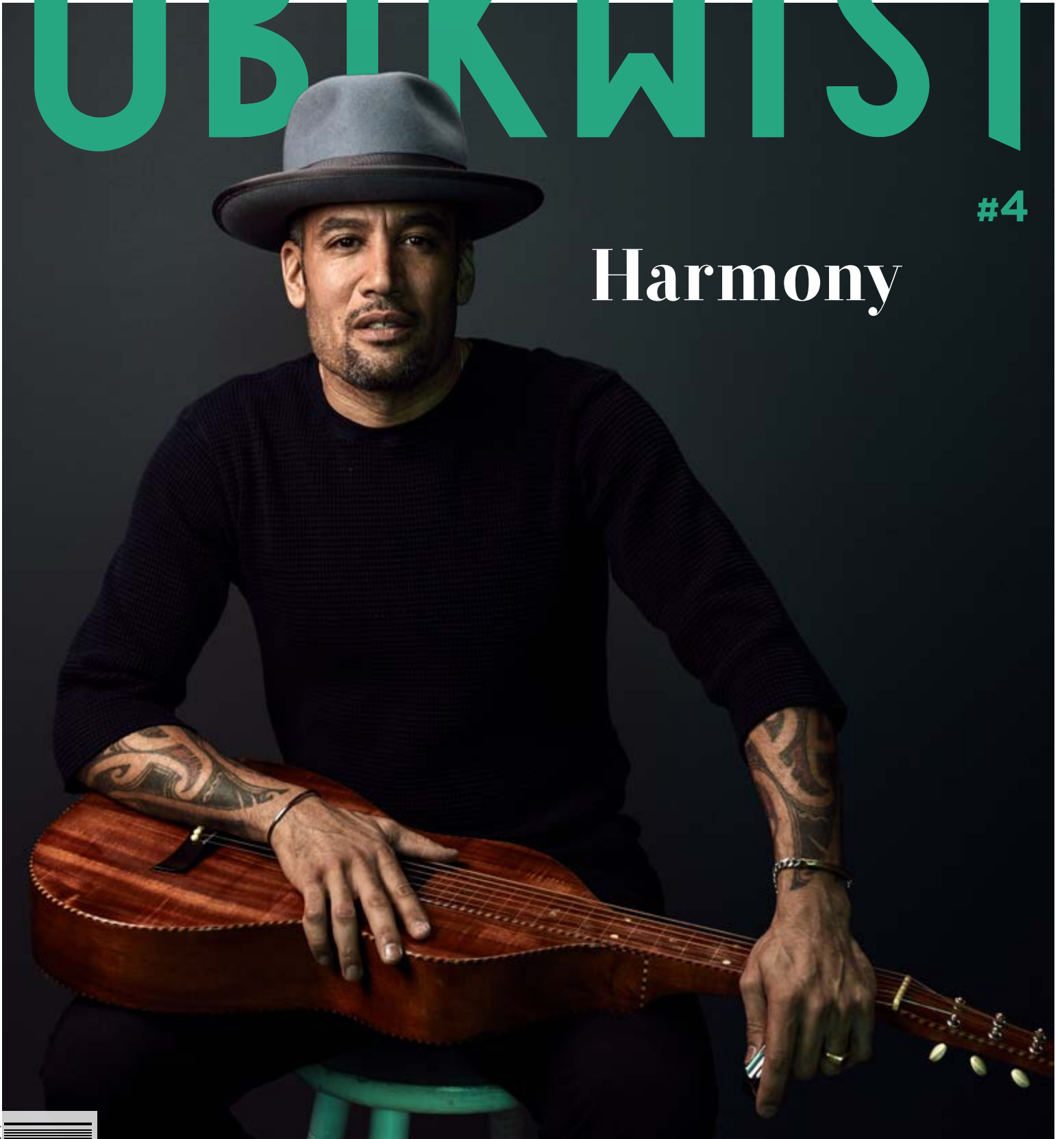


UBIKWIST

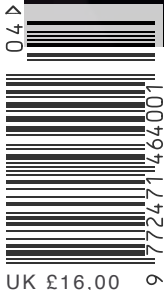
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Harmony

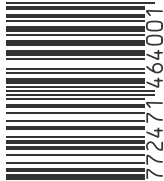


**Ben Harper • Aïssa Maïga • George Nelson Preston
Chris Obi • Abdul Rahman Katanani
Jessica Mitrani • Jahnkoy**

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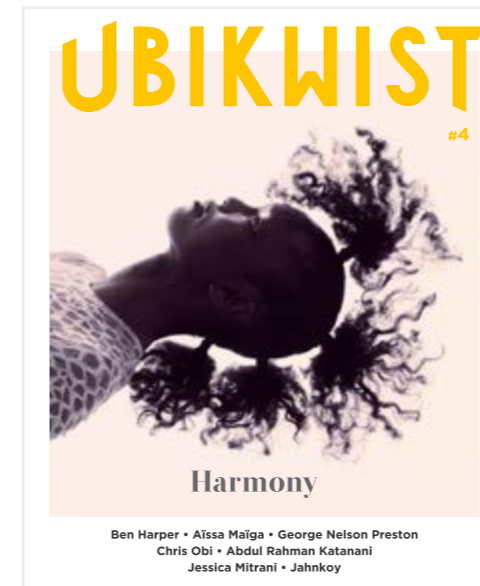
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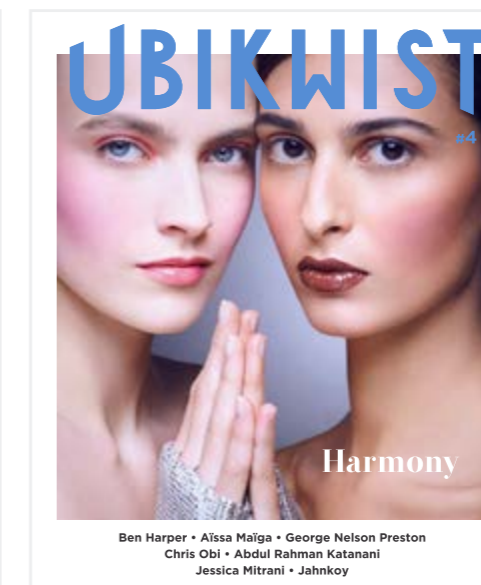
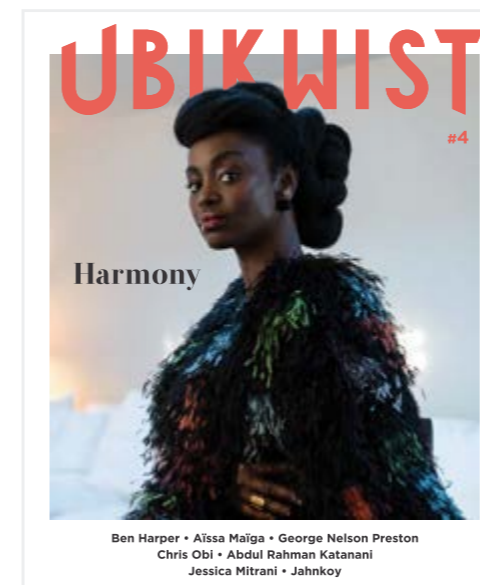
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USING BUMBLE & BUMBLE
MAKE UP : KENNY CAMPBELL USING CHANEL
ROSE WEARS JUMPSUIT BY MARINA QURESHI

PHOTOGRAPH : WARWICK SAINT
STYLING : LISA MOSKO
GROOMING : TRACY BARRETT @ART DEPARTMENT
BEN HARPER WEARS TOP BY THE SQUAD
TROUSERS BY CALVIN KLEIN - HAT & RING BEN'S OWN
NECKLACE BY BY THIEF
RIGHT HAND BRACELET BY GILES & BROTHER
LEFT HAND BRACELET BY LE 7 GRAMMES
GUITAR WEISSENBORN 1920'S



PHOTOGRAPH : THIERRY VAN BIESEN
STYLING : GIANNIE COUJI
HAIR : NADINE MATHEKY
MAKE UP : TOPOLINO @CALLISTE
AÏSSA MAÏGA WEARS CAPE BY KOCHÉ
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RING BY CAMILLE ENRICO

PHOTOGRAPH : IÑAKI
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HAIR : MARTYN FOSS CALDER @AIRPORT AGENCY
YULIA & SALOME WEAR GLOVES BY ERIK HALLEY

The Philosophical Painter

Alex Amini
by Monique Long
Portrait by Christian Kilrain
Carter Coleman



Alex Amini is a painter and sculptor, who also works with installation. With respect to abstraction, he draws upon many different influences including critical theory, philosophy, and architecture. Like many non-narrative painters, his use of materials – unconventional ones – have primacy.

Amini has a series of works where he used a cup instead of a brush to paint or rather document the sequence of his emphatic movements; each gesture is a record of his thinking as he paints the canvas. Initially, I was struck by the color in the work – romantic and muted or graphic and bold – which seems to be an important part of his compositions, although he vows that color is inconsequential to his practice at the moment.

And second, his accidental paintings, the *verso*, are extraordinary. The work is inextricable from the primary painting. The saturated canvas, normally invisible to the viewer, is undeniably a complete work and a unique part of his painting practice.

Below, Amini talks about his background, the relationship between painting and his training as an architect, and other thinkers who have shaped his practice.

Talk about your background as it relates to art making.

Having an Iranian father and an Italian mother (who met in Germany) as parents, I think I had to take matters into my own hands. I had to eliminate culture as a reference. The idea that one could deal with architecture as solids, and voids, and planes, and cuts did away with the need to borrow from other examples. I could generate my own vocabulary. Having a mixed background makes a reinvention of self necessary. I think art is taking matters into one's own hands.

What types of architectural projects have you done?

In school, projects were utopian in spirit. Working in offices was frustrating because you have to think with someone else's mind. The work has to be so compelling as to make building it unavoidable.

How did you become interested in painting?

In architecture, drawing is used to generate ideas rather than illustrating a product. The drawing is the product. In painting, the self-referentiality of the medium further minimizes the influence of extraneous forces. One can work in a vacuum and deal with things in a primal way without having to address issues other than the work at hand.

Is the approach, process, or any of the formal aspects of your practice related to your training as an architect?

Land art [mid-twentieth century art movement where avant-garde artists used soil, sand, rocks, and other materials found in nature to make objects] is an architectural influence, more so than any buildings; the earth plane is an influence, similar to the surface of a still body of water, all the way to the universe as it might relate to an infinite flat plane. The taut surface of a painting lying horizontal reactivates the sensations of a flat expanse.

Can you talk about your cupping technique, the recording series, and the unconventional materials you use to paint?

The idea of painting as “a record of events” informed my choices. When I began, I was looking for materials which would leave traces of their passage. My first attempt at painting was pouring ink on Mylar. I observe how liquids and dyes of different viscosities interact by rippling and capillary action. The drying of the ink on Mylar also produces a deposit of rings, tracing the withdrawal of the moisture. With inkjet paper, I discovered a surface that could record the edges of liquids. Using starches as a medium that could be removed, I got inspired by its cracking. In an overturned cup, pneumatic pressure will contain a liquid in a suspended state over the canvas.

Because it is difficult to materialize architectural impulses, I chose painting to investigate impulses in themselves...



CUPPING 03, 2011



CUPPING 29 (RECTO), 2015

Your use of color is striking, but you have said that your choices are incidental.

I have not yet tried to formulate a system for dealing with color. I am dealing with paint as a material. Color escapes me, so I don't try to corner it. I am simply waiting for a higher insight. Through trial and error, like and dislike, hunger or satiation, I maintain an infantile relation to color.

Who or what has influenced your work intellectually?

In painting, reading the book by Yve-Alain Bois *Painting as Model* was helpful in clarifying my own inclinations. In architecture, I was fortunate to come into contact with the teachings of Raimund Abraham and to be inspired by his drawings. Also, George Ivanovich Gurdjieff found the methods and a language for a person to be able to work on him or herself as a means of acquiring the necessary force to be able to access their own intensity. And Walter Pichler was a sculptor-architect whose book of projects I remember consuming obsessively. He was a colleague of Raimund in the sixties.

Your installations with draped fabric suggest an interest in clothing and/or textiles as well.

The way fabric is structured to meet the body, awakens the sensations of the skin, as the mind tries to wrap itself around the landscape of the body. The body always finds its way into the picture. The upper and lower areas within the field of a painting corresponds to the chest area and belly of a person.

Do you try to integrate your architectural impulses into your paintings?

Because it is difficult to materialize architectural impulses, I chose painting to investigate impulses in themselves after I had experimented with spontaneous generation as a painting process. I started working with grids and deformations of straight lines. The idea was to repeat a strategy of movement within a square to overcome ambivalence when faced with a blank canvas. Here, also, the body implies its presence.

Why are you compelled to paint?

The act of painting is a materialization of... that which is to be discovered. Painting eliminates all intermediary agents. All interactions leave a physical impression of occurring. This direct arena of exchange between the inner and outer realm is a substitute for not being able to relate to the physical world directly.

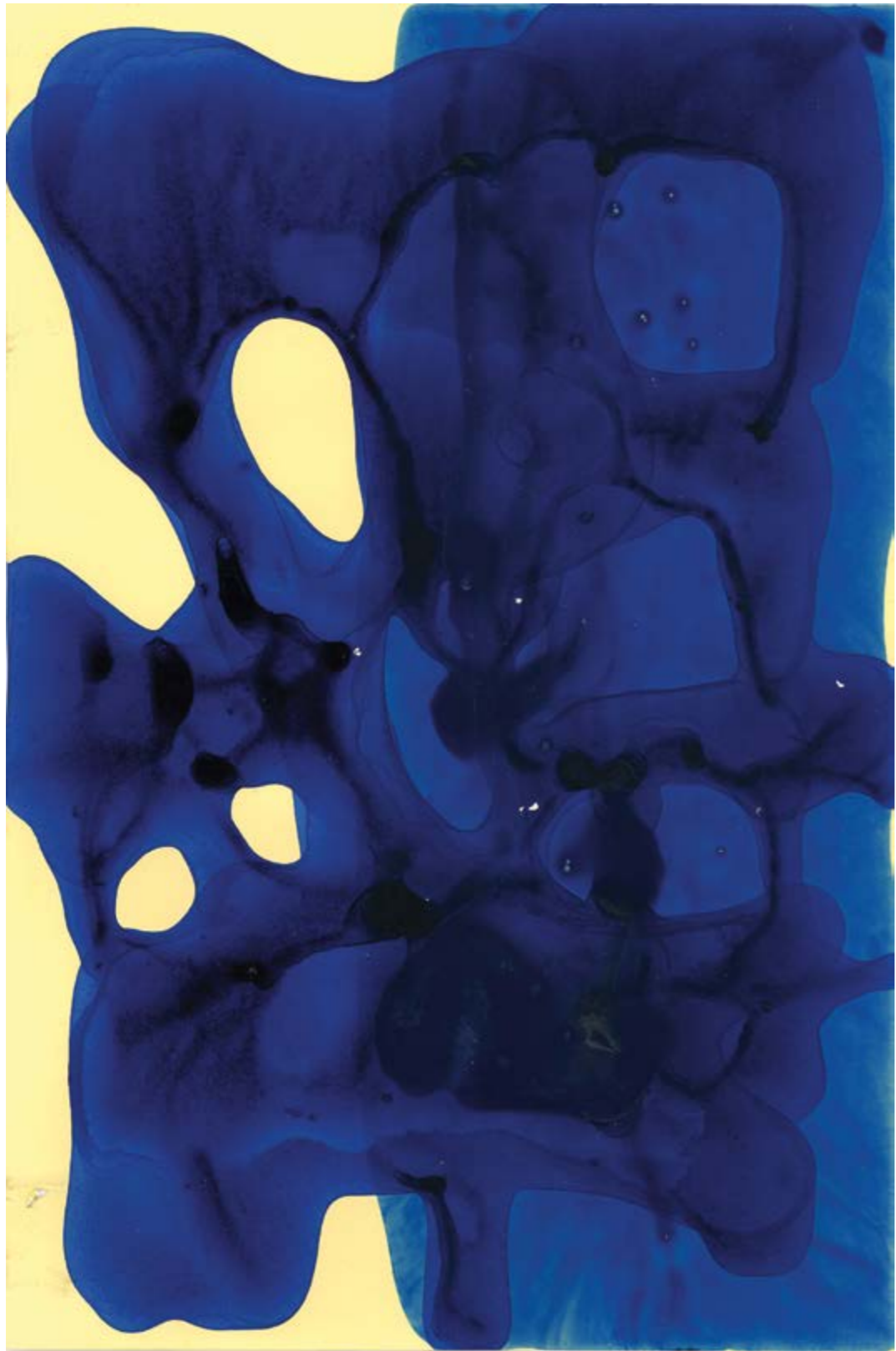
What is your idea of Harmony?

The act of joining or fusing elements into one entity is the underlying force in the making of Architecture. In painting, I am also inclined to fusing elements into a singularity. And this tendency to want to join and smooth everything into a whole might produce a sensation called Harmony.

www.alexamini.com

PORTRAIT BY CHRISTIAN KILRAIN
CARTER COLEMAN





COLORAID #09, 1998



POURING #365, 1996



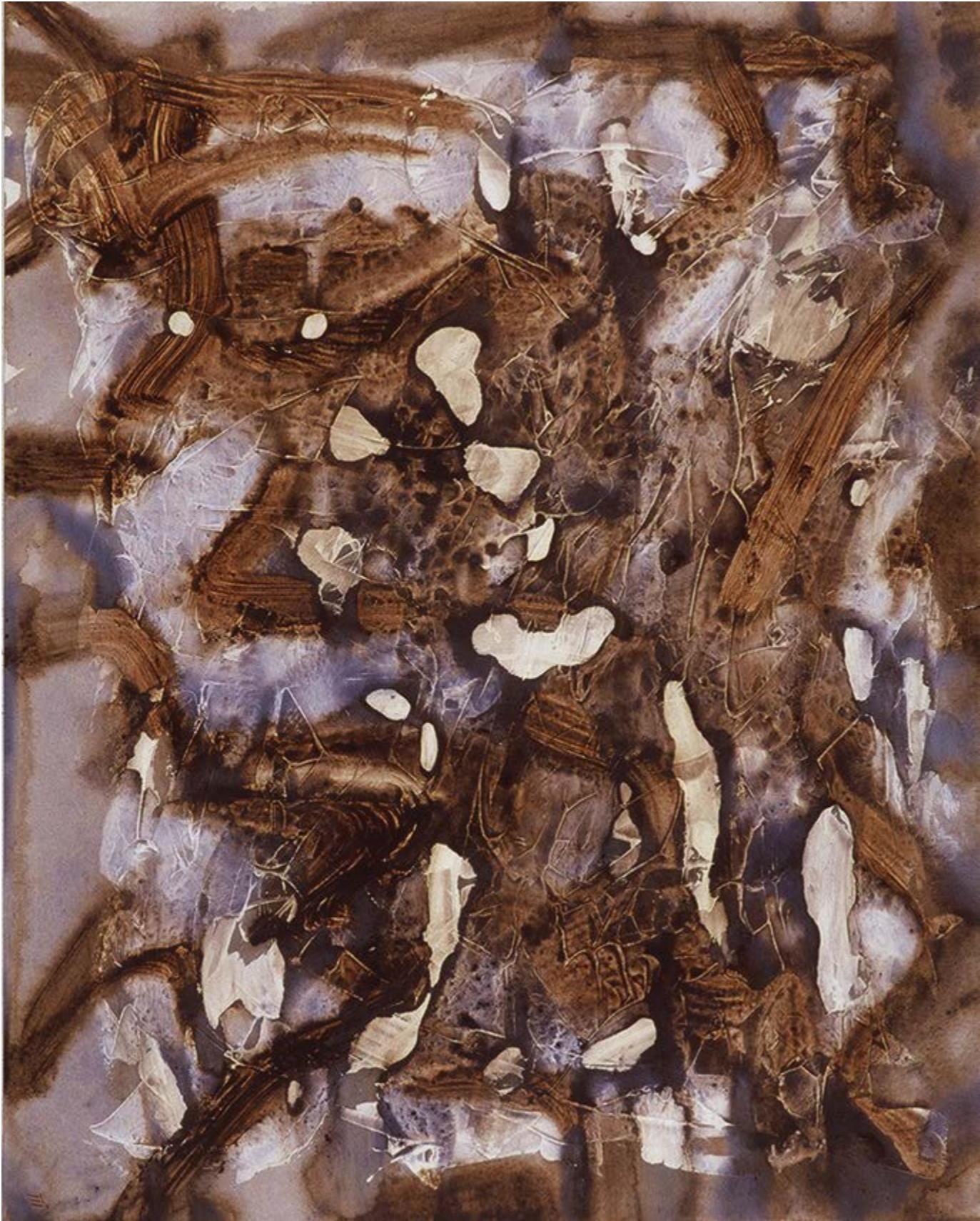
CUPPING 31 (VERSO), 2014



CUPPING 31 (VERSO), 2014



CUPPING 39 (RECTO), 2015



BRUSH #351, 1990



COLORAID #14, 1998
PICTURES : COURTESY OF THE ARTIST