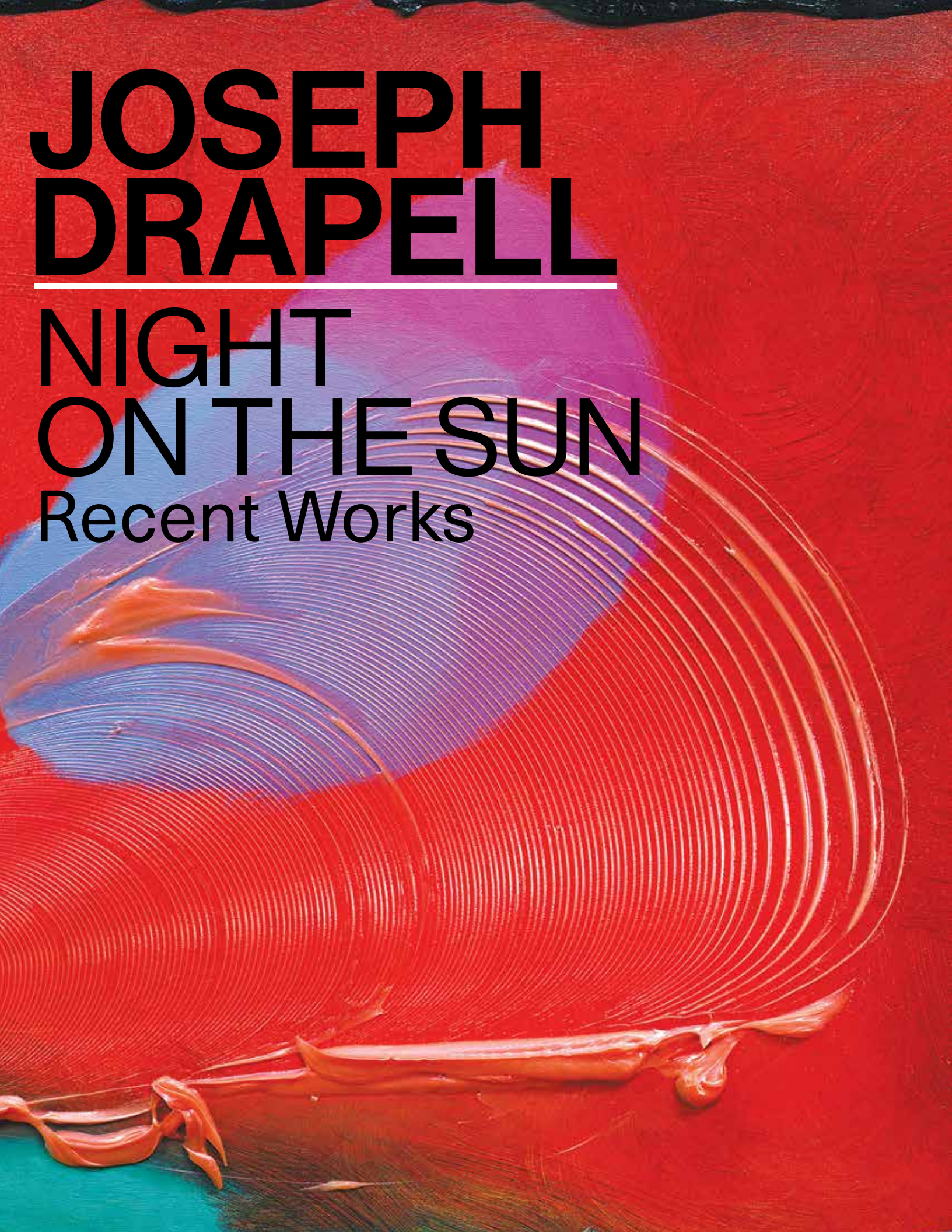
JOSEPH DRAPELL

NIGHT ON THE SUN

Recent Works



Start of Time, 2008
acrylic on canvas with rhinestone, 60 in x 48 in

JOSEPH DRAPELL

NIGHT ON THE SUN

Recent works

October 4 to November 2, 2024

In Front of the Horizon, 2010
acrylic on canvas with acrylic additives and rhinestone, 51.5 in x 60 in

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JOSEPH DRAPELL

NIGHT ON THE SUN
Recent works

At 84 years old, Canadian artist Joseph Drapell is no stranger to risk, both as an artist and as an individual. In 1965, at the age of 25 he “jumped a bus”, as he puts it, leaving behind not just a tour bus in Vienna but also his familiar surroundings to flee the confines of a Communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia. A country that did not allow freedom to artists, and had even denied him the opportunity to study art.

A circuitous path took him to Toronto, by way of a refugee camp in Germany; then Halifax, where he worked for an architectural firm; and then Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where he spent two years earning an M.F.A. at the Cranbrook Academy of Fine Arts. There he met such influential figures as Louis Kahn, Donald Judd, Malcolm Morley, Clement Greenberg and Jack Bush, all brought in by Cranbrook’s ambitious visiting artists programme.

Drapell’s early career was marked by striking success. In 1971, the artist exhibited at the Robert Elkon Gallery in New York, a gallery known for their openness to show contemporary trends highlighting artists that are now celebrated historical international artists, including Agnes Martin, Chuck Arnoldi, Friedl Dzubas, Jack Bush and many others. Drapell’s first show at the Elkon Gallery was an immediate success, most of the paintings were sold. His exhibitions of 1971, 1972 and 1973 at the Dunkelman Gallery in Toronto, managed at the time by Jared Sable, also had great success.

But Drapell was not satisfied with the work that had produced this commercial success. He wanted a more mechanical and more personal method than the painterly one he had been using. In 1973, Drapell invented his spreading technique, using strips of aluminum to move paint around the canvas rather than brushes. Drapell’s “compression method,” as he calls it, can be seen as his own version of Mexican muralist David Alfonso Siqueiros’ quest to “put out to pasture that stick with hairs on its end” and the first of a half dozen surprising, challenging innovations. By 1974 Drapell’s compression technique was producing his best work of his career to that point, titled the “Great Spirit” paintings (Manitou is in the collection of the AGO), we see a great radiation of light from the top and centre, as well as a grand infusion of warmth from behind, and that sense of a splendid, expansive warmth is further enhance by the striking emptiness of the central area. These works deal with the artist’s beloved Georgian Bay, with death, with the concept of God, and yet the artist intended hardly any of that.

Drapell is a restless artist, and every decade or so he has felt compelled to make a major change in his art. As he says, “You don’t want to be a slave of your past.” In the mid 1990’s he introduced holographic glitter to his paintings, to the dismay of much of the audience, especially more conventional artists. Certainly glitter is no privileged high-art material, and Drapell argues, “this is how Picasso worked,” using non-fine-art materials without any preciousness: cardboard, sand, scrap wood or metal, and so on. “the way “glitter” articulates the field is pleasing to me.”. Holographic glitter, with its glimmering, long-lived color, reminds Drapell of stars as seen through a telescope, especially the Milky Way, and he has long been interested in observing the vast expanses of the cosmos with a telescope at his island retreat on Georgian Bay. For Drapell the cosmos has mystery, infinity, and visual beauty. It remains an “amazing puzzle” that defies efforts to explain why it is the way it is. For Drapell that enhances its value as a stimulus to creativity, because for him art without mystery is mere design.

Georgian Bay No. 4, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

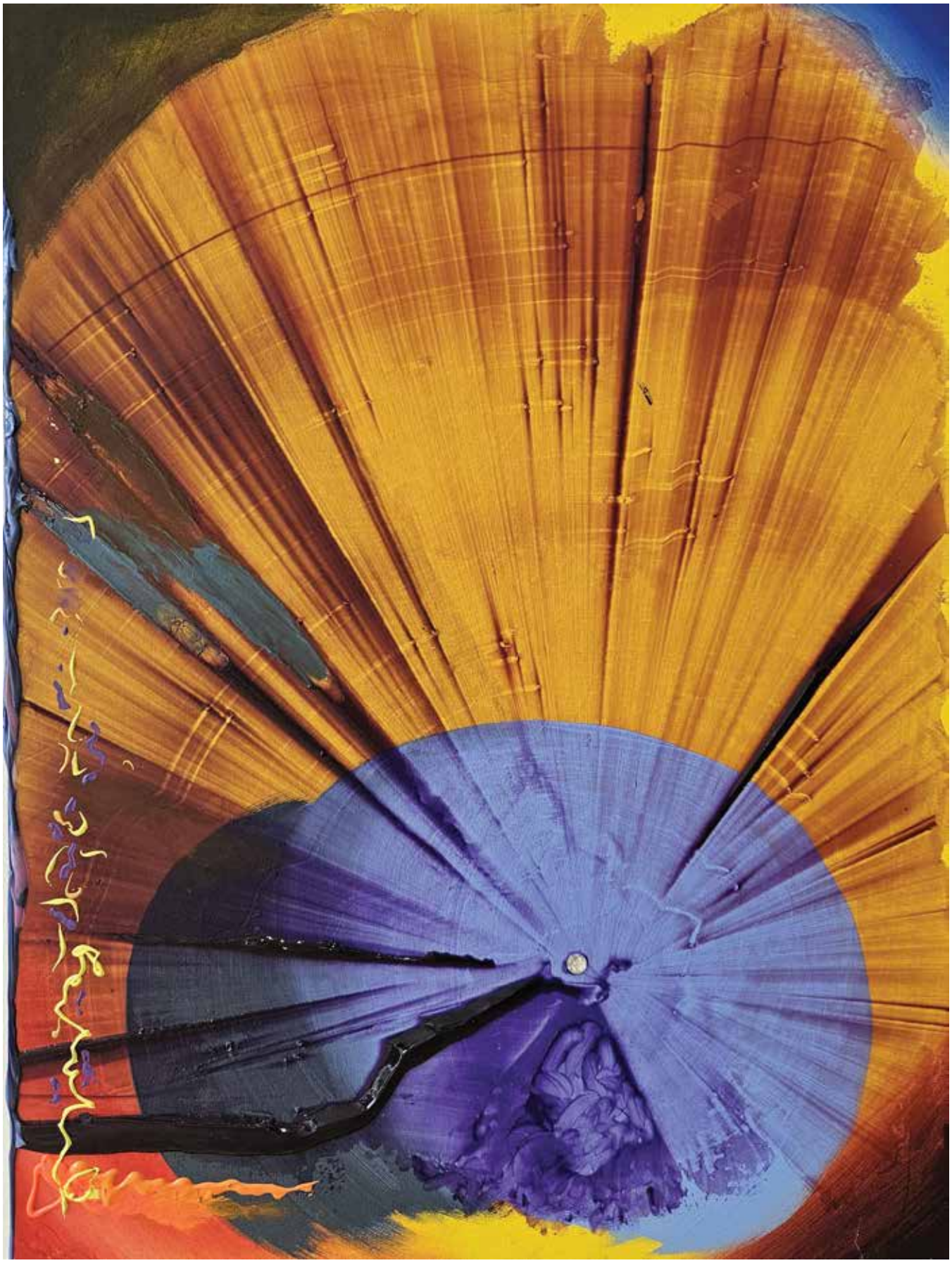
Notes on Night on the Sun

Drapell has spent 50 summers on an Island in Georgian Bay. Upon his first visit there, the artist felt this was his spiritual home. His cabin was built on a high granite cliff which provided exceptional views. Elemental wildness and purity of the area provided nourishment for all Drapell's abstraction. Dark nights on the island introduced the artist to amateur astronomy.

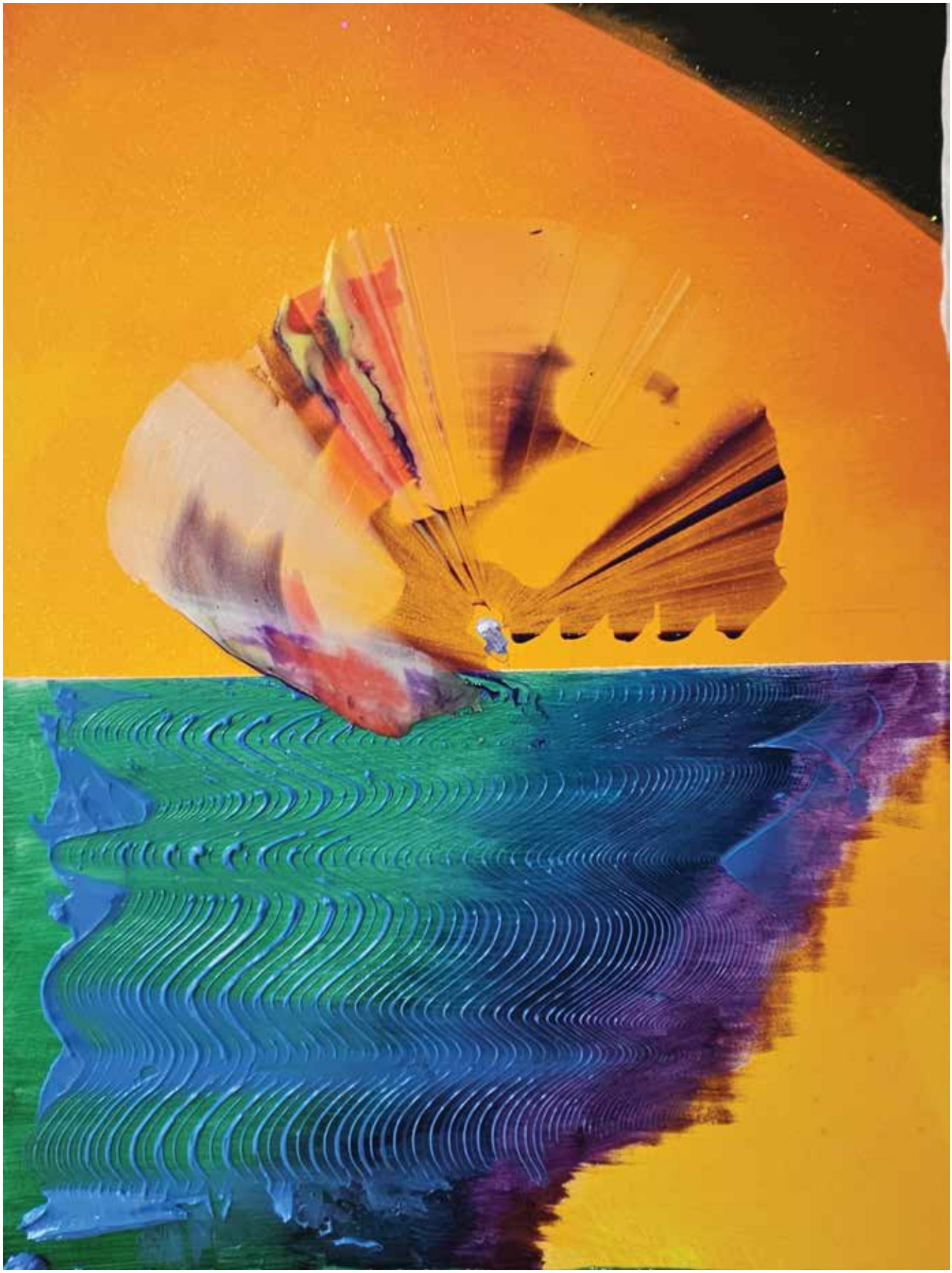
In 1973 Drapell painted the critically acclaimed "Great Spirit" paintings, a group of six large works. He is still pursuing the theme today. Drapell has included one black corner in all his 2024 paintings to indicate cosmic space. The rest of the canvas references the sun or the planet. The center of the paintings have a "small Georgian Bay view" floating across.

LOGIC FINDS NO PLACE IN ART OR POETRY ~ Joseph Drapell.

Essay credits: extracts taken from the writings of former art historian, arts writer and Professor, Ken Carpenter, York University, The Invisible Revolutionary, Joseph Drapell, Volume One, 2015



Little Planet, 2022
acrylic on canvas, 40 in. x 30 in



Wildlife, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 48 in. x 36 in

Friendship, 1990
acrylic on canvas, 16 in x 20 in

Georgian Bay No. 1, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

Georgian Bay No. 5, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

Georgian Bay No. 7, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

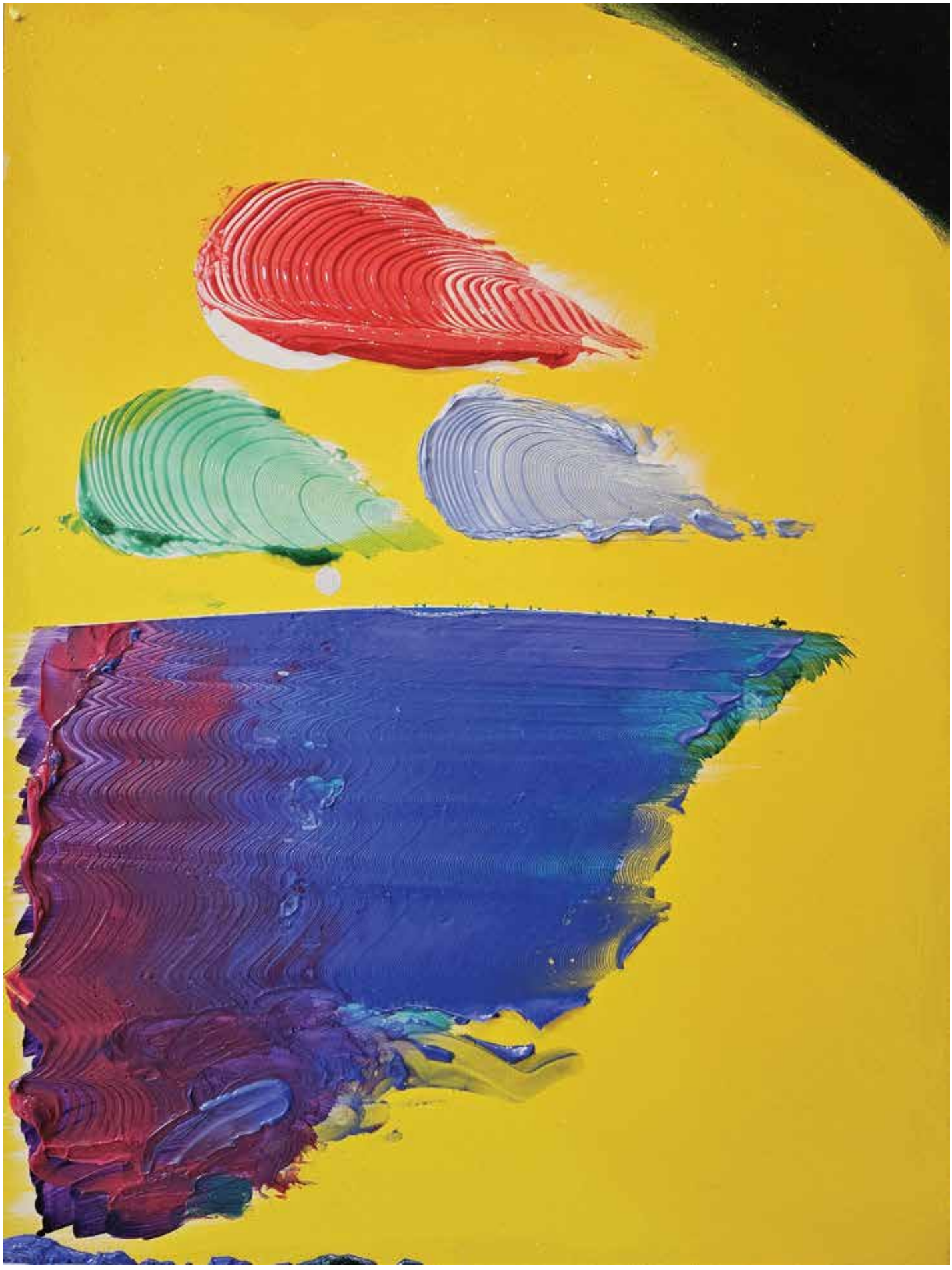
Georgian Bay No. 11, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

Georgian Bay No. 12, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

Georgian Bay No. 6, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 20 in. x 20 in

Cat's Eye, 2022
acrylic on canvas, 40 in x 28 in

The Moon, Star and the Veil, 2022-23
acrylic on canvas, 40 in x 30 in



Procession, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 48 in x 36 in

Day on the Sun, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 40 in x 40 in, (tondo)

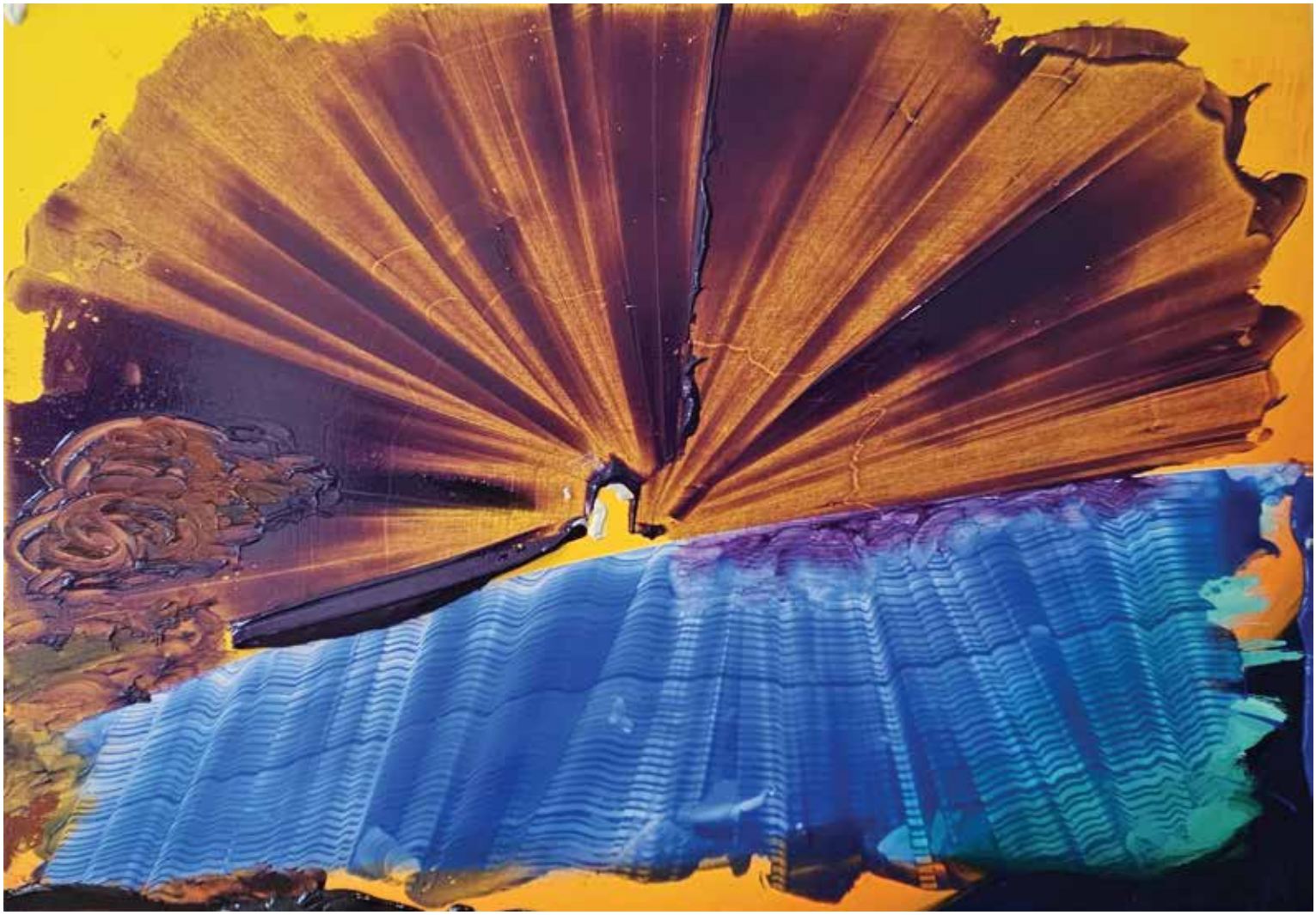
Night on the Sun, 2024
acrylic on canvas, 40 in x 40 in, (tondo)

Rapids, 2023
acrylic on canvas, 30 in x 30 in

The Pearl, 2023
acrylic on canvas, 30 in x 30 in

Morning Star, 2023
acrylic on canvas, 48 in x 30 in

Stealing the Sun, 2022
acrylic on canvas, 40 in x 28 in



Door to the Sun, 2022
acrylic on canvas, 28 in x 40 in

JOSEPH DRAPELL

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1968 Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax
1971 Robert Elkon Gallery, New York
1971 Dunkelman Gallery, Toronto
1972 Robert Elkon Gallery, New York
1972 Dunkelman Gallery, Toronto
1973 Robert Elkon Gallery, New York
1973 Dunkelman Gallery, Toronto
1974 Jared Sable Gallery, Toronto
1975 Jared Sable Gallery, Toronto
1977 The Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto
1978 O'Reilly Galleries, New York
1979 Gallery One, Toronto
1980 Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston
1980 Meredith Long Contemporary, New York
1981 Martin Gerard Gallery, Edmonton
1982 Gallery One, Toronto
1982 Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston
1982 Meredith Long, Houston
1983 Gallery One, Toronto
1983 Galerie Elca London, Montreal
1984 Robert Kidd Gallery, Detroit
1984 Gallery One, Toronto
1984 Galerie Elca London, Montreal
1984 ***Joseph Drapell: Ten Years*** a survey exhibition with a catalogue traveling to five museums: Art Gallery of Windsor, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Confederation Art Centre P.E.I., Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Koffler Art Gallery, Toronto (essay by Karen Wilkin)
1985 Gallery One, Toronto
1985 Buschlen/Mowatt Associates, Vancouver
1986 Joseph Drapell at Exhibition Space at 112 Greene St., New York City (curated and catalog essay by Karen Wilkin)
1987 Mathew Scott Gallery, South Miami
1987 Eva Cohon Gallery, Chicago

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (continued)

1987 Gallery One, Toronto

1988 Shippee Gallery, New York
The Island Paintings (catalog essay by Ken Carpenter)

1988 Gallery One, Toronto

1989 Galerie Elca London, Montreal

1989 Gallery One, Toronto ***The Island Paintings***

1989 Kathleen Laverty Gallery, Edmonton
Paintings from Emma Lake Artists' Workshop

1990 Gallery One, Toronto ***50th Birthday Exhibition: The Czech Paintings*** (catalog)

1991 Moore Gallery, Hamilton
Several Directions in the work of Joseph Drapell

1991 Gallery One, Toronto ***Small Paintings from Georgian Bay***

1991 Kathleen Laverty Gallery, Edmonton

1991 Canadian Art Gallery, Calgary

1991 Gallery Camino Real, Boca Raton ***1985-86 Works***

1992 Gallery One, Toronto ***The Paradise Paintings***

1992 Galerie Elca London, Montreal

1993 Gallery One, Toronto ***The "Figure" Paintings***

1994 Kathleen Laverty Gallery, Edmonton ***Personages***

1994 Galerie Dambier Masset, Paris ***Individuals***

1994 Gallery One, Toronto ***Archetypal Figures***

1996 Moore Gallery, Hamilton ***25 Years of Joseph Drapell***

1996 Kathleen Laverty Gallery, Edmonton ***Composers***

1997 Gallery One, Toronto

1998 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
Drapell's Art, 1970-98

1999 Moore Gallery, Toronto
Joseph Drapell: Paintings and Sculptures

1999 Gallery One, Toronto ***Photographs of Joseph Drapell***

1999 Oblastni galerie Vysociny, Jihlava, Bohemia
The Deepest Layers works painted in Drapell's birthplace, (catalog essay by Dagmar Jelinkova)

1999 Moore Gallery, Toronto
Joseph Drapell at 60 (30 year retrospective)

2000 Muzeum Dr. Alese Hrdlicky, Humpolec, Bohemia
The Deepest Layers

2000 Prachenske Museum, Pisek, Bohemia
The Deepest Layers

2001 Gale***rie moderniho umeni, Roudnice, Bohemia***
The Deepest Layers

2001 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
Universal Images

2002 Roy Thomson Symphony Hall, Toronto
Drapell paints on Stage

2002 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
Joseph Drapell Retrospective

2003 Moore Gallery, Toronto ***The Celestial Experiences***

2005 Moore Gallery, Toronto ***35 years of Drapell's Art***

2005 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto ***"Anti-drapell"***

2006 Moore Gallery, Toronto ***Terrorism Quartet***

2007 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The Unknown Drapells

2007 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The Great Spirit, six works from 1974

2007 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The New New Landscape

2007 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
Digital Colour Engravings

2008 Moore Gallery, Toronto ***Duality & Singularity***

2008 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
50 Years of Drapell's Figures

2008 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The Great Spirit, North

2008 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The Nude and The Art of Painting

2009 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The Nude Continued

2010 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
JOSEPH DRAPELL: My Universe @ 70

2010 The Spoke Club, Toronto ***Georgian Bay & Joseph Drapell, November – January, 2011***

2010 ART11, Montreal ***The Art of Joseph Drapell, 25 years retrospective, November – April, 2011***

2011 Museum of New New Painting, Toronto
The Cosmic Woman: the Enigma of Georgian Bay, April – May, 2011

2012 Lausberg Contemporary, Toronto ***Eternal Return***

2013 Museum of New, Toronto ***The Earth Quartet and the Classic Period of Joseph Drapell, Inaugural Exhibition at the newly expanded Museum of New, curated by Morgan Copeman***

2014 ***Birth of New Worlds - The Quartet***
Museum of New, Toronto

2015 ***House of Mirrors***, Nikola Rukaj Gallery, Toronto

2017 ***Cosmic Woman,*** Museum of New, Toronto

2018 ***Cosmic Woman—Abstraction***
Museum of New, Toronto

2018 ***Toronto Seasons 2003,*** Museum of New, Toronto

2018 ***ORIGIN***, Museum of New, Toronto

2019 ***ORIGIN***, Part Two Museum of New, Toronto

2019 ***The Story of Striations,*** Museum of New, Toronto

2020 ***Solar Variations***, 13th Street Gallery, St. Catharines,

2022 ***Joseph Drapell: Re-Inventing Landscape***
13th Street Gallery, St. Catharines

2023 ***Nude Ascending (Re-Inventing Figure)***
Museum of New, Toronto

2023 ***Liberty*** Museum of New, Toronto

2024 ***DRAPELL*** John Mann Gallery, St. Catharines,

COLLECTIONS

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
National Gallery, Prague
Museum of Modern Art, Foundation Ludwig, Vienna
The Clement Greenberg Collection at Portland Museum of Art, Oregon
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo
Minneapolis Institute of Art
The Chase Manhattan Bank, New York
La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla California
AT&T, New York
The Francis J. Greenberger Foundation, New York
Hines International Corporation, Boston
21st Century Master Artworks, New York
Imperial Oil Ltd
Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale
Center for the Arts, Vero Beach, Florida
Camino Foundation, Valduz, Lichtenstein
Vaclav Havel, President of Czech Republic, Prague
Collection of Gerald Piltzer, Paris
Gallery Ism, Seoul, South Korea
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest
Galerie Moderniho Umeni, Roudnice, Bohemia
Galerie Klatovy Klenova, Bohemia
Prachenske museum, Pisek
Oblastni galerie Vysociny, Jihlava
Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, ON
Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario
Toronto-Dominion Bank
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery
Art Gallery of Windsor
Chevron Standard, Calgary
Royal Bank of Canada
Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina
Shell Calgary
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick
Rothmans of Pall Mall, Canada
Westburne International Industries, Montreal
Alcan Ltd, Montreal
Teleglobe, Montreal
David Mirvish Collection, Toronto
Cineplex Odeon Corp. Canada
London Reginal Art Gallery
McIntosh Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London
Red Deer College, Alberta
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, Alberta
Tom Thomson Memorial Gallery, Peterborough
Canada Council, The Art Bank
University Gallery, Carleton University, Ottawa
The British Museum, London (suite of 4 etchings)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1971 ***Man and His World*** Montreal

1973 ***New Acqusitions*** The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

1976 ***Ontario Now*** Art Gallery of Hamilton

1976 ***Abstractions 21 Olympiad***, Montreal travelling to Stratford Ontario and Paris and London

1977 ***New Abstract Art*** Edmonton Art Gallery (catalog)

1979 ***Color Abstraction*** Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, catalog by Kenworth Moffett, (included were Louis, Bush, Frankenthaler, Noland, Olitski, Poons and Drapell)

1980 ***The New Generation*** Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, touring Paris (The American Center), Berlin (Amerika Haus), and Lisbon (Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes (curated and essay by Kenworth Moffett)

1981 ***Viewpoint-29x9*** Art Gallery of Hamilton (catalog) touring in Canada

1981 ***The Heritage of Jack Bush*** Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa (catalog)

1981 Toronto-New York Art Toronto 81 (catalog)

1982 ***The Threshold of Color*** The Edmonton Art Gallery

1983 ***Update: Cranbrook*** Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham, Detroit

1984 ***Triangle international Artsists' Workshop*** Pine Plains, N.Y. (catalog)

1985 ***Abstraction x 4*** Canada House, London, (curated and catalog essay by Karen Wilkin) travelling to Bonn (IFA Gallery) and Paris (The Canadian Cultural Centre)

1986 ***Toronto-3*** Eva Cohon Gallery, Chicago

1986 ***Contemporary Candian Artists*** Wade Gallery, Los Angeles

1987 ***New Abstractions*** Shippee Gallery, New York

1991 ***Moffett's Collection*** Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale

1991 ***The Big Picture*** Gallery Camino Real, Boca Raton

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (continued)

1991 ***The New Acrylic Painters***
Center for the Arts, Vero Beach, Florida

1992 ***The New Acrylic Painters*** Gallery One, Toronto

1992 ***New New Painting*** Galerie Gerald Piltzer, Paris (book-catalog, essays by Kenworth Moffett and Marcel Paquet)

1993 ***New New Painting*** Musee des Beaux Art, Charleroi, Belgium

1993 ***New New Painting*** Musee d'art Moderne et Contemporain, Nice, France

1993 ***New New Painting***
Stadtishe Galerie, Goppingen, Germany (catalog)

1993 ***Discovery '93*** Grand Palais, Paris

1993 ***New New Painting*** International Art Fair, Chicago

1993 ***Konfrontationen*** Museum of Modern Art, Foundation Ludwig, Vienna (catalog)

1993 ***New New Painting*** Galerie Tilly Haderek, Stuttgart

1993 ***New New Painting*** Art Cologne '93

1994 ***New New Painting*** International Art Fair, Frankfurt

1994 ***New New Painting***
International Art Fair at the Pier, New York

1994 ***New New Painting***
Art 1994 (International Art Fair) Chicago

1994 ***Seda cihla*** (Czech artists, exile)
Klatovy, Bohemia (catalog)

1994 ***Hidden Values*** Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, travelling to Ontario and Alberta

1994 ***New New Painting***
Salander-O'Reilly Gallery, New York

1994 ***New New Painting*** Gallery ISM, Seoul, (catalog)

1996 ***New New Painting*** Vanderleelie Gallery, Edmonton

1996 ***New New Painting*** Gallerie Gerald Piltzer, Paris

1996 ***Annual Fall Exhibition***
The Edmonton Contemporary Artists' Society

1996 ***New New Painting*** Art 2000, Stamford, Connecticut (catalog, essay by Donald Kuspit)

1997 ***New New Painting***
Performing Center, Stamford, Connecticut

1997 ***New New Painting***
York College, Queens, New York

1997 ***New New Painting***
Museum of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, Florida

1997 ***Colors: Contrast and Cultures***
The Discovery Museum, Bridgeport, Conn.

1999 ***New New Painters***
Flint Institute of Art, (catalog, essay by David Carrier)

1999 ***New New Painters***
Denver Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver

2000 ***New New Painters*** Stadthuise, Brussels

2000 ***New New Painters-the Real Avantgarde***
Armory, New York (organized by Kenworth Moffett at the site of 1913 Armory Show, catalog)

2001 ***New New Painters*** Galerie Anne Letree, Paris

2001 ***The Clement Greenberg Collection***
The Portland Art Museum. Oregon (catalog)

2001 ***Ten Years of New New Painters***
Museum of New New Painting, Toronto

2001 ***Tondo Rondo*** C.W.White Gallery, Portland, Maine

2002 ***New New Painters***
National Gallery, Prague, (large scale survey of NNP, catalog with essays of five international critics, 120 pages)

2003 ***Gallery Artists*** Moore Gallery, Toronto

2004 ***Gallery Artists*** Moore Gallery, Toronto

2005 ***Gallery Artists*** Moore Gallery, Toronto

2007 ***New Acrylic Abstraction*** Salt Lake Art Center, Utah, U.S.A.

2008 ***Gallery Artists*** Moore Gallery, Toronto

2009 ***Six New New Painters***
Museum of New New Painting, Toronto

2010 ***Toronto Art Fair*** Lausberg Contemporary, Toronto

2011 ***Winter Thaw*** Lausberg Contemporary, Toronto

2012 ***Toronto Art Fair*** Lausberg Contemporary, Toronto

2015 ***Toronto Art Fair*** Nikola Rukaj Gallery, Toronto

2017 ***Twenty-Five Years of New New Painters***
Museum of New, Toronto

2020 ***Joseph Drapell & Henry Saxe***
13th Street Gallery, St. Catharines

2022 ***Thirty Years of New New Painters***
Museum of New, Toronto

2024 ***Joseph Drapel***l, John Mann Gallery, St. Catherines

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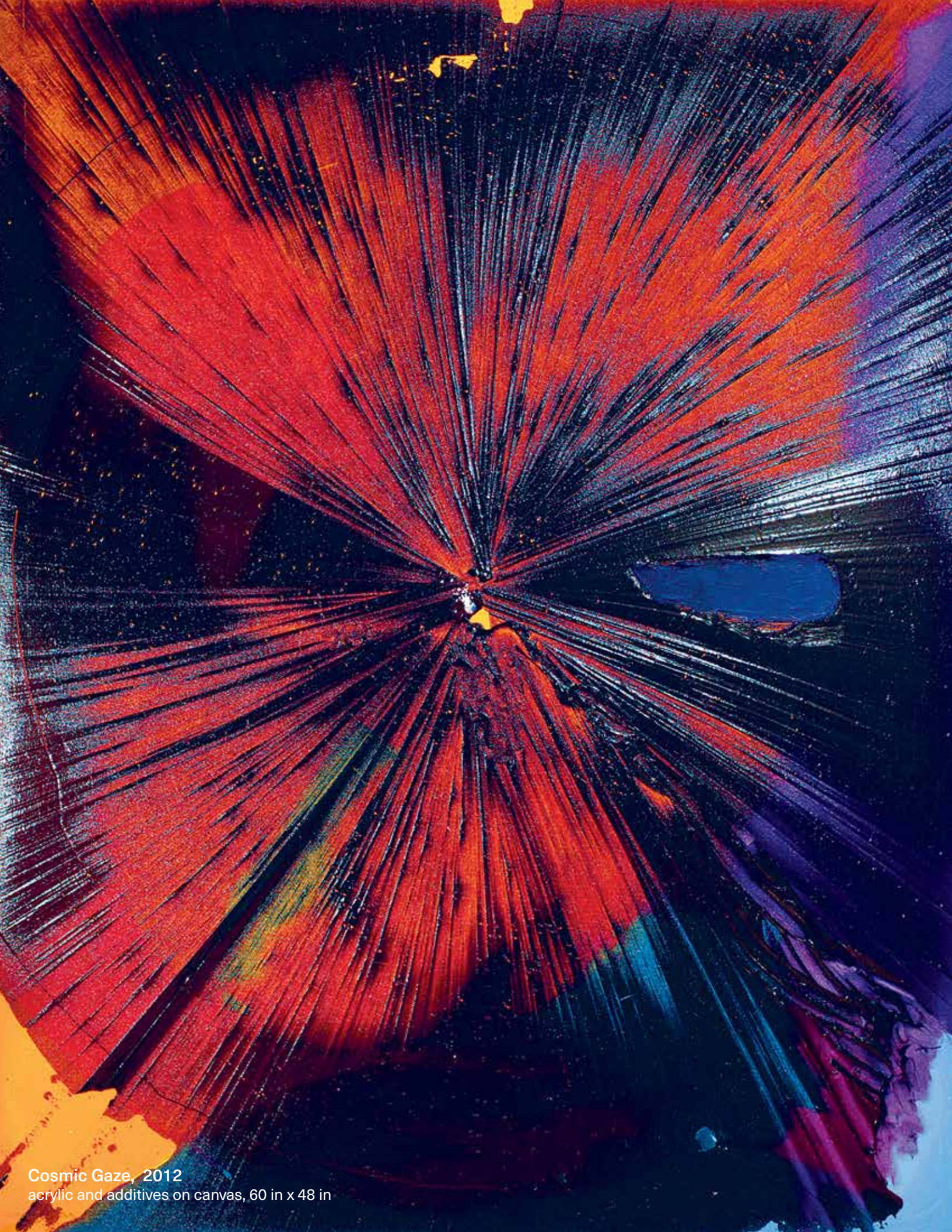
front and back cover **Everyone is Robin Hood, 1991**
acrylic on canvas, 32 in x 55 in



Cosmic Gaze, 2012
acrylic and additives on canvas, 60 in x 48 in

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