death, he worked in a small dining room he converted into a studio in his suburban home. Despite the confining make-shift studio, he experimented with pouring and staining techniques on vast swaths of canvas, averaging 8 ½ by 12 feet. Dramatically divergent from the Abstract Expressionist works that dominated the era, Louis eschewed gestural and textural markings, as well as vestiges of expressive imagery; instead, he aimed toward a purity of vision in terms of composition, color, and light. Monumental in more than one sense, these works eventually came to be recognized as among the pinnacle achievements of the Color Field movement. Today, Louis's vast legacy continues to grow.

Among the highlights of the show is *Green Shade* (1958), a quintessential "Veil" painting, with thin layers of deep green and gray-green pigment covering a large (91 by 134 ¾-inches) canvas. While wholly abstract, the imposing yet gentle cascade suggests the sea-foam mist of a crashing ocean wave. Among other outstanding works, *Number 9*, a major-scale "Stripe," features tall, vertical lines of brilliant color—blue, yellow, green, red, and orange—sequestered on each side by the unprimed white canvas. More meditative, but similarly riveting, *Beta Gamma* is a resplendent example of Louis's "Unfurled" series. Here, on each side of the canvas, diagonal, narrow bands of poured, incandescent color frame a vast central expanse of unadulterated canvas—the inimitable and sublime space that this artist so poignantly articulates.

Born Morris Louis Bernstein in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1912, to Russian émigré parents, the artist attended Baltimore's Maryland Institute of Fine and Applied Arts (now the Maryland Institute College of Art [MICA]). In 1954, Louis traveled to New York, where he was included in a well-received New York group show organized by critic Clement Greenberg. Louis's work garnered greater attention from museum curators and collectors after being featured in a 1957 group exhibition at New York's prestigious Leo Castelli Gallery. Just as his career was about to be firmly established, Louis succumbed to lung cancer in early 1962, and died, age 49, on September 7th of that year. The following year, his first major solo museum exhibition was held posthumously at the Solomon R. Guggenheim.

Morris Louis's work is included in many prominent public and private art collections throughout the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Art Institute of Chicago; Saint Louis Art Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Baltimore Museum of Art; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Louisiana Museum of Art, Denmark; National Gallery, Berlin; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofia, Madrid; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; and The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

Morris Louis: Spectrum is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an introduction by Diane Upright, and an essay by Alexander Nemerov.

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