



**RICHARD CARTER**

MASKS + MANDALAS



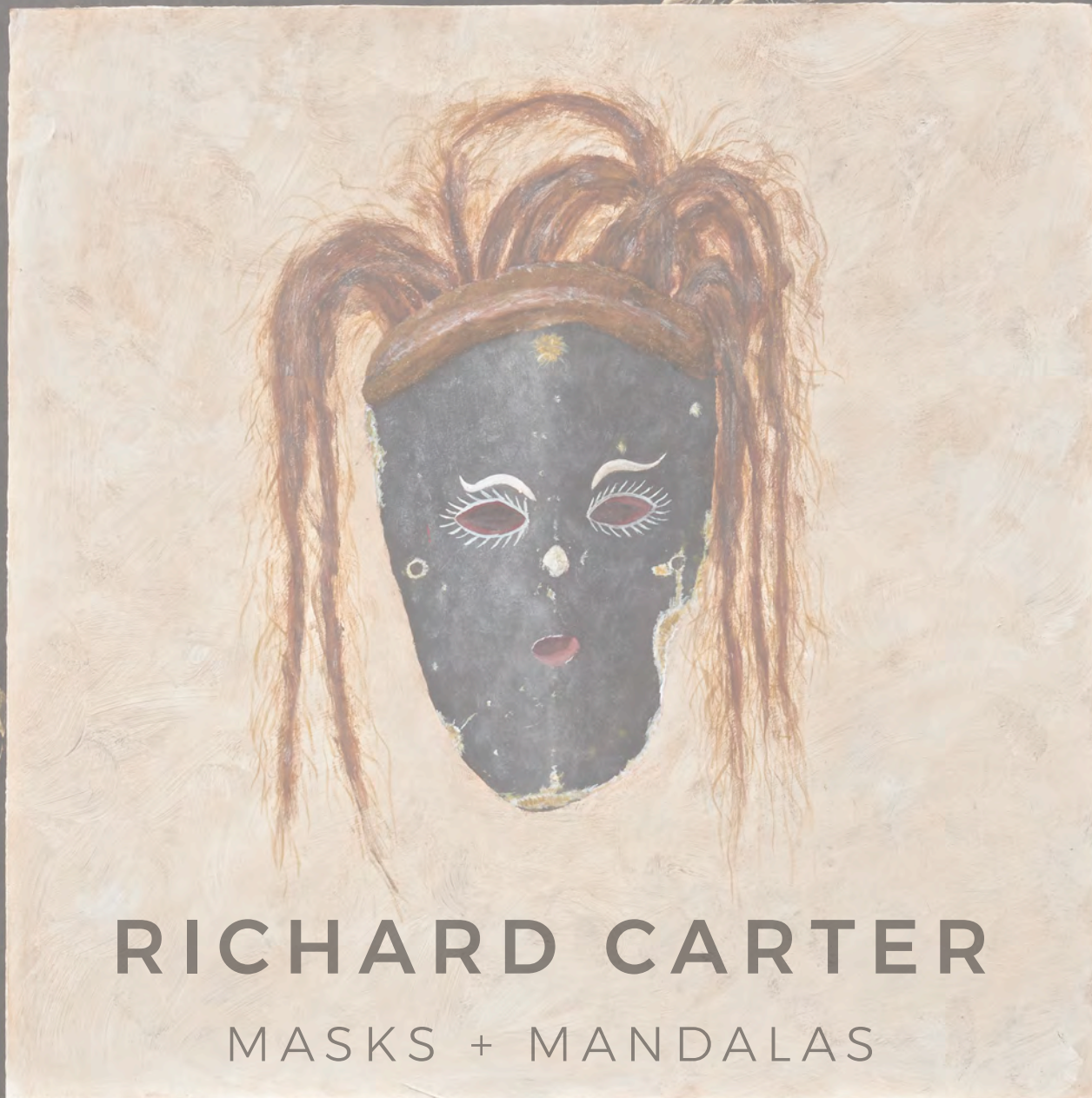




COVER | SHAMAN MASK | 30 X 27 | MIXED MEDIA/MDF | 2018

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**RICHARD CARTER**

MASKS + MANDALAS





RICHARD CARTER IN HIS STUDIO

# ARTIST STATEMENT

**I USUALLY DO DEEP DIVES** into subjects, studying and exploring them in detail. Sometimes these studies evolve into ideas that lodge in my brain and in my spirit, and these ideas bang around my studio and often come forth as a creative act, usually in paint or graphite.

I have spent a great part of my artistic practice exploring science and math. Both are ever present in my work, with geometry serving as a principal source of imagery from my earliest work. Whether solid geometry, a mapping of the night sky, or a study of icebergs or lightning, natural science appears throughout. Studies of crows and fire and even a series on the western highway: I see science everywhere.

Masks and Mandalas: both are manifestations of the visual art used by various societies to express social, religious, historical or other cultural themes important to those respective communities.

At some point I was drawn into an examination of mandalas as a form of artistic expression. This ancient geometry is laden with meaning and is a very significant part of the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. “Mandala” means circle and that form has been basic to my work since I started making art over fifty years ago.

I saw the mandala as a geometric matrix that was interesting as a platform on which to experiment with new interpretations and depictions and to express my own versions of the cosmos. My work already had an affinity with the centered image, the strong borders, the complicated structures. As a twenty-first century artist, I found in these elements a kinship with the traditional practitioners of that art. They also appealed to me with their complicated mathematical relationships. Perfect subject.

I took the border and fractured it dramatically. I reduced it to varied rectangles that were often scattered and disconnected from each other. A nod to the reality of chaos. I kept the image centered and used this as an arena to pay homage to various modern and personal subjects.

A Judd sculpture, a Celtic medallion, a Japanese symbol, a Malevich off-kilter square, a Cartesian drawing of the universe, and many other iconic forms that I carry in my mind. And, of course, the circle.

So, this contemplation of the mandala resulted in a very productive period in my studio, as is seen in this exhibition. The other half of the exhibition consists of the portraits of masks from my personal collection of primarily vintage Latin American masks.

I started collecting masks many years ago. I was fascinated by the diversity of the subject matter and the craftsmanship involved in their creation. They also evoke a very palpable power as simple objects. I did not really search for them but, over time, they came my way.

As I found and collected more interesting masks, I became more knowledgeable about their uses and about their importance in dance rituals, celebrations and processions. Masks have been used in Mesoamerican cultures for thousands of years, always in connection with ceremony and ritual. Masks are important to their owners and are reused and repainted to stay in new condition. When not in use they are frequently kept in the church as they can have a religious importance. There is a spiritual aspect to the dances and the masks have everything to do with enhancing that. They become evocative cultural objects. When participants wear a mask and participate in an event the dancer strives to become the person or animal depicted in the mask.



The mask paintings started as stand-alone portraits (a brave move for me) but soon they also became an arena for a geometric transformation. The portraits alone felt forlorn and rather empty. By layering various wallpapers behind the portraits, they suddenly had a context that made them seem more alive, more like they do when they are being danced.

I see in each mask a personality and I can imagine a dancer striving to become the bull, or the monkey, or the shaman, etc. They have a life or a spirit that animates them.

As I painted the portraits, it was important to me to get the right angle and lighting for each mask that best evoked that personality. And finally, I went through dozens of sessions to match the wallpaper backings to accentuate and complement those personalities....The bull in the china shop, the king's jester with a colonial backdrop, the shaman in a jungle, the horse with the zebra background.

There are similarities in the social, religious, performative, and cultural significance of each subject to their respective communities. Like the mandala in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, Mesoamerican masks have been used for millennia in their cultures as objects of transcendence and reverence. As the mandala serves to transform ordinary minds into enlightened ones and assists with healing, the mask is a vehicle to help the dancer achieve a higher state and inhabit the spirit of the creature or person depicted by the mask.

So, I have these two collections of paintings. The mandalas were produced over a two year period, and a year later the masks project started and took the better part of a year. I was not really aware of the synchronism between these two subjects while I was doing the work but I eventually saw this connection and thus arose the idea for the Masks and Mandalas show. Although it was only obvious later, it became clear that there was a convergence of energy between the two series. The use of visual art to build pathways between traditions is at least informative, at best, enlightening.

**RICHARD CARTER**  
**BASALT COLORADO**  
**JULY 2019**

# MASKS + MANDALAS

**RICHARD CARTER DOES HIS BEST** to keep his studio organized. He is by nature a neat person. His brushes are lined up in their plastic cups; jars of acrylic paint are arranged in tiers on his palette table like a church choir; and stacked finished panels, several deep, lean against the walls. The sink and counter where he washes his brushes are kitchen clean. One can help themselves to a glass of water without fear. There is also a nice sitting area where a visitor might leaf through one of the many art books on the coffee table.

And yet, the studio is overwhelmed with artistic creativity. Those few hundred square feet strain to hold the quantity and range of Carter's ideas as they take form in paint and drawing. The space simply can't keep up with the productive capacity of Carter's mind and hand. The latest painting series crowds out its predecessor. Studies for the next compete for table space. Every bit of wall, including those of the bathroom, is hung with a panel or framed work. The space is dense with art, and the air charged with the energy of Carter's process.

The omnivorous curiosity informing his art, and the work ethic that fuels its making, have produced for this exhibition two seemingly disparate bodies of work, the mandala and masks series, the first executed between 2014 and 2016, and the second from 2017 to 2019. Carter generated these as separate projects and without considering how they might relate. They stem from different stimuli. The masks images are

inspired by his collection of carved wooden goats and horses and bulls and bears and others, all of whom gaze down from their place on the studio wall. These pieces originate mostly from Mexico, though a few are Guatemalan and African. Such masks are often part of indigenous ceremonies, but also find their way into the global marketplace. Carter's mandalas, on the other hand, are rooted in the Buddhist and Hindu diagrammatic representations of the cosmos, and, like the masks, are central to rituals.

In these series Carter has captured two different but complementary traditions of expressing an enchantment with the world. Their respective points of engagement in a spiritual understanding of the universe is different, but they both share the human impulse to see the workings of deeper forces behind the everyday. The mandalas' representation of a vast terrain of time and space visualize an exploded context for human existence, not to trivialize it, but to decenter it such that it is understood to be no more and no less a part of the universal order. Carter's interpretation of the masks comes to a similar point: that the human animal is just one of many, and it shares with the others the same essential conditions of existence. Both series build a bridge from the immediate and intimate to the spiritual and cosmological.

In each case Carter has reinterpreted these traditions according to his own vision. In the mandalas he substitutes for religious elements a set of motifs that add up to his own understanding of the cosmos. He retains the square format, an approximate compositional symmetry, and a central dominant object, but in place of buddhist deities or mythological narratives Carter draws on a vocabulary of forms whose universality transcends any particular culture. The circle, present in Carter's work since the beginning, again appears here, sometimes as a solid ring but just as often as a formation of small pencil dashes, more of which below. The sphere and cube similarly ground the composition in geometry, while in other pieces, Carter references specific cultural moments such the sakura cherry blossoms and Celtic knots. These designs operate as both pure abstraction and as humanistic touchstones.

Carter's mandalas also integrate his notation for subatomic particles as they whizz and skitter through space. The aforementioned pencil dashes approximate neutrons and bosons and whatnot. In addition to these clouds of energy, he reproduces in squiggly and arabesque pencil lines the trails left behind from the engineered collisions which break down matter into its most basic constituents. Here Carter explores

that edge of theoretical physics where questions of science push into questions of metaphysics or even mysticism. The mandalas in his handling synthesize aspects of science, geometry, and culture to create his own maps of the universe.

For the masks, Carter arrived at an entirely different pictorial solution. He first painted the objects with representational fidelity, and then began, for reasons known only to his creative mind, experimenting with samples of wallpaper as background fields for these portraits. It's a novel technique in the long history of his art making, and evinces yet again, if we needed confirmation, his capacity for innovation. The portraits by themselves already accentuated the personas of each individual. The king looks worried about his kingly responsibilities; the monkey is living up to the cheeky moniker; the bunny is clearly up to no good; the goat is knowing; the deer is stuck in the headlights; the horse is companionable, and the bull is set on raising hell. They are by turns sober, humorous, dim-witted, or contemplative, qualities which anthropomorphize them and bridges their native context to ours. Carter has not yet ventured to paint the human figure, but with these masks he captures human psychology. All this preserves the functions of such masks as they were used and enjoyed by their makers.

Beyond that, Carter complicates these subjects by placing them against the wallpaper rectangles, each of which carries cultural associations that relate to but have no originary connection with the artifact. Carter's first attempt placed the *Shaman* against a background of dense foliage, as if such might be the figure's native environment. Its browns and blacks rhyme with the palette of the mask itself, and the total effect almost comes off without irony. But it is a wallpaper that might be in the lobby of a once nice but now decrepit New York hotel, and the effect subtly but distinctly sets up a tension between the authenticity of the mask and the contrivance of a mass-produced, consumer product. One is tempted to think that Carter wants to point out how first-world homes and museums and galleries domesticate and fetishize artifacts appropriated from indigenous cultures. That is a plausible reading, but Carter doesn't paint from such political or social critiques. Rather, the juxtapositions are better thought of as a kind of play in which neither side of the equation is above a little teasing. Throughout the series, Carter similarly harmonizes the frank beauty of the papers with the masks, and in doing so creates visual puns and moods and gives to these personas psychological inflections that they don't possess by themselves. The *Patron*, with his fussy mustache, soul patch, and careful coiffure, gets the equally fussy and fakey pincushion upholstery. The



monkey's mischievous grin belies the delicacy and refinement of the cherry blossom pattern. The bull is gleeful at finding himself in a china shop.

It is remarkable enough that Carter continues in his seventh decade to find new and expansive subjects and that he imports them into his arts practice. Even more remarkable is that he innovates his technique and style to fit each new set of questions in response to their unique aesthetic requirements. He seemingly draws on an inexhaustible reservoir of ingenuity, a resource that was perhaps strengthened by his work as a production designer in the film business. Somehow Carter is possessed of a creativity superpower, and there seems to be no end in sight. The expression of ideas in their novel media is multiplied in this exhibition by placing two different bodies of work in close proximity. They lend each other meaning that they would not have otherwise. Together they make for a continuous spectrum of considerations, with the mandalas representing the macrocosmic and the masks the microcosmic.

It is also a virtue of Carter's work that, as rich in conceptual content as it is, he never tells the viewer what to think. Instead he offers an open field of thought and experience in which one can wander and explore. These paintings are more evocative than prescriptive, more experiential than didactic. Unlike so much contemporary art that flogs a point of view, Carter doesn't trap himself or the viewer in an agenda. This is perhaps because, aside from knowing that pedanticism is offensive, Carter is accustomed to moving between perspectives and moods in his art. That series is somber, this one is playful, and the other one is philosophical. We can expect that the next will be equally engaging.

**TIMOTHY BROWN**  
**SNOWMASS COLORADO**  
**JULY 2019**



**M A S K S**





























































































**MANDALAS**

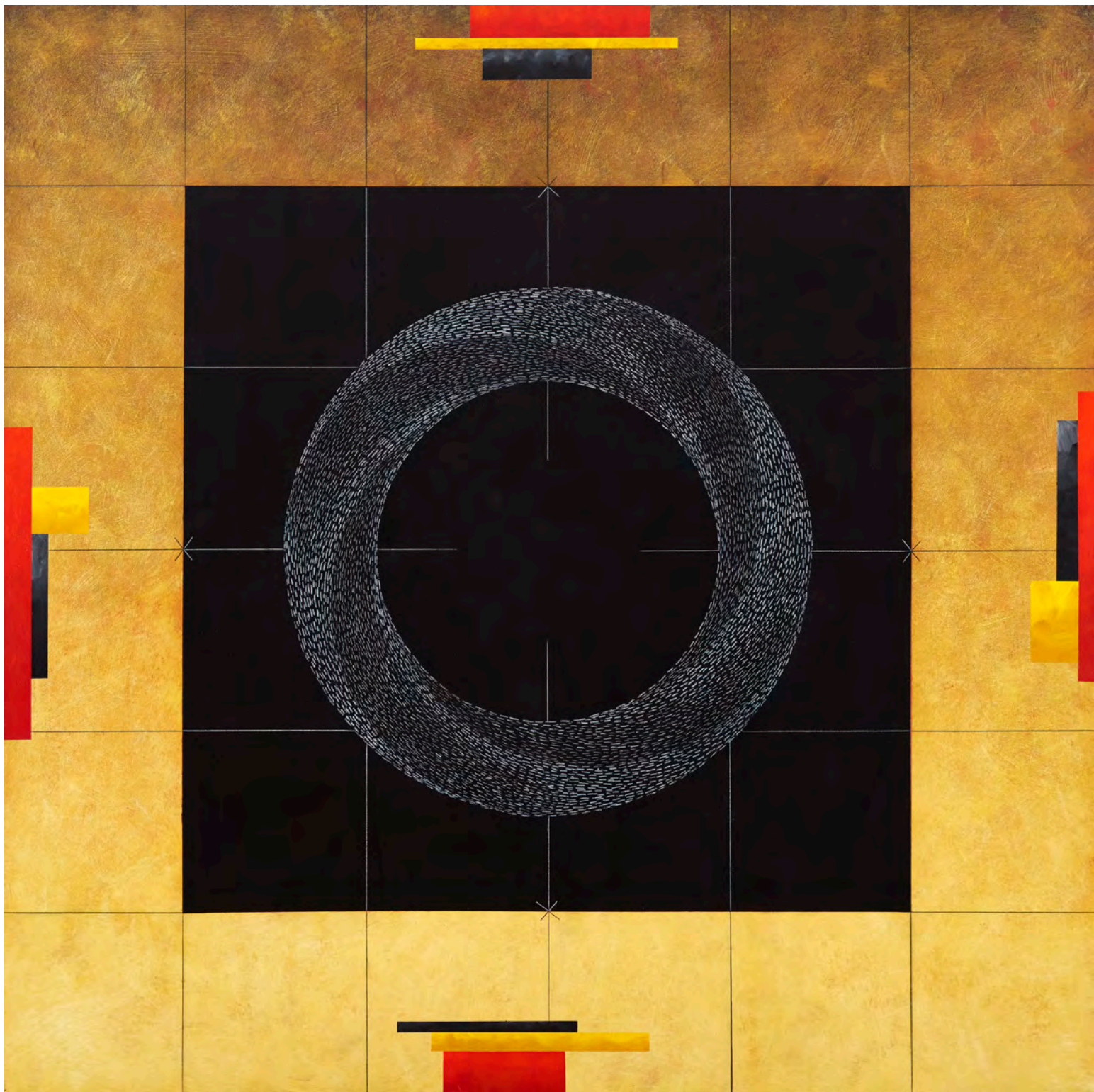






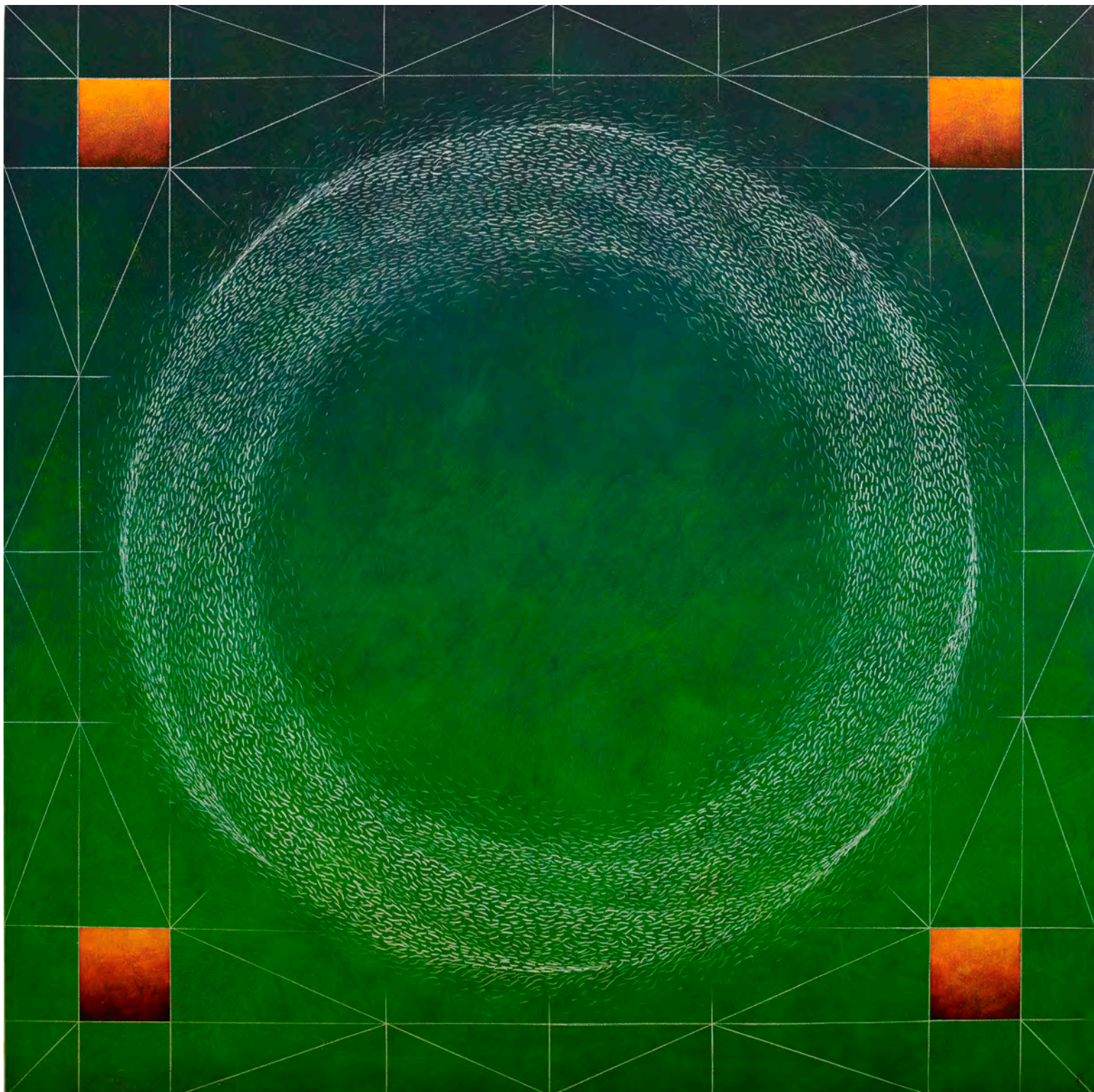












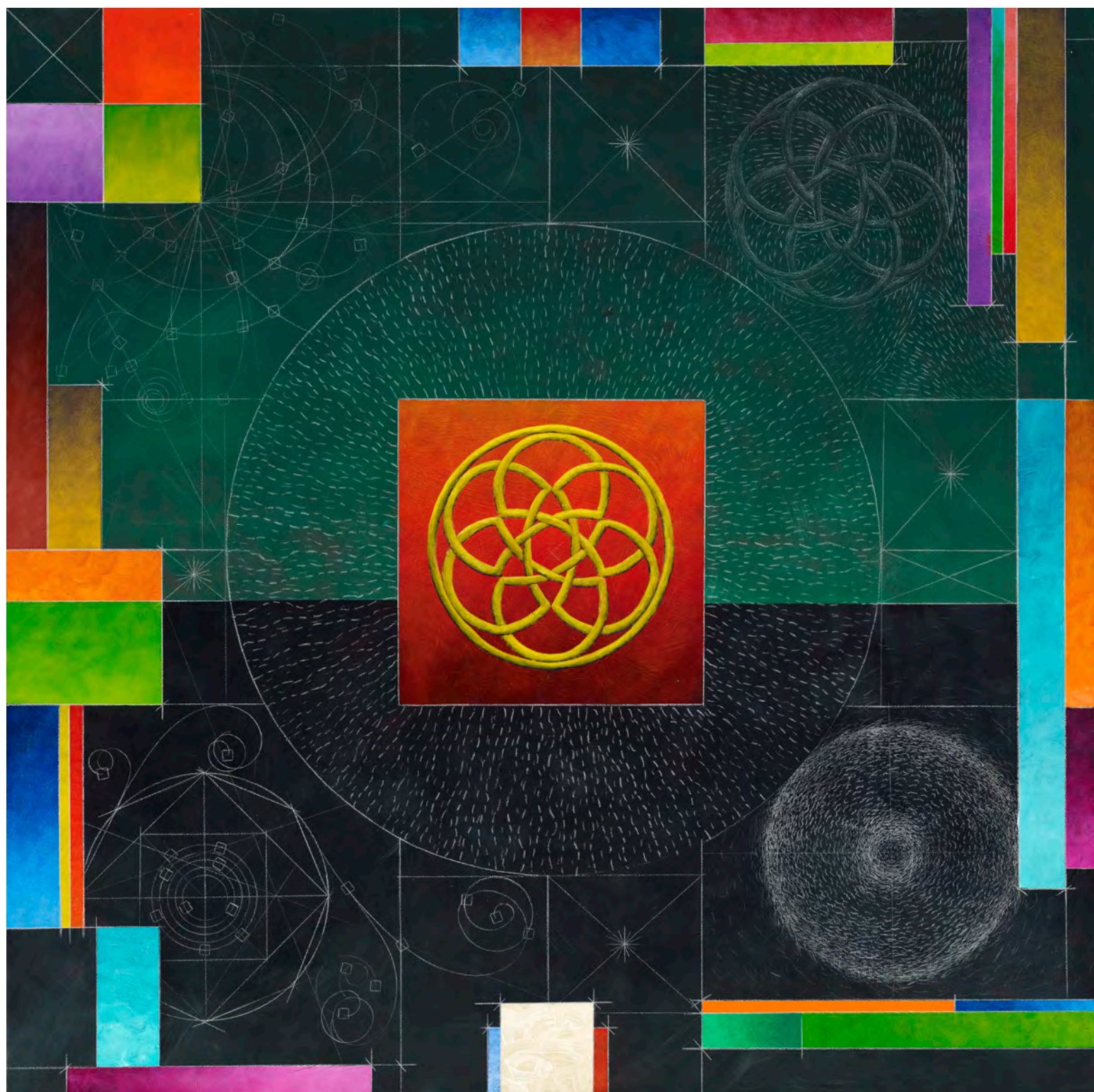


















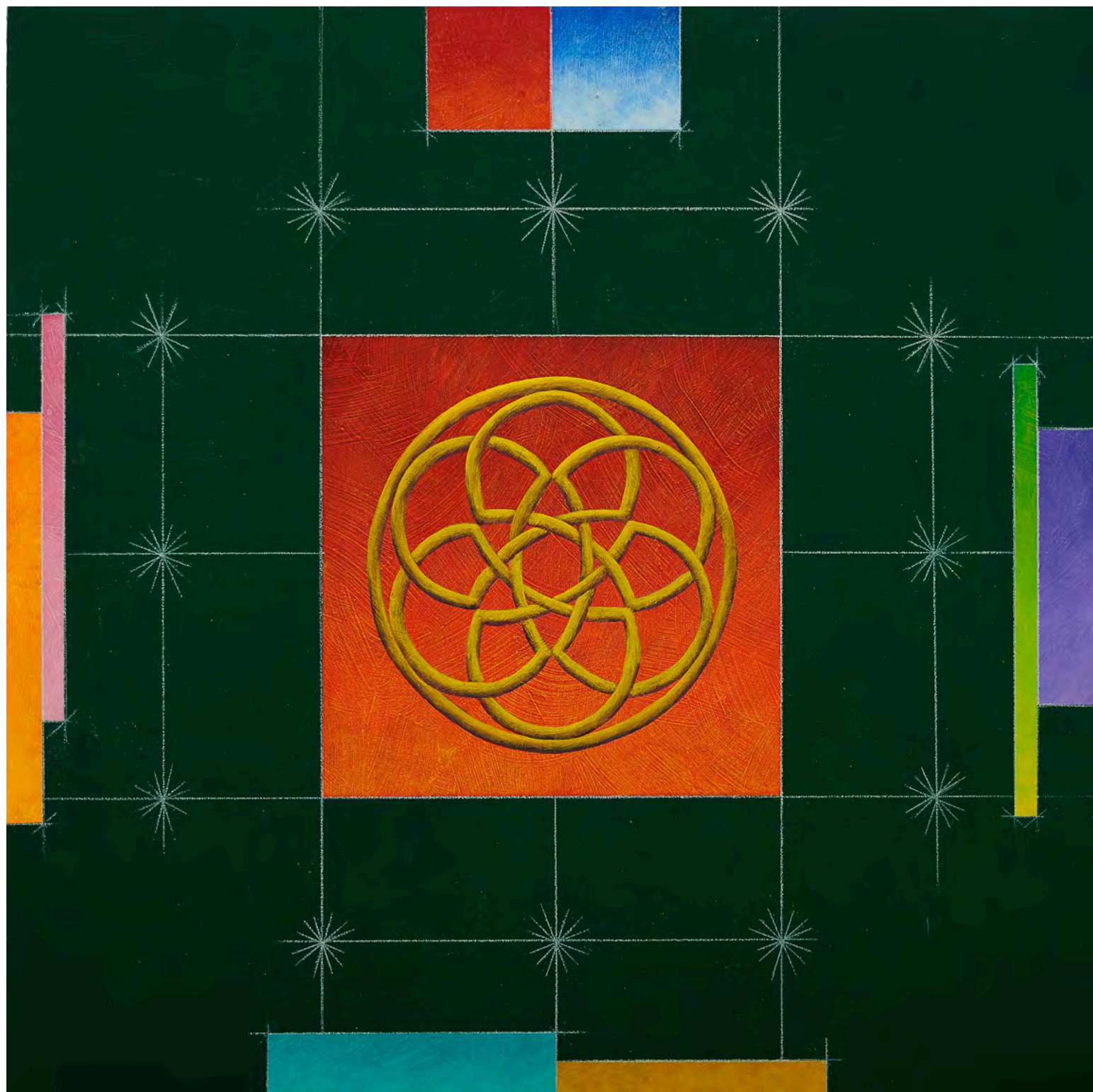




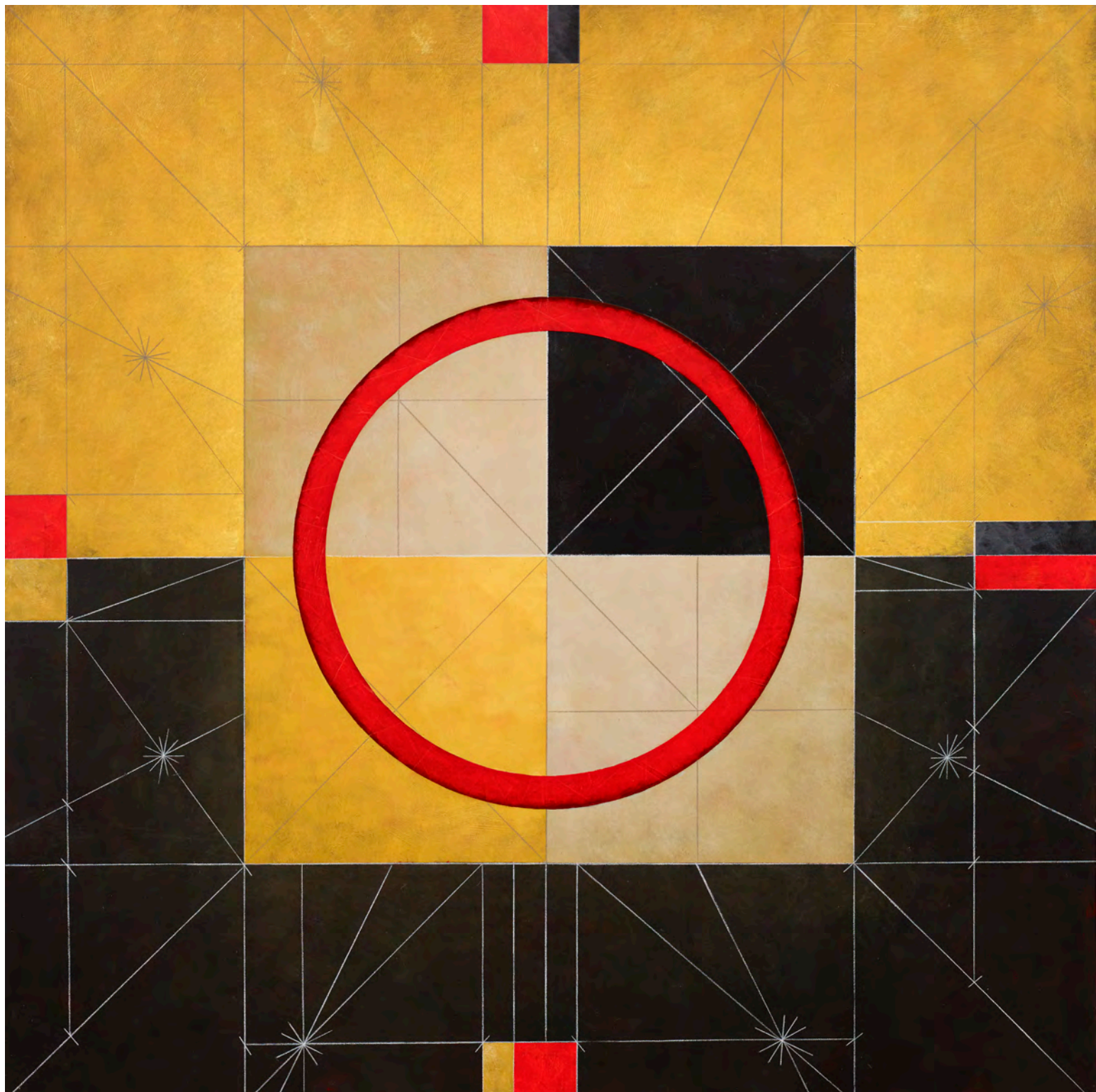






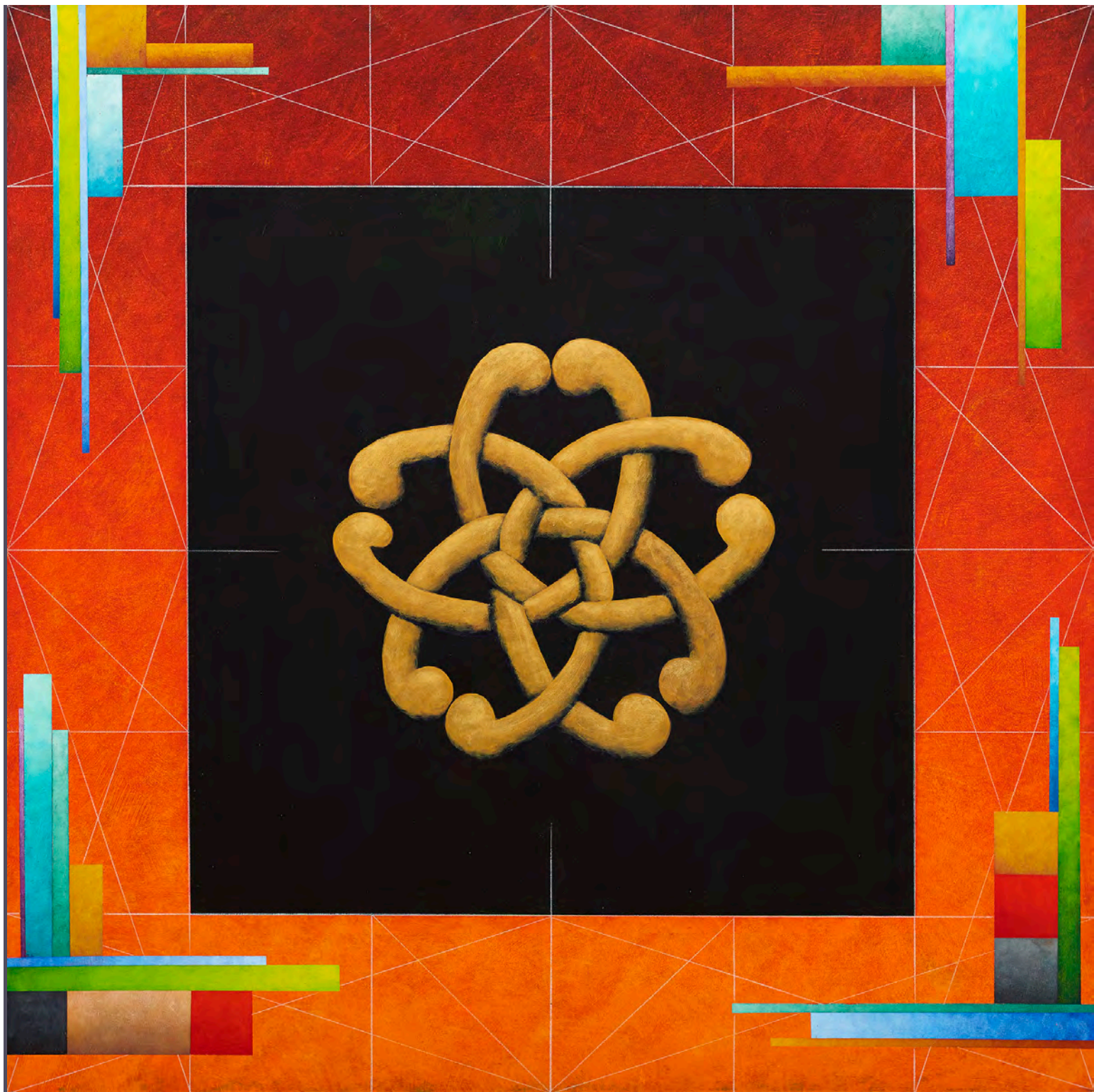












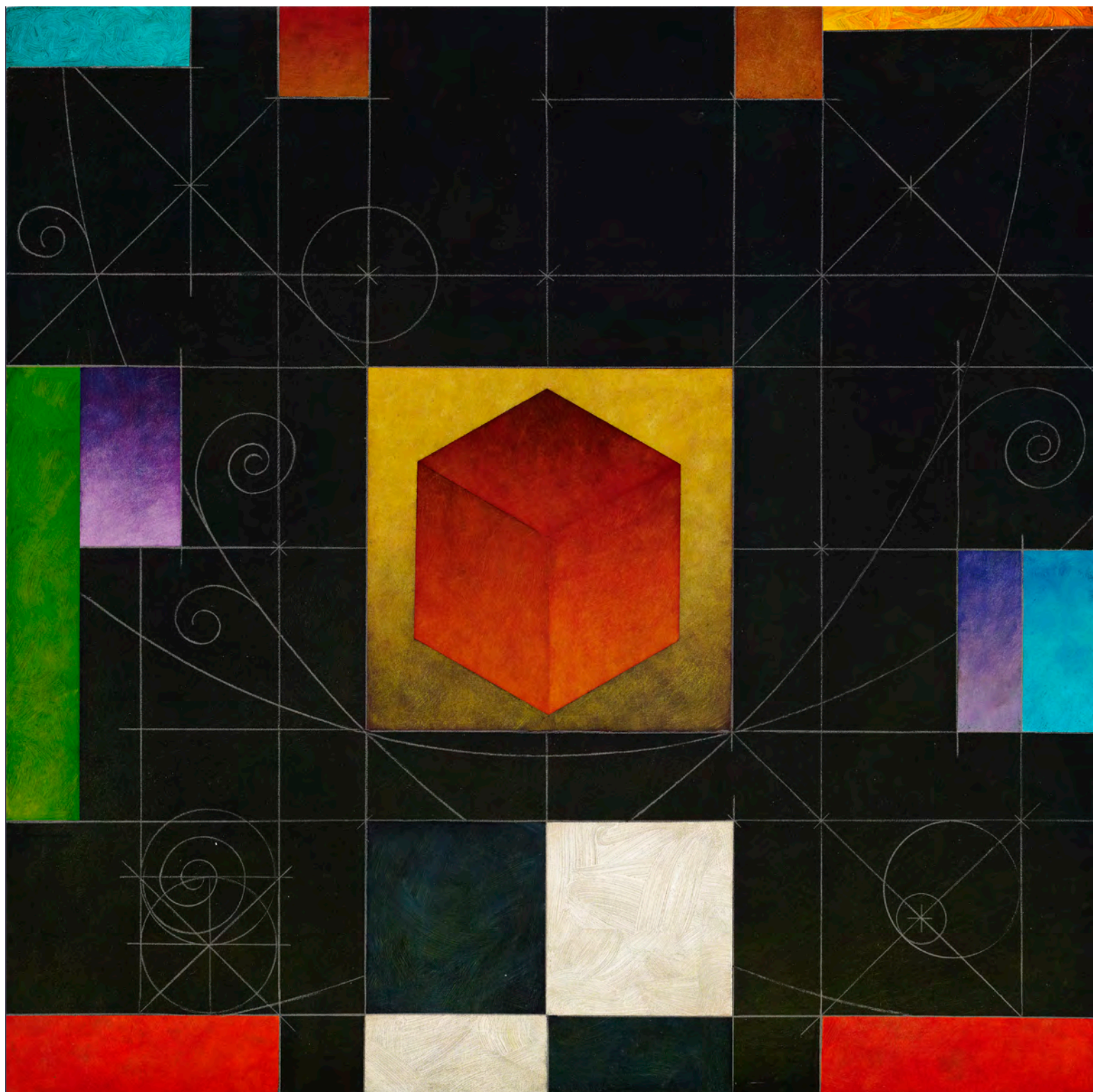












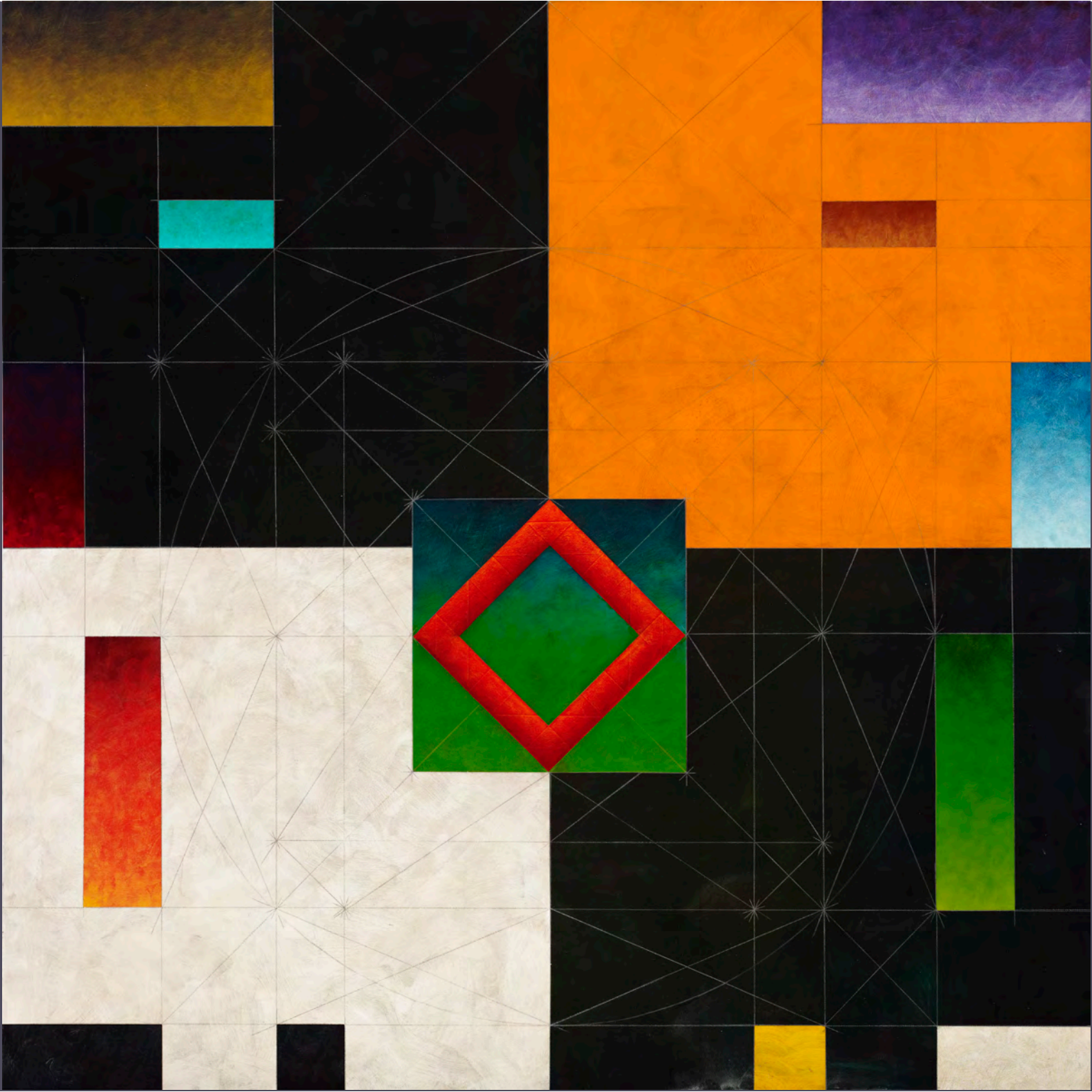






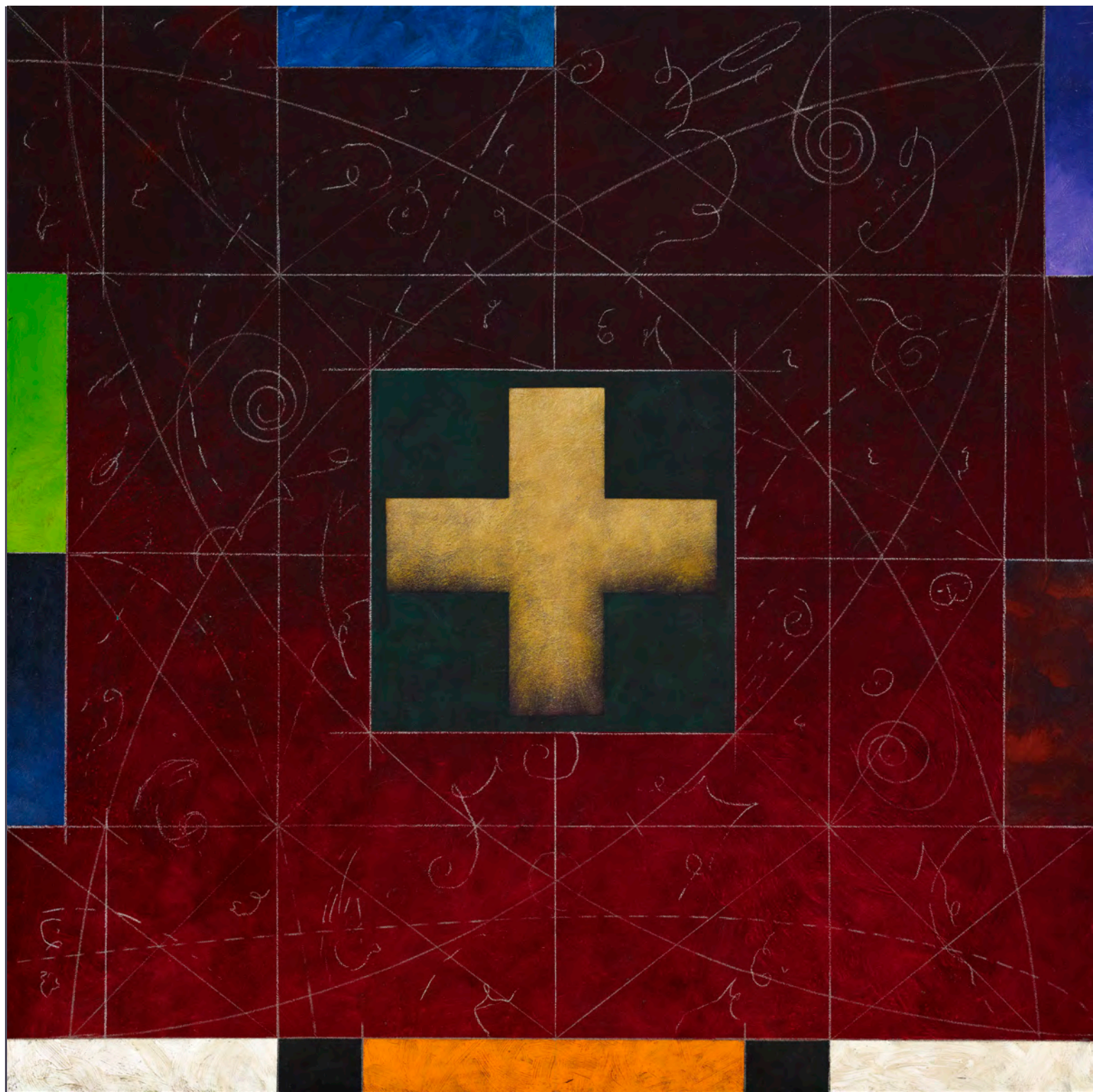






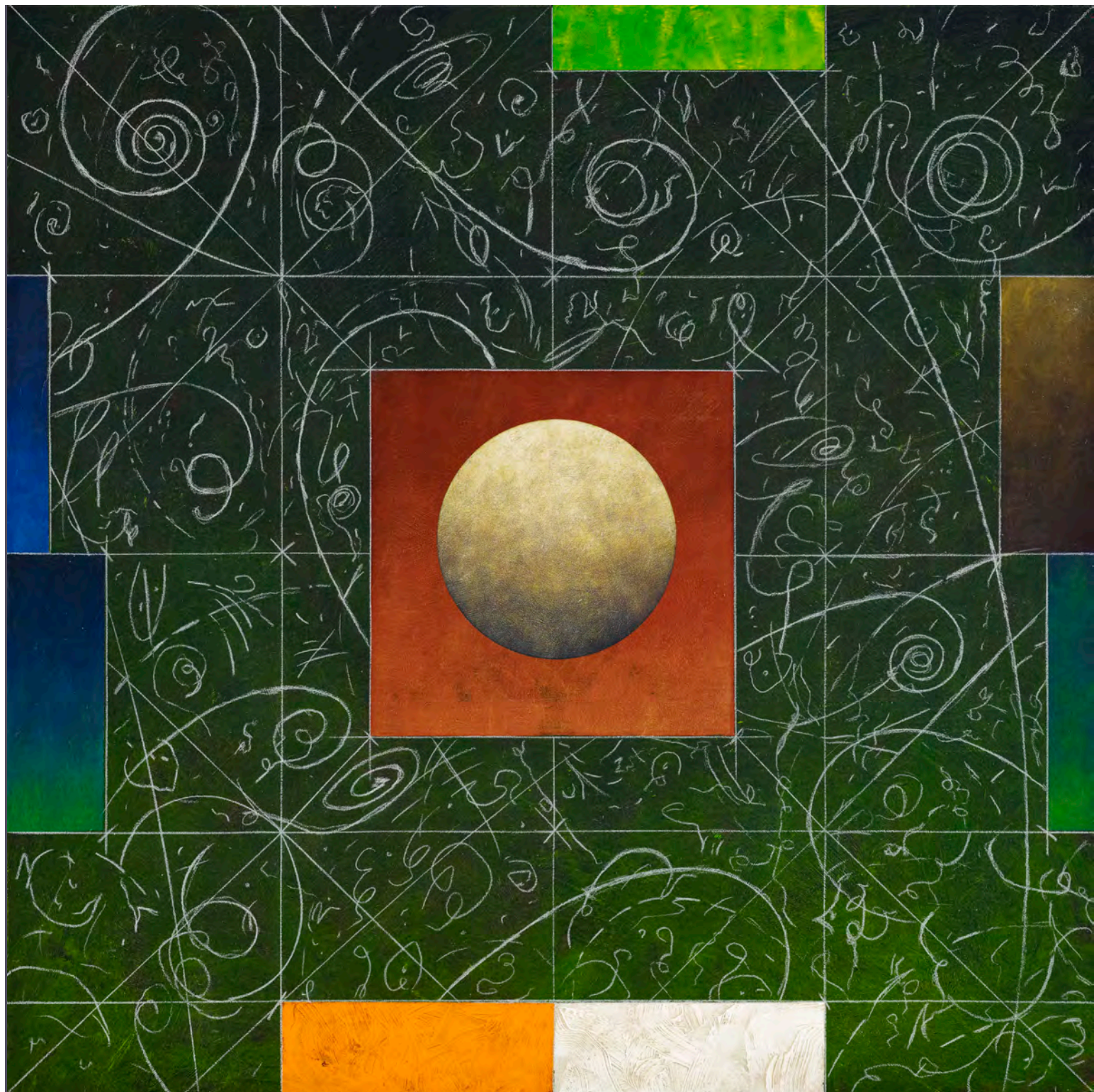












# VITAE

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019 R. CARTER GALLERY, ASPEN COLO. "MASKS + MANDALAS"  
2019 R. CARTER GALLERY, ASPEN COLO. "THE ERRATIC SERIES"  
2016 WILLIAM HAVU GALLERY, DENVER COLO. "NEW PAINTING"  
2016 CARBONDALE COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS & HUMANITES,  
"NEW PAINTINGS:MANDALAS CONSIDERED"  
2013 ARTWORKS GALLERY BASALT COLO. "NEW PAINTINGS"  
2013 ART WORKS GALLERY, BASALT COLO. "ROAD WORKS"  
2010 DAVID FLORIA GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
"FUTURE BEAUTY-FIRE"  
2010 BASALT REGIONAL LIBRARY, BASALT, COLO. "DRAWINGS"  
2009 DAVID FLORIA GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
"LIGHTNING DRAWINGS"  
2007 SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART, SANTA MONICA, CA.  
"ICEBERGS"  
2004 KATHLEEN EWING GALLERY, WASHINGTON DC "ICEBERGS"  
2006 OFF MAIN GALLERY, SANTA MONICA, CA "THE NIGHT SKY"  
2003 MAGIDSON GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO. "COSMIC VISIONS "  
2001 MARY BELL GALLERY, CHICAGO, ILL.  
2000 MAGIDSON GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1998 MAGIDSON GALLERY, ASPEN COLO.  
1998 MARY BELL GALLERY, CHICAGO, ILL.  
1997 DAVID FLORIA GALLERY, WOODY CREEK, COLO.  
1995 DAVID FLORIA GALLERY, WOODY CREEK, COLO.  
1993 MARY BELL GALLERY, CHICAGO, ILL.  
1993 MILL STREET GALLERY, ASPEN COLO.  
1990 SANDY CARSON GALLERY, DENVER, COLO.  
1990 MARY BELL GALLERY, CHICAGO, ILL.  
1987 MILL STREET GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1984 MILL STREET GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1984 NIMBUS GALLERY, DALLAS, TEXAS  
1984 VIRGINIA MILLER ART SPACE, CORAL GABLES, FLA.  
1983 ASPEN INSTITUTE FOR HUMANISTIC STUDIES, ASPEN, COLO.  
1983 IMAGE SOUTH GALLERY, ATLANTA, GA.  
1982 COLORADO SPRINGS FINE ART CENTER,  
COLO. SPRINGS, COLO.  
1981 ANDERSON RANCH ART CENTER, SNOWMASS, COLO.  
1980 CARSON-SAPIRO GALLERY, DENVER, COLO.  
1980 IMAGE SOUTH GALLERY, ATLANTA, GA.  
1980 PUTNEY GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.

1979 HEYDT-BAIR GALLERY, SANTA FE, NM.  
1979 CARSON-SAPIRO GALLERY, DENVER , COLO.  
1979 MARY BELL GALLERY, CHICAGO, ILL.  
1979 VORPAL GALLERY, NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
1978 PUTNEY GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1977 CARSON-LEVINE GALLERY, DENVER, COLO.  
1976 GARGOYLE GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1975 GARGOYLE GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1975 ASPEN INSTITUTE FOR HUMANISTIC STUDIES, ASPEN, COLO.  
1975 GARGOYLE GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1974 BRENA GALLERY, DENVER COLO.  
1972 GARGOYLE GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1969 GARGOYLE GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.  
1968 GALLERY 267, LEONIA, NJ.  
1968 VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY GALLERY,  
VILLANOVA, PA

## TWO-PERSON AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019 "RETURN TO SIMPLICITY" COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE ASPEN  
GALLERY, ASPEN COLO.  
2019 "BAUHAUS SEEN" R2 GALLERY CARBONDALE ARTS,  
CARBONDALE COLO.  
2018 INCOGNITO, INSTITUTE OF ART LA LA,CA.  
2016 "DRAWINGS X4" ARTBASE, BASALT COLO.  
2015 "COLLECTIONS: DRAWINGS" DENVER ART MUSEUM,  
DENVER COLO.  
2014 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA  
2013 BLACK & WHITE RED BRICK ART CENTER ASPEN COLO.  
2013 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA  
2012 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA  
2011 RFO, ASPEN ART MUSEUM, ASPEN COLO.  
2011 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA  
2010 970.ORG, ASPEN ART MUSEUM, ASPEN COLO.  
2010 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA.



2010 SUBLIME TRANSIENCE, ICEBERG DRAWINGS,  
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE

2009 "MELTING POINT", (ICEBERGS,) EL CAMINO COLLEGE, LA CA.

2009 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA.

2008 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA.

2007 DAVID FLORIA GALLERY, ASPEN COLO.

2006 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA CA.

2005 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA, CA.

2004 INCOGNITO, SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART,  
SANTA MONICA, CA.

2003 MAGIDSON FINE ART , ASPEN, COLO.

2000 CARSON GALLERY, DENVER, COLO.

1999 RUTH BACHOFNER GALLERY, LA, CA.

1999 RUTH BACHOFNER GALLERY, LA, CA.

1997 MARGOT JACOBSEN GALLERY, PORTLAND, ORE.

1996 DAVID FLORIA GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.

1995 "ART AND POLITICS" OBERE GALERIE, BERLIN, GERMANY

1994 MARGOT JACOBSEN GALLERY, PORTLAND, ORE.

1993 MILL STREET GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.

1992 EVELYN SIEGAL GALLERY, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

1992 MILL STREET GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.

1990 SANDY CARSON GALLERY, DENVER, COLO.

1988 RICHARD CARTER-TIM BERRY, SANDY CARSON GALLERY,  
DENVER, COLO.

1988 RICHARD CARTER- GEORGE KOZMAN,  
MARY BELL GALLERY, CHICAGO, ILL.

1987 RICHARD CARTER-JESUS MORALES,  
VIRGINIA MILLER ART SPACE, CORAL GABLES, FLA,

1989 "ART AND THE WEST; TRADITION AND INNOVATION",  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING ART MUSEUM, LARAMIE, WY.

1986 ART IN CORPORATE COLLECTIONS, NORTH MIAMI MUSEUM,  
MIAMI, FLA.

1985 KINGSLEY- CROCKER ANNUAL, CROCKER ART MUSEUM.  
SACRAMENTO, CA.

1985 RICHARD CARTER- BRIAN BLOUNT, MILL STREET GALLERY,  
ASPEN, COLO.

1984 COLORADO INVITATIONAL PAINTING SHOW, ARVADA  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS, ARVADA, COLO.

1984 RICHARD CARTER- ANN CURRIER,  
CARSON-SAPIRO GALLERY, DENVER, COLO.

1984 COLORADO STATE FAIR INVITATIONAL, PUEBLO. COLO.

1984 LARRY BELL- SAL PECORARO- RICHARD CARTER,  
UNICORN GALLERY, ASPEN, COLO.

1982 STATE OF THE ARTS, DENVER ART MUSEUM,  
DENVER, COLO.

1981 HEYDT-BAIR GALLERY, SANTA, FE NM.  
"LARRY BELL-RICHARD CARTER"

1981 COLORADO BIENNIAL, COLORADO SPRINGS ART CENTER,  
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.

1979 HEYDT-BAIR GALLERY, SANTA FE, NM.

1979 ROARING FORK VALLEY ARTS FESTIVAL, ASPEN COLO.

1978 ANDERSON RANCH ART CENTER, SNOWMASS, COLO.

1977 WRIGHT- INGRHAM INSTITUTE INVITATIONAL,  
PARKER, COLO.

1977 "ASPEN COMES TO BOULDER" BOULDER CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS, BOULDER, COLO.

1976 COLORADO CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS,  
SPREE INVITATIONAL, DENVER, COLO.

1975 ASPEN FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, ANNUAL ART FESTIVAL

1974 DENVER ART MUSEUM, 2ND ALL- COLORADO,  
DENVER, COLO.

1972 RICHARD CARTER- SALLY HENDERSON,  
GARGOYLE GALLERY ASPEN, COLO.

1970 FAIRLIEGH DICKENSON UNIVERSITY  
METROPOLITAN SHOW, TEANECK, NJ.

1969 ALL PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL SHOW,  
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, VILLANOVA, PA.

## EDUCATION AND ART ADVOCACY

1984-PRESENT	PRODUCTION DESIGN AND FILM ART DIRECTION
2011-PRESENT	BOARD MEMBER, THE ART CAMPUS AT WILLITS
2017	DESIGNER OF THE TEMPORARY THEATER
2010-PRESENT	THE ARTBASE BASALT CO., BOARD AND NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1980-1985	ANDERSON RANCH ART CENTER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1978	CURATOR, ROCKY MOUNTAIN INVITATIONAL, NON- FUNCTIONAL CLAY, 14 CERAMACISTS
1977	CURATOR, ROCKY MOUNTAIN INVITATIONAL, PAINTING AND DRAWING, ASPEN, COLO.
1976	CURATOR, ROCKY MOUNTAIN INVITATIONAL. PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, ASPEN COLO.
1976-1982	FOUNDER, ASPEN ART MUSEUM, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1977-1978	GALLERY DIRECTOR, ASPEN, COLO.
1972-1978	ASSISTANT TO BAUHAUS MASTER HERBERT BAYER, PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN AND OTHER MEDIA
1964-1968	VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, VILLANOVA, PA. BA., SOC. SCI.





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

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## ESSAY

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

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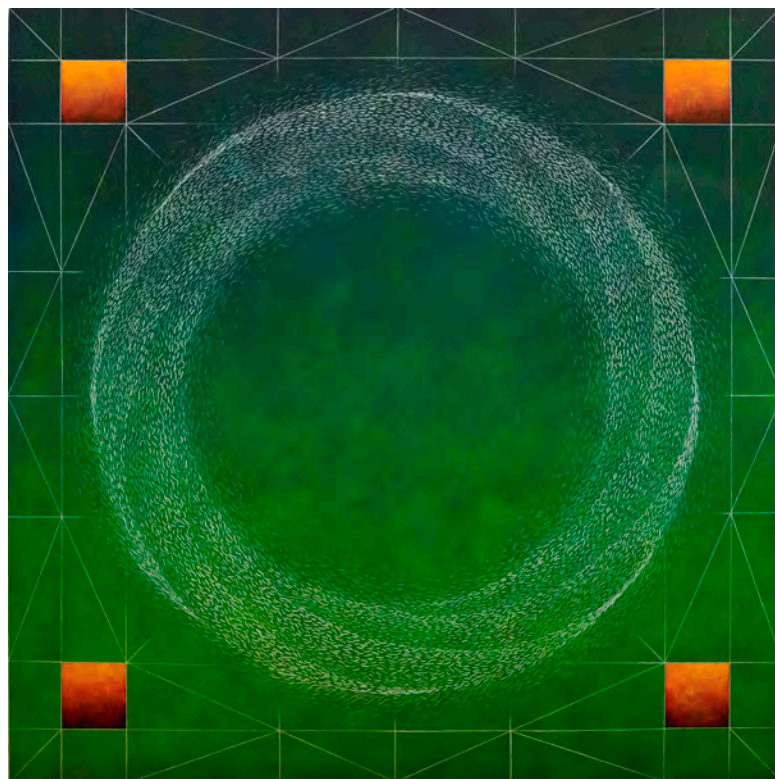
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## GALLERY

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