JASPER JOHNS' FALSE START
AND HIS PAINTING BEFORE 1964

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Ph.D. in History, Theory, and Criticism of Art

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT:
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Nan Burks Freeman

Submitted to the Department of Architecture, MIT, on January 12, 1979, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in History, Theory, and Criticism of Art.

The thesis is predicated on Johns' importance as a painter of the group coming to maturity just after the zenith of Abstract Expressionism. His work is important as an example of the response of a commanding artistic personality to this historical position, and because he has been widely influential in the work of many from the late 1950s onward.

Section One examines a pair of works of 1959, False Start and Jubilee, which marks Johns' change of direction from his earlier flag and related paintings and his all over gray field works toward a new non-representational mode which is conspicuously gestural. Structured not from bounded shapes but brushy, expansive ones, the paintings are based on new formal principles and have a greater illusion of depth. They overtly refer to the manner and look of Abstract Expressionism. By the inclusion of printed words and real objects, Johns constructs paradoxical situations which focus on information versus knowledge, intellectual versus sensual assimilation of material, two dimensionality versus three dimensionality in painting, and the great questions of mimesis and illusory space. The background for these developments lies in Johns' work before False Start; he elaborates them later.

Section Two examines Johns' exploration of preoccupying formal issues by recasting structures developed in earlier 20th century painting. The space in False Start is structured like that of Pollock's drip paintings, as a series of conceptually parallel planes extended back into illusory space along a perpendicular. The separation of hues and tones and use of the primaries, and the intellectualism of those choices, recall pioneer abstractionist and theoretician Piet Mondrian. Johns' understanding of pictorial space derives also from Cubism, as does his use of collage material both formally and iconographically. Johns' interest in the free brushwork and in the facture developed before and in False Start refer back to Monet's surfaces and the role played in Impressionism by brushstroke vis-a-vis the canvas field and the thing depicted in it.

Section Three cites the larger connotations of the formal issues in Johns' work, and notes some aspects of personal imagery and attitudes toward creativity and painting.

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EDUCATION

Houston Public Schools
Smith College: B.A. 1966; fine arts major, concentration in painting.
University of Pennsylvania: M.A. 1969; history of art, concentration in classical art.
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Smith College: Scholarship 1962-1966, Dean's List, 1964-1966, Honor Society for Artists, awarded 1964.
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POSITIONS

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Registrar of the Art Collection and Exhibitions Assistant, Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge Massachusetts 1968-1970.
Draftsman, Harvard Joint Exp dition to Idalion, Cyprus, 1972; archaeological illustration.
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Instructor of Drawing, School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; studio instruction, 1975 and continuing.
Instructor of Art History, Tufts University on the campus of the Museum School; art history of all periods and special topics.
Instructor of Art History, Harvard Commission on Extension Courses, 1977 and continuing; nineteenth century art history.

Lecturer in Fine Arts, Brandeis University, Waltham Massachusetts 1977; modern art history.
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PUBLICATIONS

Eight Artists; Recent Work (exhibition catalogue), Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston 1975.
"Katherine Porter, Painter," New Boston Review of the Arts, 1.No.1 (Spring 1975).
Gallery Notes, exhibitions of the Boston Visual Artists' Union Gallery, Boston, 1973-1975.
Jo Sandman (exhibition catalogue) Gallery of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School, Boston, 1974.
Natalie Alper (essay for exhibition), Schochet Gallery, Newport Rhode Island, 1975.
"Art and Commonwealth; the 1978 Artist's Foundation Fellowship Exhibitions", New Boston Review of the Arts, 4.No. 2, (Oct.1978).

EXHIBITIONS

Numerous group and one person shows of painting and drawing in the United States and Europe; work owned by various public and private collections.

INTRODUCTION

Jasper Johns stands as one of the most important and influential of American artists of the second half of the twentieth century, and one of the least well understood. Emerging in the late 1950s, Johns came to artistic maturity with the generation which faced the choice between following the new American old masters, the Abstract Expressionists, or striking out in less well accepted directions more appropriate to their characters or their times. Thus Johns' position in history is an important one, and his responses within it constitute a fascinating case study of the mutual interplay between inherited circumstances and personal sensibility. Johns in his early work posed nearly all the questions which would engage the attention of his contemporaries over the succeeding two decades, and then, having consolidated the break from the old regime, turned back at a crucial moment in his development to reexamine its legacy and reintegrate into his own work those aspects which could be made his own.

Johns' character, as well as the course of his stylistic development and the nature of the dialectic which informs it are almost unique. The profound and complex confluence of intellect, sensuality, and emotion in which he grounds his visual art, and his peculiar Socratic capability for holding all components in suspension and making all simplistic questions moot, determine that John's work

has not easily lent itself to explanation, or even description, by current modes of art criticism. This, of course, is the shortcoming of art criticism, and it is in an effort not only to examine an important phenomenon but also to transcend narrowly based critical poaitions that I, as well as others, have tried to come to terms with Jasper Johns. Taking the artist at an important transitional moment in his personal history, in which he is concerned with himself, as an observer must be concerned with him, as a man within collective history; I have begun with that aspect of art work which lies at the base of everything else, its formal structure. This, alone, has shown itself to be a multilayered issue. Much has been written about Johns' subject matter and its content, both those aspects which came to attention with pop art, and those which mimic or derive from Dada and Surrealism, especially the work of Marcel Duchamp. I have not in this paper discussed the many and important references Johns makes to Duchamp, nor the similarities between the two artists in approach and treatment of art work. This is first because Max Kozloff has begun already to explore these issues (in "Johns and Duchamp", Art International, 3,No.2, March 1964, ans in Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969), and, second, because my primary aim has been to place Johns in the context in which he is less often seen, that of the formal developments of his immediate and more distant background. The intriguing character of this material, and the fact that the attention of contemporary writers most interested in painterly

form as such has been largely drawn to artists whose work is of a less mixed nature, have conspired to leave the formal issues in Johns' work examined only in passing, and their greater connections unexplored. I have omitted from this dissertation discussions of the enormous, sometimes vitrupritive debate which has ensued between such critics as Kozloff and such critics as Clement Greenberg over the work of Johns and other painters of the post-Abstract Expressionist era. Their differing tastes and schools of thought derive from differing critical positions and methodological approaches which result in antithetical assessments of value and even opposed readings of art history. These deserve to be treated in a seperate study devoted to recent criticism as an influence in American intellectual and artistic development; Jasper Johns' painting must be observed very clearly first as the specific production of one artistic personality at work in this period.

I cannot overstate the influence in this dissertation, and in my historical and critical thinking as a whole, of my thesis supervisor and intellectual mentor Professor Wayne V. Andersen, nor my appreciation for it.

JASPER JOHNS' FALSE START AND HIS PAINTING BEFORE 1964

SECTION ONE: FALSE START AND JUBILEE; FORMAL ASPECTS OF THE TWO AND RELATED FORMAL ASPECTS OF JOHNS' OTHER WORK

Part One: Description of the formal structure in False Start and Jubilee

Jasper Johns' painting False Start of 1959 (fig. 1) is made up of irregular brushy splotches of color; interspersed among these are letters, applied with stencils, spelling out names of colors. The shape of the painting is a rectangle of slightly greater vertical than horizontal dimension. False Start has a companion, Jubilee (fig. 2), of the same visual structure, but rendered in black, white, and gray rather than color; traces of color may be discerned under the gray, along with collage elements.

False Start deals with a universal formal problem, one of particularly great concern to American artists of the mid-twentieth century: how to organize a field visually. It deals also with the counterpart to that issue, the problem of how to make a visual configuration bear meaning. Johns works in False Start with an iconography that ranges in nature of reference from the most direct and visual to the most circuitously associated and extra-visual. Primary among Johns' concerns here is the exploration of a dichotomous nature of painting, which is simultaneously two-dimensional as a plane, and three-dimensional by virtue of various kinds of visual illusion.[1]

There are two distinctly different kinds of shape in False Start; splotches of brushwork and stenciled letters which spell out the names of colors, both applied with relatively thick oil paint. Jubilee also includes some collage elements cut out of paper and adhered to the canvas.

The splotches in False Start are of irregular shape and are centrifugal, which is to say their shapes are not conceived as contained within a bounding outline, nor rendered hard-edged accordingly. Rather, their outer limits are arrived at by outward expansion from a center somewhere within the expanse. This sort of shape is a natural one in a style which emphasizes the brushstroke as a mark made by the hand in motion across the surface. Within each shape are clearly visible textural and tonal variations that denote the various directions taken by the brush in the process of paint application; the shape of each spot is the direct result of these directional moves. Shapes such as these tend somewhat to read as flat, visually sticking to the surface because of the way the conspicuous stroke calls attention to the surface.

The letters which make up complete or incomplete words in the painting are shapes of a different order; they are centripital and definite; their boundaries established by strict hard edges; and the expanse within, painted relatively evenly and homogeneously, with a minimum of coloristic and textural incident. Shapes of this kind tend also to read as

flat (as indicated in the use of the word "flat" to denote "evenly painted"). The only directness present in the letter shapes is achieved when they are sequentially juxtaposed in words; as such, they appear as long straight configurations, the directedness being reinforced by the convention of reading letters in an unidirectional linear sequence. The contrast between the different natures of the two types of interspersed shapes is very strong, like a mixture of nails and feathers.

The two types of shapes carry distinctly different connotations. The unbounded, brushy splotches emphasize the physical substance of paint and its viscous consistency, and thus the sensual presence of the work. By calling attention to the motion of the painter's hand, they suggest physical release, and appear to be unpremeditated in their formation: such shapes are generally taken to be emotionally expressive, both manipulation of physical substance and emotional release are associated with sensual pleasure. Both the suggestion of voluptuousness and the hand-made quality of such works strike the viewer at the level of direct sensory reception and with strong psychological impact. By contrast, the hard-edged shapes connote, by their definiteness, controlled and deliberate movement of the hand, and thus deliberation of the mind, intentionality and premeditation, and therefore a conception intellectual in its nature. Visually, they carry a more formal tone, not suggestive of emotional release or sensual

pleasure. These particular hard-edged shapes are stenciled letters: the viewer identifies them to have been generated not only intentionally but even mechanically, the artist employing the template as a device to disallow any idiosyncratic contribution to their visual form. The use of centrifugal brushwork shapes and centripital, hard-edged ones together signifies both the inclusion in the paintings of the full range of types of painter's shapes and also, the contrast of opposites.

In the organization of False Start and Jubilee relatively equal visual elements are fairly evenly dispersed throughout the field, a distribution which emphasizes two dimensionality. The freely brushed splotches constitute one system of shapes and the stenciled names another, both systems evenly and thoroughly dispersed so that both occupy the whole field, the two thoroughly interwoven. Within each system, the separate elements are about the same size, the names being smaller than the splotches. False Start is made up of principally red, yellow, blue, white, and orange, with very small areas of green and lavender, dispersed throughout the field. All the spots and words of any given color may be read as a constellation, the four constellations (orange tends visually to group with red) interspersed, and each occupying the whole field. In Jubilee three such coloristic systems appear, the bright whites, the absolute blacks, and the various intermediate grays. A third visual system,

texture, is also distributed homogeneously throughout the field.

Thus, for the internal visual structure in both works, Johns sets up one set of relationships based on shape and another based on color; both operate simultaneously, and independently. The texture, since it is a physical property of the paint itself, regardless of color or shape, runs throughout the painting.

In the general organization of False Start and Jubilee, no heirarchy prevails among shapes, neither of size (except that the splotches are larger than the color names), nor of location on the surface, nor position in space. because of the nature of the interrelation among the shapes, they cannot be seen as parts of a whole, anatomically organized, but rather simply as elements in an agglomeration, which constitutes the whole of the painting.

Though the paintings are lively throughout with visual events, these are so evenly distributed that the canvases appear as homogeneous surfaces, which suggest potentially limitless continuity. The emphasis is thus also on their two-dimensional nature; flatness, solidity, and continuousness, a character of the surface as a whole reinforced by the fact that each kind of shape in a different manner tends to appear as lying flat.[2]

Two characteristics of the shapes Johns has used in False Start and Jubilee, overlap and soft edges, in conjunction

with coloristic and textural contrast, allow the illusion of pictorial space. Visually, the various splotches and names appear as before and beyond each other in space (Johns has in many places actually brushed one spot or name on top of another, physically partly obliterating the prior occupant of a given area of canvas). The energetic, directional brushwork, and the expansiveness implied in such centrifugal spots and their rollicking positions about the canvas, suggest it is appropriate to their nature to jostle into each other, overlapping and intermixing. The strong figure-ground contrasts, established in False Start by hue differentiation and in Jubilee by tonal differentiation, automatically give the optical illusion that the figure element is before, and the ground element beyond, in space. Thus shapes which themselves appear as essentially flat, when set in figure-ground relationships with their neighbors (which read as overlap), tend to keep their orientations parallel to the picture plane but appear as differentiated from each other in depth. The use of brushy edges without sharp boundaries for the color splotches gives the whole visual complex a general softness which appears spacious; shapes which are distinctly bounded by clear edges tend more to appear as abutting expanses on an impenetrable surface, as in a patchwork quilt.[3]

Inasmuch as the spots of each particular color read together as a constellation, the various constellations can be seen as standing in spatial relationships to each other, the

web of whites in Jubilee, for instance, or yellow in False Start standing forward of everything else. Curiously, no particular one of the predominant hues in False Start always seems foremost; whichever color appears forward is the one that "comes" forward under the influence of the viewer's attention. If one is looking at (or looking for) red, the red constellation appears to dominate, and that dominance is visually understood as a forward position in space. If one then notices an area where blue overlaps red, contradicting logical spatial conventions for overlap, and looks to blue, then blue seems foremost, and so on. In many instances the illusion of space caused by the forwardness of hue runs counter to that set up by overlap. The resulting ambivalence brings on a sense of constantly uncertain or shifting positions within a spacious context.

In some passages Johns has painted one shape over another without hue or tonal differentiation, as in the area just above center in the right side of False Start, where a red area is labeled "blue" in red paint. The word can be seen as a figure on a ground of the same color only by discerning textural differentiation; direction of brushmarks and greater surface build-up of the viscous physical medium of which the painting is made. Texture is, of course, a property of the actual rather than the illusory third dimension.

A major aspect of False Start and Jubilee, in their physical nature and in the visual appearance they present,

is that they consist of superimposed layers. The painter's response to the surface shows great sensitivity to its expansiveness and to its ability to receive an accumulation of touches. Johns' brushwork suggests the activity of the artist's hand moving over small areas of the surface; his juxtaposition of color splotches records his traversal of the whole field by a succession of operations in neighboring areas; his superimposition of splotches indicates that the available dimensions for such operations are not only lateral but also in depth. Johns often paints an area which, because of its size and placement, completely eclipses another shape.

Overpainting and textural differentiation in False Start and Jubilee lead from visual effects, which establish the illusory third dimension, to physical effects, which establish the actual third dimension. In Jubilee, a vivid layer of underpainting (in red, yellow, and blue) along with some collage elements, lies beyond the foremost layer of grays. Thus Jubilee clearly is physically structured in depth, the layers placed in distinct before/beyond positions.

Except in a few cases in False Start and Jubilee, textural differentiation is not used as a major device to differentiate visually figure and ground. Both paintings, however, are worked in relatively thick impasto, so their surfaces have a general texture, the accents of which, just as those of color and shape, are distributed homogeneously

throughout the expanse, establishing in this way the whole surface as a clearly continuous skin.[4] This aspect of texture, a property of the actual third dimension, emphasizes the two dimensionality of the surface and contradicts the illusory three dimensionality of the figure-ground relationships visible on that surface.

Where overpainting is not absolutely opaque, underpainting may be seen. When brushwork is not perfectly smooth, and the edges of abutting shapes are not perfectly joined, a figure may be seen even on a ground of the same color. False Start and Jubilee are generally painted in such a way that overpainting does not fully eclipse underpainting, or is somewhat transparent, and the brush work leaves clearly visible texture; thus one sees evidence of the physical three dimensionality in False Start and Jubilee, just as one sees the illusory three dimensionality.

None of the pictorial devices, which give False Start and Jubilee the illusion of extension into the third dimension, is perspectival; however deep the picture seems, its space as a continuum does not funnel vision nor does it focus it on a single point. The structure of the pictorial space as a whole is based on relationships that would conceptually be described as parallel and perpendicular. Each spot, brushy splotch or letter, or each constellation of

spots, constitutes a plane visually parallel to (and physically identical with) the picture surface, standing in some illusory distance relationship to it and to the others. The eye of the observer is not given the luxury of a single vanishing point or viewing point around which everything in the pictorial field is organized and from which everything can be seen, nor is his body given the comfort of finding itself in a central position in the world thus seen. There are as many points from which the eye may penetrate the space of such a painting as there are points on its forward surface. Each point must conceptually be viewed straight on, and the visual penetration into the space as if it were perpendicular through parallel planes; there are no orthagonals as in a perspectival construction, and no parallax as in a real three dimensional situation in the actual world.[5]

The pictorial structure in False Start and Jubilee gives the illusion of space while also emphasizing the two dimensional fact of the canvas; it focuses on the inherently paradoxical nature of the art of painting. Johns doubles this paradox by employing a three dimensional element in the painted surface, and by calling attention to the fact that a painting, though considered only a two dimensional plane, is an object with a significant third dimension in real space.

The quality of the distribution of the pictorial material through illusory space is, like the distribution across the surface expanse, non-episodic and non-heirarchical; there is

no accumulation of many elements in one area of space which would build up a sense of density. There is, however, an effect caused by the paradoxical combination of actual two dimensionality and illusory three dimensionality in the canvas which produces a tension felt acutely at the edges of the field. In the center, the spatial illusion operates most freely; at the edges, the irregular splotches are intercepted by straight geometric borders, calling attention at that point to the material nature of the picture as a spotted canvas surface. This physical treatment of the edges tends somewhat to squeeze space out of the illusion which would otherwise prevail among the spots. The canvas is framed, not with the older traditional window type frame which overlaps the front surface of the canvas, but with the more modern strip frame which lies along the sides of the stretcher. The former enhances the illusion of pictorial space, as if one looked through, and past, a nearby aperture into the distance beyond. The latter emphasizes the real three dimensional character of the canvas as a geometric solid, and the viewer is left in full awareness that the canvas is a flat cloth surface wrapped around the stretcher. Visually, the left, right, and top framing edges of <u>False Start</u> and <u>Jubilee</u> work in a way that intercepts the splotches midway in their expanse; they run off, or beyond, those edges. In the traditional window illusion frame, this would be visually understood as an overlap denoting space, the nearer

frame overlapping and thus blocking from view the more distant scene beyond. Since the frame of False Start allows one to see the edges of the stretched canvas rectangle, the excluded remainders of the splotches along the edges seem not to be cropped but rather turned away from the viewer's sight, continuing around the far side of the stretchers, whose edges form a horizon. The suggestion of potentially infinite continuity set up by the homogeneous distribution of the visual elements across the field is generally not contradicted in the relationship which the internal material bears to the boundaries of the field.

The splotches are generally not differentiated by shape or orientation in response to the edges of the canvas. In a few cases, the direction of the brushwork, with which a spot abutting the edge of the canvas is painted, runs parallel along the edge at all, angling toward it rather in a way that suggests the hand and brush moved on, suggesting that the spot would continue if the canvas surface would permit it to do so. Only at the bottom does the entire complex of painted material acknowledge the edge; there the splotches are stopped shy of the edge along a roughly even horizontal line, leaving a strip of bare canvas. This establishes a definite bottom, treated differently from the top and sides so as to signify its different nature. Since the strip parallels the horizontal lower edge, it stops and stabilizes other visual forces in a way that indicates the controlling

dominance of the lower margin. Supporting this, one important adjustment has been made in the orientation of the color names scattered throughout the field; many are oriented bottom down, several are oriented bottom vertical (parallel to one side or the other), many are angled, but only one is oriented bottom upward. Thus the whole visual organization of the paintings is one of complex "all over" dispersal of visual incident giving a look of limitless extendibility except in the direction of the bottom, controlled by no heirarchy, but having nevertheless a definite, subtle vertical orientation. The strip at the bottom is an area where the bare canvas, which is the furthest layer of the painting, shows through. It sets up a spatial relationship so strong as to render the relationships among the painted areas secondary; at the bottom, all the paint appears as a figure to the whole unpainted canvas as ground, and as a physically forward layer over a more distant one beyond.

The colors chosen for <u>False Start</u> are the primaries, red, blue, and yellow, and the secondaries, orange, green, and violet, (the last two used sparsely) along with white. In <u>Jubilee</u> the "colors" are the polar tones, black and white, and the intermediate grays. Thus as a pair the two paintings include the entire cosmos of coloristic elements, primaries and secondaries of color and tone. They also, as a pair, pit contrasting opposites, color and tone, against each other side by side. <u>Jubilee</u> taken alone apparently also

sets these opposites against each other, the colored painting a layer of underpainting beyond the gray one and thus hidden, only marginally accessible to the senses.

Color is present in False Start and Jubilee via two different systems, the colored brush spots and the color names. Both are visual, but only one of them carries information for direct receipt by the senses, the other carrying information by means of letters, graphic signs to be decoded intellectually. The different ways the two systems carry information is emphasized by the fact that the word names are assumed to be labels for the spots on which they are painted; taken as such, they often tell lies, conveying different color identity information from that carried by the pigmentation of the spots with which they are associated. By using names, Johns has included all coloristic possibilities in both canvases, even though the actual visible hues included are limited.

Color contributes to the illusory third dimension because of optical dynamics natural to different colors and tones in juxtaposition. The visual progression or recession of various colors and tones against others has been noted, along with the fact that Johns often contradicts the spatial illusion set up by shape with that established by color. Color is also used in the service of the actual third dimension; color separation is what allows the distinction to be made between the before and beyond layers in Jubilee.

Notably, the same principle is also used to distinguish various positions across the flat expanse of the canvas, the different spots being painted different colors.

The subject matter in False Start and Jubilee might be said to be color and shape, just as it is by the formal means of color and shape that this subject matter is presented. The complex question of identity and identification stands prior to the questions of pictorial representation, representation depending also to some extent on the nature of subject matter. The fact that some of the shapes in False Start are letters raises the question of representation and immediately makes the question moot, because the thing represented is, in its ontological character, a spot of color or tone of a certain shape applied to a ground which is, conceptually at least, a flat surface. Thus the subject "depicted" here hangs exactly on the edge of the question of representation. The other shapes in False Start and Jubilee, which are not letters, are "abstract", non-representational. In False Start and Jubilee the visual form and the design are not organized following the demands of mimetic representation of an object in the extra-painterly world. Thus they are assumed to function freely as themselves: "abstract" painting.

The issues raised by Johns in False Start and Jubilee are concerned with the ontological nature of painting and the iconographical aspects of form. As will be seen, his method for the exploration of these issues is a visual

Socratic interrogation, usually working by means of logical contradiction and paradox, isolation, and reductio ad absurdum.

Notes; Description of the formal structure in False Start and Jubilee

[1]It has been widely recognized and commented upon that Johns' work was influential in stimulating the return to representational subject matter in the late 1950's and early 1960's, particularly those commonplace motifs associated with American pop art. Johns' formal influence has been much less widely acknowledged, and formal aspects of his work have been less thoroughly examined, except to the extent that they have been bound up in the subjects he chose to depict.

Max Kozloff, in the first extended monograph on Johns' work, cited his general importance and his formal influence: "Several years before (the year 1959) and extending the same principles with even greater richness and self knowledge beyond it, is a body of work that has virtually changed the character of American art. Either by direct influence or suggestive signal, the vision of Jasper Johns is the turning point of the post Abstract Expressionist period. Of necessity, much of his career has been concerned with stylistic or compositional strategies, whose tenents have affected with equal force the past several years of American abstraction and the Dadaist upsurge which is its closely related counterpart." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York,Abrams, 1969,p.10)

[2]Essential here is that the flat character of the whole is also emphasized by the identity of the hard-edged shapes as letters, which are habitually associated with flat surfaces in a way that emphasizes planarity, solidity, and continuity. Thus an aspect of subject matter helps support a characteristic of form, via the viewer's recognition of the shapes and association of them with previously held knowledge of traditional usage elsewhere. The formal character of False Start and Jubilee is thus assessed by the viewer by means of a cognitive and sensory loop of connections which goes outside the realm of form, and then outside the realm of purely visible aspects of form.

[3] Alan Solomon notes that the overlapping of the brushstroke patches "creates a complex deep space", while the stenciled color names "refer flatly to the surface". (Alan Solomon, "Jasper Johns", in Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, The Jewish Museum, 1964.p.4.)

The visual effect of the systems of overlap is considerably stronger than the effect of the viewer's assumptions and expectations for printed matter: the total effect produced by False Start is that while words are supposed visually to lie flatly on continuous flat surfaces, these are pushed backward and forward in space. What they are observed to do is at a variance with what is remembered, that which is per-

ceived is at a variance with what is remembered, that which is sensed is at a variance with what is known, as in a successful magician's act.

[4] Kozloff notes the homogeneous distribution of textural incident in such earlier works as White Flag and Figure 5, in which the canvas is divided into subsidiary shapes but they are all painted monochromatically: "Johns uniformly stresses a staccato, choppy, impasto that reaches impartially to every perimeter. The absence of any nervousness or episodic intervals characterizes the very density of this facture. For Johns' handling of paint now evidences a neutrality on the question of weight - a neutrality which cuts across the whole range of his works and gives them their indeterminate densities." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p.16.)

[5] This type of spatial configuration, which I observe in Johns' work and in Pollock's and Mondrian's, has been the focus of much important study by Wayne Andersen in the context of the examination of the formal structuring of contemporary and other painting and drawing. My understanding of this element, and many others discussed in this dissertation, is deeply endebted both to my formal study with Professor Andersen and to the many informal discussions in which such issues were posed. These have profoundly shaped and focused my perception and understanding of pictorial formal structures in general.

SECTION ONE, Part Two: Related formal issues in Johns' work before *False Start*

False Start is the first occasion where Johns employs shapes of centrifugal nature in intensely contrasting colors. He had juxtaposed the primaries and the secondaries in *Target with Plaster Casts* of 1955 (fig. 3) and had also painted canvases of all over gray in very closely valued shades, as, for example, *Gray Rectangles* of 1957 (fig. 4) and *Tennyson* of 1958 (fig. 5). However, he had not before 1959 painted a canvas in which the visual structure was of freely brushed but distinctly separate spots juxtaposed.

In *Target with Plaster Casts*, and likewise *Flag* of 1955 (fig. 6), Johns had painted encaustic surfaces which were noted for their rich, voluptuous, and painterly character.[1] The operative shapes in these paintings, however, are not free centrifugal splotches, but crisply deliniated centripital shapes--circles, stars, and stripes--within which color is contained. In *Numbers in Color* of 1958-59 (fig. 7), separate brushed shapes of contrasting primaries and secondaries appear, but they are still contained within the outlines of the numbers somewhat, or within the grid compartments, though in each case more loosely than in the flags and targets.

Johns' gray paintings of 1957-58 such as *Gray Rectangles* and *Tennyson* show conspicuous brushwork, but the range of tone is kept so narrow that, again, no distinct splotches of brush

work distinguish themselves from the field as separate shapes. In both of these and in other monochrome works, the canvas is treated as a homogeneous field of slightly modulated tone, within which subdivisions are achieved by the physical interposition of separate objects or separation of the canvas.

In both types of painting, then, those with hard-edged colored shapes, such as the flags and targets, and those with gray fields, such as Tennyson and Gray Rectangles, the great structure of the painting is still a complex of tightly outlined hard-edged shapes; only in the fine structure, in the elaboration of areas within the outlines, does the free brush work play a part. Only in Numbers in Color, do the brushed shapes threaten to operate as strongly in the pictorial structure as the outlined shapes.[2]

In Johns' paintings before 1959, the choice of primaries and secondaries as colors, and the separation of sets of hues from sets of tones, seems less pointedly present and less programmatic, but still, especially in the gray pictures, a specific and conscious choice. It is in the monochrome that Johns first began to explore textural differentiation, as an aspect of physical three dimensionality separate from tonal and hue differentiation. In Green Target of 1955 (fig. 8) and White Numbers of 1958 (fig. 9), edges of the shapes which constitute the image are physically inflected, so that the shapes may be seen despite a lack of color differentiation.[3]

Johns plays here between two things of different natures, the physical object and the pictorial illusion, as well as between two visual systems which are of different types: the hard-edged matrix of shapes and the rich and brushy all-over variegated surfaces.

False Start represents a melding of certain ideas and formal traits which had emerged in earlier works. He combined the juxtaposition of expanses of contrasting color, as in the flags and targets, with the all over surface, the freer brushwork, and the reserved lower strip of bare canvas found in Tennyson and Gray Rectangles. The use of freely brushed shapes of contrasting hues in False Start (the dominant element of which the pictorial structure is constructed) shows the emergence in Johns' work of a decidedly different mode of pictorial organization, and with it a radically different kind of spatial treatment.[4] That 1959 marked a turning point in his work has been noted by Johns and commented upon by others.[5]

His works before 1959 show a consistent interest in the actual versus the illusory third dimension, which is to say in the canvas as the physical surface and the substance of the painting as distinguished from the visual appearance of the configurations painted upon it. The inherently paradoxical nature of representational and illusionistic painting is of major interest to Johns, whose taste runs, he says, to the exploration of paradox and "impure" situations.[6]

Figure-ground relationships had been at issue in the flag paintings from the beginning. By choosing a configuration of abstract geometric shapes which represented a flag, rather than one invented by himself, Johns forced his viewer to read the configuration as an object. In this way, he presents something which his viewer recognizes as simultaneously having two natures. A similar configuration of abstract geometric shapes, which did not represent a known object, would, when presented in the familiar framed stretched canvas format of a painting, appear as spatial only in some zones because of the figure-ground effects and color contrasts. However, because this pattern represents a flag, the viewer assumes for it the essential physical nature of the flag, which is one object, a continuous flat cloth surface.[7]

Because of this, Flag above White with Collage of 1955 (fig. 10) may be extremely disconcerting. The viewer is confronted by an ambivalent pictorial spatial illusion brought about by the inclusion in the picture of the white rectangle below the flag. The flag is seen as a flag, but simultaneously as part of the visual pattern of shapes in the canvas. If it is identified as a flag, then everything that constitutes flag (the lowest red stripe up) is seen as figure on the white ground of the lower area. The visual pattern, however, is such that the eye wants to see the lowest red stripe and, to some extent, the one above that as red figures on an underlying white ground, the ground made up

of the lower white rectangle and the lowest white stripes of the flag. This prompts a sense of the dissolution of the flag image, the tenacity of which, established by its familiarity, leads the viewer to resist. The next alternative is to deny the illusion of space between the shapes and see the whole canvas as a continuous flat surface. This spatially makes right the position of the lowest stripes, but also causes the flag to appear as an object with seven thin red stripes, six thin white stripes, and one wide white rectangle at the bottom. The mind rejects this also, attempting to confine the flag to only those visual elements requisite to the known model, the stars and stripes, not the stars, stripes, and rectangle.

In Flag on Orange Field of 1957 (fig. 11) Johns places the rectangle of the flag within a larger orange rectangle. Again, the mind recognizes the red, white, and blue areas as belonging to a known object, so the flag reads as an object-figure standing out against the surrounding ground. This effect is reinforced by the contrasting treatment of the painted areas, the orange being more loosely brushed than the flag and including within it tonal variations. [8]

The spatial illusion is very strong here, the flag visually floating before the distant orange. In terms of the deliniation of areas, Flag on Orange Field is essentially like Gray Rectangles and strongly related to Tennyson and Tango of 1955 (fig. 12). The orange field in Flag on Orange

Field is treated exactly as the all over gray, or blue, fields of the others; as a continuous surface of brushmarks with little tonal variation, broken only at the bottom of the canvas where it stands away from the lower edge to leave the horizontal reserved strip of canvas.

In Flag on Orange Field, the figure is set off from the ground by the crisp, straight edges of the regular, rectangular shape, and in the contrast of the colors of figure and ground. In Gray Rectangles, the shapes are again set off by sharp edges but not by color contrast. (The rectangles here appear as essentially the same color as the field in which they are set, although a more sensitive observation recognizes them as respectively reddish, yellowish, and bluish, indicating that once, at an earlier stage of the picture, they were red, yellow, and blue, but are over-painted with a gray layer.) Flag on Orange Field carries a very strong illusion of space because of the figure-ground visual structure. In Gray Rectangles the physical nature of the piece seems to deny such an illusion while supporting an equally strong implication of three dimensionality in a very different way. The rectangles are cut-out pieces set into the ground, their outlines are neither drawn lines nor the abutments of hard-edged color areas (things of a purely visual nature) but rather actual breaks in the surface (things of a physical nature). The rectangles as separate surfaces establish the strong suspicion that they are the

front side of three dimensional objects which extend back away from the viewer beyond the surface of the canvas. In Drawer of 1957 (fig. 13) this implication is acknowledged more explicitly by means of the addition of two drawer pulls on the rectangle, indicating that one could pull it forward of the picture surface and find it to be the front surface of a three dimensional rectangular solid of great depth. With both Gray Rectangles and Drawer, the viewer who receives this illusion of deep space becomes acutely aware that there is no room for a drawer between the front surface of the painting and the wall on which it hangs. Thus these works call attention to the canvas as a real three dimensional object in space, and simultaneously call attention to the ironic shallowness of its third dimension. The canvas-as-object is thus emphasized as being what it has always been, an object whose important features are its expansiveness in two dimensions and its ability to bear on that expanse visual configurations which give the illusion of space.

A third type of structure which focuses on these issues was used by Johns in Canvas of 1956 (fig. 14) and Three Flags of 1958 (fig. 15). Canvas is a painting of the gray surface type like Gray Rectangles except for its lack of the reserved strip along the bottom. Three Flags is another in Johns' series of images of the flag type. In both works, the visual configuration is one of rectangular figure within rectangular field, while the physical structure is one of superimposition

of canvases one before the other. The three tiers of flags and the stacked large and small grey canvases both physically extend forward to involve the actual space before the picture surface.

A major issue posed in Flag on Orange Field and not in Gray Rectangles is the difference in conceptual nature between the painted rectangle and the painted field. It has been observed that Flag of 1955 can be seen as an abstract painting, constituted of stripes and other shapes typical of that genre, which are composed in a typical design --but at the same time it may also be recognized as a representational painting, bearing the mimetic visual similarities to the model requisite for that genre of painting. In Flag on Orange Field the rectangle within the canvas is understood as a section of representational painting, in fact, much like a complete Johns flag painting, while the orange field may be recognized as an abstract painting, of the non-geometric, all-over variety. Were the flag omitted, the orange field could stand alone, a "field" painting, as such works are often called. The orange field shows John's exploration, in more explicit terms than in Tennyson and Tango, of ideas about pictorial structures which are increasingly associated with types of late 1950's--early 1960's painting. False Start, as has been noted, shows a full-fledged and conscious engagement with the concept and structure characteristic of a certain such painting type.

Three Flags elaborates upon Johns' original Flag of 1955. One of the disturbing aspects of that painting was, again, an ontological dilemma; in the real world the flag is a piece of cloth, thin and mobile, while Johns' flag, though keeping to the requisites of "flat" and "cloth", appears in the form of a painter's canvas (an object with a slight but important third dimension, and stiff), which (as in Tango) possesses a slab-like physical presence. In Three Flags, such stiff and thickened flag slabs are stacked one upon the other, emphasizing the volumetric nature of the painter's canvas, and its existence in the world of actual three dimensional objects, and the physical substance of its frontal plane as a surface capable of supporting other objects.

In Three Flags, as in Gray Rectangles, the physical nature of the configuration contradicts its visual nature: as actual object, the medium-sized and smallest flags are forward of the largest. Visually, a set of concentric rectangles, especially a set of images of the same object in diminishing sizes, would read as if the smallest were farthest away, a standard principle of linear perspective and a major device in perspectival pictures. Works such as Flag on Orange Field and Three Flags point in different ways to the same thing: Johns' frequent inclusion after 1959 of other objects attached to the surfaces of canvases which are themselves both objects and abstract paintings with some illusory space.

In Canvas, Johns explores the issue of the three dimensionality of the stretched canvas as object in conjunction with several more subtle issues. In False Start, there are many passages in which a spatial illusion is established when previously painted areas are partially covered by succeeding applications of paint. Canvas involves two types of covering over. The smaller canvas, like the medium and small flags in Three Flags, covers part of the larger canvas' surface; we assume that the canvas surface is continuous behind it, though we cannot see. In Canvas, the smaller canvas is turned to face the larger; it turns its back on the viewer--anything painted on its usual picture-bearing surface is unavailable to be seen. The front surface has been rotated in space around beyond the available line of vision; the back becomes the front.

In Canvas, as in Tennyson, the gray paint, which appears as a richly textured gray skin, has been applied continuously over the whole face of the structure, covering the canvas surface and the applied objects alike. The work is understood to be made up of layers; the original, backmost canvas surface, the final, foremost, paint surface, and the elements sandwiched in between. The thickness of the applied elements is extreme in Canvas; in Tennyson the applied element is a piece of canvas of slight but readily discernible actual thickness doubled over to provide yet another hidden surface.

In Newspaper of 1957 (fig. 16) Johns had applied a paper-thin layer of newspaper to the canvas, working the thick encaustic across it. In Tennyson and Newspaper, the viewer's sense of the three dimensionality is derived more strongly from his awareness of the layered nature of the work than from the actual extent of the physical protrusion of the applied elements. The use of layering had been extremely important since the first Flag of 1955, which included pieces of newsprint collage that did not themselves contribute to the articulation of the pattern of shapes requisite to the flag pattern, but provided another layer of alternative form and content. In these works, as in Gray Rectangles where there seems to be colored paint under the gray and in False Start where color names and spots are overlaid with other brushwork, the "illusion" of three dimensionality is both physical and visual. There are passages where there appears to be something underneath because of the trompe l'oeil illusion, and others where there appears to be something there because of physical evidence, the edges of the applied canvas in Tennyson, for example. There are other passages where the viewer knows there is more underneath than he can see. Johns is again making a play between things of two natures; the fronts of canvases and the printed surfaces of newspapers and book pages are surfaces which by their nature are carriers of visual material from which information is to

be gathered via looking at them; this is what they are for. By covering up these particular surfaces, Johns not only physically constructs multi-layered surfaces and visually gives evidence of having done so, he confounds the typical appropriate responses to the objects involved in such a way that the viewer may be made more intensely aware of the superimposition, and also mildly psychologically disturbed by it.

In all of the real and illusory three dimensional constructions in Johns' work before 1958, the nature of the structure of the third dimension is the same as in False Start and Jubilee: the elements spatially related are of the nature of flat planes, oriented parallel to the picture surface, and the line of recession into depth is perpendicular. The viewer perceives space as extending backward not along the converging orthagonals of perspective but along the paralleling perpendiculars of the edges of the drawer in Drawer, or the spacious but unspecified and undiminishing flat succession of Flag on Orange Field.

Johns' feeling for such a non-perspectival deep recession as a spatial structure is made clear by a drawing of 1958 called Hook (fig. 17), which takes as its subject matter a model from the real world, a thick rectangular slab in which two hooks are set on one side two thirds of the way up. This drawing gives a succinct and clarified formulation of those concepts of spatial structure, evident in

works from 1955 on, which burst out in False Start and other works of the transitional year 1959 in a new formal manifestation. In the left area of Hook, the object is depicted broadside, the slab aligned parallel to the picture plane. The full expanse of the slab is shown, with the hooks appearing as small white drop shapes in the darker expanse. One would not know, in fact, that these were hooks, except for the fact that at the right side is another image of the hook board, here depicted as oriented in strict perpendicular to the picture plane. In this representation, the slab appears as a thin strip, while the hook, shown side on, is hook shaped. As in an architect's conventional use of plan and elevation drawings as a pair, Johns gives elevation and cross-section images as a composite that will complete the graphic presentation of the hook board to the observer in its informational content. In Hook, Johns uses the conventions of mimetic representation of a "real" model to explore the limits of the relationship between appearance of the model and that of its image. He has deliberately chosen a model which poses a crucial problem: an accurate depiction of the shapes provided by a front-on view of the hooks tells very little about them, not even enough to identify them as hooks. Meanwhile the depiction of the hook board end-on gives thorough information about the hooked nature of the hooks, but is incapable of showing the extensiveness of the broad surface of the slab, or the number of hooks aligned

in it. Only a perspectival rendition of the hook board would allow both sets of information in one image of the object. Johns refuses to employ that device, holding strictly to the parallel or perpendicular orientation and recession of the space as in his other works. As a whole, Hook, including as it does the broad side and end-on images of the hook board in one pictorial field, is one of the most easily identifiable and most aggressive non-perspectival spatial configurations in Johns' work. In Hook also, somewhat as in Flag on Orange Field, Johns is exploring the way the nature of the field changes when it serves as the ground for a representation of a known model from the real world. If the hook is a hook, then the field is a picture of a slab of some kind into which it is set. Visually, with or without the influence of the hook which interjects the subject-matter interpretation, it may be identified as an abstract drawing, since the images of the hooks seen frontally do not in themselves carry enough unambivalent visual information to demand that they be identified as mimetic representations of hooks. The "front view of the hook board" is just as easily seen as an abstract configuration of square, two small white spots, and small graphic strokes.

The characteristic parallel and perpendicular spatial configuration within Johns' works reiterates that of the spatial relationship between the viewer and the work in real space, and it is no accident that he deals as often with the

space before the picture surface as with the space beyond it. In his early targets, Johns used his subject matter to specify this spatial relationship; the target being pre-eminently that object with which an observer aligns himself at a distance from, on a perpendicular to, and takes aim.[9] Not only does one sight the target, but also shoots it, an action whose course through space is also, conceptually, a straight line perpendicular to the surface. Via the verbal association carried in the word gallery, the act of shooting is assimilated to the act of viewing the painted canvas, an action thus understood as operating through space toward the picture just as the spatial relationship in False Start is seen to operate within the picture.

Another set of paintings important in Johns' work before False Start is that which involves numbers. Early on (1955), Johns painted canvases in which a single numeral stands in a rectangular field. Although they are clearly based on a single figure-ground relationship structure, unlike Flag on Orange Field, the paintings do not show the numerals as distinguished by color from their grounds, nor are their shapes strictly deliniated by definite sharp bounding edges. It is again impossible to miss the appropriateness of the double verbal pun associable with these paintings; the numerals are figures, and the paintings are equivalent to traditional figure paintings in which the figure is a human being.[10] Also, they are, visually, studies in figure-ground relation-

ships in which the figures are numerals. Johns paints these works in encaustic, which is layered over newspaper collage; another instance of the early emergence of the layered structure which is developed in the various later differentiations.

The figure-ground distinctions in these works are established not by color difference nor by thoroughgoing boundary line, but texturally. As in Green Target and the magnificent White Flag of 1955 (fig. 18), the canvases are essentially monochromatic, the edges of the figures established by directionality of brushstroke, thickness of encaustic (and thus the degree of its transparency or opacity) and the physical edge of the leaves of cut newspaper in the underlying layer. In these works, Johns achieves an interlocking system involving a great structure (the numeral in the field) and two fine structures (the collage bits and the paint strokes) which work sometimes independently of each other and sometimes in conjunction. The result is an image that is definite without being strict, and full of visual incident so rich and multiple that the canvas seems to scintillate, but without dissolving.

These paintings may be seen in relationship to the flags and targets as studies in which the pictorial field is divided into subsidiary compositional shapes, and also in relation to the all-over gray paintings for their greater integration of figure and ground by means of emphasis on the

monochrome surface throughout with textural and tonal modulations.

The numeral paintings are for Johns the set in which all issues of the second and third dimensions emerging in the work of his early years are most thoroughly engaged.[11] The issue of the expansiveness, two-dimensionality, of the surface is primary in the great Gray Alphabets of 1956 (fig.19) in which Johns establishes the format of White Numbers of 1958. These monochrome works provide the basis in turn for the bright Numbers in Color of 1958 which brings into focus some of the issues in the immediate background of False Start. In Gray Alphabets and then in White Numbers and Gray Numbers, Johns divides his canvas field into an even, regular pattern of rectangular compartments by means of a grid. This alone basically reconciles the all-over textured surface element so strong in Tango and other early gray field type paintings with the subdivision into geometric sections characteristic of the flag and target type in a refined balance. Johns' use of either monochromatic tonal variations or color patches not bound within hard-edged color shapes, well dispersed throughout the canvas, show his urge to combine the all-over emphasis of visual incident with geometric structure, and to combine hard-edged with unbounded shapes. Johns is sensitive to the great importance of size relationship between element and whole pictorial rectangle; after the 27 x 27 (the alphabet plus

one) grid of the Gray Alphabets, Johns turns to the 11 x 11 (0 through 9 plus one) grid of numbers which is more classical in proportion and less busy. The system in both alphabet and number paintings is one of sequential enumeration used expansively. Like the grid system of latitude and longitude by which the surface of the earth may be understood, the primary conditions set up to enable measuring and orienting within it, the grids in the alphabet and number paintings subdivide and organize the whole rectangle in a way that is specific but neutral. The grid itself is by nature an extendable pattern, having a predetermined necessary relationship between the lines as to their orientation and proximity, but none as to their length, and a predetermined relationship between every rectangle and those which abut it but no limit as to how many rectangles in either direction it may be carried.

The parallel and perpendicular nature of the relationships between the elements of the grid is the exact counterpart in the transverse plane to the depth relationships in space; the numbers in Gray Numbers are related to each other across the expanse just as the splotches in False Start are related to each other in depth.

Within each rectangular expanse cut out by the grid appears a numeral (in the alphabet paintings a letter). Each compartment is a small version of the physically independent figure paintings of 1955 with the same characteristic

multiple textural and tonal elaborations. The relationships between the compartments, by virtue of their being enumerated by the standard well known finite sequences of letters or numbers, are sequential two-dimensionally, across the expanse horizontally and vertically.[12] The whole expanse of each canvas is enumerated by the whole set of numbers 0 through 9 plus one bare compartment, an artist's additional contribution on the canvas, zero signifying nothing but usually being as much a thing as any other figure. Both the horizontal and the vertical expanses of the canvas rectangle are determined by the number of grid rectangles occupied by this system; thus, though the grid is itself a neutral structure infinitely extendable, the choice of the system within its compartments determines its dimensions as 11 x 11. However it is important to recognize that the nature of this system is not particularly centrifugal nor particularly centripital, but neither. In False Start, there is no grid, and the canvas is not divided into sections. However, the whole canvas is still understood as an expanse which is the sum of adjacent expanses, the color splotches, which the color names mark as do the numerals in the sections of Gray Numbers. The color names locate the spots; the concept of location is the concept on which soft-edged, centrifugal shapes are based, expanding outward as they do from some center. False Start is freed of any vestige of the grid, which still generates expanses based on the concept

of area, which is bordered, determined from the outside. In both the grid paintings and False Start, the viewer, like the artist's working hand, makes his way across the expanse from location to adjacent location.[13]

The ancient Roman cardo and decumanus determined the north-south, east-west axes which crossed at right angles at the center of the city site and continued, infinitely extendable, into the surrounding land, a conceptually centrifugal system. The city wall was then drawn around the site, encircling and containing it, a centripital system. The grids used by Johns are potentially infinitely extendable, but by the association of the numbers with their compartments their extent is specified and limited. At their limits is a canvas edge. The canvas edge is not, however, like the Roman city wall; the number system is not expansive beyond its finite eleven places, and would stop even if the field did not, just as in the flag the theoretically extendable alternation of red and white stripes must stop at thirteen, because thirteen is the number of stripes in the flag. Thus the visual dynamics of the relationship of the field to the material within it is simply given; Johns makes no more claim to regulate the whole configuration than to regulate the relationships of part to part within it. It is not a personal decision, and it is not up to the artist--it is a thing given, which, once taken, is simply carried out. Likewise the nature of the flag as a visual pattern taken

is inert, neither expansive nor centripital, simply there.[14]

The sequences of numbers in the number grids set up definite left-right and top-bottom progressions, according to the conventions of linear systems for reading in English. Johns uses eleven places, but only in the upper left space does he fill the one with a blank. In all rows (reading left to right or top to bottom) the last number is the same as the first number, attaching the last place in the run to the first, the latter taking up where the former left off, full circle. Thus except for the blank in the upper left space, the top and the bottom bands of the picture are the same, as are the right and left.

Notes; Related formal issues in Johns' work before False Start

[1]For example; "White Flag would be a key picture and a masterpiece by virtue of its lambent textures and caressing strokes ... In this respect... Figure 5...is even more remarkable". (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969, p.17.)

[2] Wayne Andersen analizes the formal situation in a succinct passage which takes into account extra-pictorial and even extra-visual content of these paintings as well: "In the paintings of the map of the United States, Johns distributed the brushwork by outlined states, but these also symbolized the idea of boundary, as did the American flag paintings, which though more iconic, were symbolic of the bounded states organized precisely on a flat, delimited field. The targets Johns painted were symbols of containment and precise focus. In this way the improprities of Abstract Expressionist brushwork were brought into contrast with space defining patterns. The vital syntax of a new schema was thus established." (Wayne V. Andersen, Katherine Porter (exhibition catalogue), Cambridge Massachusetts, Hayden Gallery, MIT, 1974, unpaginated.)

[3] Kozloff observes the role of textural differentiation in the monochromatic works of 1955: "The creamy whiteness of these works suggests the color of a modeling material more than it does an outright hue applied to the surface of the painting, that is, the color is something out of which the substance forms itself, even into a kind of bas relief, rather than something externally conferred upon it." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p.16.)

In the last remark, he means, of course, not color but colored paint, as it is exactly here that Johns breaks apart the relationship commonly presumed to be inherent between the hue and the substance of the paint, both of which are essential attributes but attributes of different natures. It is not that the whiteness "suggests the color of a modeling material" so much as that the white encaustic, or paint of any hue, used monochromatically, simply is the substance out of which the surface is formed in painting where there is a thick impasto or in which brush stroke or other texture is not smoothed into non-existance.

[4] Barbara Rose is of the opinion that "Johns' early work is"not at all a spatial art: it is an art of surface and surface alone ", but that "the great crisis that breaks Johns' career as a painter in two hinges on Johns' desire to become more than a painter of surfaces, to become, in other

words, a spatial painter." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part I", Artforum, 8, No.7, Mar.1970 , 41.

[5] Most writers trying seriously to assess Johns' career as a process have discerned a major change in his work in 1959 or 1960. They have not necessarily agreed as to what constituted the change, what caused it, or what was the nature of Johns' new direction. Alan Solomon, writing for Johns' first major retrospective in 1964, divides his work into four period groups;

(1) 1955-1958; early flags, targets, numbers, letters, and objects covered with paint.(Some of these recur later.)
(2) 1959-1962; more abstract, expressionistically painted works with words, letters, numbers, and some objects; also the maps. He notes "a liberation of paint handling" at this point.
(3) 1962; works with real objects, usually unpainted.
(4) 1962, beginning with Diver; new preoccupations, more personal imagery.

(Alan Solomon, "Jasper Johns", in Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, The Jewish Museum, 1964, p.4.)

Michael Crichton, in the catalogue for Johns' most recent retrospective, singles out 1959 as a transitional year: "That same year he altered his methods radically. Identified with encaustic, he began to work with oil. Known for flags and targets, he stopped painting them... Thus we are presented with a young artist having just attained international renown, abandoning the technique, imagery, and concerns which made him famous. The result of this transformation -- and the cost -- are clearly seen in two major paintings of 1959 that can be considered together, False Start and Jubilee. (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, Abrams and Whitney Museum, 1977, p.38.)

Barbara Rose, who had followed Johns' career from the start, devoted an entire essay to the proposition that 1960 marked a momentous turning point in it."Abandoning two-dimensional images, he abandoned, at the same time, Impressionist surface and facture as well. Indeed, Johns changed both his medium as well as his technique at the same moment that he chose to expand his repertoire of images, that is, around 1960. At this time, he loosened and enlarged his brushstroke, exchanging the all-overness of Impressionism for the less controlled painterliness and bravura of DeKooning style. Apparently because this more quickly executed and spontaneous style was not compatible with the laborious process of painting in encaustic, he switched to an oil medium in 1959 in paintings like Jubilee and False Start. (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work I", p.41-42.) She is correct about the change and the subsequent interest in

Abstract Expressionism, but the differences between the earlier and later periods lie much more in how and toward what Johns addresses himself than with subject matter and media choices.(False Start and Jubilee are oil, but the similar and closely related Shade, Highway, Device Circle, and Out the Window are encaustic, a medium he used as late as Map of 1963.)

Kozloff, writing the first substantial independent monograph on the artist, remarked "One might say that Jasper Johns' work since 1959 continues all its preceeding complexities, but is now submerged beneath a frothing sea of pigment which only imperfectly camouflages them. Facetious, possibly, but not necessarily inaccurate." He correctly specifies that it is toward Abstract Expressionism Johns turns, employing its superficial appearance to explore the possibility that "what a painting appears to be, and how it is seen, can be two different things". "The major dilemmas of Abstract Expressionism having been acknowledged or sidestepped", he says, Rauschenberg and Johns "felt free to play fast and loosewith its manner". (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p.23.)

The course signified by such a change seems an anomaly. Rose felt "Johns' development from an involvement with surface to an involvement with space is particularly odd since it reverses the course of modernist painting which has been away from deep space toward the assertion of the surface plane. This nominally backwards development has caused formal critics to reject Johns' later work out' of hand as simply retarditaire Cubist formulations." (Rose, op.cit, p.70.)

Kozloff noted "One of the fundamental premises of his art is its contrariety, so that it was actually quite natural for him to switch from evenly rendered and graded paint facades and/or rigid systems to their opposite, an open, broken, brushy handling. His vision is a matrix of opposing propositions rather than a gradual pictorial evolution, and as a result the changes in his work can seem much more abrupt than they actually are." (Max Kozloff, op.cit.,p.24.)

Jasper Johns said "There was a change. I don't think of it as drastic." (Quoted by Walter Hopps in "An Interview with Jasper Johns", Artforum, 3, No.6, March 1965, p.35.)

[6] Johns: "Most of my thoughts involve impurities, those kind of technically or visually pure situations which can be shown in a work are not interesting to me in my work. They interest me in other people's work, but I don't focus on those particular conditions." (Quoted by Joseph Young in "Jasper Johns, an Appraisal", Art International, 3, No. 7, 1969, p.50.)

The presence of "impurity" and even outright contra-

diction and paradox is typical and widespread in Johns' work from the beginning. This has given rise to consternation among viewers and critics whose aesthetic stance, intellectual capacity, or theoretical methodology could not encompass such an eventuality. Kozloff said "Whatever the persuasion of the critic, he perceives in the work of Johns now weakly, now distinctly, a programmatic mating of opposites whose fusion is by no means settled or even determined." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns. p.14.) Leo Steinberg observed how the contradictory reception by critics of different schools points up the significant character of Johns' work which is its "perpetual oscillation between its content and its formal aspects". (Leo Steinberg, "Contemporary Art and the Plight of its Public" in Other Criteria; Confrontations with Twentieth Century Art, New York, Oxford University Press, 1972, p.31.)

[7] In his well known article of 1962, Clement Greenberg acutely observed how Johns' flag paintings formally turn the tables on the traditions of abstraction and representation:"Everything that usually serves representation and illusion (of three dimensionality) is left to serve nothing but itself, that is, abstraction, while everything that usually serves the abstract or decorative -- flatness, bare outlines, all over or symmetrical design -- is put to the service of representation." (Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism", Art International, 6, No.8, Oct.1962, p.24.) Having defined criteria for quality evaluation of current painting as the degree to which a work remains devoid of illusory space (a near impossibility visually, and a condition of interest to only a few painters certainly not including Johns), and devoid of reference to any model in the actual world, Greenberg is oblivious to the variety of illusory spatial structures used by Johns, their different natures, and the importance of the role they play in the dynamics of pictorial design. Likewise, rejecting out of hand the presence of representational subject matter, he is insensitive to the the major importance that factor has in determining whether the viewer sees the geometric design as flat or spatially differentiated. The color names in False Start, as Kozloff says, "Affirm a surface to which no other element gives as much credibility, but they reject the idea that an abstract picture must be considered strictly from a visual point of view." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p.27.)

[8] Johns later emphasized the importance of illusory space in these works and the development of it to his own process: "Flag on Orange was involved with how to have more than one element in the painting and how to be able to extend the space beyond the limits of... the predetermined

image... It got rather monotonous, making flags on a piece of canvas, and I wanted to add something, go beyond the limits of the flag, and have different canvas space. I did it early with the little flags with the white below, making the flag hit three edges and then just adding something else, and then in the Orange, I carried it all the way around." (Walter Hopps, Interview with Jasper Johns", p.35.)

[9]Leo Steinberg noted that one's visual and spatial relationship to a target is at a considerable distance, but to a face only a short one. He mused on the contrast between hereness and thereness in a discussion of Target with Four Faces. (Leo Steinberg, Jasper Johns, New York, Wittenborn, 1963.)

[10] Barabera Rose is, I believe, the first to state it: "The number paintings beginning with the prototype Figure 1 of 1955 are, of course, a surrogate for figure painting, as their titles indicate. They are "figures" which unlike the human figure, with its roundness and three dimensionality, have two dimensionality as part of their definition." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work Part I", p.41)

[11] Wayne Andersen, in a discussion of the use of the grid in mid 1970s painting, cites Johns' "regularized formats of the mid fifties" as the essential forerunner; Johns " dealt with the principle by which a regulated pattern forces space out of the painting. Mondrian in fact, was the first to discover this... In the example of Mondrian, the space regulating pattern was imposed upon spatial energies generated by his acculturated grasp of perceptual space; the perspectival and heirarchical appearance of cityscape and landscape. In Johns' case, the imposition was upon the energies of Abstract Expressionist brushwork." (Wayne Andersen, Katherine Porter, unpaginated.)

[12]Wayne Andersen articulated this; "Johns' symbolic system of numerical, alphabetical, or geographical topography ... had assigned elements to places -- as states on a map zones on a target, the positions of letters in the alphabet" and observed "In one's daily exercise of perceptual capacities seeing involves the recognition of objects-in-place. In ridding art imagery of objects, depicted or abstracted, the artist is left with the concept of place, or, in the utilization of the grid, a system of places with constant spatial proximity. The spatial quality lies not in the (illusory) distance behind or in front of the grid, but rather in the uniform distribution of contiguities throughout the plane; the space of the grid as the unified system of places." (Wayne Andersen, Katherine Porter, unpg.)

[13] Barbara Rose specifies that color "which normally has an emotive capacity, is assigned to the abstract role of establishing location. Johns' color, which is deliberately restricted, ... is denotative rather than connotative. It places rather than expresses. In this way, color is converted into pure abstraction, and color relationships appear to function as mathematical intervals with regard to each other." (Barbara Rose, "The graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part II", Artforum, 9, No.1, Sept. 1970, p.66.)

[14] Johns expressed this very characteristic attitude and method of operation in his much quoted remark to Leo Steinberg "Using the design of the American flag took care of a great deal for me because I didn't have to design it. So I went to similar things like targets -- things the mind already knows. That gave me room to work on other levels." (Leo Steinberg, Jasper Johns.)

SECTION ONE, Part Three: False Start and other works of 1959, and elaboration of formal issues in Johns' work after 1959

Two paintings of 1959 show the beginning of the break codified in False Start and Jubilee. These are Shade (fig. 20) and Device Circle (fig.21). Shade comes from the gray expanse type of painting, while Device Circle comes from the flag and target type; Shade specifically resembles Tennyson, and Device Circle, Target of 1958 (fig. 22).[1] Both of these paintings have objects attached to the canvas surface; Shade, much like Tennyson has a superimposed layer covering the greater part of its expanse, which is ,in its case, a window shade. It is painted in tones (shades) of black, white, and gray, which give evidence of being painted over brighter layers of colored underpainting. Device Circle has a stick attached by one of its ends to the center of a circle which its own rotation seems to have drawn. It is painted in red, yellow, blue, and white over newsprint. In both Shade and Device Circle, Johns has used much larger, freer brushwork than in their predecessors, so both paintings have surface patterns of distinct large splotches.[2] Johns' earlier two approaches have here been brought toward each other; in Shade the range of grays has been extended and more radically separated so that distinct black and white areas are clearly differentiated. In Device Circle, the sharp edges in which areas of contrasting color were contained in the target paintings and ,even the less strict

but still limiting grid compartments in Numbers in Color, have been dropped. Except for the large circle and its name below, there are no bounded shapes; across and through the circle, the name, and the field they occupy are scattered large multicolor freely brushed splotches which take on a proportionately large and active role in the total pictorial structure.[3]

As of Device Circle, Johns specifically differentiates the canvas and the attached objects into the receptive and active counterparts of a pair. Another statement of the same development would be to say that from Device Circle on, the objects attached to the surface of the canvas are specifically understood to be active objects, so the nature of the objects used for attachment changes. A little later, in a few works, an additional differentiation is made; in Painting with Two Balls, Thermometer, and others, objects are not attached to the surface but set into the picture plane by means of being inserted between the stretchers.

Structurally, Johns' paintings are, from 1959, divisible into three distinct types: (a) those which are a single skin, made of one conventionally stretched canvas, (b) those which are three or four slab-like sections attached abutting each other, each section of which is made of an independently stretched canvas, and (c) paintings of one or the other type with objects attached to their surfaces.

After False Start only a few canvases are neither composed of sections nor occupied by attached objects. These are the ones in which Johns explores specifically the problems of the illusion of deep space and its relationship to surface expanse. A number of paintings are of the type made up of sections, each of which is itself a separately strecthed canvas, without objects attached. In these, the issue of the third dimension centers around the nature of the painter's canvas as a slab-like object; these show a continuation of certain issues raised in such earlier works as Three Flags and White Flag. Most of Johns' works after False Start until 1964 involve attached objects (actors) in real space and a stretched canvas (a receptive surface) which is also an object in space, and continue to bring up other issues of space and of expanse. Thus Johns deals with three kinds of space which might be called deep space, object space, and action space. These are actually closely related to the traditional three with which painting has always been involved, each posing specific different problems: the first two are the types of problem involved in the depiction of the illusion of space in painting, distance, and volume. The third is the one involved in the relationship of artist and viewer to the painted work, the real space in which making and viewing take place. False Start provides a basic formal paradigm for many of these paintings, until 1962, when with Passage (fig.23) and related paintings

John's color usage, shapes, and compositional relationships shift again.

In 1960 and 1961, Johns used the number series 0 through 9 to elaborate the exploration of depth initiated in False Start, just as he had used it to elaborate the exploration of expanse in 1958-59.[4] In the festive 0 through 9 of 1960 (fig.24), Johns returns to the format he had used for the monochrome individual numbers of 1955, a large figure set within an upright rectangular field. Following the trend toward contrasting hues and broken outlines begun in Numbers in Color and incorporating the full-fledged False Start structure of overlapping and intermeshed splotches of fast brushwork, Johns achieves an image in which the large figure is distinctly present, but, paradoxically, figure and ground are inextricably intermixed, much more so than in Device Circle. Unlike False Start, 0 through 9 still employs outlines, but they do not form enclosures, and the placement, expanse, and shape of the color splotches work almost entirely independently of both the lines and the figure they would like to delineate. As in False Start, though, the splotches are relatively smaller, brighter, and faster, constellations of spots of each of the various colors may be seen related to each other across the surface in a visual system independent of and contradictory to any figure-ground relationship prevailing between the large numeral and its field.

The illusion of space among the color splotches is achieved in 0 through 9 in the same way as in False Start. In addition, an even more forceful illusion of even greater extension into depth is achieved by the presence in the center of the field of not one numeral but all of them, superimposed. Typically, Johns, punning visually on the spatial suggestion in conventional verbal terminology, has painted 0 through 9. The viewer's familiarity with the subject matter helps him identify the respective numerals by their shapes, each of which may be vaguely read as the visual memory turns its attention successively from one to the next. The actual visual configuration presented is one in which all are present simultaneously, a conflation of the whole linear sequence of numbers superimposed upon the same area of canvas. Conceptually, the placement of the numbers is according to the same configuration discernible in Johns' earlier number grid paintings, which is there extended in the second dimension but here in the third. That is, the numbers in 0 through 9 are, like the Numbers in Color, aligned along a straight line, but that line is oriented not horizontally nor vertically across the canvas perpendicular to its sides or bottom, but rather straight back, perpendicular to its surface plane. The actual appearance, of course, is not a clear illusion of deep space, but rather one of a surface clotted with overpainted colored brushmarks, giving the visual appearance of the presence of an indefinite,

contradictory, and generally shallow spaciousness, understood to represent ten layers of figurative material superimposed.[5]

Johns painted several large variations on this image in 1961. In the version in the Newhouse collection (fig. 25), the outlines of the numerals are more apparent than in 0 through 9 of 1960; this image involves a visually tangled web of linear marks which the intellect disentangles looking for each successive numeral. The idea of transparency is more important in these paintings than in False Start, including, as they do, not only shapes of the centrifugal type, which are the numerals themselves. The larger shapes are differentiated with outlines, but the expanse within each outline includes spots and other outlines of other figures. The whole mass of interlocked outline numerals appears as the figure against the ground of the field. In the version from 1961 in the Hirshhorn (fig.26), Johns has worked further with the idea of transparency by filling various areas with more or less thickly dispersed scatterings of dots which tend to read as filling shapes in the way a skin of color would, but letting sight through, like a veil. In the 0 through 9 in the Titleman collection (fig. 27), Johns has incorporated within the numerals not only the system of splotches from False Start but also the stenciled color names. Since the stenciled names tend to read as flat strips lying parallel to the picture surface,

the picture appears as a configuration of multiple flakes overlapping and interpenetrating among the superimposed figures.

While numerals and number sequences are used in explorations of pictorial depth after False Start, a new subject, the map, is chosen as a vehicle for further exploration of pictorial expanse, replacing the number grids used earlier. Maps by nature deal with issues of expanse, intended as they are to portray surface areas of land. Johns uses a political map of the continental USA, in which the natural boundaries of land areas such as seas are shown along with artificial subdivisions of those areas by man-made boundaries. As in the 0 through 9 paintings, Johns here combines a large figure having many various subdivisions with the system of freely brushed splotches and the system of stenciled names from False Start. Map of 1961 (fig.28) is a more constrained picture than False Start and a less complicated one than 0 through 9 of 1960. Although the colors are mixed within the state shapes, their outlines are kept relatively distinct, and the whole shape of the continent as a figure is, relatively, distinguishable from the ocean ground in which it appears. This return to relatively more distinctly bounded shapes as against the expansive ones of False Start causes the painted surface of the map to visually cohere, reading more like a two-dimensional agglomeration of abutting expanses, though still somewhat spatially inflected. The

brushwork and the resulting painterly spots are less free in the land areas, which already possess the network of subdivisions, and more free in the undivided expanses of the oceans, where color spots rather than states become the main subsidiary divisions. Only in Kansas and along the coasts do the brushstroke spots outdo the state boundaries. The map, like the flag, is known by the mind to be an object which is a continuous flat surface, and it therefore has a tendency to be seen as such despite the spatial illusion generated by the actual visual configuration. Johns' map reads as a surface of subsidiary planes semi-geometric in shape inflected in a relatively shallow space.

Because of the nature of the subject matter, the map must be considered in the context of the tradition of landscape painting, the type of painting which is, more than any other, involved with deep space. Johns encompasses more territory in this image than ever would be possible in traditional pictorial structures precisely by equating the expansiveness of the land with the expansiveness of the canvas, its two dimensionality, rather than with its illusory three dimensionality. Instead of orienting the ground plane to the pictorial surface as a rising incline up and back like a Renaissance floor, he orients it parallel with (and makes it identical to) the picture surface so that one's visual and conceptual approach to it are perpendicular.

Like False Start, Map is made up of primary colors and a few touches of secondaries. Like False Start, it also has a gray companion, the somber beautiful Map of 1962 (fig.29). In this work the underpainting clearly shows through the gray upon it, indicating the layers beyond those that meet the eye. The names of a number of the states (notably Colorado) are stenciled in deeply grayed primaries. The structure is similar to that of Map of 1961, though the brushstrokes are less agitated, and in one place just off Baja California, a rectangle which is not a state intervenes with its sharp edges in the otherwise non-geometric patches of the Pacific; it appears as a solid object-like figure in a spacious ground.

In Map of 1963 (fig.30), both colors (primaries and secondaries) and grays are used; in this painting the sides of the canvas which are still, as subject matter, associable with ocean, are given freer treatment, indicating less a geological distinction than a visual distinction deriving from the painter's responses to the sides in contrast to the center of a horizontal rectangle. The continental expanse of America, which runs from sea to shining sea as we are proudly taught, is represented in the form of a map image for the wall, which suggests breadth not only by its actual size and horizontal proportions, but also by virtue of its being given a visual structure suggestive of the eye's own perception confronted with an expanse: a clearly

focused middle flanked by more blurred, less detailed peripheries. The sides of Map of 1963 are full of very free brushwork, the strokes cutting inland from the west and southwest like oncoming storms. The northeast coast is clotted with slower but thicker strokes, and the Atlantic bears, as did the Pacific in Map of 1962, rectangular shapes of primary and other colors that depict no state or similarly figurative element. The varied treatment of the sides versus the center makes the maps very different from the number grids which also dealt with expanse: Johns has, in the maps, dealt with aspects that come into question with great lateral expanse, as he had in the 0 through 9 paintings dealth with great rather than shallow depth. In the map paintings, the awareness of the outlying oceans/sides flanking the continent/center is confirmed by Johns' inclusion of an eyecatching mark by which he finds the center, occuring in Map of 1963 almost exactly as it did in Map of 1961, in Kansas.

The map paintings represent the last usage in Johns' work of a thing from the external world as a model for an entire painting. All his succeeding works (to date) are original visual configurations synthesized of various elements both figural and abstract, both real and illusory.

The last of the paintings based on False Start from this period which is a single stretched canvas without attached objects is Arrive/Depart of 1963-64 (fig.31).

The greater part of its surface is occupied by the familiar, freely brushed spots of primaries, orange, and grays. At the bottom words have been stenciled and brushed over. In the lower middle, a packing label for fragile goods reading "glass" has been placed. Two elements appear in this painting which do not in False Start; the first is shapes of hard-edged and semi-hard-edged definition, rectangles of the three primary colors and white occupy the left side, the top, and the upper right. These, because of their more definite edges and appearance of greater opacity, cling to the surface, visually pushing back the freely brushed area as a ground just as the sharp rectangular flag pushed back the brushy orange field in Flag on Orange Field. Because there are several of these shapes, and because their colors and edges are different from each other, they seem to occupy among themselves different, though nonspecifiable, positions in illusory depth.

The second new element in Arrive/Depart is marks that are imprints of objects pressed against the surface of the canvas; a human hand, the bottom of a can, the bottom of an unfamiliar object which gives a very characteristic shape that offers no clue whatsoever as to what the object was, a piece of wire mesh, and a human skull.[6] These marks come from Johns' experience with objects attached to canvas surfaces, and are integrated here in a painting without attached objects, reminding one in an overt and specific

way that all painted marks in a picture are the result of the impact upon the canvas surface of a marker, a painter. This principle is one of great importance to Johns; his sensibility to it begins to emerge with the use of stencils to paint words as early as Tennyson, and grows ever greater and more specific. This is the issue of action space; spatially, the imprint of objects on the surface of the canvas indicates that not only the act of seeing on the part of the viewer proceeds from a point in space before the canvas toward its surface, but so also does the act of painting on the part of the painter. The implications of the early targets are here made specific and emphatic. This elaboration upon positions in space (and actually through space) before the canvas in Arrive/Depart is the counterpart to that in the illusory space beyond the canvas. The title itself, taken for its spatial/motion meanings, specifies that this is at least one aspect of what the painting is about.

False Start gave rise to a set of paintings which are made up of a number of separately stretched canvases, usually three, attached abutting each other; elaboration of the second dimension by the same means used in Three Flags and Canvas to elaborate the third. In Out the Window of 1959 (fig. 32), the canvas sections, now each felt to possess a thick slab-like physical presence, are covered with brush patches in color as is the surface of False Start.

Just legible across the separate sections, stenciled, painted out, and restenciled, are the names of the primary colors. Under and in the paint are bits of newsprint. Each panel seems to have a preponderance of the color whose name it bears, but all are thoroughly mixed. The strokes and the shapes they make sometimes run across, but often respect, the physically separate sections within the visually continuous field. The heightened emphasis on the object nature of the stretched canvases makes the work appear less spatial than False Start, despite the wry references in the title to the traditions of panel painting as a view into distant space.

A similar work of 1961, By the Sea (fig.33) is made up of four panels. The upper three bear separately the words red, yellow, and blue; the lower one bearing all three words superimposed. Though the concept of spatial extensiveness is implied as it is in the 0 through 9 paintings, the visible illusion of distance among the words is not strong. This painting is rendered with some color but its surface tends to appear more flat and opaque because of the predominance of areas of less energetically spread pearly gray. The division of the field into three horizontal sections (physically or by means of lines) labeled with color names continues to be used by Johns in Passage (fig.23), Land's End (fig. 34) and related paintings of 1962-63, where the brushwork becomes noticably different

from that of False Start. In these paintings the two visual systems (the three steady, geometric rectangles and the violent brushy paint areas) simultaneously occupy the same pictorial expanse and seem violently antagonistic to each other.

By the use of separately stretched canvases as elements to make up a single painting, Johns invents a new method for incorporating non-painted material in the painting, which is used in Painting with Two Balls (fig.35) and various other works. He had previously used the method of embedding material--collage, a stretched canvas, etc.--between the far (canvas) layer and the near (paint) layer, and he concurrently uses the method of attaching objects to the surface of the canvas, first done in Device Circle. Both structures are elaborations in the third dimension, variations in before/beyond position. Painting with Two Balls is made up of three panels which constitute a single field painted in a False Start manner. The balls are inserted between the stretchers of the uppermost two panels, whose margins are painted so as to clearly indicate that they are the pushed-apart sections of a continuous surface. The placement of the balls, unlike that of the device in Device Circle, is an elaboration in the second dimension. Similarly in Thermometer of 1959 (fig. 36) Johns inserts the non-painted object between vertical panels of a False Start type painting, indicating its inclusion in the same plane as the paint.

The structural positions occupied by the balls and the thermometer indicate that they are acted upon by the painting; the different structural position of the contemporaneous device and its many variants indicate that they act upon the paintings with which they are associated. Objects attached to the painted surface of the canvas had been included by Johns since Drawer and Canvas. Device Circle is the first of the numerous canvases in which, from 1959 on, objects attached are specifically understood as actors who move across and mark the surface.

In Device Circle the device, a stick, is attached so that it rotates over the surface of a False Start type canvas, making its mark, a scraped arc, in the paint. In the presence of such objects attached to the surface and clearly affecting the visible configurations on it, the False Start canvas tends to lose its illusory spatial nature and its sense of completeness as a painting, and appear as a brightly patterned continuous, tangible surface standing to receive marking touches. Painting with Ruler and Gray (fig. 37) superimposes a variant of the device against a Jubilee type canvas, and Good Time Charley (fig. 38) and No (fig. 39) employ grounds that reintroduce the old, more evenly toned and textured, gray surface used in Gray Rectangles and Tennyson. Good Time Charley incorporates not only the device (an 18 inch section of a yard stick) but also a cup, appearing to have been overturned by the device moving

across the surface. In No, the long object which swings before the canvas surface is a straightened-out coat hanger wire with a sculpt metal cut-out work "no" at its end. In addition to this attached object, the surface of No bears in its upper part the imprint of the same object whose mark is left in Arrive/Depart.

In Fool's House of 1962 (fig. 40) a broom is attached to swing like the device, leaving an arc of brushed marks on the surface. Fool's House also has a cup, towel, and stretcher, all labeled, at its edge. In Memory of My Feelings - Frank O'Hara, 1961, (fig. 41), is a wide rectangle made up of two panels attached side by side. The right half is a Jubilee type canvas; the words "dead man" stenciled in and then painted out so they may only be read by textural differentiation among the shades of gray. The two canvases are attached by hinges, indicating that the painting is capable of closing or being closed, folding inside between its layers the painted and other material, and presenting as an outward front only its back. This is an elaboration of Johns' much earlier Canvas, which is also echoed in the little stretcher at the bottom of Fool's House.

Fool's House is an extremely complex painting in its spatial implications, which are themselves full of greater implications as to the nature of painting. The panel of Fool's House is a single canvas field, painted with large passages of white to dark blue-gray brushwork, as spacious

in their appearance as a Constable sky. The illusion in their modulations is broken by the intervention of the arc of scrapes made by the swing of the broom and by the self-evident physicality of the surface as the bearer of the broom and other objects. The stretcher appears to show the viewer the back of a painting as part of the larger painting's image, the two canvas faces closed together, accessible only to each other, as in the earlier Canvas. The towel, like the applied cloth in the earlier Tennyson and Disappearance II (fig.42) is folded into layers, a single cloth surface which hides its expanse and also increases its three-dimensional presence by doubling inward.

Across the upper part of the canvas the words "FOOL'S HOUSE" are imprinted by the familiar stencils, but not in the conventional order. To the right of the broom, letters read "FOOL'S HO", left to right, running to the edge of the field. To the left of the broom, beginning at the left-most edge of the canvas, letters read partial "O, USE". The implication is that the right margin of the canvas is continuous with the left one, that the canvas as a whole is a flat object in two dimensions or a cylindrical one in three.[7] This understanding had been hinted at in False Start, in which the side borders, unlike the lower border, have their splotches cut midway through, not because they are overlapped by the picture frame but rather because they are wrapped back and around the stretchers, which in

fact they physically are. It had also been indicated, less visually and more conceptually, in the earlier alphabet and number grids such as White Numbers where the right and left left numbers in each row, and thus the side strips are the same, this being true not only in the horizontal dimension but also the vertical. In such a configuration Johns touches on one of the profound philosophical dilemmas of physical existence, the contradictory nature of an object that can be two-dimensional and three-dimensional at the same time. He also touches on one of the most mundane and well known facts of a painter's experience, which reflects, in another way, the same paradox; every canvas, no matter how spacious and convincing a scene is painted on it, is really a surface wrapped around and behind its stretcher frame.

In Johns' work between 1955 and 1964, False Start and Jubilee, along with their companion Device Circle, represent a major turning point and a bridge. They pose new formal issues as well as new elaborations on older ones, and provide a basis for the further exploration of them.

Notes; False Start and other works of 1959, elaboration of formal issues in work after 1959

[1] "The genesis of this device circle motif as a modified counterpart to Johns' earlier targets should be noted, at least in passing." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969, p. 25.) Solomon had made this connection in 1964. (Alan Solomon, "Jasper Johns", in Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, The Jewish Museum, 1964.)

[2] Rosalind Krauss says of Shade "A painting whose field is dominated by a pulled down window blind becomes a reference to the traditional analogy between the picture frame and a window frame, opening up to a view of illusionist space. Johns' shade, closed against the possibilities of three-dimensional space, is ironically covered over with a painterly evocation of the very space the work is at pains to deny". (Rosalind Krauss, "Jasper Johns", The Lungano Review, 1/2, No.2 (1965), 88-89.)

Evidently assuming that the true goal of painting should be, and is here, the purging of illusory space (despite Johns' comments to the contrary) Krauss sees the spatial illusion produced by this new 1959 combination of high-contrast tones with centrifugal shapes something he is "at pains to deny". It seems more likely that Johns was at pains to produce the spatial illusion, as it represents a conspicuous move in that direction from his earlier, flatter gray field works. Clearly his intention in Shade was to structure the paradox itself, to produce a deep space illusion with visual means while emphasizing planarity with physical means; and to draw attention to it by the window/picture imagery, itself paradoxical -- the canvas is a window (spatial), but it is a closed window (a flat plane). As Max Kozloff remarks of this work, "Encouraged to penetrate behind the plane, the eye is shown that the plane is merely physical, since it is pasted onto another plane. Illusionism is devalued, and abstraction is contradicted, by a device which reveals the inevitable artificiality of pictorial depth." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p.21.)

[3] Johns has commented on both the new role of color and the new type of shape which emerged in 1959 with False Start and related works, and on the new relationship of color to shape, relating that two years earlier he had become aware of "certain limitations in my work, and I had the need to overcome those, to break with certain habits I had formed, certain procedures I had used. The flags and targets have colors positioned in a predetermined way. I wanted to find a way to apply color so that the color would be determined by some other method." And also "In

my earlier work the gestures have to conform to the boundaries. That's the only thing they have to do, stay within the lines. By the paintings of this time (1959), there was an attempt to find a way that gestures would make up an image; the gestures would determine the boundaries". (Quoted by Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, Abrams and Whitney Museum, 1977, pp.39, 41.)

[4] Barbara Rose says"Johns made the superimposed 0 through 9 (lithograph) ... in 1960. In it he appeared to solve certain problems created in Jubilee and False Start executed in the new style, technique, and medium." She discusses only the problems of transparency and pictorial revision, solved, respectively, by the use of outlined shapes and new media. (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part I", Artforum, 8, No.7, Mar.1970, p.44.)

[5] Richard Field understands the spatial aspect of the lithograph 0 through 9 of 1960, which is a black litho crayon drawing closely following the charcoal drawing of 1960, in this way: "The suggestion of illusion in 0 through 9, which seems to struggle forth from the smudges that surround and weight the upper and lower curved surfaces,is finally denied. The sculptural qualities of the numbers are felt as evidence of the artist's (will to) round out, unify, and ultimately flatten the matrix of ten numerals. Each numeral may be lifted out and released back into the space created by an act of attention on the part of the observer, that is, through his act of concentration rather than through the artist's suggestion of illusion."

The dependence of the spatial effect upon "an act of attention on the part of the observer" was used by Johns earlier in False Start, as noted, where whichever consellation of color spots seems foremost depends partly upon which color the viewer is looking for. The artist himself has of course, suggested space, but has done so in ways that contradict each other, leaving the selective attention of the viewer to swing the balance psychologically.

Field continues "the title of the print... means what it implies, that each number is meant to be seen through all of the others". In his catalogue entry for the print, he mentions that the related charcoal drawing "was executed in mid-stream in order to clarify the structure of a painting then in progress", that is, to sound out a basic concept which is very important to John's elaboration of pictorial space, particularly the issue of outlines which is in the painting enormously complicated by the counter system of colored brush splotches. (Richard Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970, New York, Praeger and Philadelphia Muse., 1970, unpaginated.)

[6] Michael Crichton identifies the strange imprint as that of a cast of Marcel Duchamp's Feuille de Vigne Femelle. (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p.54.)

[7] Michael Crichton observes this in Fool's House, and points out that Johns uses it again later in the three panel work Voice 2 of 1971: "In Fool's House the title is split to suggest a curved space... Johns did not actually make this space, he merely provides the clues to suggest another space... Voice 2 is also intended to represent a curved space, that is why the panels can be arranged in several different orders". (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p.58.)

SECTION TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JOHNS' FORMAL STRUCTURE.

Part One: Aspects of Johns' False Start related to Jackson Pollock and Abstract Expressionism

The structure of pictorial space used by Johns in False Start resembles that developed by Jackson Pollock in his great drip paintings of 1947-50. The elaboration of this structure of illusory space is Pollock's most significant pictorial innovation. This, along with the technique of paint application he developed to produce the drip paintings, and the attitudes and emotions which led to their creation, constitute Pollock's impressive contribution to modern history. The originality and importance of Pollock's inventions were indicated by Willem DeKooning when he said, speaking for Abstract Expressionism as a movement, "Jackson broke the ice."

Pollock's Lucifer of 1947 (fig. 43) may be taken as an example of this type of painting fully developed. The organization of Lucifer is that of a field having visual elements of relatively equal size relatively evenly dispersed throughout. Pollock has dripped and slung various paints, making characteristic wiry linear marks which curl, crisscross, and puddle in webs across the painting surface. Each web reads as a loose veil which both covers expanse and lets sight through. All the veils together constitute an intricate lace of marks having the illusion of vary great extension into space: the linearity and curved shape

of Pollock's marks suggest that their traversal is not merely across the expanse of the canvas plane, but extends forward and backward; the physical overpainting of webs of different colors or color combinations gives the illusion that several webbed layers hang one beyond the other in deep space. In Lucifer, green and colors, black, and blue-gray and white stand in basic foreground, middle ground and background positions: they also appear to intertwine somewhat with one another. Johns constellations of colors in False Start are basically equivalent to Pollock's webs in Lucifer, visually constituting planes aligned generally parallel to the picture plane, spatially differentiated from that plane and from each other.

The nature of the structure of the space in Pollock's work is distinctly non-perspectival. There is nothing like a vanishing point, thus no funneling of the space, and no single or more correct viewing point. A viewer's line of sight in perceiving the nearer and further webs pierces the pictorial space perpendicularly at every point on the canvas surface. The importance of this to Pollock is indicated by the fact that much of his formal exploration in paintings before Lucifer is toward the clarification and refinement of this structure, and also by the fact that other aspects of Lucifer and related paintings emphasize and intensify its effect.

The illusion of space in Lucifer is very great; the painting suggests a vast deep galaxy. The magnitude of the space is set against its other most important characteristic: its specific extent cannot be accurately read and therefore intellectually grasped. Unlike pictures constructed after Renaissance perspectival methods which convince the viewer of their depth precisely because its extent is finite and can be clearly observed and measured, Pollock's painting is immeasurable. Lucifer carries an enormous amount of visual data in a system which is not easy to order conceptually, is not familiar in art viewing experience in the western tradition, and does not refer by its subject matter to the real world of objects in actual space. It therefore suggests infinity.

Within the basically all-over treatment of Lucifer, a number of subtle hierarchies may be discerned. The spatial positions of the various color webs has been noted. The composition in two dimensions is based on the long horizontal axis of the canvas; the web of green marks is placed in a centered position in the field, and generally does not expand as far toward the edges of that field as the black web on which it lies.[1]

The basic spatial structure of False Start is the same as that of Lucifer, but the spatial illusion in Pollock's work is greater than that in Johns' owing to several factors. Large dimensions are characteristic of Pollock's

drip paintings, as are horizontal rectangular fields. Lucifer is a large painting, larger than False Start, but the details in which it is painted are comparatively very small, smaller than those of False Start. Large size per se adds to the spatial effect of Lucifer: the actual size of the canvas is greater than human-size scale, conveying a strong feeling of expansiveness, the two dimensional counterpart to the extensiveness of the illusory space. The viewer, as has been often observed, is surrounded by the picture, "engulfed". The viewer has been said to be "in" the picture; a terminology that refers to a position in three dimensional space used to describe an experience which is actually one of being simply smaller than an object viewed.

Because Pollock's paintings such as Lucifer are large and wide, in order for the eye to receive a full view of the whole painting, the viewer must position himself some distance away from it. Great patterns such as the green web in Lucifer may only be seen as complete gestalten in relation to the whole field from this distance. However, Pollock's combination of extra small detail with the extra large field makes that viewing distance alone insufficient. The extraordinarily beautiful, intricate and fascinating interplay of lines, the small marks, and the rich subtle colors and surface textures of the various paints cannot be seen well unless the viewer stands very close to the canvas. Standing close by the painting affects the viewer's perception

of the pictorial space. In general the viewer feels "engulfed" in the canvas. Looking directly at the area of the canvas surface directly before him, the viewer peers into deep space among the webs; if he turns his head, however, to look at any area of the canvas except that directly before him, he does not receive a view of the painted material that gives the illusion of space. The raking view of the surface minimizes the viewer's perception of illusory space and heightens his awareness of the canvas as a flat surface with paint texture upon it, the more so the more acute the angle of view. Thus from close by, the space in Pollock's painting seems very deep in the center of the area commanded by the viewer's eyes but shallowing and flattening at its periphery. Pollock forces the viewer to perceive both contradictory aspects of the painted canvas, its illusory spaciousness and its actual flatness, as dichotomous elements of the same experience. The two are, of course, present in all painting since the ancient Greek, but Pollock focuses on this paradox around 1947-50 as a major concern in paintings of extraordinary beauty, originality, and grandeur.

The very close viewing distance, like the further one, seems inadequate, causing the viewer who has come up to appreciate the detail to step back again. Thus an important effect Pollock has achieved by means of combining the large field with the small detail is to keep the viewer himself moving.

Johns was clearly concerned, in False Start, with creating a visual configuration that would simultaneously emphasize the actual two and illusory three dimensionality of the painting in a paradox of mutual support. It was not until the map paintings that Johns dealt with the effects of great actual size, choosing as Pollock had large canvases of greater horizontal than vertical expanse.[2] Johns' handling of the greater and smaller brush marks, and the more precise and less precise detail in Map of 1963 within the context of the horizontal field and in the presence of a mark specifically marking and locating visual center of that field (in Oklahoma) show the picture to be a response to the visual effects of interest to Pollock, those concerned with focusing on a spot and with central and peripheral vision. Johns' early choice of the target as subject matter hints at a sensitivity to issues of the point at which the direct line of sight meets the canvas and the area about this point where their lines of sight, like oblique shots, would hit.

Pollock's combination of elements requiring different viewing distances, and the resulting movement of the viewer, were used by Johns very early in his work in a slightly modified form. Johns' mechanism does not depend so much on smallness of detail in the context of largeness of field as much as upon visibility of detail in the context of the obliterative character of the paint, and upon the relative

psychological command of the different visible images. When one sees Flag of 1955, the image calls upon him to stand so that he can visually grasp the canvas as a whole, in order to see it as an American flag. Doing so, he notices that there are the requisite red, white, and blue areas, but that they are full of visual incident of an unexpected and particularly intriguing kind, introduced by means of bits of newspaper and other material over which red, white, and blue encaustic is laid. The viewer then comes very close to the picture surface to attempt to see what lies beyond the paint, and then to read its message. Unlike Pollock's viewer, Johns' can never get close enough, because Johns puts his newsprint detail into a space into which the viewer's sight can never more than imperfectly penetrate, beyond the obscuring layer of paint. Johns makes Pollock's formal spatial device also a device to carry other, psychological, content. Pollock manipulates the position of the viewer by control of the before/beyond physical placement of layers of material and their transparency/opacity, that is, by elements of the third dimension.[3]

Though Pollock's classic drip paintings employ the visual more than the tactile and emphasize the illusory more than the actual third dimension, Pollock had himself experimented with the embedding of other things in the viscous substance of the paint and the building up of layers to do so. Full Fathom Five of 1947 includes nails, tacks,

buttons, keys, coins, cigarettes, matches, and other such small objects in a surface that is physically thick and heavily textured while visually deep. The title, functioning like many of Johns' titles, suggests simultaneously depth and its measure and the shapeless and infinite sea. It also brings to mind Shakespeare's passage which describes the transformation of objects and substances to others by the agent of sea change, and the more disturbing transformation of life to death.

Pollock's Guardians of the Secret of 1943 apparently depict two figures flanking a panel which bears marks indefinite in their imagery and obscure in their meaning. The subject matter of this painting might be said to be that which several of Johns' paintings actually are, a tablet marked with unknowable, inaccessible, undecipherable, but meaningful signs. Johns' encaustic-bound Book of 1957 (fig. 44) and Canvas; his many works in which newsprint cryptically shows through paint; his number and alphabet grids in which the repetition of well known sequences takes on an evocative incantatory quality; and his veiled, self-concealing Tennyson, Disappearance, and Shade all derive some of their power from the suggestion of the unattainable, important secrets carried on a man-marked tablet.

Though its image is discernible, Guardians of the Secret does not clearly depict a scene; Pollock has chosen a formal treatment for figures, tablet, animal, and whatever

else may figure in the melange, which is itself secretive. Most of Pollock's works between 1942 and 1945 employ a style that simultaneously reveals and conceals its subject matter, as Johns later does. In Pollock's Guardians of the Secret the viewer discerns the figures but cannot specify their actions or their character, while Pollock indicates by the accompanying title that he is dealing with potent arcane knowledge either mythic or personal. In such paintings Pollock frequently used numbers and letters or marks which resemble them, emphasizing that the painter's canvas is in fact a tablet surface which bears inscriptions, an aspect much more thoroughly exploited by Johns. Though Johns' spirit and tone are vastly different from Pollock's in the early 1940's paintings, Johns' works are frequently similarly cryptic, for apparently, equally personal reasons.[4]

For all their similarity of spatial structure, False Start and Lucifer show a great difference in the actual illusion of space they respectively convey. The marks in False Start show the effort of the hand pushing the brush over the surface of the canvas, they are more expansive and flatter than Pollock's. The appearance of these marks emphasizes the surface and its tactile nature; each splotch overlaps or collides with the pigment occupying an adjacent area of surface. Pollock's marks are thin wiry lines formed when strings of liquid paint fell freely through the air to the surface of the canvas; they record the track of Pollock's

moving hand but they have no tactile quality. Pollock's hand moved freely through space, and the appearance of the resulting marks is one of airy spaciousness and the traversal of great depth. Johns strokes cross back over one another and cluster into star-shaped bursts; Pollock's "strokes" unfurl in long trails that do not cluster. If a track returns to loop over itself, that crossing tends to make space; Johns' recrossing strokes tend to make surface. In all, because of the nature of the marks, False Start is much more involved with the expansive character of the canvas; the splotches serving to locate and to mark places, while the marks in Lucifer swing through space without occupying it. They do not claim area by crisscrossing to form centrifugal shapes, nor by circling to outline centripital ones. In Johns' work the painted marks cause one to look at the surface, no matter how many spatial differentiations the surface has; in Pollock's, one looks through. Pollock chose his drip technique in order to achieve that freedom of line, and that deep spatial effect without emphasizing the surface. However, both before the drip paintings and after them, Pollock painted with brushes to achieve something of the same effect as Johns in False Start. In Sounds in the Grass - Shimmering Substance of 1946 brushstrokes are interwoven in a fabric of overlapping curves to form an open latticework of spatial illusion and also suggest the direct tactility of the movement of the

hand, brush, and paint across the surface. Pollock returned again to this manner in 1955 with Scent; the thick clusters of small curved strokes with their rich texture give a strong sense of tactility to its surface.

A major difference between Pollock's Lucifer and Johns' False Start lies in the way the material within the field is related to the field itself. As a horizontal rectangle, Lucifer has a long horizontal axis, which is slightly reinforced by the green marks in the center of the field. However, all edges of the canvas in both the horizontal and the vertical directions are treated in the same way. Johns in False Start has chosen a rectangle with a predominant vertical axis; he has reinforced this orientation by the arrangement of his stenciled color names, thus tending to distinguish the vertical bounds as a pair from the horizontal bounds. He has very specifically distinguished the lower edge with the strip of reserved canvas; it is a distinct bottom. Pollock's treatment of all the edges as similar suggests expansiveness: the painting, though felt as composed within its rectangle, is also felt to be an excerpt from a potentially endless continuum; the great spaciousness in the painting supports this. Johns' painting with its distinct bottom is an upright object with, appropriately, a comparatively greater emphasis on its surface. The orientation and the treatment of the lower boundary in False Start reflect the artist's position with regard to it, along with his physical nature as a

human being, standing upright, feeling gravity under him, facing the canvas straight across, painting on it. Like the viewer described earlier, the painter of False Start is understood to inhabit the space before the canvas and relate to it in a perpendicular direction, straight across, touching the surface with his brush. Pollock's painting also reflects the artist's physical position in relation to it, and also his physical nature as a human being, but in his case the whole complex, painter and canvas, was differently oriented in space, for Pollock painted his canvas on the floor. The essential factor in Pollock's drip technique, by means of which he achieved the line which looks as if it darts and wheels freely through mid-air, is gravity. The band at the bottom of False Start was left bare by the painter's hand but has been marked with straight vertical streaks by the paint flowing down across it, following gravity toward the floor. Since the canvas for Lucifer was on the floor, the shape of the lines made by paint pulled down by gravity is not down the canvas but down through mid-air to the canvas. Lucifer has been given top/bottom right/left borders secondarily, after the painting process, by acclamation; in the making its top was the canvas plane, and the edges of that plane were the more equal east/west north/south. Pollock's working contact with the canvas is perpendicular, but he is not straight across from his canvas, but on top of it, the plane he

stands on identical with the plane on which he paints. The whole physical concept of the painting is thus different; Pollock is at once "above" his work--a godlike position--and "in" it, engulfed by it, a highly subjective position. Pollock's painting is large and expansive as is the sensibility which manifests itself in the painter's physical relationship to it; it is like land.

It is a characteristic of Pollock's line in such pictures as Lucifer that it has been freed almost entirely from shape. Only when the line itself widens does a shape come into being; and such shapes retain so linear a character as to remain different in their nature from traditional painter's shapes. Johns used lines in combination with the expansive shapes typical of False Start in 0 through 9 of 1960, achieving in some areas a complex, spacious webwork suggestive of Pollock's. Johns, however, although he has everywhere contradicted boundaries and allowed lines to flow freely, distinct in themselves, still achieves a denser configuration which suggests space by accumulated conjunction of visual incident rather than by the free trajectory of line through open space.

Pollock, in the crisis period which followed his great cycle of abstract drip paintings, responded to an urge to organize his surfaces more nearly in the manner of Johns' 0 through 9. In Portrait and a Dream of 1953 Pollock painted a head in black drip work, with shapes

worked into it in color. In the structure of this portrait, Pollock reverts back to more traditional relationships between line and shape and the concepts of drawing and painting. More so than does Johns in 0 through 9, Pollock uses bounded shapes, the boundaries even drawn in separately first and then filled with color. The general figure-ground distinction is also more traditional and simpler than Johns'; Pollock has let the bare canvas serve as the universal neutral ground, and confined his painted areas to the figure, with the exception of one spot in the field above the head.

Portrait and a Dream points up Pollock's later interest in color and value; the work includes two sections, one painted in black and white and one in color. Pollock here conceptually and formally separates the two, as Johns often does, Pollock additionally separating them structurally, allowing the black to function as drawing and shading while color, introduced over a black drawing, functions as secondary differentiation of the expanses already enclosed. Several of Pollock's large drip paintings are essentially tonal; in 1951 Pollock began a series of semi-figurative works using a modified drip technique with black enamel. These paintings are, in conception and execution, more like traditional drawing than painting, being dark line work on light ground, and are unlike Johns' Jubilee in every respect but their omission of hue.

Johns' understanding of the formal structure of Pollock's work as reflected in his own is profound and accurate. His assimilation of Pollock's innovations is thorough, and his application of them is entirely according to his own original tastes and needs. Johns' interest in certain formal issues related to those engaged by Pollock dates to Johns' earliest work; his strong specific focus on Pollock appears in 1959, the year of False Start and Jubilee.

This is also the year of Device Circle, a work that not only alludes to Pollock through its False Start type field but also with the device attached to its surface, as discussed below. Pollock was the most popularly notorious of the Abstract Expressionists, and his work no doubt the most difficult to assimilate in any but its superficial aspects. Johns would have constantly been exposed to Pollock's work from any number of sources; it is significant that Jackson Pollock is the painter whose work was of great interest to Johns' close friend, Frank O'Hara, whose monograph on Pollock was published in 1959.

Johns was not only immersed in the ambiance of Abstract Expressionism and its aftermath, the second generation of the school. Not only does his painterly form reflect full knowledge of these but so also do many specific references of other kinds. Rothko, Still, and various others besides Pollock named their paintings by numbers or letters; Johns' use of numerals as subject matter mocks this affectation

and expands upon the idea it generates. Johns titles a painting Zone in 1962; Philip Guston had done so in 1954. Johns titles his By the Sea in 1961 as Motherwell is working on his Beside the Sea series. Again in 1973-74, Johns titles a painting Scent, as Pollock had done in 1955.

Notes; Aspects of Johns' False Start related to Jackson Pollock and Abstract Expressionism

[1] Max Kozloff associates Johns' Gray Alphabets with Pollock's drip paintings on the grounds of its being an evenly distributed, all over dispersal of visual incident, then contrasts the two; "Johns' space formulates itself unpredictably in every one of the hundreds of rectangles composing the facade, rather than, as in Pollock, with a homogeneous infinity extending beyond the frontal skeins". He does not take into account the space in Johns' other works here, nor does he examine the shape of the spatial structure in Johns' or Pollock's work. (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969, p.18.)

[2] Very interesting in this connection is Michael Crichton's observation that "paint drips", so important a feature in Pollock's work, "are a prominent feature in the Map (1961); they are much more striking than in previous paintings..." (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, Abrams and Whitney Museum, 1977, p.45-46.)

[3] Johns spoke specifically of intentionally constructing the viewing space of Tango and Target with Plaster Casts in this way, using different means: "I wanted to suggest a physical relationship to the pictures that was active. In the targets, one could stand back or one might go very close and lift the lids or shut them. In Tango, to wind the key and hear the sound, you had to stand relatively close to the painting, too close to see the outside shape of the picture." (Quoted by Michael Crichton, in Jasper Johns, p.30.)

[4] Richard Field remarks on the evocative character of the alphabet grid pictures "we know the letters so well... and yet we are forced to wonder whether we understand the work at all; thus we come to accept the image as an ancient coded inscription, still to be deciphered, but rewarding as a witness of past accomplishments..."

Field also relates the alphabet grids formally to Abstract Expressionism and earlier art movements: "Articulation of a large surface through small regular accents also harks back to Pointillism and Cubism. It is a Cubism that refuses to break from the surface despite every device working to the contrary. And like both Cubism and Abstract Expressionism, there is a ground tone against which the other strokes and tonalities play." His discussion is general, elaborating no further on the relation of Johns' to Cubist space. (Richard Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970, New York, Praeger and Philadelphia Muse., 1970, unpaginated.)

SECTION TWO, Part Two: Aspects of Johns' False Start Related to Mondrian and Neo-Plasticism

False Start is a painting about painting. In it, Johns turns his attention, in a manner more specific and more self-conscious than is evident in the paintings before 1959, to the formal structure of painting as such. Johns' exploration of the illusory third dimension in False Start and Jubilee rises specifically out of interest in questions concerning color and tone, centrifugal and centripital shape, and the interplay between color and tonal systems and shape systems.

Johns' programmatic separation of hues from tones and use of primary and secondary hues is a major element of form and of content in False Start and Jubilee, and continues to be included both tacitly and explicitly in many works between 1959 and 1964.[1] The specific colors chosen, the self-limiting tenor of Johns' choice, and the intellectualism evident in the programmatic application of a preconceived system all point to the work and the attitudes of Piet Mondrian, and indicate Johns' painterly concerns of that great pioneer of early abstraction.

Like Johns' relationship to the work of Pollock, Johns' relationship to the work of Mondrian is that of one who is externally well-informed and internally deeply involved in the same issues for reasons of his own painterly predispositions. Mondrian, like Pollock, is a figure of such

magnitude that his work would be available to a successor through two channels and in two ways. First, directly; anyone interested in Mondrian finds his work accessible for thorough first-hand observation--and second, indirectly; Mondrian's influence widely pervades the abstract art and and more widely pervades the art thinking of the twentieth century.

In his Neo-Plastic works by which he is best known, which may be exemplified by Tableau I of 1921 (fig. 45) Mondrian confined his colors to red, yellow, blue, black, and white as part of a move toward the radical reduction of painting to its pure essential means which was required by the formal theories he derived from his philosophical and ethical principles. In False Start and Jubilee, Johns reduces his visible color elements to the primary and secondary colors and tones, although the actual number of colors visibly distinguishable by the eye is much greater. The specifically ideational nature of the particular set Johns has chosen is emphasized by his inclusion of color names in these paintings: he enumerates in word form all the colors present, a thing he is able to do because he has chosen the colors which are specific, named, and thus namable entities.

In Out the Window, a False Start type painting, Johns takes another step in the exploration of issues raised by Mondrian. Here the canvas field is divided (by the physical

edges of separate juxtaposed canvas sections) into three rectangles labled red, yellow, and blue. The Neo-plastic works such as Tableau I which are most exemplary of Mondrian's mature work may be described as paintings in which the canvas field is divided by black horizontal and vertical lines into rectangles of red, yellow, blue and white; the very idea of such a painting is itself associated with Mondrian's name. In works such as Tableau I, this is the only pictorial system present; in Johns' work it is not. To describe Out the Window as a field divided into red, yellow, and blue rectangles is to describe it in terms of the information given by only one of its systems, the one based on the entirely ideational (in which the identities of color areas are established by means of printed color names) and on the real, physical, entirely non-illusory (the horizontals that delineate the rectangles, which are not drawn lines but actual physical edges of the canvas stretchers).

The other, more assertive pictorial system in Out the Window is that which is purely visual in nature; the field is subdivided into shapes which are not rectangles but irregular brushy splotches colored primarily red, yellow, blue, and white, each distributed throughout the field. Here, the theoretical, idea-bearing visual elements characteristic of Mondrian's Neo-plasticism are present simultaneously with the sensual, emotion-bearing elements characteristic of Abstract Expressionism; though mutually contradictory in both nature and appearance, neither system

is subordinate to the other. Johns has achieved this complex situation by means of a spatial structure similar to that of False Start, in conjunction with his incorporation of both painterly and written information. By structuring pictorial material as a series of parallel layers before and beyond in space, he is able to allow two different systems to occupy the same expanse at the same time.

The set of works painted in 1962 and 1963, Out the Window Number 2 (fig. 46), Passage, Land's End, and Periscope (fig.47) are similar in their dichotomous nature to Out the Window, their relation to it made explicit by the reuse of the name for one of the set. In these paintings, Johns has intensified the effect of the dichotomy by reducing his red, yellow, and blue rectangle system to a minimal but pervasive presence and intensifying his system of free painterly marks so that they become wildly powerful, intensely expressionistic, and obviously personal. The formal contrast evident in False Start between centripetal, bounded shapes and centrifugal, expansive, soft ones is here made extreme, and the association of ideational and sensual, intellectual and emotional with the respective elements is made more definite.

Johns' Out the Window refers not only to Mondrian's color system but to his use of a geometric abstract system of divisions of the field; Mondrian's exclusive use of rectangular shapes derived from horizontal and vertical

straight lines was derived, like his exclusive use of primary hues and tones, from the highly rationalized application of his ethical philosophy. Johns' first conspicuous use of pure geometric abstraction had been in his flag paintings of 1955, in which the canvas rectangle is subdivided into a system of regular stripes and a rectangle. (In Flag over White, two rectangles. In White Flag, the use of three actually separate stretched canvases to make up the whole field allows for the incorporation of an additional rectangular subdivision via physical means, as in the Gray Rectangles and the later Out the Window.) Though the brushwork as such in the flag paintings is much less assertive than in the later False Start and related paintings, and the edges of the geometric shapes more visually emphatic and unviolated than in later works such as Out the Window Number 2, it was already recognized that Johns' brushwork within the strict subdivisions of the flag was not flat but rich with subtle, brushy variations indicating sensuous delight in painting, and also full of evocative bits of collage.[2] Thus even in the flag paintings, Johns had begun to work with dichotomous elements of strictly regulated, centripetal shape and freer centrifugal shape. As geometric abstract canvases in the tradition of Mondrian, Flag and Flag above White evidence the assymetrically balanced composition, the emphasis on the canvas as a continuous plane surface without traditional spatial illusion but with a

dynamic in the color relationships such that certain areas are more and less assertive. Like Mondrian, Johns controls the spatial effect set up by the color dynamics by placing certain large rectangles so that some of their boundaries coincide with the actual edges of the whole field.[3] The paintings as a whole play primarily on their two dimensionality, the field articulated as an exciting visual complex of above/below and right/left relationships. Like Mondrian's Tableau I, Johns' flags employ (except for the stars) strictly horizontal and vertical elements, many of them linear, which carry the suggestion of continuity beyond the edges of the rectangle itself.[4]

In Tableau I, Mondrian locks all his pictorial material into the hard-edged gridwork of black lines, and by supressing almost all variations of surface within each painted rectangle, emphasizes the presence of the continuous skin of paint tightly occupying the whole expanse. The spatial illusion in Mondrian's work is thus not one which involves any vestige of linear perspective. He also allows no blurring of edges which might give a softness felt as spatial, a vestige of "atmospheric" perspective. Within the limited vocabulary of formal elements and traits Mondrian allows himself, the only illusion of space derives from the effect of the assertiveness of color and size of the respective rectangles. Spatially, Tableau I is a finely tuned dichotomy; the gridwork of black lines which continues

vertically and horizontally across the canvas seem to lock the red rectangle to the surface, while simultaneously its color and size make it seem to rise forward of the neighboring painted material. The structure of the slight illusion of space achieved by Mondrian is scrupulously in keeping with the two dimensional structure of his work; all spatial differentiations appear as forward or backward in perpendicular relationship to the canvas plane.

Johns'painted rectangles are, like Mondrian's inclined to be seen as slightly spatially distinct, but this illusion is countered (or counfounded, in Flag above White) by the function of the recognizability of the image as one which represents an object which is actually flat, leading the viewer to fail to observe, or refuse to accept, the Neoplastic dynamics of the composition. Johns introduces in Flag an element alien to Mondrian, the newspaper collage under the skin of paint. The presence of another complete, identifiably different layer beyond the paint surface creates a strong extension into space entirely independent of that set up by the painted shapes. The structure of this spatial relationship however, is perfectly in keeping with Mondrian's, its orientation parallel to the picture plane and its position in space based on a perpendicular, as observed earlier.

Johns' various number and alphabet grids of 1956-59 follow Mondrian's principle of a matrix of verticals and horizontals used as a means to order and control the entire

expanse of the canvas field. Unlike Mondrian's mature Neo-plastic work and Johns' own flags, these are symmetrical grids rather than assymetrical complexes of horizontals and verticals. This is one of the compositional solutions Mondrian used earlier on, which in his work represents an event in the developmental process which resulted in his later mature work.

In Composition: Chequerboard in Dark Colors of 1919 the field is evenly divided by a 16 x 16 grid of rectangles whose horizontal is slightly greater than their vertical dimension. The field rectangle is of the same proportions as the component rectangles in it. This is the same principle and system used by Johns in his 11 x 11 number grids and 27 x 27 alphabet grids, the only difference being Johns' choice of a vertical rather than a horizontal rectangle. Mondrian painted his chequerboard composition in three colors besides the dark grey grid lines; blue, red, and red orange, irregularly distributed. Each grid compartment is painted only one color, but in many instances adjacent compartments are the same color. The strict, regular, grid system, therefore, runs universally throughout the rectangle, while the color system, also running throughout, provides an assymetrical counterpart, each set of color spots reading as an irregular constellation across the canvas, much as the color spots in Johns' False Start. In his number and alphabet paintings, Johns either intersperses

all the colors thoroughly, even within each grid rectangle, or omits color entirely, in favor of monochrome throughout.

Another experimental and developmental work of Mondrian's of 1919 reveals that his designs in which the horizontal and vertical lines do not form a regular grid are, conceptually, an extension from those in which the grid is regular. In Composition: Light Color Planes with Gray Lines which is a square hung by its corner to make a diamond, rectangles of different sizes, proportions, and orientations are derived from various combinations of abutting squares on a regular square grid, visible in the underpainting. In addition to the verticals and horizontals, the underpainting also shows diagonals (lines which parallel the canvas edge since it is a diamond). In this work Mondrian has never chosen to use one of the diagonal lines as a boundary of a shape in his final configuration, but he is clearly aware of the diagonal axes of the rectangles and the diagonal relationships among them. In his number and alphabet grids, Johns arranges the figures or letters so that the same one occurs one space to the left in each row going down, thus, in addition to the stronger horizontal and vertical rows, diagonal rows lower left to upper right are formed, emphasized by the visual repetition of shapes. The opposite diagonals (upper left to lower right) are not visually but conceptually emphasized; they are regular sequences of successive numbers counted by twos, alternating

odd and even, thus 0-2-4-6 etc. and 1-3-5-7 etc.

The elaboration of the diagonal is of course a natural development from the exploration of the horizontal/vertical grid as the formal basis of the works of both artists, each of which comes from a point in its author's career when he is exploring geometric structure as a mode of organizing the canvas and seeking to articulate the relationship between the whole field and its component parts in two dimensions.

Mondrian had already by 1917 developed the spatial system to be used by Johns in False Start and Jackson Pollock in his drip paintings. This is evident in Composition with Color Planes on White Ground A in which large red, yellow, and blue rectangles, often of square proportions, and also small, long, black rectangles are scattered throughout the field upon the white ground. Their arrangement shows a definite centering and a slight concentration toward the upper right. By overlaps, and the way the colors of each set read as constellations, and most of all by the free "floating" placement of rectangles or clusters in the field without connection to the framing edge, the configuration appears as a set of planes parallel to the picture plane positioned variously back into space along a direction perpendicular to the picture plane. Like Pollock's space and Johns' as discussed above, Mondrian's space is here non-perspectival, and though it is clearly present its extent cannot be definitely grasped nor rationally described.

Like Pollock's Lucifer, Mondrian's picture has a strong sense of levitation, and of extensiveness and expansiveness. Like False Start, it reads as predominantly red, yellow, blue, and white, and also appears as a dispersed collection of two different types of elements, the large broad color spots and the small linear black ones intermixed.

By 1917 Mondrian was working to suppress in his painting that element which Pollock and Johns would emphasize in theirs, the brushstroke as visible evidence of the artist's hand at work and of the viscous material nature of the paint. In a set of works of 1913 and 1914 (including the Facade series of ovals), Mondrian worked with a black line grid (which he dropped in various works of 1917 but returned to in 1919) in order to explore certain aspects of figure-ground relationships and, especially, centrifugal and centripetal shapes. In most of these, Mondrian sets an irregualr network of black lines in a field of closely related grays tinted with red, yellow, and blue. The grid is made up of horizontals and verticals with a few simple curved lines replacing certain small horizontals. There is, relatively, a slight emphasis on the horizontal axis (the field is a horizontal rectangle) and a slighter one on the vertical, along with a very obvious centering of the whole network due to the greying out of those parts of it which extend near the periphery of the canvas on all four sides. (In Pollock's drip paintings, the networks of

lines usually show this tendency to center, shrinking back slightly from the edges.)

The marks of the artist's hand are clearly visible in the painting of the areas within the grid, whose edges are not the sharp, impersonal ones of the rectangles in Mondrian's later work. Johns in False Start deals with centrifugal expansive shapes left by the marking brush, and, in many works before that painting and after, with the relationships between such shapes and enclosing boundaries and edges. Mondrian, in a refined and subtle manner, dealt with the same issues in the works of 1913 and 1914. The black lines remain visible in all but the periphery of these canvases, and are assertive as controlling enclosures by virtue of their straightness and darkness; yet the shapes that they bound threaten the authority of the lines, because they are painted in a way that subtly but definitely indicates their expansiveness. Spatially, the black network both seems to hang before an opalescent field and to lie beyond particular spots of tinted gray. The first illusion is brought about by color organization, a black figure on a light ground, while the second is brought about by the shaping of spots within the compartments; brushy, expansive, and physically painted on top. The extraordinary subtlety and refinement of these works in both color and touch are alien to the raucous, wild False Start, but characteristic of Johns' White Flag and his pearly White Numbers and Gray Numbers.

In his development Mondrian worked toward the suppression of the rich, voluptuous element in paint handling; Johns favors it from the first, producing ravishing refined works, then expands upon it beginning in 1959 to produce eventually such works as the aggressive, violent Diver of 1962 (fig. 48) and Periscope. Mondrian's development was intentionally from the more personal, emotive, and subjective style and imagery toward the more objective, universal, and rational. Johns' early work, according to his own view, though it is easily identified as his own, was intended to be discreet, non-autobiographical, and deadpan. His development in the period between 1959 and 1963 was clearly toward the expression of decidedly autobiographical imagery in intensely emotional terms.[5]

Notes; Aspects of Johns' False Start related to Mondrian and Neo-Plasticism

[1] Michael Crichton says of critical commentary surrounding False Start "We can find it perculiar that no one really recognized that Johns, an artist who had already set a course toward increasingly abstract treatment of painting ideas, would quite logically move from images to color, one of the components of images, and that he would deal with color in the same implacably abstract way." (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, Abrams and Whitney Museum, 1977, p.39.)

Rosalind Krauss had focused on the issue of color in False Start saying "The counterpoint between labels and colors spells out one's experience of color in this or any other similarly 'painterly' work." (Rosilind Krauss, "Jasper Johns", The Lungano Review, 1/2, No.2, 1965,p.88.)

[2] The voluptousness of the encaustic and collage medium and its handling, and the contrast of those to what was expected in such images, was a theme in commentary on Johns' work from the very beginning. "R.R." reviewing Johns' 1958 exhibition, talks for example of "commanding sensuous presence", "elegant use of encaustic", etc., in "a beloved handmade transcription". ("In the Galleries", Arts, 32, No. 54, Jan 1958.)

[3] Again we may remember Johns' specific statement that the later flag paintings involved efforts to "have different canvas space" by means of "making the flag hit three edges of the canvas" and then adding the white rectangle. (Quoted by Walter Hopps, "An Interview with Jasper Johns", Artforum, 3, No.6, March 1965, p.35.)

[4] Max Kozloff maintains that, because of the non-relational and given character of the abstract geometric patterns provided to Johns by such signs as flags and targets, "although his art heralded the revolution of closed against open form, it had nothing to do with that long neglected geometric abstraction which had all along been the adversary of 'action painting'". (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969, p.12.)

It is dangerous to maintain that there is anything Johns' work catagorically "has nothing to do with". It is unlikely that Johns could have been unaware ot the amusing and irreverent visual relationship the flags held to geometric abstraction, nor is it necessary that because their major reference was to Abstract Expressionism they could not also refer to something else. The course of Johns' work after the flags and targets shows him to be not only deeply interested in the questions of closed and

open form but also in the associations which have been so widely attached to them, reenforced energetically by, respectively, Neo-Plasticism and Abstract Expressionism.

Barbara Rose makes this interesting connection: "Johns' flags represent the coalescing of two forms of realism, the literalist 'realism' of abstract art as well as that of representational art... Johns' flags would have been impossible without the example of Mondrian's realism. From Mondrian, Johns appropriated the emphasis on the concrete, physical properties of the painting as an object in the world." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part I", Artforum, 8, No.7, March 1970, p.42.)

[5] Johns said "I have attempted to develop my thinking in such a way that the work I've done is not me -- not to confuse my feelings with what I produced. I didn't want my work to be an exposure of my feelings." (Quoted by Vivian Raynor in "Conversation with Jasper Johns", Artnews, 72, No. 3, March 1973, pp.20-22.)

Crichton correctly observes "When Johns says 'I didn't want my work to be an exposure of my feelings', he is really removing himself from the tenants of Abstract Expressionism, where the goal of the work, the point of the painting, was some statement of subjective emotion. Johns never had this goal. To that extent his statement is literally correct. But it is impossible for anyone to create out of purely intellectual, unemotional impulses; I doubt such impulses exist, in the first place; but even if they did, the act of creation, extending over time, would incorporate other elements which must be defined as emotional." (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p.41.)

SECTION TWO, Part Three: Aspects of Johns' *False Start* Related to the Cubism of Picasso and Braque

The use of line and enclosed shapes in conjunction with, but independent of, freely brushed areas of tone was explored by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in that part of their development of Cubism which began around 1909. Picasso's *Ma Jolie* of 1911-1912 (fig. 49) is a work of full "analytic" Cubism, which shows a thorough-going and complex use of this combination. Throughout the painting are dark lines, most of them straight, and thus either horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. Frequently these lines serve as outlines for expanses of tone of which they are the boundaries. In many cases, they are completely independent of their neighboring painted areas, cutting across expanses of the field which function to them as areas of ground either homogeneously colored or varigated. Though many lines are boundaries, few shapes are completely enclosed within boundaries, and those which are are disrupted by others which cut across them, giving the appearance of mutual interlocking or transparency. *Ma Jolie* thus includes many shapes which are hard edged and bounded on some side and soft edged and expansive on another, giving a general effect of sharp corners and edges projecting at an angle into shallow three dimensional space. By the use of straight, especially diagonal lines, Picasso creates suggestions of

a vestigal linear perspective; by the use of hard edges, he creates many instances of overlap: both of these show illusory distance. By reducing color to a minimum--the canvas is almost monochrome but for enough blue and yellow hue to give the light/dark variation a cool/warm variation also--he suggests traditional shading which appears as volume. However, none of these systems, diagonals, overlap, or shading, is used to sustain a continuous and consistent spatial illusion; they are everywhere self contradictory and mutually contradictory, or simply discoordinate. The resulting pictorial effect is one in which the configuration seems distinctly three dimensional but does not coherently depict either objects in space (volume) or space itself (distance). Ma Jolie appears simultaneously as a continuous surface and as a collection of subsidiary elements energetically differentiated in a shallow depth. Picasso's Ma Jolie is unlike Mondrian's works of 1917 in which a fretwork of black lines differentiates shapes in a varigated, light colored field, in that in Ma Jolie (because of Picasso's use of diagonals, incomplete enclosures, and strong tonal variations within enclosures) elements appear to be oriented at various angles to the picture plane rather than parallel to it.

It is important also that Ma Jolie is a figure painting; although the human being, like the space, is

not shown as a clear cohesive entity, she is, like the space, decidedly present. The greater visual activity toward the center of the field makes for a greater sense of substance along with a greater sense of depth, and the arrangement and proportions of the configuration suggest those of the human being and of the traditional three-quarter length depiction of it. In False Start, Johns uses an all over, relatively even dispersal of visual incident and puts a heavy emphasis on unbounded centrifugal shapes. Thus False Start lacks certain of Picasso's spatial devices evident in Ma Jolie, and likewise lacks the differentiation of the middle of the canvas as, formally an area of greater spaciousness and, thematically, an area of figuration. In the related Device Circle, however, Johns has differentiated a large central figure--the circle--out of the all over False Start field, and established a distinct vertical axis with a top/bottom orientation by placing the strip of lettering across the field below the circle. That the device and its circle have reference to the human figure is discussed below. In 0 through 9 of 1960, working of of the experience of False Start and, of his early single numeral paintings and his more recent single numeral prints, Johns makes a painting which like Device Circle establishes a definite figure in a False Start type ground, but goes beyond Device Circle in the

degree of complexity and integration of the two. Here Johns achieves a painting much like Ma Jolie in the pictorial elements employed, in the principles of its formal structure, in its compositional proportions and balances, in its illusion of unspecified but distinctly present space, and in its clear thematic references to the human figure. In 0 through 9, Johns employs not only the expansive, freely brushed areas of paint but also lines that are sometimes the boundaries of shapes and sometimes free lines across expanses of the field. Thus 0 through 9 is brought very close to Ma Jolie, the major difference being that Johns retains the spatial structure based conceptually on planes parallel to the picture surface characteristic of Mondrian and Jackson Pollock, as against Picasso's use of planes illusionistically oriented at angles to each other and to the picture plane as in linear perspective.[1]

It is from Picasso and Braque that the spatial system used by Mondrian descends, developed during the "synthetic" phase of Cubism between 1912 and 1914. Picasso's collages often show the artist working with a complex of overlapping planes oriented parallel to, or angling only slightly toward, the picture plane, spatially distinguished from each other. The spatial differentiations here are physical as well as illusory; by the use of the medium of collage, Picasso allowed

himself to incorporate physically distinct layers. In later works such as his Three Musicians of 1921 Picasso translated this system back into a painted image, the "overlapping" of the "cut out" pieces entirely illusory.

With "synthetic" Cubism, Picasso tends to lessen his use of soft-edged shapes and freely brushed painterly areas of surface in general. He continues to include passages of tonal variation which give the illusion of volume, and enclosures or partial enclosures which allow for effects of transparency but minimally, as in La Bataille s'est Engagée of 1913 (fig.50). Though diagonals abound in "synthetic" Cubism, they are used mostly as dynamic elements in the plane rather than as illusory elements of extention into depth. They sometimes carry a slight suggestion of extension because of a perspectival effect, which is a much less operative device in establishing the illusion of extension into depth than the overlap with which it is incorporated. Similarly, the relative minimization of shading lessens the tendency for passages to read as volumeric, the projecting corners and edges of the "little cubes" which are still strongly suggested in Ma Jolie.

Looseness of edge and effects of transparency are minimized in "synthetic" Cubism partly because of a desire to maintain the surface cohesion of the work, and to achieve a formal vocabulary in which the composition

(including its spatial ambivalences) might be as precise and clear as it is complex. In such paintings as Device Circle and Painting with Ruler and "Gray" Johns continues to use the very spacious painterly type of mark, but comes back to reemphasize the actual physical nature of the canvas surface on which it appears, and thus emphasize the cohesion of that surface by superimposing on it other objects. This is an effect he had begun to work with as early as Drawer.

The shapes Johns uses in False Start, and the structure in which he sets them, carry a spatial illusion even though they do not depict any other model from the real world, but the question of spatial illusion is itself one deeply involved with the issue of mimesis. Johns' earliest explorations of the illusion of space set up by formal effects were those carried out in the context of paintings in which the mimetic quality of the image was very important. The power of Johns' flags to disconcert and confound the viewer derived from the fact that though the paintings were unquestionably good representations of the object, since the object itself was by nature two dimensional, any illusion of pictorial space led toward more inaccurate rather than more accurate mimesis. Questions of representation and mimesis, and the manner in which they relate to the identity of the object are of great interest to Johns and constitute

a main theme in his work. The superimposition of real objects on the surfaces of canvases painted with abstract shapes is followed in Johns' work by the additional inclusion on those canvases of painted images of the same objects. In Out the Window Number 2, a real spoon is attached to the canvas on a stretched coat hanger wire; in Passage, a fork is similarly treated. Directly below the object is painted its image, the close juxtaposition making recognition and comparison inevitable. Johns chooses for his mode of representation a flat shape, unmistakably identifiable as a picture of a spoon but one which does not represent the real spoon's three dimensionality. Furthermore, the painted shape depicts the "top" of the spoon, with broad handle and bowl, while the real spoon is attached in such a way that the viewer looking straight at the canvas sees the side of it. In the late "analytic" and in many "synthetic" Cubist works, Picasso and Braque included many plays on representation, juxtaposing various kinds of images of models and images which vary in their degree of mimetic fidelity. Picasso's collage The Violin of 1913 includes pieces of newspaper, paper painted to resemble wood veneer, and paper which has very convincing commercially printed images of fruit, along with hand drawn, highly abstracted images of a glass and parts of a violin. The non-traditional reorganization of visual

material in Cubism (especially as it concerns the illusion of the third dimension) has been seen not merely as a departure from pictorial conventions for design's sake but also as an effort toward a different, even a more "true" mimesis. Such configurations as the drawing of the wine glass in The Violin and La Bataille s'est Engagée incorporate various shapes characteristic of the model but characteristic of it as seen from different vantages as if at different times, brought together in a single image. Johns' double presentation of the spoon, "top" and "side", is such a combination of various visible aspects of a single object, an object which, because it is a volumetric one that exists in space, has as many different shapes as there angles at which to position it before the eye. Johns' spoon is also, like Picasso's violin, a combination of images which are different in the nature of the way they represent their model. Again, the differences in the general structure of the respective painter's pictorial space makes itself felt; Picasso's wine glasses include passages that read as elements extended into space at an angle to the picture plane, while Johns' spoons are arranged strictly parallel and perpendicular, one of them, the real one, actually set in real space before the canvas plane, parallel to it.

Cubism favored the play of levels of "reality"

carried by representations of different types and degrees of mimetic fidelity and spatial illusion, and it is in this tradition that Johns continues to work. In 1910, Braque painted Violin and Palette in which the lower part of the canvas, in which appear a violin and sheet music, is already broken into the spatially contradictory flakes and facets, lines and painterly expanses which were to become typical of full "analytic" Cubism. In the upper part of this same canvas, however, is a shape which is recognizable as a painter's palette, overlapped by other shapes but not itself fragmented. Painted as if it protruded from the hole in the palette is a nail. This object is represented so recognizably, and the illusion of its extension into space is established so convincingly that the viewer immediately attributes to it the qualities of the real nail which was its model. The geometrically faceted and tonally variagated Cubist picture surface thus becomes something into which a nail can be driven and across which its shadow can be cast. The "painted" palette can hang upon the "real" nail. Johns takes this idea a step further" in Out the Window Number 2, a "realistic" spoon and wire, along with a real spoon and wire, can hang from respectively "realistic" and real screw eyes set into abstract shapes on an actually flat/illusionistically spacious canvas. The real spoon and wire cast a shadow, which is a grey

flat shape, on the painted silhouette image of the spoon and the abstract brush spots alike. As early as Drawer Johns had included real objects protruding straight out from the abstractly painted surface; as early as Coat Hanger of 1957, a drawing, (fig.51) he had "realistically" depicted a peg with an object hanging on it, illusionistically appearing to protrude from the type of field worked all over with abstract marks long accepted as itself a work of abstract art.

Cubism addressed a major part of its creative energy to the issue of the structure of pictorial space, and it is for innovations in that area that the movement is best remembered. The new attitudes toward pictorial space developed by Braque and Picasso between 1907 and 1911 led in 1911 to the inclusion in painted canvases such as Ma Jolie and Braque's Le Portugais of lettering as flat compositional shapes set freely in the painted field. This led in 1912 (Braque's pioneering Fruit Dish and Glass, Picasso's famous Still Life with Chair Caining) to the inclusion of cut-out pieces of paper printed with lettering or standard decorative patterns, and of other real (non painted) things and materials outside the traditional fine art range. Especially prominent in "synthetic" Cubist collage was newspaper.

The similarities between Picasso's Ma Jolie and Johns' Device Circle include not only the human figure

subject matter and the central, vertically oriented pictorial composition, but also the naming of the figure (and the picture) by means of a lettered label across the center bottom of the field. Johns had used this arrangement in Tennyson of 1958, in which the spatial illusion carried by the brushed paint is not so strong, and in The of 1957 (fig.52) where the word "the" labels a field not differentiated as bearing any figure other than the word itself. In Device Circle, the lettering is itself varigated in color and brush stroke, though it is still distinct. In False Start, as in Ma Jolie, words painted with even tones in letters of a standard face run across varigated, brushy expanses of paint. In Ma Jolie, this device accomplished several things. First, the lettering affirms that the nature of the canvas is a continuous firm planar surface, a characteristic contradicted by those elements which give the illusion of extension into space, the overlaps and partial overlaps, the diagonal lines, the shading which suggests volume, and the "atmospheric" softness of brushy areas of tone. Second, it equates the painter's canvas with the printer's page, thus reinforcing the spatial dichotomy, since the canvas has traditionally been treated wholly illusionistically and the printed page absolutely flat. The inclusion of lettering also allows for information given in the painting to include that which is carried by

words which are read, as well as by the more traditional material which is directly sensed and assimilated. This device had not been used since late medieval times in panel paintings; the renaissance abandoned it in an effort to purge from painting any element that would call strong attention to the actual nature of the painting as a non-spatial flat surface.

Picasso and Braque are the first to focus on that dichotomy, used so dramatically by Johns, between intellectual and sensual perception and assimilation of pictorial content. Johns' puns, which often involve a visual and a verbal side, are reminiscent of the many puns in "synthetic" Cubism, such as "jou" and "le Jou" in Picasso's Still Life with Chair Caning and La Bataille s'est Engagée. In the latter, "le jou" is achieved by Picasso's clipping down of the masthead "Le Journal"; in the former, one also assumes that "jou" comes from "journal" even though it is painted rather than cut out. Le jeu ("jou") is the game of cutting newspapers and otherwise excerpting printed material to play on pictorial representation and illusory space, as well as to introduce verbal double meanings. Picasso's use of "jou" which reads as a complete word but comes from the cutting short of "journal" is like Johns' treatment of the words in Fool's House, where "use" may be read in the upper left; a curtailment of the word "house" but a word in itself, and also in

itself a double meaning, being both a noun and a verb, active or non active, depending on how it is pronounced when verbally spoken. The labels "scrape", "iron" and "envelope" in Passage, (which also includes the fork and its image, like the spoon and its image in Out the Window Number 2) are similar. La Bataille s'est Engagée is also called Guitar and Wine Glass, because it depicts a guitar and a wine glass. The line "La bataille s'est engagée" comes from part of a headline legible on the clipped strip of Le Journal which runs horizontally along the lower left of the pictorial field, the traditional place for the title or signature, two of the few elements of written material previously acceptable for inclusion on the face of a painting. The battle here engaged becomes not only the World War I military event reported in the newspaper, but rather the jeu of identity and illusion. The use of the headline for the title of what the eye assesses as a picture whose subject matter is not a battle but a violin and a wine glass emphasizes the dichotomy between the two ways the pictorial content is carried, and also brings to mind Maurice Denis' famous dictum of 1890 on the double nature, formal and subject matter, of painting; "a picture, before being a war horse, a nude woman, or some sort of anecdote, is essentially a surface covered with colors arranged in a certain order."[2] The extensive use of newspaper collage

by Johns in his early work, which he continues to use selectively later on in eg. Passage and Arrive/Depart relates his work directly to "synthetic" Cubism, where the newspaper played its triple role as formal element in a pictorial design, bearer of printed material which could be read, and "real" object from the non-art world incorporated into the picture.

It has been noted above that Johns' underlying newspaper collage in such works as Flag of 1955 is a continuous, all over layer of material running under the encaustic paint layer, thus setting up an actual and an illusory spatial distinction between itself, beyond, and the paint, before. The distinct separation of layers allows for the implication of a greater extension into space than the use of clipped newspaper collage elements in "synthetic" Cubism, and also allows that space to be structured as a series of perpendicular planes set before and beyond each other rather than as planes angling forward and back among each other in the shallower but more definite space of synthetic Cubism. Johns has also included both systems, the painted and the collage, in a thoroughgoing way. In "analytic" Cubism, in such works as Ma Jolie, lettering was used along with freely brushed passages, but it was hand painted lettering. In La Bataille s'est Engagée, typical of advanced "synthetic" Cubism, the hand-worked element is minimized: paint, with

its thick, surface-covering quality is not used, and the drawn lines and freely hatched passages of tone are confined within a single clipped paper shape. Though Ma Jolie incorporates illusory transparency and overlap, and La Bataille s'est Engagee strong illusory and actual overlap, nothing in Pacasso's work is ever thoroughly buried or obliterated, everything is clear. Johns' use of a post-Pollock spatial structure, along with his predisposition toward an iconography of the secret and concealed, have allowed him to construct paintings in which both transparency and overlap are given all-over dispersal across the canvas.

Johns' painting 0 through 9 has been discussed above in terms of its relationship to "analytic" Cubism and in particular to Ma Jolie. It must also be recognized for its relationship to "synthetic" Cubism. If Picasso in his collage works allowed printed materials to function as flat figures oriented parallel to the picture surface, Johns goes a step further and uses single print-type numerals in the same way. If Picasso overlapped these, Johns does so more thoroughly still, reintroducing the transparency typical of "analytic" Cubism to allow him to wholly superimpose them. The printed legend (such as "Ma Jolie") from "analytical" Cubism becomes the flat strip of printed newspaper pasted to the surface in "synthetic" Cubism. This, in Johns' hands, keeps both its basic spatial structure and its type-face

theme; but because Johns now conflates the numeral with the nude, it is reworked to emerge as fragmented but traditionally composed, as in the figurative "analytic" Cubist picture Ma Jolie.

It seems clear that Johns was specifically reconsidering Cubism in 1959 with Device Circle, False Start, and Jubilee, and that he had for some time in a personal and thoroughly digested way drawn upon the innovations given to the twentieth century by Cubism. It was in 1959 that John Golding's major reexamination Cubism, a History and an Analysis, 1907-1914 was published. In that work the author analyzes the formal character and traces the historical development of Cubism, noting that "by 1909 Picasso and Braque had initiated the first phase of Cubism", that phase which Ma Jolie represents as a fully elaborated example.[3] It may be that the enigmatic title of Johns' somber monochromatic Jubilee refers, as does so much of its pictorial structure and content, to the important emergence of Cubism exactly fifty years before.

Notes; Aspects of Johns' False Start related to the Cubism of Picasso and Braque

[1] Barbara Rose's view on Johns' relationship to Cubism is the following:

"Johns' early works are more than merely not Cubist... (but) anti-Cubist, because of the nature of the images represented. As has been pointed out repeatedly... flags, targets, numbers, letters, maps, are all flat by identification. Although the Cubists incorporated such flat signs into their work, such signs could never have been the exclusive subject for a Cubist painting because they are images with only a single surface. Cubism, on the other hand, demands a three dimensional subject -- if only to flatten it -- for investigation of complex spatial relationships and in order to present superimposed 'simultaneous' images. That the early paintings are remote from Cubism becomes even more obvious if we realize that it is impossible to set up the sculptural or relief space of Cubism if one is consistently reminded in identifying a subject such as a flag, a target, or a numeral, that such images have no volume or mass. One cannot... reach around or embrace an object without a back, nor can such an object be detached from its background because it is as flat as the plane on which it lies." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part I", Artforum, 8.No.7, March 1970, pp.39-41.)

It is true that by the use of subject matter known to be volumetric in nature the Cubists, in the "analytic" phase of the movement investigated certain spatial relationships and invented pictorial illusions of new ones; and that the concept of simultaneous views could not have been posed for any model but one for which more than a single view was possible. However, Rose misses the important distinction between the two different aspects of pictorial space, volume and distance. In his remarkable 0 through 9 paintings, Johns does not give his numerals volume, either actually or illusionistically; but by superimposing them, he establishes, if not a convincing optical illusion, an undenyable notion of distance relationships between them. Although the use of transparency was not so important in "synthetic" Cubism as in Johns' 0 through 9 works, the figure ground relationships set up between non-volumetric collage elements (even those which represented such actually volumetric models as violins and bottles often appear as flat paper) read as spatially differentiated. It is significant that Johns has achieved this spatial structure with flat numerals as subject matter. It is also interesting that he had done so ten years before Rose, a friend in close touch with his work, wrote her discussion, indicating the

power of the idea of non-spatiality associated with flags, targets, letters, and numbers per se to condition the viewer's observation.

[2] Maurice Denis, "Définition du Néotraditionnisme", first published in Art et Critique, 23 and 30 (Aug. 1890), quoted in George Heard Hamilton, Painting and Sculpture in Europe 1880-1940, The Pelican History of Art, ed. Nikolaus Pevsner, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1967, 1974), p.107.

3 John Golding, Cubism: A History and an Analysis 1907-1914, (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p.80.

SECTION TWO, Part Four: Aspects of Johns' *False Start* related to Monet, Renoir, and Impressionism

The most important formal innovation contributed by the Impressionist movement was the development of a pictorial structure based on shapes of a centrifugal, unbounded nature, which are identical with individual brushmarks of paint, which are themselves in turn identical with particular motions of the painter's hand. In the early years of the Impressionist movement, the representational significance of each mark remained specific and important, though at the same time, the canvas as a whole existed as a somewhat agitated all over fabric of brushmarks. Thus in Monet's *La Grenouillère* and other works painted by himself and Renoir in 1869, the viewer simultaneously identifies the small shapes throughout the canvas as touches of thick paint of variously contrasting hue/tone and as things; ripples, clothing, faces, leaves, etc. In order to depict large nearby objects such as the boats and pavillion, Monet sets the strokes together in a manner that to some extent relies on the traditional painter's devices such as the use of darker and lighter tones of a given hue to depict contiguous planes of one volumetric object. In general, however, the painting is structured in such a way that the relationship between the formal identity of the strokes as brushwork and the representational identify of the strokes as things is one in

which neither dominates. Monet changes the shape, size, and color/tone of his strokes throughout the field to carry information about what things are present, and where they are situated in space, without losing the balance between their two natures.

Two kinds of figure-ground relationships are set up in La Grenouillère, the first that of the small stroke-shapes to the larger areas with which they are associated (e.g., ripples to water, leaves to trees) and the second the large shapes one to another. Because the small strokes which serve throughout as the basic component of which the picture is made are expansive and unbounded in nature; and because the larger shapes (since they are agglomerations of the smaller) are also; the canvas surface is emphasized as a continuous fabric of brushstroke, varigated in color but continuous in texture. At the same time, because of the subject matter and the organization of the overlaps of the larger shapes, the picture appears extended back into distance. In the relationship between the canvas surface and the pictorial space, Monet has again achieved a situation in which the physical flatness and the illusory spaciousness of the painting are simultaneously emphasized in a balance which neither dominates.

The radical nature of Impressionism lies in its

liberation of the colored/textured paint spot which reads as a trace of the painter's hand moving across the planar surface, not from representational value, but from a structural role subsidiary to that of the larger shapes in the visual complex. Monet in his famous Impression: Sunrise of 1872 deliberately picks subject matter and arranges it in space so as to maximize his emphasis on brushmark as itself, freely distributed through expansive areas of the canvas which are, relatively, so large and loose that they can hardly be called shapes. The minimization of tonal and color contrasts in this work shows Monet's emphasis on the painting as a continuous fabric of paint and therefore a two dimensional object. He includes only one small instance of extreme tonal contrast (two little dark boats in the large light field) and one extreme hue contrast (the sun and its reflection, orange in a generally blue field).

Jasper Johns' Tango of 1955, heir to Monet's work as well as to impressive abstract variations derived directly from it such as Phillip Guston's typical Zone painted a year before, shows Johns extreme use of Monet's reduction of color/tone contrast and emphasis on textural qualities and their gestural connotations to draw attention to the two dimensional nature of the canvas surface.[1] The few figure ground and spatial relationships Johns includes in Tango are accomplished

by essentially different means than those employed by Monet in Impression: Sunrise: they are of an essentially physical rather than optical nature, and do not rely at all on the identification of depicted subject matter from the outer world. Johns has here isolated the principles of brushstroke and surface texture and of color and tone contrast first explored by early Impressionism, and set them against not the painterly tradition of depiction of objects in space, as Monet did, but against the philosophical issues of physical nature and identity which are implied, subtly but surely, in Monet's enterprise.

The interrelated issues of stroke and texture, color, shape, pictorial field, and the third dimension continued to be of specific concern to Monet throughout his later work, and were explored in various ways. In Poppy Field Near Giverny of 1885 (fig. 53), Monet maintains the use of a generally rough textured paint surface throughout, but varies the direction and length of the stroke according to the nature and shape of objects depicted. In this work, the rectangular pictorial field is quite emphatically divided into subsidiary shapes of a strongly geometric nature which are interlocked into a strict, symmetrical, two dimensional pattern. Each shape in this system is differentiated by color and texture, a trapezoid of red dots between two

triangles of small green verticals, etc.

In this way Monet reinstates strong clear compositional design so conspicuously absent in Impression: Sunrise, without relying on strictly bounded shapes as such and without sacrificing the textural effects of strong brushstrokes throughout. By his use of the fragmented, stroked surface which is so appropriate to the frilly plant material typical of landscape subject matter, Monet supresses any tendency of tonal variation to make itself understood as a description of volume, a necessity if the surface tension of the textured canvas is to be maintained. This does not mean, however, that Monet's work lacks illusory space; the vestigal perspective carried in the trapezoid of poppies, the figure-ground overlaps of clearly deliniated shapes, and the identifiable landscape subject matter all establish the illusion of distance.

In such works as Haystack at Sunset of 1891 . Monet altered his use of color, stroke, and texture and the relationships between them. He does not here, as in Impression: Sunrise and still in Poppy Field Near Giverny so much identify brushstroke with thing (ripple, spar, poppy, leaf); rather he divides the pictorial field as a whole into a few great shapes (haystack top, haystack base, shadow, sky, etc.) and works within these with relatively smaller grained and also rougher texture than before. He also disengages color from texture.

Previously, color had been closely associated with stroke, the working brush depositing each pigment about the canvas for the sake of color distribution, the texture remaining as residual effect of the pigment's physical substance. Monet's move toward more thoroughly intermixed colors required for more subtle and complex light effects, and toward more intensely but more finely grained texture, results, in Haystack at Sunset, in passages of agitated surface suffused throughout with an opalescent coloration which looks as glowing and disembodied as the light it seeks to depict.

Having, thus, first established the surface of the canvas as a distinct, tangible surface, continuous and heavy textured, and having then also achieved a way of differentiating shapes so they are definite but still soft edged, Monet moved in his Poplars of 1891, a series, to pictorial structures which (though still depicting a model in nature) are compositional arrangements based on horizontal and vertical lines and retangular sections of the rectangular field. Mondrian used this line of development in Monet's work as part of the basis for the differentiation of geometric structure in his own work, dropping, however, the actual three dimensionality of heavy texture and the illusory three dimensionality still carried by Monet's use of overlap and reference to landscape subject matter. The varigated colors within

shapes and the soft edges of the shapes were dropped as impurities inappropriate to Mondrian's rigorous formal requirements in Neoplasticism. The Abstract Expressionists reinstated the free, visible stroke typical of Monet, and with it the all over distribution of visual incidents of both color and texture, but they omitted the internal subdivisions of the field used by Monet and Mondrian. Pollock made numerous paintings in which the entire pictorial rectangle is, relative, an all over homogenous field of tiny marks of color/texture. Guston in certain canvases did likewise, playing more homogeneously distributed textural incidents against more clustered color/tone incidents. Motherwell, Kline, and deKooning all made canvases in which the field is subdivided into large, subsidiary shapes often somewhat geometric in derivation (for example, Motherwell's Elegy to the Spanish Republic) but these shapes are not internally varigated, not built up of much smaller strokes of color and texture as in Monet's Poplars: the whole shapes themselves appear to be the results of single strokes of an enormous brush moving across the canvas with the gesture of the artist's arm.

Johns in his alphabet and number grids does not use this Abstract Expressionist structure, but rather returns to Monet's more complex structure which involves three levels of differentiation: the whole field, the

subsidiary shapes into which the field is subdivided, and the visible individual marks of color and texture in which these shapes are worked. In Numbers in Color, as in Tango, Johns drops the illusion of space derived, in Monet, from visual overlap related to the representation of landscape subject matter, and adds physical overlap by indluding the layer of newsprint collage beyond the layer of encaustic pigment. Both are types of overlap, Monet's entirely an optical effect, Johns' physical and also visible. Monet had also relied strongly on physical three dimensionality, discernable not only in the thickness of his impasto but also in the dissociation of color from stroke per se: although the viewer cannot specifically identify the underlayers beyond the overlayer in Monet's Haystack as he can in Johns' Numbers in Color, he concludes that many layers of paint lie beyond the foremost, accounting for, for example, heavy texture in areas now painted over all one hue.

Late in his work, in his waterlily paintings, Monet returned to a painterly system in which brush stroke and also color spot, were often equated one for one with elements depicted. In these works also, Monet adjusted his subject matter so as to exclude distance, so that the canvas, undivided by the landscapist's typical horizon, consist formally of an all-over brushed field representing the surface of the lily

pond. Thus in many of his waterlilies, Monet uses essentially the same basic structure to which Johns turns in False Start and Jubilee, a rectangular field through which is dispersed splotches of color clearly showing the motion of the painter's hand in their making. Monet does not, as Johns will do, pit hard-edged centripital shapes against his soft brushy ones, but rather incorporates several types of brush-formed shapes, varied in conjunction with the objects depicted (lily leaves or lily flowers) and their positions in space.

Monet's treatment of pictorial space is extremely complex and varied. His waterlilies represent his profoundest, most imaginative, and most disconcerting rethinking of distance as depicted by means of renaissance perspective versus the actual expanse of the canvas surface. Clearly, Monet was from early in his career more interested in the illusory spatial problems of distance as against those of volume, though he included the figure in his painting from time to time. In such works as Waterlilies of 1905 (fig. 54) Monet employs the last identifiable element of perspective; the inclined ground plane. Because the painting includes all landscape and no architecture, there are no orthagonals to suggest a vanishing point. Because Monet has filled the canvas field with pond surface, there is not even a horizon to suggest the line upon which it might lie.

Thus only the variation of the shapes used to depict lily pads (from generally round ovals lower in the canvas to generally longer ones higher up), in the context of the identification of these spots as representations of the round leaves of waterlilies, establishes the pictorial space. Visually contradicting and confounding this illusion, other systems which represent other material otherwise situated in space are also incorporated, all legitimately included as part of Monet's chosen subject matter. Since the pond is water, one may look not only at its surface but through its surface; Monet includes therefore underwater plants whose spacial distribution does not in any way correspond to the perspectivally inclined plane of the surface. Since, also, the water is reflective, its surface may visually carry an image of material above the water which conflicts with the visual reading of its surface as a plane inclined backward into the third dimension. Earlier, in the Poplars, Monet had used the water surface not to enhance the spatial illusion but to break it, the reflection of bank and trees formally allowing him to set up the rigorously rectilinear pattern of horizontals and verticals which appears as a two dimensional grid.

Although the space in Waterlilies can be identified by means of the perspectival effect of the water surface, other aspects of the visual structure give a stronger and often contradictory spatial effect. The figure-ground

relationships, set up by the lily and flower shapes against the field of green and lavender areas, result in an overlap which gives a strong spatial distinction, but one by which the specific extent of spatial differentiation cannot be calculated. As a pattern of interlocking and overlapping shapes, in many places the visual configuration in the painting contradicts perspective, as in the upper right corner where the shapes made up of lavender strokes do not appear to extend back at an angle, but appear to stand forward of the lilies.

Monet in the Waterlilies both relies on and contradicts the traditional usage of the extended ground plane and its pictorial effects. Johns, after working in False Start with only one spatial aspect of Monet's waterlilies, the figure-ground effect of brushed spots dispersed through a field, reintroduces, in Map of 1961 the extended ground plane. By pushing Monet's downward-looking view which looses the horizon and fills the rectangle with water surface, Johns makes the plane of the land he depicts identical to that of the canvas on which it is depicted. Thus the expansiveness of the land surface, its planar continuity, is equated with the expansive nature of the painter's canvas itself, at the same time that it is depicted upon it. In Monet's painting the water surface is understood to be tilted, but the picture as a whole "feels" upright, largely due to the

verticality of the tree reflections in the water areas. It is important in Johns' maps as in Monet's waterlilies that the painting is figurative; in both cases, were there no subject matter that could be identified, the visual configuration would appear somewhat differently. The identification of the subject matter strongly conditions the viewer's reading of the visual material and also allows for specific questions to be answered about the tilt of the ground plane. Typically, in Map, Johns plays both sides of the issue of identification-of-space-by-subject-matter, by representing land through a representation of land. This map of the land, The Map, spatially very unlike the land, is a plane which hangs perpendicular to the wall. Johns' painting, like Monet's shows a cluster of solid surfaces surrounded by water; in both cases the painters have differentiated their brushwork accordingly, states like lily pads tend to be more definitely outlined so they appear as having their characteristic shapes, while ocean and pond are handled more loosely, with more expansive, gestural brushstrokes playing through them.

Monet had used the perspectivally inclined ground plane in certain works before the waterlilies, notable Poppy Field Near Giverny of 1885 in which the red trapazoid is understood as a flat red rectangular expanse extended back into space.[2] Chosen and oriented

as specifically as a renaissance floor by Piero della Francesca, the poppy field provides orthagonals with its side borders and implies a definite vanishing point. In many other paintings, such as Poppy Field Near Giverny of 1890 he employs a spatial system devoid of perspectival devices, in which the illusion of distance is achieved by means of overlap in the context of identifiable landscape subject matter. Here the poppy field, trees, mountains, and sky are conceived and depicted as bands oriented parallel to the picture plane and to each other in successive layers set back in space. There is no vanishing point, no funneling of space, and no illusion of paralax.

Monet used this system many times again, in his poplars and Houses of Parliament pictures, exploiting particularly the purely non-perspectival extensions achieved by figure-ground overlaps. In all these, although Monet paints objects not with a flat, hard-edged, even color and surface, but rather with his typically internally varigated soft-edged areas of multiple brushstrokes, they appear as flat shapes. His suppression of the volumetric aspect of objects depicted in favor of emphasis on their silhouettes shows again a choice against perspectival devices, as well as against those spatial problems of specific concern to figure painters. In his very late paintings, working off of very loose brushwork used to depict plant materials in the waterlily

paintings and continuing also to use a near, closed landscape space with no visible horizon, Monet employs the spatial system based on parallel planes. In terms of the subject matter, although Monet continues to depict his water gardens, he paints not the ground plane (the water surface) but the vertical "plane" he faces, the Japanese footbridge and the "wall" of foliage beyond it. Japanese Footbridge c.1922 is typically composed, in the plane, of expansive areas of loose brushwork of contrasting color and tone dispersed relatively evenly throughout the field. In illusory space, it is constructed of elements dispersed non-perspectivally back into distance, their specific positions being, however, uncertain and visually changeful. In terms of the actual third dimension, the canvas is everywhere painted with thick impasto, vigorously roughened by the painter's brush. The tangible physicality of this treatment, along with its even continuousness across the canvas, emphasizes the planarity and expansiveness of the pictorial surface. Johns' False Start is, except for the inclusion of the hard-edged letter shapes and the slightly more homogeneous distribution of color areas, structured like this painting.

False Start bears a more overt relationship to Abstract Expressionism than to Impressionism, but, nonetheless, reincorporates more of the original structural complexity of Monet's work than do any of the works of the

Abstract Expressionists, who themselves returned to reintegrate the free brushmarks and expansive, tactile surfaces purged from late Cubism and geometric abstraction. Probably the most interesting relationship between Johns' work and Monet's is Johns' elaboration on Monet's exploration of the actual third dimension of ambient space and object (or person) in ambience.

Monet's great desire in painting the waterlilies, which prompted, among other things, the choice of the horizonless, filled up canvas, was to create the sense of being in the water garden, encompassed by its actual space and immersed in the sensory experiences proper to it. His great panorama of canvases in the Orangerie show that though he might still employ one vestigal perspectival element in the inclined ground plane, he certainly broke the previously inseparable association of that element with the single specific vanishing point and the funneling of extended space. In this panorama the structure of space as a whole becomes more complex than, and different from, the space within one canvas, or (in the very long horizontal pictures) one area of the canvas graspable with one focus of the eye. Although a person might not be capable of viewing all of it at one glimpse, real space, vis a vis his true position in it, is encompassing, and its shape is circular. Jackson Pollock had appreciated this aspect

of space and physical existence in it, along with the accruing psychological implications for a painter of visual images. The great actual size of Pollock's works as seen hanging, and their conceptual and physical identity as expanses of floor "in" which the artist moved, both reflect Pollock's responses to questions of space such as preoccupied Monet late in his life.

Johns treats the same questions and offers similar answers; though, typically, only partially by direct visual manifestation. Circularity and endlessness of space in the horizontal and vertical dimensions is indicated very early on in Johns' number and alphabet grids by the way he makes the last number (right side or bottom) repeat the first (left side or top) in a series known intellectually to be annular. The same is true of Fool's House, which asks to be rolled into a cylinder to reunite the separated parts of the incomplete word which, like a reverse Colombus, goes off to the east and arrives in the west.

Johns uses the neutral concept of cylindricality to indicate both aspects of the third dimension, distance and volume. Viewed from inside, the position occupied by a viewer of Monet's water garden in the Orangerie or a habitant of the Fool's House, the cylinder represents the expanse of surrounding space in the midst of which anything exists. Viewed from the outside, the cylinder

becomes the object in space, the volumetric object par excellence. In 1960, Johns made a work representing two Ballentine ale cans, and another of a Savarin coffee can full of paint brushes, and named them both Painted Bronze (figs. 55 and 56). By virtue of their being volumetric objects in actual space, these are classed as sculpture. However, by their titles, Johns tells us that they are paintings, and that the support on which they are painted is of bronze material. It has often been noted that the Ballentine labels do not exactly replicate their model. The treatment is painterly, and has a hand made look, and fact marks typical in painting of a specifically self expressive nature are everywhere (fingerprint, drip). These have been noted in the context of discussions in which the point was to establish the credentials of Painted Bronze as a piece of sculpture as opposed to real ale cans or a replica of ale cans. The question of identity, representation, mimesis, and replication are important for both painting and sculpture, becoming more acute in sculpture, especially in that which takes as its subject matter things which are man made in the first place. More relevant to the specific issues of painting, however, is the fact that each of Johns' cans is a cylindrical painting, which is to say a flat, planar painting rolled up and connected, as Fool's House might be, at its

lateral edges. Johns states this fully and explicitly later by using a "real" ale can as a flat image; the portfolios for an edition of a series of prints, which included images in which Painted Bronze is depicted, bear on their covers Ballentine ale cans taken from the manufacturer in their original state, already printed with the label but not yet rolled.[3]

Impressionism as a style provided the conceptual and formal point of departure for the use of free brush work in painting and much of the understanding of the physical surface of paintings in the twentieth century, and was particularly important as the basis for formal manifestations of Abstract Expressionism. The typically fragmented color and tone, and the textured surface available to the Impressionist manner of paint handling lent themselves especially well to the landscape subject matter which held Monet's primary attention and later to the varieties of pure abstraction as in the work of Pollock, Guston, and others. The use of brushy shapes and the all over, dispersed organization of False Start and Jubilee descend from, exemplify, and examine this system. Johns' thinking did not, however, focus on this concept without acknowledging its opposite. Device Circle, produced around the same time as False Start, resembles it but with one enormous difference, the great circle which occupies the field. The circle has

been drawn by the device, that is, drawing has been used in its most traditional way, to enclose an area and thus delineate a shape. The enclosure is the most specifically and completely bounded centripetal type shape, the drawn circle the purest example of this type. In Device Circle, as in False Start, opposites are juxtaposed.

In the specifically drawn character of the shape and its very dominant position and proportions, Device Circle clearly addresses a cluster of formal/conceptual/subject matter issues most problemmatical and difficult in both the Impressionist and Abstract Expressionist styles, those which come out of the traditions of figure painting. They center on the problems of clear delineation of shape, differentiation of discrete figure from ground, and the illusion of volume. Renoir, like Monet, developed the formal essentials of the Impressionist style in 1869 painting landscape, as he continued to do often through the 1870's and occasionally in the 1880's and after. Monet, like Renoir, had made many important figure paintings in the 1860's, as he continued to do occasionally later. However, both the figure as subject matter and its fundamental traditional formal problems engaged Renoir more fully than they engaged Monet, and Renoir's struggle to redo figure painting in Impressionist style poses the issues Johns engages when

he sets the device circle in a False Start field.

By 1875, Renoir's portraits, genre scenes, and nudes all face the same problem. The very use of the nude, a subject avoided in the Impressionist repertoire, shows Renoir's determination to deal with it. Like Device Circle, Renoir's Nude in the Sun of 1875/76 is structured as a large figure placed against a ground. Both the figure and the ground have within them subsidiary shapes rendered by means of clusters of relatively free brush marks; the skin of the nude woman is dappled with light and dark splotches representing sunlight, while the ground is filled with various outdoor objects all very sketchily rendered, so that grass, earth, leaves, etc. merge together as a generally homogeneous field of brushwork. By far Renoir's most emphatic differentiation is between figure (nude) and ground (everything else) in the canvas field. In contrast both to the landscape details and to the internal details, (facial features, etc.) the delineation of the shape representing the woman's body is visually strong and sharp. This painting relies very heavily on drawing in the traditional sense, the articulation of definite shapes within the field by linear enclosure.

Renoir supports the main figure-ground distinction by general color change between nude and background, and by the use of generally finer grained strokes for the

nude against broader ones for the ground. Johns in Device Circle also does the former, the circular figure appearing generally redder than its ground, though as in Renoir's work, true to Impressionist color handling, all colors are found dispersed throughout the picture. Renoir, like Monet, employs the overlap effect of figure and ground to establish a spatial relationship between nude and landscape; more importantly, however, he uses shading within the body of the nude to give the effect of volume in space. Very powerful and conspicuous in Nude in Sunlight, Renoir also employs shading in portraits and genre pictures to establish, in all cases, the physical bulk of the human figures.

Renoir, especially after 1880, saw the possibilities for formal dissolution in the use of the Impressionist style and sought in his own work to maintain a more rigorous structure, which for him as a figure painter amounted to a relatively clear delineation of shapes and the use of shading to give the illusion of volume.

Johns seeks to maintain the type of image proper to figure painting while breaking down drawing (enclosure lines) and dissociating tonal and hue variation from the illusion of volume. John's numeral paintings as figure paintings deal with this problem. The early single numeral paintings in monochrome show a reduction of color and dispersal of tonal variation so complete as

to allow for figure-ground differentiation only by textural distinction. Johns makes moot the question of volume in these paintings not by refusing to represent something, and not by flattening what he represents, but by picking as his subject matter a kind of figure that is, unlike Renoir's woman, without volume. 0 through 9 of 1960 is a full scale attack on the question of drawing; the figure, now not one but ten numerals thick, is clearly discernable in its traditional placement within the field, but its outlines are everywhere disrupted in many different ways.

On one hand Johns omits volume from his painted figures but on the other he reinstates volume in a way more emphatic than Renoir would have dared, by the incorporation of actually three-dimensional figures in the form of attached objects. The fact that these objects represent the figure has been suggested by Johns; the specific human body imagery is conspicuously clear from the early 1950's, as in Target with Plaster Casts, and in the 1960's when, as in Watchman (fig. 57), the device becomes a human leg. Device Circle, in a way that is more pointed and more clearly concerned with the manner and means of painting, restates the issues of its predecessor Target with Plaster Casts, those of figure as two-dimensional shape distinguished flatly by encircling line and color differentiation, and figure as distinguished

volumetrically by actual three dimensionality.

It is not surprising that it is in the 0 through 9 paintings that Johns explores the interrelationships of outline enclosure and three dimensional effects of brush stroke in particularly Impressionist terms. In the series of 0 through 9 paintings of 1961, Johns varies the distribution of color, tone, brushstroke, and texture within and outside of the figure. In 0 through 9 in the Hirshhorn collection Johns has used not only the broader brushed splotches of color among the lines which delineate the figure, he also uses small round dot brush strokes in sets of various colors and sizes, distributed in conjunction with the patterns of enclosure and the splotches. These openwork patterns of dots play across and fill in areas while letting sight through. They elaborate on the visual activity, color, and spatial effect without interfering with the great figure or its ground which constitute the main structure of the painting. They suggest one of Renoir's two light/color systems seen in such works as Nude in Sunlight, not the one which provides shading and establishes the volume of the figure, but the one which, representing the cast light of the sun, provides the dappled spots which play across figure and ground. Johns' dots also bring to mind, as do all his various types of brush touches in these works, the various brush touches used by Renoir to build up the

figure and connote also the systematized and theoretical extension of that system in the work of the Neo-impressionist Seurat, who reduced the idiosyncratic brushmarks of his mentors to small clear round dots and subjected their coloristic and numerical distribution to strictly rational control. In both Slow Field (fig. 58) and Diver of 1962, Johns includes a passage of strict, regularized polka dot work among the otherwise free, large scale, explosive brushwork.

In 0 through 9 in the Titleman collection, Johns introduces as a third visual element not dots but color names, bringing all the questions of space, brush stroke, and color of False Start into play with the additional problems of large scale figure painting. Having both turned to the incorporation of actual volumes by the inclusion of attached objects and banished the question of volume by representing flat models, Johns in 0 through 9 retains only the vague connotation of massiveness proper to visual patterns in which a large figure dominated a field.

Issues of traditional figure painting were explored in Abstract Expressionism by Willem DeKooning; the style, like Impressionism, giving little support to the use of line as enclosure and enclosed shape as figure, or to the use of tonal gradation as the representation of volume. DeKooning's famous Woman I of 1950-52

(often felt to be an anomaly within Abstract Expressionism) shows, as does Renoir's Nude in Sunlight and Johns' 0 through 9 a large figure within a vertical rectangular field. DeKooning does not allow a general outline to prevail which would differentiate his woman as an object from her background; figure and ground are allowed to merge ambivalently, the visual effect Renoir retreated from and Picasso in early Cubism welcomed and exploited. Certain parts of the body, however, lend themselves to being drawn by means of large oval enclosures, and these, the head and breasts, do so precisely because they are the parts which, in the actual woman, exist most emphatically as rounded volumetric solids in space. Because of their representational subject matter therefore, these shapes in DeKooning's painting read as volumetric, and any tonal emphasis, such as the heavier line and darker paint to the side of the face and under the breasts reads as shading. It is more by the change in the nature of the figure represented than by change in the paint handling per se, or by a change from representation to pure abstraction, that Johns excludes the illusion of tonal variation as shading to show volume in his figure paintings.

In terms of the relationship of the internal pictorial material to the field itself, Johns' choices in 0 through 9 are, as Renoir's extremely traditional.

Impressionism as a movement saw the invention of radically new compositions, however, especially in the work of Degas and Manet. Johns in his earliest works and in certain aspects of his later ones, avoids assymetrical compositional balances and radical cropping such as Degas used, as well as, of course, unorthodox angles of view, since he refuses to specify single viewing points altogether. This he does in an effort to emphasize the object nature of the painting, along with the planarity of the canvas surface. Johns has said that he dislikes putting visual elements in the center of their fields, a statement hard to reconcile with such works as the targets, until one understands Johns' distinction between the artist's willfully putting something in the center, as against something merely being in a central place because of the nature of the object of which it is an organic part. Many of his earlier works have a center with some visual accent placed on it; most have at least a vertical axis around which they are organized. False Start lacks a central element and reduces the vertical axis to a mere implication of the vertical proportions of the canvas rectangle.

False Start consists visually of brush splotches evenly distributed all over the field. Seen as brush stroke and surface texture, these elements relate back through Abstract Expressionism directly to Monet's and

Renoir's Impressionist facture. Seen as compositional elements, the spots in their widespread placement and their lack of heirarchy refer back to Manet's compositional innovations such as Concert in the Tuileries of 1862 in which he strove to break down the traditional heirarchical organizational principles inherited from the renaissance. The scattering of the visual ascents in the canvas corresponds to the scattering of people and trees in the crowded park; Manet keeps only the distinction between top and bottom appropriate to a painting which still represents figures in space. Spatially, Manet conspicuously avoids all subject matter elements which might read perspectivally, and though the further figures are smaller than the nearer, the space itself does not seem to funnel vision, nor to focus it. Other painters of groups of figures, Degas in his Orchestra of the Paris Opera of 1868 and Renoir in Dancing at the Moulin de la Galette of 1876 used related arrangements.

Johns used the numeral as subject matter to first elaborate on the non-heirarchical multi-figure composition just as he had used it to explore the single large figure composition. In his number and alphabet grids, the non-volumetric nature of the numeral as subject matter is as important as it is in the single figures and **0** through 9 paintings. Furthermore, the a-spatial nature of the grid itself allows Johns to express the expansive

as well as the non-heirarchical character of a group of figures, equating the distribution back in space still present in Manet's concert audience entirely to distribution across an expanse of surface. This is essentially the same kind of transformation Johns effected in landscape with the Map paintings.

Only in the very expressive and powerful Passage and Out the Window Number 2, Land's End, and Periscope does Johns introduce radically assymetrical placement of dominant visual elements, and also radical cropping of figures. These two characteristics are prominent in the work of Edgar Degas. Degas' Place de la Concorde includes four main human figures and a dog. As shapes within the field, they and other, background, material are arranged so as to set up dramatic and tension-filled relationships across intervals of expanse. As human images, they are cropped off by the frame in untraditional ways, again resulting in an arresting and tension-producing visual presentation. The poses of the figures and their physical positions in relation to each other carry very strong indications of their individual psychological states and psychological interrelationships. The visual form and the characters depicted in Place de la Concorde set up an intense, slightly disturbing, yet wholly unspecified narrative drama.

This is also the case in Johns' Land's End, com-

posed notably like Degas' Place de la Concorde with one main figure half cropped by the vertical side frame and another related to it lower and across the field, with three secondary figures distributed about them. The human figure character of the device and its scrape and also the "diver", the long stripes with hand prints, are clear from Johns' own iconological associations. More immediately, the interaction in Land's End of device, "diver", and color name words; and in Passage of the real objects ruler device, wired fork, envelope, scrape, iron print, and color names; carries the same enigmatic but intense sense of dramatic psychological interaction typical of Degas' work.

False Start, the first painting in which Johns begins to explore formal questions and questions of meaning within the context of painting's historical background, refers by its title to Degas; Johns has said only that he got the title from a "racing print" he "saw in a bar";[4] it must have been Degas' famous and much reproduced painting of 1869-72 in the collection of John Hay Whitney, The False Start.

Notes; Aspects of Johns' False Start related to Monet, Renoir, and Impressionism

[1] Max Kozloff notes Johns' relationship to Guston (whose work he relates back to Mondrian's because of its compositional structure) in terms of a similar desire "to transmute concrete material into some etherially charged, unutterably refined, sentient substance" which inspires a similar facture. (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969, p.16.)

Barbara Rose says of Johns' flags and "iconic" paintings of the late 1950s, "Not only the facture but the physical characterof the surface, with its sensuous impasto, was reminiscent of mature Impressionism -- the original source for the all over style in painting. By reaching straight back behind the modern styles of the 20th century to redeem what was still viable in late Impressionism, Johns gained access to an all over style that was one of Pollock's sources without necessarily having to deal with Pollock's art directly." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part I", Artforum 8, No.7, March 1970, p.39.)

[2] Barbara Rose points out a relationship between Johns' flag paintings and Monet's work both formally and iconographically. In a discussion substantiating her observation that Johns' early subject matter choices, flags, targets, and numerals, could be related respectively to the traditional subject matter catagories of landscape, still life, and figure painting, she states: "The graphic scribbles in drawings of the flag simulate a grassy field, as do the minute Impressionist brushstrokes in... Flag on Orange Field." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work I", p.41.)

Later she elaborates "If we accept the flower image established through a pun (flag=iris), Monet's Field of Red Poppies comes to mind as a possible source for the sunny Impressionist landscape Johns has created ..." (Barbara Rose, "The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part II", Artforum, 9.No.1, Sept.1970, p.71.)

[3] In First Etchings, 1967-1969. The set contains two prints depicting ale cans.

The use of the cylinder in these works is one solution to the problem of the other side of the back of the painting: the cylinder is a form of two dimensional surface which does not, technically, have a back. The issue had come up in other manifestations in Johns' work including the early Canvas in which the back of the small canvas becomes a front as it becomes the pictorial image within the larger canvas, and Disappearance II in which a cloth adhered to the stretched canvas rectangle is folded inward

so its "back" becomes the "front" -- the surface presented to the viewer -- and its "front" --the forward surface before folding -- is folded in upon itself. Fool's House, the earliest painting to overtly broach the issue of cylindricality of the canvas plane, incorporates both these images, in the stretcher and towel at its lower edge. All of these are works in which Johns has focused on the issue of the actual physical three dimensionality of the canvas as an object. Johns said "one of the extreme problems of paintings as objects is the other side -- the back -- it can't be solved; it's in the nature of the work." (Quoted by Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, Abrams and Whitney Museum, 1977, p.34.)

[4] Max Kozloff refers off handedly to "False Start's self depricating title, which was coincidentally suggested by a horse racing print in a bar." (Max Koxloff, Jasper Johns, p.26.)

Michael Crichton specifies that it was the Cedar Bar, a favorite of the Abstract Expressionists. He says "The title came accidentally. The artist was sitting in the Cedar Bar, saw a racing print titled 'False Start", and took that for the name of his own painting. But most observers have sensed a reference to the artist's state of mind, or his feelings while working." (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p.38.)

The assertion that " the title came accidentally" is yet another instance of Johns dissociating himself from the role of active and controlling creator in the generation of his works, and eschewing any emotional or biographical content in the work or its title. This attitude, and Johns' avoidence of portraying himself as a painter enormously well versed in art history have disinclined observers to explore the matter further. Like the splashy, free wheeling manner in which False Start is painted, the story of the artist hanging around in the Cedar Bar calls to mind the popular image of Jackson Pollock.

SECTION THREE: IMAGERY AND MEANING IN FALSE START, JUBILEE, AND DEVICE CIRCLE

Part One: False Start and Jubilee

It has been noted above that the composition used in False Start and Jubilee is homogeneous and non-episodic. The question of what accounts for the distribution of visual elements ("composition") is raised by False Start because this type of arrangement in general, and especially in this particular work, seems perfunctory and meaningless--undifferentiated and unarticulated, and thus indifferent and inarticulate, the rote application of a painting process.[1] The placement of the visual elements does not appear to have been the result of intentionality and control--designed--and therefore the pattern does not seem to be a meaningful configuration ideationally, a "composition". On the other hand, the relative placement does not seem to have been achieved following decisions made during the process of physical making and visual/emotional responding, and therefore does not seem emotionally meaningful either. It appears thus to be intellectually and emotionally dumb. The configuration has been called chance and random, which it cannot possibly be since it is the product of human action.

The question remains as to what, in fact, accounts for Johns' visual structuring of False Start and Jubilee;

what attitude of the artist lies behind and conditions the creative force which has prompted the physical making. It has been observed that Johns in these works and others refers to all the major modes of creativity involved in the production of visual art in the twentieth century, and to many of their characteristic physical manifestations. He seeks, however, to hold them in solution, maintaining for himself a noncommittal relationship to specific attitudes and producing works of paradoxical nature, enigmatic appearance, and uncertain personal valence.

The visual form in False Start and Jubilee clearly indicates that Johns is at this point, in 1959, addressing most pointedly Abstract Expressionism. He is, secondly, as in earlier work, raising basic questions of the nature of painting and the nature of the way paintings bear their meanings. Third he is seeking to examine, as he continues to do in his work into the early 1960's, the relationship of the painting to the painter, the nature of the activity of painting itself, and the notion of authorship.

The clear generic resemblance of False Start to works of Abstract Expressionism, along with the absence of anything which would clearly indicate that it be classified with any other stylistic school, encourage the viewer to identify it as an Abstract Expressionist type work. Various writers have made this assumption

and proceeded to criticize Johns' work against standards derived specifically from Abstract Expressionist assumptions. For very many paintings made by young painters in 1959, this approach would have been appropriate. However, certain aspects of False Start and Jubilee, also manifest in the visual form though less immediately conspicuous, indicate that the works depart significantly from Abstract Expressionism, and that the artist is not simply acting as an Abstract Expressionist as he paints.[2]

In the context of the strong formal reference to Abstract Expressionism, the most unsettling aspect of False Start and Jubilee is the absence of content assumedly carried by that form. Since Abstract Expressionism is essentially a non-figurative style, the question of content has, from the beginning, not been one of iconology in the conventional sense. The manner in which the painter's marks bear their meaning is fundamentally different from that of figurative, non "abstract" styles, just as the meaning they bear is different from non "expressionist" styles.

In the few figurative images that Abstract Expressionism produced (such as DeKooning's Women and Pollock's early Guardians of the Secret and later Portrait and a Dream) the painted marks still have relatively greater importance as independent painterly formal elements per se rather

than as contributors to a more perfect mimesis. This, along with the deliberate use of painterly means to obscure rather than explicate the objects depicted and to manipulate the visual appearance of the painting for non-mimetic ends, indicates that even in the figurative works of Abstract Expressionism, the painting's content is not bourne simply by what is represented. This is not to say, however, that content was of no concern to the Abstract Expressionist artist, as has sometimes been erroneously implied. In Abstract Expressionism, the meanings carried by the painter's marks are very important: they represent, (in the sense of "stand for" or "refer to") at one level, specific things not of a physical and visual nature such as emotions, states of emotion, and emotive ideas--and, at another level, the physical activities undergone in the process of painting which occurred as a response to the stimulation of things at the first level. The common association of motion and emotion, and the identification of freely brushed marks as carriers of both has been described above; it is as old as the works of Delacroix. This association is the essential link in Abstract Expressionism between form and content, the strokes visible on the canvas recording like the graph produced by a seismograph the motion of the artist's hand driven by his feelings.

Against the background of Abstract Expressionism

provided both by the apologia of its critics and by the enormous, flamboyant, and emotionally convincing examples produced by its great practitioners, False Start looks pedestrian and mediocre. The brushwork in its repetitiveness, the splotches in their uneventful and unexciting distribution through the field signify not an impassioned painter responding by necessity to great emotions with inspired gestures, but rather a dispassionate craftsman making his way across the surface driven by nothing more cataclysmic than the enjoyment of doing his job.[3]

The shapes in False Start which are stenciled names connote, even more than the brushy splotches, the absent-minded, emotionless application of paint by means that are actually mechanical. They no longer include, even at the physical level, the idiosyncratic vagaries considered by Abstract Expressionism enormously meaningful and essential to content in painting. To False Start as an Abstract Expressionist work, the color names function not merely as a formal anomaly but, in terms of the connotation of the spirit in which they are painted, an essential refutation. The matter-of-fact rendering, and the obviousness of associating color name with color spot give the painting a guise of objectiveness which seems in context aggressively superficial and stupid, as when a judicious cataloger in an anthropological

museum attaches labels to artifacts that in another culture are mysterious and sacred.

That Johns questions and casts doubt on the principles of Abstract Expressionism even while ostensibly making a painting on their basis is typical of his visual Socratic method. In False Start, it is as if Johns is faithfully participating in the Mass while refraining from believing in God; in it he breaks the conventional association assumed necessarily to prevail between loose brushwork and emotional intensity, and thus disproves what had come to be the main validating principle of Abstract Expressionism.

Since Johns in False Start takes up a position at a distance from Abstract Expressionism, the question arises that if the work is not a genuine Abstract Expressionist work, and yet is not clearly anything else, then it may be an Abstract Expressionist work but a false one: a fake, a sham, or a reproduction. The questions of identity and negation of identity figure heavily in Johns' work, and are related to the question of pictorial representation. Johns is here working with a most curious and problemmatical aspect of the nature of painting as something which necessarily has a physical/visual form, but for which that form does not constitute its whole (for Abstract Expressionism, even its major) value. It is not the object itself but the

references made by that object and therefore the referential significance of the object which Johns calls into question with False Start.

In examining the question of content in painting, the total meaning carried by a work, Johns distinguishes between information and knowledge, information being the content of the work considered from the standpoint of that which the work presents, and knowledge being the content of the work considered from the standpoint of the viewer's experience of it. Johns distinguishes specifically between identity and identification, the first an inherent property of the object and the second an interpretive assessment of the object made by someone who confronts it, and brings both the object and the means used to identify it into question.[4]

In False Start, by including spots which are certain colors, and words which name certain colors, Johns presents the same information in two different visual modes, knowledge of which is gained by two different modes of human reception, the direct sensory and the intellectual/interpretive.[5]

The use of words to carry information allows Johns, as he has done in Jubilee, to create a situation in which all the colors are present ideationally although not optically.[6] In this he goes beyond Mondrian, who had reasoned that by including all the primaries one

thereby includes all possible colors and tones because every other color and tone may be mixed from, and is therefore represented by, red, blue, yellow, black and white. By including his colors by means of color names, Johns in Jubilee works between the intellectual and the sensual, between that which may be read and that which may be seen. Mondrian (although he assumed that whatever was sensed by the eye would be intellectually identified and understood in its theoretical nature, the full range of coloristic and tonal possibilities represented by the set of what are recognized as and known to be its irreducable components) still presented all his information by sensual means rather than verbal, intellectual means.[7]

Johns, by confining the colors in his painting to the primaries and secondaries, explicitly confirms Mondrian's use of the theoretical system, but he also mocks it, and also questions it. By including his colors by means of words as well as colors, he extends the specifically intellectual element in the conveyance of information in a way Mondrian would not have done. Intellectual in its nature and spiritual in its impact, Mondrian's conception of color universality nevertheless had to be presented exclusively in sensory terms. In Johns' work, the conjunction of spots of certain colors with labels which name other colors calls into question the very nature of apprehension of identity of the

pictorial elements, and leaves the viewer hanging in the dilemma of whether to accept the knowledge gained through his senses or that contributed by his intellect. By painting his color names on colors which often are not the colors they name, Johns points up an essential, almost universally overlooked aspect of color in painting, which is that under no conditions can there ever be simply "a color", but rather only an area of paint, a substance, which is colored, a visual property of that substance. This completes a line of exploration followed by Johns earlier when, in his White Flag, he presented a colorless monochrome image of a subject often called "the colors". By the erroneous names and the contradictory verbal and optical information he gives in False Start and Jubilee, Johns brings to the viewer's awareness the fact that knowledge of the painting and understanding that he formulates upon it are drawn at his own risk.

Johns again juxtaposes the intellectual and the sensual, the information written and read against information directly sensed in Painting with Ruler and "Gray" of 1960. This painting expands upon Device Circle of 1959, the painting most closely associated with False Start. The word "gray" in the title has a double meaning; it simultaneously refers to that which is directly sensed, the gray coloration of the Jubilee

type painting which forms the basis of the work, and to something which is understood in an entirely different way. The device in Device Circle was a stick; in Painting with Ruler and "Gray" it is a ruler, attached at mid-point to pivot before the canvas. In addition to the ruler, Painting with Ruler and "Gray" has also attached to its surface a vertical wooden stick, perhaps a slat from a crate containing gray paint, which is stenciled with the word "gray". Thus the word "gray" in the title refers to the object which is named a "gray", counterpart to the similar object known as a ruler. Johns thus gives the slat a generic and perhaps even a personal name and gives it an identity; the viewer identifies it by reading its label.

By the use of the ruler for the device, which occurs again in Device of 1962 (fig. 59), Good Time Charley , Out the Window Number 2, and Passage, Johns joins the measuring implement with the freely smeared paint area which the device makes in its movement across the canvas. The ruler represents those rational and theoretical systems by which distance may be understood in terms of its component modules and may be measured and thus grasped intellectually in finite terms. As such, it is a counterpart to red, blue, and yellow as a theoretical system by which color may be understood in terms of its irreducable component elements. The ruler spans the

arc-shaped area over which it moves just as the red, yellow, and blue rectangles span the canvas in Out the Window; while that area is simultaneously occupied by the freely smeared, varigated scrape of paint just as Out the Window is filled with freely brushed splotches of paint.

In a similar vein, in Thermometer of 1959 and Water Freezes of 1961 (fig.60) a thermometer is set vertically into a False Start or Jubilee canvas, spanning it. In Thermometer, numbers indicating Farenheit and Centigrade degrees are stenciled in the field flanking the thermometer. Again, the measuring device with its systematic gradations and its capacity to translate undifferentiated sensible material (here heat rather than dimension) into specifiable terms which may be grasped by the intellect is placed against the free painterly work.[8] The association of heat with the False Start type painting is a reference to the emotionalism assumed to be carried by the gestural brushwork. Johns calls much attention to the assumption here by putting a real heat measuring implement to gauge exactly how hot it really is. Against the work of the Abstract Expressionists, who had been popularly characatured as spilling excessively autobiographical and emotion-laden psychic material onto the canvas in untrammeled and unregulated orgasms of fiery brushwork, Johns' work of the late 1950's was

heralded as an alternative and described as the new "cool" art.[9] Johns stated at this time that his work was objective and impersonal. If Johns' work is understood to reverse and cast doubt upon Abstract Expressionism as a historical development, then Water Freezes commemorates the reverse possibility countering "Jackson broke the ice".

Contradictory information is given in many of Johns' paintings, often by systems which are themselves of two different natures, but both equally reputable, as are the words and spots in False Start. This has been observed in works before False Start such as Flag above White and Drawer, where the information about three dimensionality contributed by the visual information is countered by that contributed by the object depicted, and the final assessment depends entirely on what the viewer sees the painting as.[10]

The painting No exemplifies this theme, equating, by pun, the whole concept of knowledge with negation.[11] Liar (1961, fig. 61) refers to the possibility of untruth told in the convincing guise of truth, visually presenting something which appears to be what it actually is not. Johns here reminds us that such is the nature of all illusionistic art, which Plato long ago abhored for being a convincing liar.

The dual question of information and knowledge is an inherent one for painting, clearly recognized to be so

in figurative work, where the visual configuration replicates the visible appearance of some model from the external world. Johns expands the question of representation, raising it not only for figurative but also abstract images by questioning the relationship between object, image of object, and image of image; and also, simultaneously, demonstrating the contingent nature of knowledge of which is which.[12] The double nature of the identity of colors, intellectual and sensual, in False Start and Jubilee brings up the issue of representation and the illusion involved in it when the visibly erroneous labels are taken as the names of the spots they label despite the fact that they are discernably wrong. The best known predecessor for this aspect of False Start is René Magritte's The Wind and the Song of 1929 in which he wrote "this is not a pipe" beneath a picture of a pipe, reminding the viewer that even the most convincingly realistic picture is still not the real thing; the label is in fact attached to an oil painted image, not a pipe.[13] By presenting as his labeled elements spots of colored pigment which one tends to think of as colors per se, rather than images of objects, Johns has, following Mondrian, reduced painting to its pure painterly elements in the category of color, achieving as Mondrian did, an abstract work. Mondrian was aware, as Magritte was, of the dichotomous

nature of mimetic painting. Since Mondrian, like Plato, believed that because it presented the mere superficial appearance of objects of the physical world, such painting was a lie, thus morally corrupt. Mondrian thus took the same observation as made by Magritte and acted upon it, purging from his work the representation of objects from the physical world in order to achieve pure painting that was irreducable, and thus "true". Mondrian's works therefore do not depict, represent, or refer to any other visible thing as a model; they are modeled after the theoretical conceptualization of the absolute components of painting. Johns' False Start and Jubilee, though equally devoid of mimetic representations of objects such as pipes, may be said to include "representations" of certain painterly "things", namely color spots. By means of the pictorial illusion achieved with word labels for the "things" in the painting, Johns frames the paradox much more closely, and more disconcertingly, than Magritte. This is not a pipe but a picture of a pipe; this is not red, as the label says, but blue or this is not blue, as it appears to be, but red, as it is named. In Jubilee, this is rendered in black and white, but it is a picture of a red spot, as one can tell from the label. Magritte's painting is not a pipe though it depicts a pipe. Mondrian's Tableau I is an abstract complex of visual form which does not depict anything.

Johns' False Start and Jubilee simultaneously are abstract paintings and represent abstract paintings. Their overlapping double identity allows them to, for instance, look like Abstract Expressionist paintings in their superficial visible appearance but not be Abstract Expressionist paintings.

The many instances of concealment of meaningful visible material, and its counterpart, the open exposure of material whose meaning cannot be discerned because it has been given without any comprehensible context, show Johns' constant manipulation of information and possible knowledge. The layering which constitutes an important aspect of Johns' formal structuring has a profound meaning as a mechanism to allow simultaneously for the inclusion of information and the frustration of knowledge.[14] The overpainted news print in his collage works, the red, yellow, and blue color which lies beyond the gray of Jubilee, the stretcher characteristic of the back of the canvas presented as a front on Fool's House, the inward folded cloth also there, from the earlier Disappearance, In Memory of My Feelings--Frank O'Hara's capacity to close up, painting inside, all show evidence of this.

Most disconcerting are those works in which objects both real and realistic are clearly identifiable while their significance and the meaning of the relationships

between them is obscure: in Fool's House and in Passage those things which any fool could already identify have also been obligingly labeled with written names causing the intensely emotion-laden drama of their interaction to seem even more urgent for being ignored and even more irritatingly baffling for remaining unexplained. As often, Johns pits one thing against its opposite, that which gives knowledge and that which withholds it, that which conceals and that which reveals.

The dispassionate position and methodical attitude vis a vis the works and the act of painting, crossed with the maddeningly paradoxical or frustratingly incomprehensible nature of the works themselves, make it seem to be the case that they and the elements of which they are constituted live a life of their own, not determined and not limited by the artist. This has been acknowledged by Johns and noticed by others.[15] As a result, truths about the nature of the artist and his role in making art assumed by Abstract Expressionism, which made it possible to value the stroke of his brush as itself the ultimately valuable component of painting, and painting's essential raison d'etre, are called into question. Consequently, the most powerful of Johns' works are those which are most poignantly paradoxical in their nature, the great

quadrad of 1962-63, Passage, Out the Window Number 2, Periscope, and Land's End, which seem to be expressive statements of enormous, turmoiled, and mortally serious emotions, the author of which is not so much a controlling creator but a controlled victim.

Johns said in 1965

> "I think that one wants from a painting a sense of life. The final suggestion, the final statement, has to be not a deliberate statement, but a helpless statement. It has to be what you can't avoid saying, not what you set out to say."[16]

Notes; Imagery and meaning in False Start and Jubilee

[1] Max Kozloff sees the early all over gray field paintings as being "matter of factly executed of methodical brushwork, the purpose of which is to cover the surface". Later he observes of False Start "It is impossible to say that this is a distinctly warm or cool painting, a deep or shallow space, a controlled or abandoned composition -- for the reason that all contrasts are allocated an equal play so as to neutralize one another. An agitated picture that speaks only of a consciously fabricated impasse." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, New York, Abrams, 1969, pp. 20, 26-27.)

[2] Robert Rosenblum used a discussion of Johns' work in 1960 to assess the "difficult plight of younger painters" as a choice between following Abstract Expressionism at the risk of producing only "minor embellishments on major themes", or turn away from it to "reconsider the question of painting's reference to the prosaic realities" it had banished. He saw Johns as a strong member of the latter group. (Robert Rosenblum, "Jasper Johns", Art International, 4, No.7, Sept 1960, p.75.)

Max Kozloff has seen the earlier paintings such as the flags and targets as clearly anti-Abstract Expressionist, because they manifestly show less "florid gesturing", because they are signs used as such, and because the pattern afforded by such predetermined visual configurations is "nonrelational". (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns,p.12.)

With False Start, by using a visual form so close to Abstract Expressionism as to be identifyable with it, Johns constructs a much more pointed interrogation of the style based on a finely tuned dichotomy of nature and identity rather than simply inventing an alternative to it.

Clement Greenberg in 1962 summarized, in his view, the main line of development from early Abstract Expressionism through its successors, touching on Johns as an interesting painter headed for a dead end, singing "the swan song of homeless representation". Greenberg is still discussing Johns work in terms of flags and targets, although he had by this time painted False Start and Jubilee, Device Circle, and many related works. Reviewing the dichotomy in Johns' flags, etc., between the figurative content of flat pattern versus the nonrepresentational use of illusionistic tonal variation, Greenberg dismisses all with "I do not mean to imply that the effectiveness of Johns' painting depends on a device... but the fact that so much may be explained ... without the exertion of any particular powers of insight would indicate a certain narrowness." Johns, judiciously well read and also particularly sensitive to art critic's failure to take the

time and intellectual effort necessary to fully grasp his work, titled a painting finished in that year "Device". (Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism", Art International, 6, No.8, Oct.1962, p.24.)

Reviewing Johns' exhibition in 1963, Michael Fried accurately noted the painter's work "begins to mock the mannerisms of Abstract Expressionism". His work thus turns from being an attempt to "solve the formal problems inherent in Abstract Expressionism" to "heightening and showing off the problem itself". He observes Johns' stick and ruler devices as "clearly meant as a mechanical-ironic paradigm of deKooning's dragging brush and paint smeared texture." (Michael Fried, in Art International, 7, No.2, Feb.1963.)

[3] Johns proposed, in his sketchbook notes:
"Take a canvas.
Put a mark on it.
Put another mark on it.
" " " " "
The spirit of the remarks, matter of fact and oriented to the successive rote execution of acts of making, is much in the spirit of False Start despite its bright colors and brushy details.
(Jasper Johns, "Sketchbook Notes", Art and Literature, 4, Spring 1965, p.192.)

[4] Johns' very early interest in identity and identification, and the role played by intellectual grasp of the visual configuration presented; as well as his distinction between knowledge and information which is not known, not grasped, or not remembered, is revealed in his remarks about using things "the mind already knows" which gave him "room to work on different levels". (above, Section One, Part Two). To G.R. Swenson Johns said: "I am concerned with a thing's not being what it was, with its becoming something other than what it is, with any moment in which one identifies a thing precisely and with the slipping away of that moment, with at any moment seeing or saying, and letting it go at that." (G.R. Swenson, "What is Pop Art? Part II", Art News, 62, no.10, Feb.1964, p.40.)

[5] Richard Field's understanding of the color names in False Start I and II (lithographs) includes the observation that there are two seperate systems by which information is carried but he seems to miss the significance of the juxtaposition of the two; "Somehow these contradictions fail to disturb. At first they are not seen, and when perceived they are not accepted as two or three systems of perception. It does not matter that the word BLUE is stenciled in

yellow; the word 'glass' does not have to be made out of glass to be meaningful in a given context."

It is exactly the fact that one uses the word glass and the material glass in different contexts that Johns works with here, illuminating and exploring the circuitous intellectual-referential nature of the written word as a carrier of information.

Field asserts the word BLUE "speaks only about itself, and has very definite formal purposes, namely those of scale and plane". He concludes "We do not feel compelled or even able to bridge the gap between the communications systems of labels and paint strokes. We are led to understand that art produces its own field of acceptance and that we are all too ready to believe -- or refuse to question -- the ingredients of a work of art." (Richard S. Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970, New York: Praeger and Philadelphia Museum, 1970, unpaginated.)

I feel that the juxtaposition of the two systems and the contradictions between the information they convey tends to elicit not acceptance but protest in the viewer, therefore bringing sharply to his attention the presence of two contradictory systems, and also his role in determining the painting's content.

Michael Crichton insightfully observes that Johns' description of Duchamp's work as operating in "a field where language, thought, and vision actupon one another" is "not a bad description of Johns' own concerns." (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, P.40.)

[6] Johns said "It (False Start) started with an idea about color. The decisions in the painting aren't based on visual sensation primarily. The idea is that the names of colors will be scattered about on the surface of the canvas and there will be blotches of color more or less on the same scale, and that one will have all the colors -- but all the colors by name, more than by visual sensation." (Quoted by Michael Crichton in Jasper Johns, p.39.)

[7] Max Kozloff sees the relationship between the sensual and the intellectual in Johns' work in this way: "His virtuoso paint handling functions as a mask, an attractive feint concealing identities rather than existing as an independent measure of his outlook. It is... a self cancelling use of seduction, for although highly tactile and concrete, it justifies itself more by being known than by being directly experienced, and more as a passage to mental gratification than as an immediate physical reward." Later he notes "False Start... is a tissue of conflicts between what is seen, in which the mind is bid to fuse that which the eye has no difficulty distinguishing." (Max Kozloff, Jasper

Johns, pp. 10, 27.)

In my view Johns' understanding of the sensual and the intellectual in painting is carried with profound impact precisely because he presents material in such a way that neither of the two dominates; neither carries all relevant material, and each contradicts, and therefore brings into question, the efficacy of the other. The viewer's experience as Johns has structured it is not as simple a situation as Kozloff sketches, in which "being known"="mental gratification" and "being directly experienced"="immediate physical reward". There are not two but four components in the experiencing of False Start, which are (1) direct experience of material apprehended via direct sensual perception, (2) direct experience of material apprehended by means of cognitive de-coding of learned signs, and (3) conscious consideration of the directly sensually preceived material, and (4) conscious consideration of the intellectually perceived material, in an effort to balance or reconcile them. Both the last two fall into Kozloff's catagory of "being known" and constitute that dimension of the life of the work of art which resides within the viewer's consciousness and must be therefore classed as "mental". In other words, Johns distingushes between the sensual and the intellectual at both the level of information given and that of knowledge received.

[8] Steinberg notes that instruments of differentiation (ruler, thermometer) interrupt paintings "whose homogeneity cannot acknowledge their calibrations". (Leo Steinberg, Jasper Johns, New York, Wittenborn, 1963.)

[9] Irving Sandler wrote, in an article called "The New Cool Art" that Johns and Ad Reinhardt were its progenitors. He specifes there that though Johns in his flags, targets, letters, and numbers uses rich brushwork, it is not Abstract Expressionist in its emotionalism but rather shows "the dispassionate exercise of picture making" which has resulted in "the look of action painting without its romantic content". (Irving Sandler, "The New Cool Art", Art in America, 53, Feb. 1965, p.96.

[10] Michael Crichton notes " With Johns, the issues of perception -- of what you see, and why, and how you decide what you are looking at -- are not merely questions to be decided in order to produce some final effect. They are instead the focus of the work itself. There is no final effect beyond these issues. There are only the issues, made concrete in one form or another." (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p. 72.)

[11] Michael Crichton adds "The title pun on 'know'... reminds one of Virchow's classic comment 'We see what we know.'"(Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p.50.) This, of course, points again to the theme in Johns' work of the contrast between information given versus knowledge of it, and also the theme of the subjective and contingent nature of visual perception. Virchow's statement, like Johns', would seem as much its author's description of the human condition in general as that of a person's response to confrontation with a particular visual datum. The negational no=know association in Johns' painting seems to me a statement very close to T.S. Eliot's

" In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to posess what you do not posess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not,
You must go through the way in which you are not,
And what you do not know is the only thing you know...

(T.S. Eliot, "East Coker" III from Four Quartets, 1943.)

[12] Refering to work of 1962, Richard Field discusses Johns' use of print media to make images of objects which are themselves images, specifically, his own paintings: "Painting with Two Balls I (a print) ... is called 'painting precisely because the drawing which serves as its intermediary is so titled (it in turn is based on a painting)... The suggestion of a painterly surface (is) achieved through the overlapping, brushed-on tusche ... for all these painterly qualities, the lithograph differs fundamentally from its prototype in oil, setting up a tension within the artists own work. After all, the illusion of a painting (ie the lithograph) is quite different from the experience of the original painting.

Field goes on to explain that a determinant difference between the two has to do with the question of three dimensionality. The painting is experienced as a volumetric object, with a "finite and tangible" actual space in which the balls are set, against the "indefinite space of the opening depicted in the lithograph". Field also recognizes the role played by surface texture in the spatial aspect of the painting: "the painting, with its tactile surface, keeps limiting the viewer's perception of depth and projection, while the lithograph, in spite of the spectators awareness of the flatness of the paper, exploits the ambiguities of unlimited space". (Richard Field, Jasper Johns Prints, unpaginated.)

[13] Max Kozloff pointed out "René Magritte had already shown in his The Wind and The Song... that an object and its representation cannot, strictly speaking, be referred to by the same word. He emphasized the fiction of the art of painting by announcing the difference between two sets of facts. Johns heightens the same problem by doing away with representation, and yet equating the included verbal statement with an actual sensuous element: the word "red" may be looked upon merely as a new container for the color orange." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p.27.)

[14] Max Kozloff said of the aspect of frustration: "the condition of closure, denial, and concealment runs like a leitmotiv through (Drawer, Shade, and related paintings) evoking ...a low pressure frustration... They speak of content turned away from the gaze, or veiled." He concludes therefore that "Whatever is added to or projects from the surface exists merely to advertise that hidden activity which symbolizes the artist's private self involvement, or ...his resistance to being understood." (Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, 21.)

[15] Johns has always maintained the attitude that he himself was only minimally causal in his own creations, attributing much of what is generally considered to come from the artist's inner vision to some mundane exterior source, and ascribing what is generally considered an act of genius, or at least intention, to an accident of circumstance.

"By selecting a previous composition (for Alley Oop) he visually emphasizes the arbitrary nature of the decision. But beyond this, we sense another aspect of Johns personality and his methods. Again and again, we see Johns define his concerns by strictly limiting his own contribution and by employing arbitrary devices for everything else. If he needs an image he chooses something in the public domain: if he needs letters, he takes unremarkable stencils not of his making. If he needs color, he tries to find a way to make the selection happen according to some fixed rule he is not responsible for. He never seems to walk the gang plank of personal preference; the decisions in his work can all be explained by some logical, impersonal plan". (Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns, p.35.)

Other conspicuous instances of this are Johns' statement that the flag image came to him in a dream, the title of False Start came from the accidental encounter with a print in a casual environment, and that he left the lower strip of canvas bare in Tango and other paintings because it was too hard to bend down to paint the bottom. He wanted to photograph an imitation flagstone wall he had

accidentally encountered in Harlem, but his great disappointment he could not locate it and was forced to invent his own. He said "if I could have traced it I would have felt secure that I had it right. Because what's interesting to me is the fact that it isn't designed, but taken. It's not mine." (Quoted by Michael Crichton, op.cit.,p.55.)

[16] Quoted by Walter Hopps, "An Interview with Jasper Johns", Artforum,3, No.6 (Mar. 1965)72.

SECTION THREE, Part Two: Device Circle

Device Circle is the earliest in a series of paintings made in the period between 1959 and 1964 that include some form of the "device", the stick attached to the face of a canvas in such a way that it can pivot, moving over the canvas in a circular pattern.

In Device Circle and Painting with Ruler and "Gray", the device is attached in the middle of the pictorial field. In Device and in later works, the attachment is moved to the outside border. The semicircular painted shape in the area over which the device moves is emphasized as being the scraped track left in the paint by its rotation. In Passage and Out the Window Number 2, the fork and spoon on coathanger wire are attached across the front of the canvas so that they block the arc of the device. In these works, along with Land's End and Periscope, the device and other objects occupy a canvas divided into sections labeled red, yellow, and blue, painted with strong gestural brushwork, as the device in the earlier Device Circle and Device occupied False Start type painted canvases.

Johns gives the first clue to an aspect of the meaning of the device in an elaboration which comes four years after its original inception, in Periscope. The general configuration and the specific details of composition and subject matter here are close to those

in the set which also includes Out the Window Number 2, Passage, and Land's End; but in Periscope in the familiar half-circular scrape in which Johns has led us to expect the attached slat, he gives instead an analogue. The device in this work is painted in, a long straight swipe with a handprint at its end. As a stand-in for the attached slat or ruler, it reveals that one aspect of the device is the human arm outstretched. As soon as this association is specified, the structural nature of the device, a long "arm" attached at one end to a pivot point about which it swings, is acknowledged to be directly analogous to the human arm, and is therefore anthropomorphic.

The arm-device equivalence established in Periscope is confirmed again more fully in a lithograph of 1963 called Hatteras (fig.62). In this work the device is the image of the whole human forearm, the arm as well as the hand having been printed from the body.[1] Hatteras, like many of the Device Circle paintings, features the tripartite horizontal divisions and color names. Across the whole lower margin of the pictorial field runs a measure, a calibrated band with an inch scale reading 1 to 28, right to left.

Another related work, a drawing of 1963, is called, as is the painting of 1963, Diver (fig. 63). Here the center of the field holds a central vertical double

stripe with two footprints near its top. Also arranged about the center, in the lower two-thirds of the center of the field, overlapping the vertical stripe, is the "diver" figure, a pair of straight marks set together like a V, with handprints at both ends of each. Each is divided at half its length, the upper sections are marked with arrows pointing downward. From the lower handprints, curving out and upward, are two scrape marks. These arcs are clearly drawn from a center that lies just where the bands are divided into halves, indicating that the lower sections rotate about those pivot points as would the familiar device. The scrapes are marked with directional arrows curving upward. In the painting Periscope, aspects of the diver figure had been incorporated into the device; in the drawing Diver, aspects of the device are incorporated into the diver. The diver is shown to have the capacity for radial motion, but the whole long member does not swing as one, rather half swings about its center. This is exactly the motion involved in the original device in Device Circle and Painting with Ruler and "Gray". In the drawing, Johns elaborates on the types and directions of movement he associated with the diver: ascent, descent, and the radial swing. Once invented, this figure, which is anthropomorphic but not representational in the direct mimetic sense, can be manipulated by the artist as an

abstract configuration unbound by demands of anatomical accuracy. In Land's End, as noted above, the drama of confrontation between the two characters, device and diver, is extremely intense.

The human limb aspect of the device becomes explicitly confirmed in certain works after 1963 which do not include the device as such. In Passage II of 1966 (fig.64) Johns attaches a cast of the knee to foot section of a human leg to the upper left end of the margin of the canvas. It is pierced through the ankle with a conspicuous bolt, suggesting radial movement even thought it is not accompanied by a scrape. This work conflates the old device idea used by Johns with a new element introduced in two works of 1964, According to What (fig.65) and Watchman. In these works, a cast of the human leg, foot to buttocks, along with the chair in which it sits, is hung from the top of the canvas in a position similar to that of the leg in Passage II. The name of Passage II clearly reveals that the 1966 work with its attached leg is related to the 1962 Passage with its device. A lithograph called Passage I of 1966 (fig. 66) repeats the painting Passage II, employing a direct reproduction of that work for its basis. The plate used for the lithograph Passage II was used again for the lithograph Decoy which was conceived in 1967 and completed in 1971 (fig. 67). For

Decoy, Passage I was turned on its side, so that the pierced leg resumes the point of attachment on the side of the pictorial field exactly like that of the earlier device.

A further elaboration of the device-as-human-limb occurs in Johns' 1965 Eddingsville (fig. 68). In the upper right of this vast canvas, there is a plaster cast of a human arm, the fingers of the hand visible, the rest covered with a cluster of attached objects (ale can, fork, hook, bent pan), most of them familiar from Johns' other work. Attached across the whole conglomeration, running the length of the arm, is a ruler. Here Johns explicitly and concretely equates the ruler device and the human arm by binding them together as a single entity. He also heaps this device arm with other objects which appear frequently in his personal iconography. In addition to the device arm, Eddingsville incorporates a painted version of the leg from Passage II.

It would appear that the anthropomorphic meaning of the device can be understood in a broader sense, as the human figure itself. In such a picture as Device, the device and its accompanying scrape appear as a figure incompletely included in the pictorial field, cropped by the canvas edge, as Degas had done in Place de la Concorde. In Painting with Ruler and "Gray", however,

and in Device Circle, where the device is centered, it is seen as a complete figure. Formally, the figure in Painting with Ruler and "Gray" resembles the human figure, with its central upright body and two outstretched arms. Seen as anthropomorphic, the device here strongly suggests Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man both in its form and as an idea.[2] Leonardo's figure poses the concept of man as measure of all things, and demonstrates how abstract geometric figures, circle and square, are implicit in the human anatomy, deriving from the paths in which the limbs move in their radial arcs about their points of attachment. Leonardo in his drawing associates anatomy and geometry: these modes of image making, the anatomical and the geometrical, are the two which Johns repeatedly combines, free gestural brushwork against bounded, clearly delineated geometric shapes; the ruler-device against its scrape, and the red, yellow, and blue rectangle system against the False Start field are primary examples. For Leonardo, the Renaissance artist and engineer, and for Vitruvius, the ancient architect who conveyed the concept Leonardo illustrated, man is the measure. Johns uses a ruler for his device, saying by means of a point blank visual pun, the measure is a man. One of the few times Johns has allowed himself to reveal his sources or preferences, the source was Leonardo; in the lithograph series of numbers made

at Gemini G.E.L. in 1968 (0 through 9) the Number 7 (fig.69) incorporates a picture of Leonardo's Mona Lisa, about which he commented "the Mona Lisa is one of my favorite paintings, and da Vinci is one of my favorite artists."[3] Significantly, the Number 7 includes not only the Leonardo reproduction, but a handprint. This element, which occurs in the Device Circle group at the point where the anthropomorphic imagery of the device emerges most overtly (Diver, Periscope, Land's End) does not occur in any other of the number images in the Gemini series.

A further aspect of the meaning of the anthropomorphic device is that it is a painter. Like the words "iron" and "scrape" in Passage, the word "painter" denotes both verbal and nominal aspects, and Johns understands the device in both senses. The device is a painter in as much as it is something which applies or spreads paint. Johns wrote in his sketchbook notes:

> Find ways to apply paint with simple movements of objects--the hand, a board, feather, string, sponge, rag, shaped tools, comb (and move the canvas against paint smeared objects).

The device-painter is clearly such an object for applying paint. The device is capable of motion, and continues to be the (potential) actor whose role is the spreading of paint; therefore it is simultaneously part of the painting and author/maker of the painting. Because of its character as the maker of the painting, the device

is usually not itself depicted in the painted image, but stands as a physically distinct element. The scrape is the painting the painter has made, and is thus part of, and integral to, the image painted on the canvas.

Inasmuch as the device is the arm that moves from elbow or shoulder in a radial arc, the device-painter must be understood as part of Johns' wry commentary on Abstract Expressionism. Reviewers recognized early that the device and its mark related directly to action painting.[4] It refers, of course, most specifically to Jackson Pollock, who used a stick to apply the paint in his famous drip works. If the device is the painter Jackson Pollock, then Johns is again turning inside out the assumptions with which the Abstract Expressionists, especially Pollock, and their work were regarded. The gestural brushstroke and the emotional release involved in its making signified freedom to some and accident to others. Time magazine's designation of Pollock, full of unruly and antisocial implications, was "Jack the Dripper"; his paintings were despised as wildly unstructured and random or admired for the heroic personal liberty they seemed to reflect. The viewer of Device Circle is excited to realize that the stick painter actual moves, but close consideration reveals that he moves like the blind mill horse, only repetitiously round and round. Johns' pessimistic characterization is

again, that our assumptions are deluded, to be an action painter is still to be trapped. In Out the Window Number 2 and Passage the wired spoon and fork, themselves immobilized, frustrate even the full arc of the device. The Pollock-painter in Fool's House is merely a broom who sweeps his endless, paint-smeared floor.

It is in the four Device Circle related works of 1962 and 1963 that Johns most fully, and here seriously, also incorporates aspects of the expressive capacity of Abstract Expressionist type style, but he does so with his own new pessimistic attitude as to the efficacy of expressionism as individual freedom of creativity.

In these paintings, the metaphorical extensions of meaning, the enigmas and the paradoxes are directed inward, and have to do with personal rather than public material. Therefore, in such works even when the iconographical material is present, its significance is rooted in personal symbolism of Johns own which remains unexplained. Sometimes, however, Johns leaves clues, and one of these appears in Periscope which Johns subtitled Hart Crane. The periscope image appears in Crane's "Cape Hatteras" which is the fourth piece in The Bridge, written by Crane between 1925 and 1929. The passage to which Johns refers reads:

> The captured fume of space foams in our ears--
> What whisperings of far watches on the main
> Relapsing into silence, while time clears

Our lenses, lifts a focus, resurrects
A periscope to glimpse what joys of pain
Our eyes can share or answer--then deflects
Us, shunting to a labyrinth submersed
Where each sees only his dim past reversed. [5]

The passage has to do with seeing, a theme which pervades Johns' work. Crane shifts his metaphor of vision from the optimistic assumption that "time clears our lenses, lifts a focus" and its periscope enables us to glimpse "joys and pains" to the pessimistic reversal; it throws us into the obscurity and confusion of a "labyrinth submersed". The viewer is limited by his inevitable subjectivity, and the material he sees is "his own past, reversed". Johns has always been reticent about his personal life, but his painting never really was impersonal. Even the early works which used the most common visual images from the collective culture conveyed a strong sense that it was Jasper Johns who had chosen and painted them, and though he did not say why, he had had his reasons. The overtly personal character became foremost in the works from 1959 through the early 1960's the same group which shows changed formal structure.[6] The periscope passage from Hart Crane may for Johns allude to the crisis underway in his painting at this time; Periscope alludes to concerns not merely of pictorial form but of life itself. This suspicion is encouraged by the inclusion in these works of specific allusions to biographical details from Johns' past,

especially to the area where he grew up. Such details are, as always, non-committal: in Passage the yardstick section used for the device is stamped "Charleston, S.C.". In a spirit of rational factuality Johns has crossed out "Charleston S.C." and stenciled in "ruler" as if to insist that elements in paintings are only what they obviously are, devoid of further significance. Our attention is drawn to the covered over "Charleston S.C." which we read through the paint.

The bizarre personal pictures of the early 1960's are informed by principles known only to Johns; no amount of familiarity with the formal developments of contemporary painting, nor even with the formal traits and subject matter of Johns' own work will bring the viewer completely into touch with the deeper reasons for Johns' choices at this moment in history. Perhaps it is almost equally so for the work of the late 1950's, although the everyday, memorable subjects of some of them and the nice philosophical conceits they posed have preempted the attention of his audience like decoys. Some of the content of the Periscope set of paintings may be illuminated by fuller reference to Hart Crane, to whom Johns addresses much of his highly individual pictorial iconography of this time.

In Crane's Cape Hatteras, in the lines that follow the periscope passage, the tone shifts back to a note of

optimism, even transcendence. The theme shifts to an image of flight,

> But that star-glistered salver of infinity
> The circle, blind crucible of endless space
> is sliced by motion--[7]

which suggests to the poet human emotion, extreme and quickly changing:

> A flash over the horizon, shifting gears
> And we have laughter, or more sudden tears [8]

Crane's circle "sliced by motion" finds its equivalent in Johns' device circle; Crane's geometric imagery, his mode of thought, and his manner of crossing and amassing iconographical meanings in The Bridge are similar to those Johns used in the development of the Device Circle group of paintings.

The allusion in Johns' picture title Periscope is one of the few specific allusions to Crane's The Bridge which has been noticed, because it is the only one to which Johns called attention. There are others; Johns' lithograph Hatteras is named for "Cape Hatteras," the poem in which the periscope image occurs.[9] The pervading theme of the poem is the advent of the machine, here particularly the flying machine with its liberating but potentially disastrous effect. Underlying this is the theme of voyage in general, and the poem ends with a homage to Walt Whitman, Crane's mentor, the wanderer on "the Open Road". It is possible that Johns' diver image in some sense relates to this work, though no specific

image in Crane substantiates this precisely: in a broad sense his main theme in The Bridge, which is pervaded with sea imagery, is the dive, and his universal protagonist the voyager/diver. Johns' diver figure is clearly a more tragic and troubled figure than his device which moves in the assurance of its circle, and shares much of the spirit of Crane's sky diver.

In the huge and complex painting Diver, the device at the left margin throws around itself a scrape that is rainbow banded, bringing to mind Crane's final passage in "Cape Hatteras," addressed to his paragon of strength and hope, Walt Whitman, and full of salvation prophesies:

> To course that span of consciousness thoust named
> The Open Road--thy vision is reclaimed:
> What heritage thou'st signaled to our hands:
> And see: The rainbow's arch, how shimmeringly stands
> Above the cape's ghoul mound, O joyous seer:
> Recorders ages hence, yes they shall hear
> In their own veins uncancelled thy sure tread
> And read thee by the aureole round thy head.[10]

It seems that in Johns' imagery the device-painter, with the geometric figure it draws around itself, still stands as an alternative to, and transcendence of, the diver plunging in chaos. The title of Land's End, where the two figures are juxtaposed so dramatically, suggests again Cape Hatteras.

The affinity Johns felt for Hart Crane no doubt extends beyond the level of the painter's having read and appreciated a poet's work; he seems to have to some extent identified with the poet personally. Hart Crane

felt deeply and discussed extensively his uprooted, troubled youth spent between separated parents; Johns lived through a similar history. Johns was born in May of 1930; Crane published The Bridge in that year, in May. In 1931, at the age of thirty-two, and troubled with deep doubts about his own life, his homosexuality, and his writing, Crane committed suicide by diving off a boat at night in the Gulf of Mexico. Johns painted Diver when he was thirty-two and evidently troubled by deeply emotional confrontations with similar issues. Cape Hatteras, which preoccupied Crane, is part of the Carolina coast which is of specific biographical importance to Johns.

Johns's device, which has been seen as a man and a painter is thus in some sense specifically the painter Jasper Johns; the handprint, which comes to play the role of the hand to the device-arm, is used by Johns in various places as a signature--the mark of human making, and of himself.

Painted Bronze (ale cans) is one of the most meticulous of Johns' mimetic works, carefully painted to resemble the model, but carrying also a conspicuous fingerprint, announcing as surely as a police record the identity of the person who is responsible. So, also may the handprints in the Device Circle works be read as Johns' own image represented. Johns made images of himself

in studies for Skin in 1962 by means of prints made from his own hands, face, and other body parts.[11]

It has been observed with curiosity that Device Circle was originally a target idea, but Johns after having set up his usual drawing device for circles changed his mind and invented the new image with the stick left in. The close relationship between the target and the device is important to the issue of the autobiographical dimension of the device, for the target, like the handprint, stands for Johns himself. In the discreet, superficially objective and noncommittal style of Johns' early works, the great "eye" is also the "I"; in 1961 when Robert Rauschenberg and others were staging a theatrical piece in Paris, Johns was asked to play a part, and he agreed. When the time came, Johns himself did not go onstage, but sent out a large target made of flowers in his stead.[12] That the earlier Target and the later Device Circle paintings are related may be also discerned from the fact that an element used in the first and not used elsewhere came back into use with the second; the casts of human body parts. The collection of body parts (foot, nose/mouth, hand, breast, ear, penis, heel, and bone) which, along with the great eye of the target below that make up the image of a human being in Target with Plaster Casts

find their latter day counterpart in *According to What*, *Watchman*, and *Passage II*. Both the target and the *Device Circle* images are characterized by the juxtaposition of elements of a specifically anthropomorphic nature with those of a specifically geometric nature; their thematic resemblance is clear.

It is only in cognizance of the complex, multi-layered nature of the device as a figure of personal significance that the viewer of Johns' work can fully understand its presence in any particular example. The development of the device as a historical process--the multiple use of it as a figure in successive paintings and the elaboration of the complexities of its meanings which that afforded--was in fact the process through which the artist invented and discovered its nature. The device is but one example of the working of Johns' creative process as a whole. The same process is clearly observed in his development of painterly form, drawing, as it does, deeply from both his personal needs and his awareness of the historical material to which he falls heir, elaborated and developed in an integrated growth process involving both the objective and the subjective; mind, emotions, and body.

Notes; Imagery and meaning in Device Circle

[1]Richard Field relates Hatteras to developments within Johns' prints: "the labels RED, YELLOW, and BLUE ... have become partly obscured by the large 'device circle' now created by the imprint of the artist's own hand and arm rather than by a stick. Something new, already announced by Hand (a lithograph of 1963) and Red, Yellow, Blue (a lithograph of 1962-63) is entering Johns' work at this point, namely, a willingness to broaden his context to include both personal and historical references". (Richard Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970, New York, Praeger and Philadelphia Museum, 1970, unpag.)

[2] Richard Field sees this connection in the lithograph Hatteras: "Vitruvius' and Leonardo's theories of proportion are compared to the ruler which provides tangible measurement at the lithograph's bottom edge". (Richard Field, Jasper Johns Prints, unpaginated.) By the time of Hatteras, the human arm/ruler equivalence is much more explicitly presented and less integrated than in the earlier Painting with Ruler and "Gray".

[3] Quoted by Joseph Young in "Jasper Johns, an Appraisal" Art International, 3.No.7, (1969) p.50.
Clearly the visual reference is not solely to Leonardo but also to Johns' far more influential mentor, Duchamp.

[4] "It seems evident that the action painter's record of movement is the source for Johns' imagery (in Device Circle)". (Barbara Rose,"The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns Part II", Artforum, 9, No.1, Sept.1970, p.71.)

[5] Alan Solomon pointed this out in 1964. He comments on Johns' Periscope and related works "One senses a subjective response to the poet's anguish for some deep personal reason...One wonders about (Johns') own submersed labyrinth". (Alan Solomon, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, The Jewish Museum, 1964, p.16.)

[6] Leo Steinberg remarked of the new iconography "Past thirty, he dares to be autobiographical". (Leo Steinberg, Jasper Johns, New York, Wittenborn, 1963.)
Donald Factor commented "The main body of (post 1959) work is difficult. It involves fragments of autobiography". (Donald Factor,"Jasper Johns," Artforum, 3, No.6, 1965, p.11.) No one has thoroughly dealt with Johns' biography or with the nature of his autobiographical references.

[7] Hart Crane, "Cape Hatteras", lines 32-34, from The Bridge , in The Complete Poems of Hart Crane, ed. Waldo Frank, (New York, 1958).

[8] Ibid, lines 40-42.

[9] Richard Field notes this and proposes: "The luminous circle with a revolving hand seems to evoke the Cape Hatteras lighthouse as well as Johns' lithograph Device." (Richard Field, Jasper Johns Prints, unpaginated.)

[10] Hart Crane, "Cape Hatteras", lines 220-227.

[11] Field recognized the personal imagery in the body prints, which he also related to Pollock. He sees in Johns' "immobile" use of the hand print-device in the lithograph Hatteras yet another indication of Johns' pessimistic refutation of the myth of Abstract Expressionist freedom, and another indication that he sees himself "prisoner in his own work". (Richard Field, Jasper Johns Prints, unpag.)

[12] June 20, 1961. David Tudor played Variation II by John Cage at the American Embassy Theatre in Paris; participating were Robert Rauschenberg, Jean Tinguely, and Johns. (Cited in Michael Crichton, Jasper Johns (exhibition catalogue), New York, Abrams and Whitney Museum, 1977, p.66.)

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG. 1 - JASPER JOHNS, FALSE START, 1959

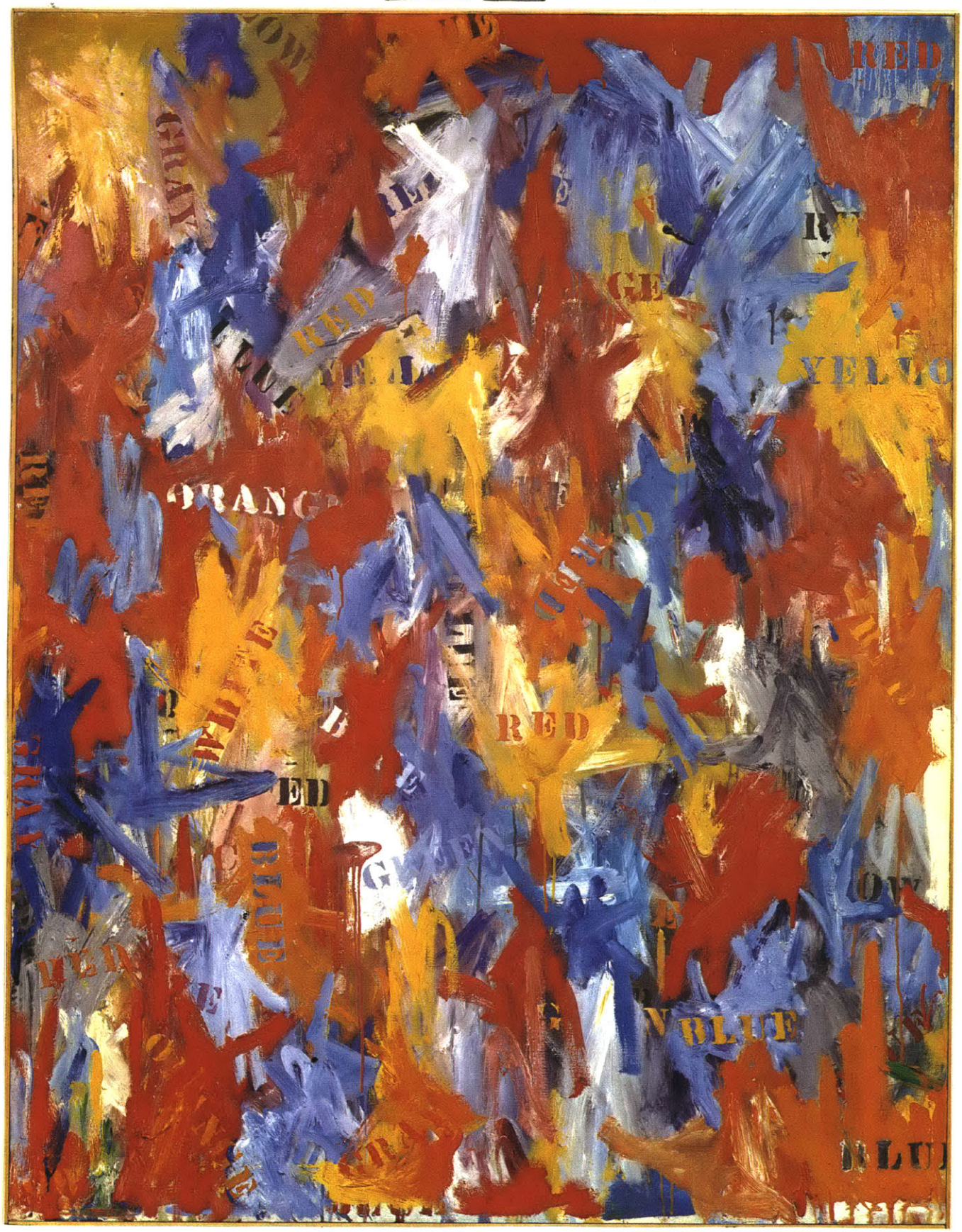

FIG. 2. JASPER JOHNS, JUBILEE, 1959

FIG. 3 - JASPER JOHNS, TARGET WITH PLASTER CASTS, 1955

FIG. 4. JASPER JOHNS, GRAY RECTANGLES, 1957

FIG. 5 - JASPER JOHNS, TENNYSON 1958

FIG. 6
JASPER JOHNS, FLAG 1955

FIG. 7 JASPER JOHNS, NUMBERS IN COLOR, 1958 - 1959

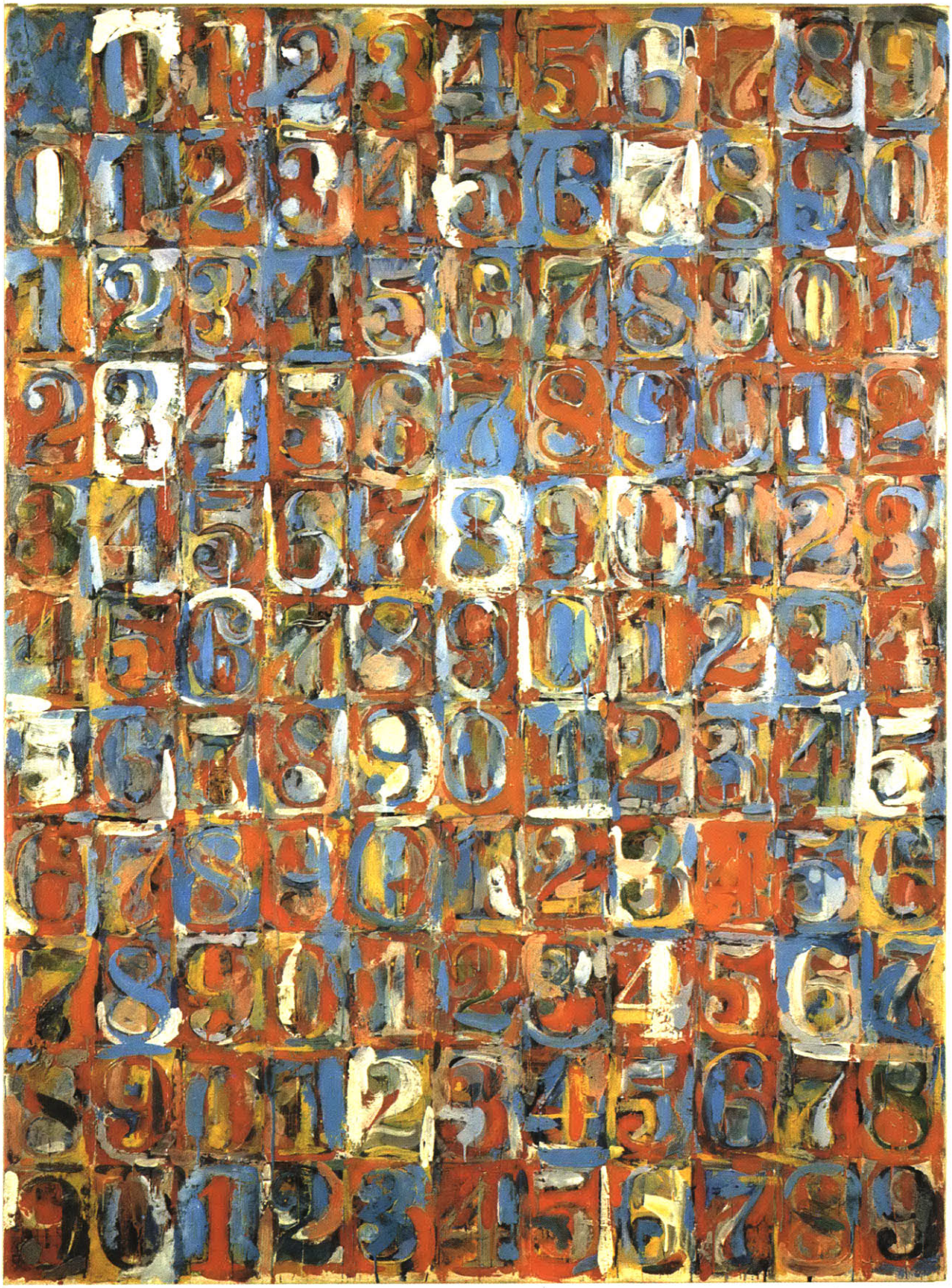

FIG. 8. JASPER JOHNS, GREEN TARGET, 1955

FIG. 9 - JASPER JOHNS, WHITE NUMBERS, 1958

FIG. 10
JASPER JOHNS, FLAG ABOVE WHITE WITH COLLAGE, 1955

FIG. 11 - JASPER JOHNS, FLAG ON ORANGE FIELD, 1957

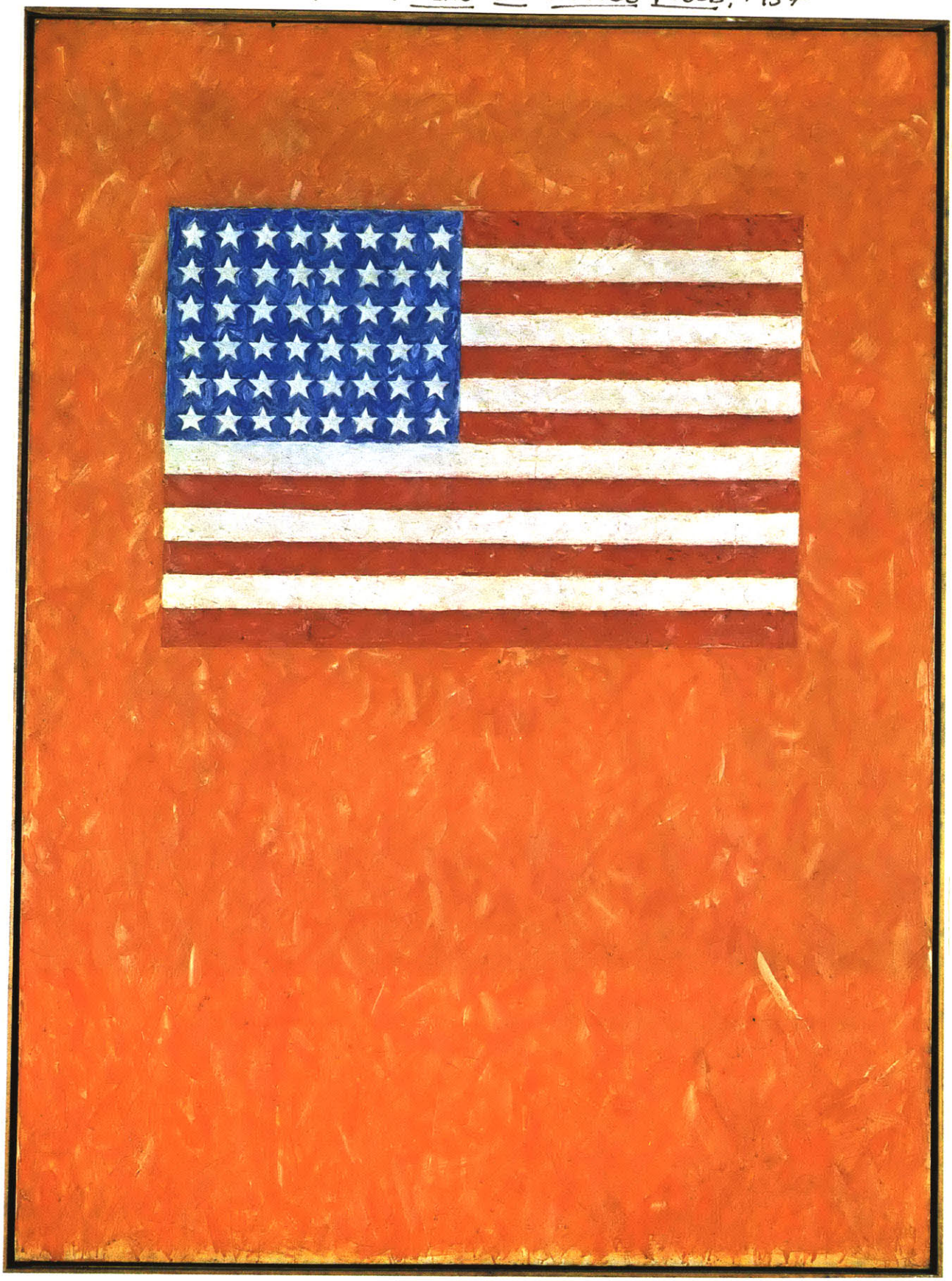

FIG. 12
JASPER JOHNS. TANGO, 1955

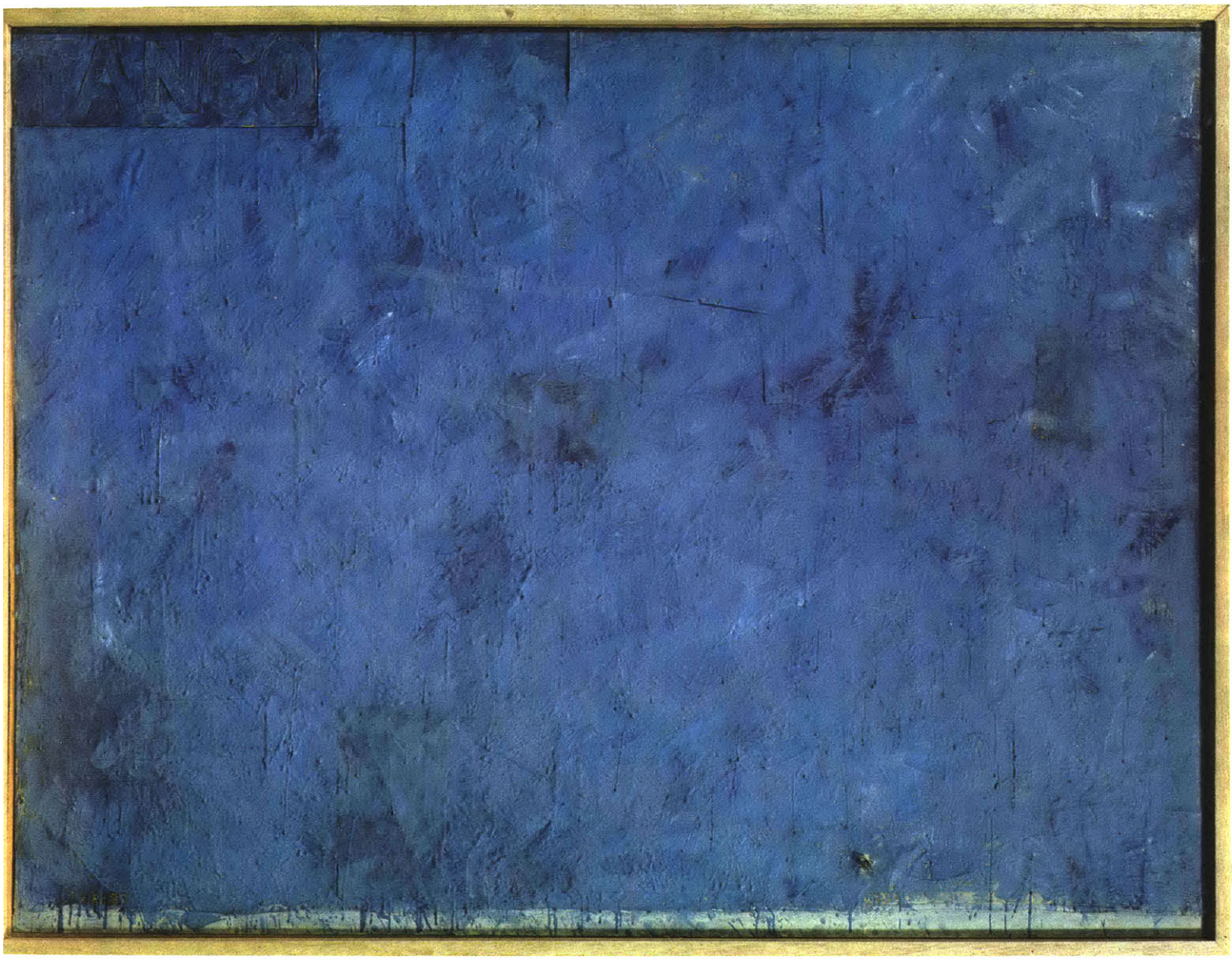

FIG. 13

JASPER JOHNS, DRAWER, 1957

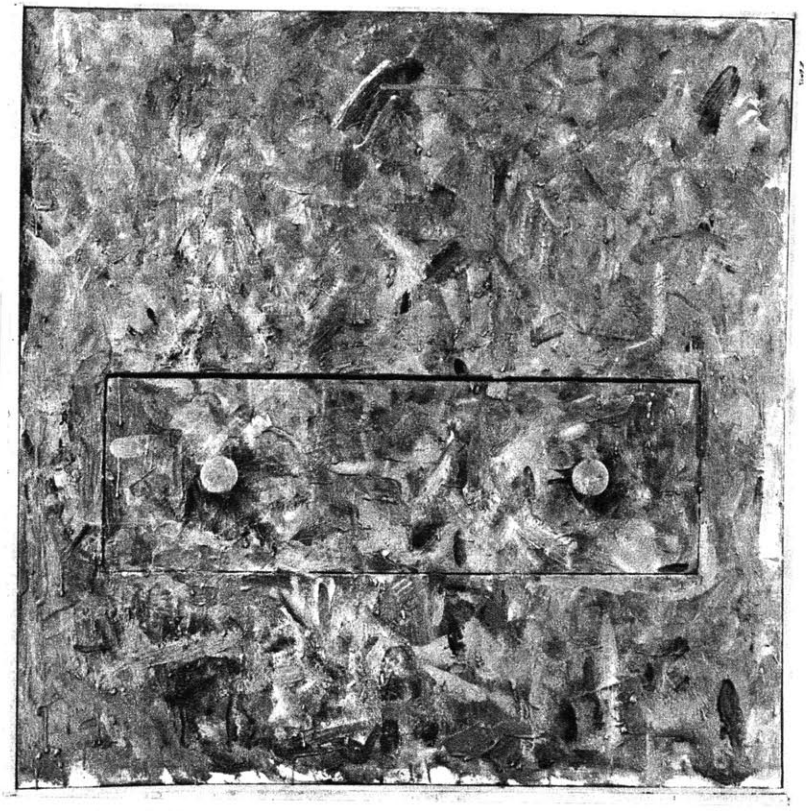

FIG. 14
JASPER JOHNS, CANVAS, 1956

FIG. 15
JASPER JOHNS, THREE FLAGS, 1958

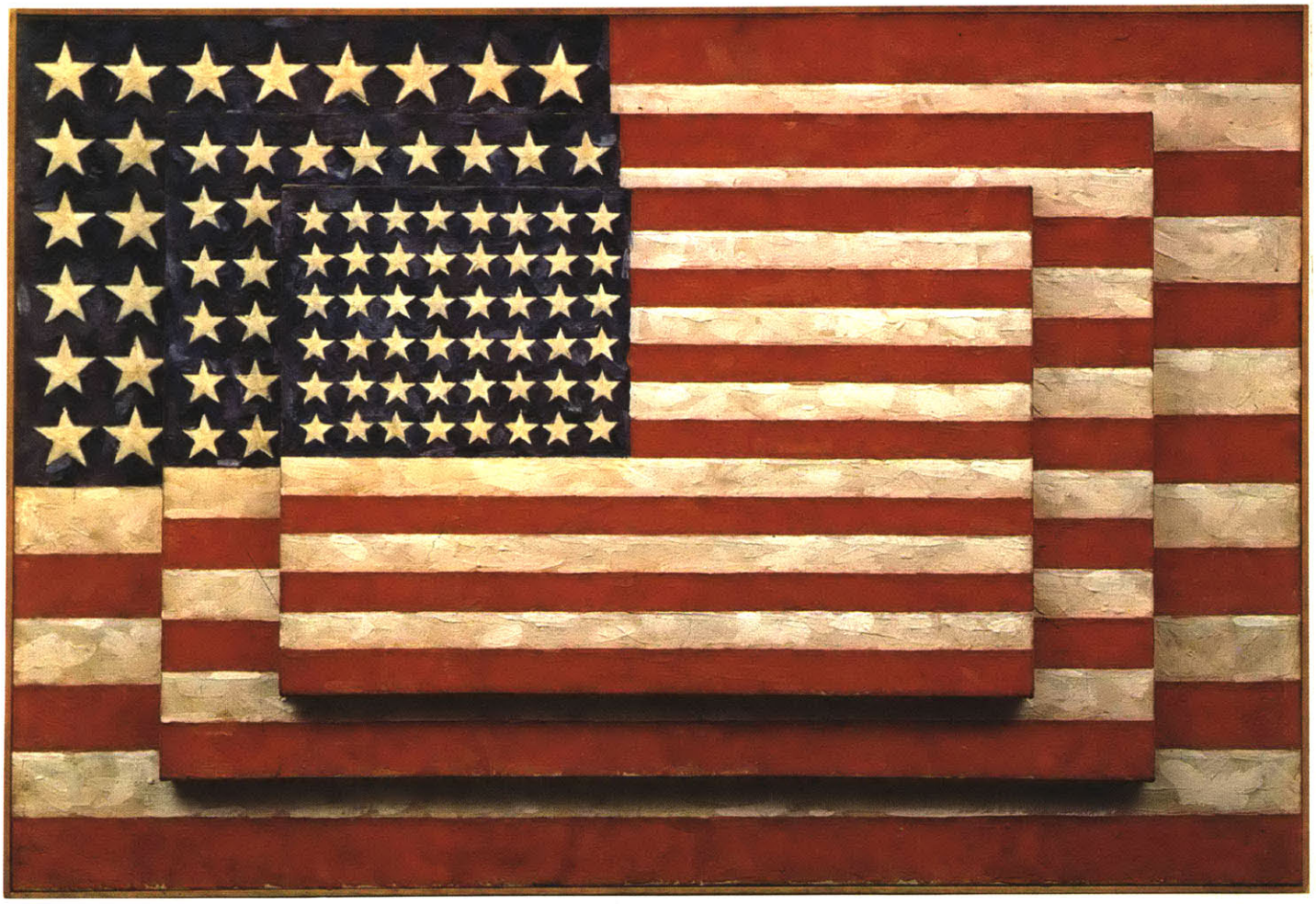

FIG. 16
JASPER JOHNS, NEWSPAPER, 1957

FIG. 17
JASPER JOHNS, HOOK, 1958

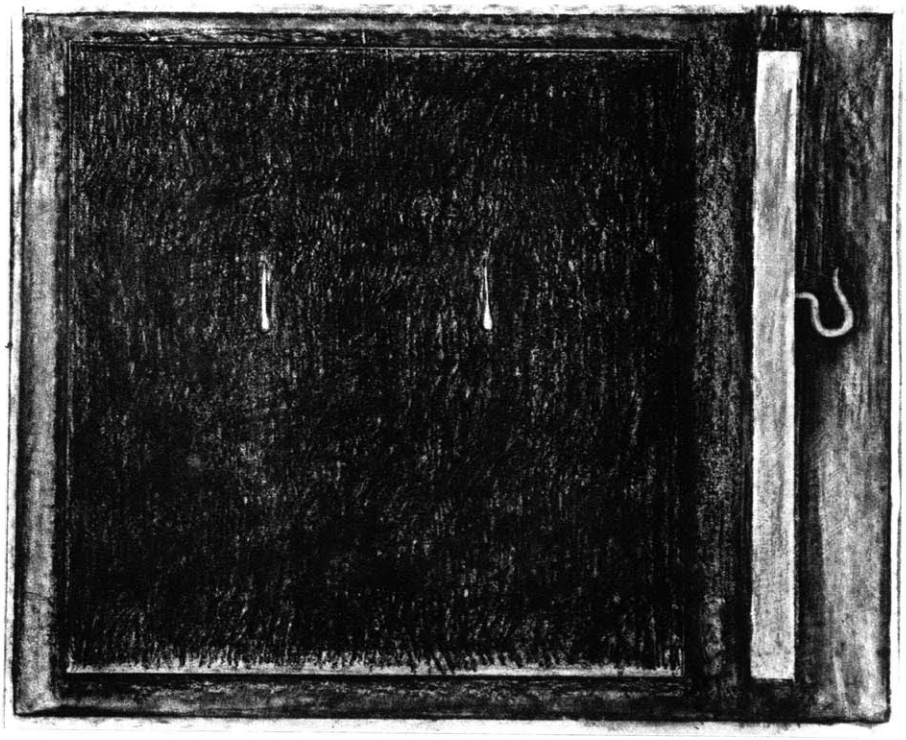

FIG. 18 - JASPER JOHNS, WHITE FLAG, 1955 ←

←

FIG. 19 - JASPER JOHNS, GRAY ALPHABETS, 1956

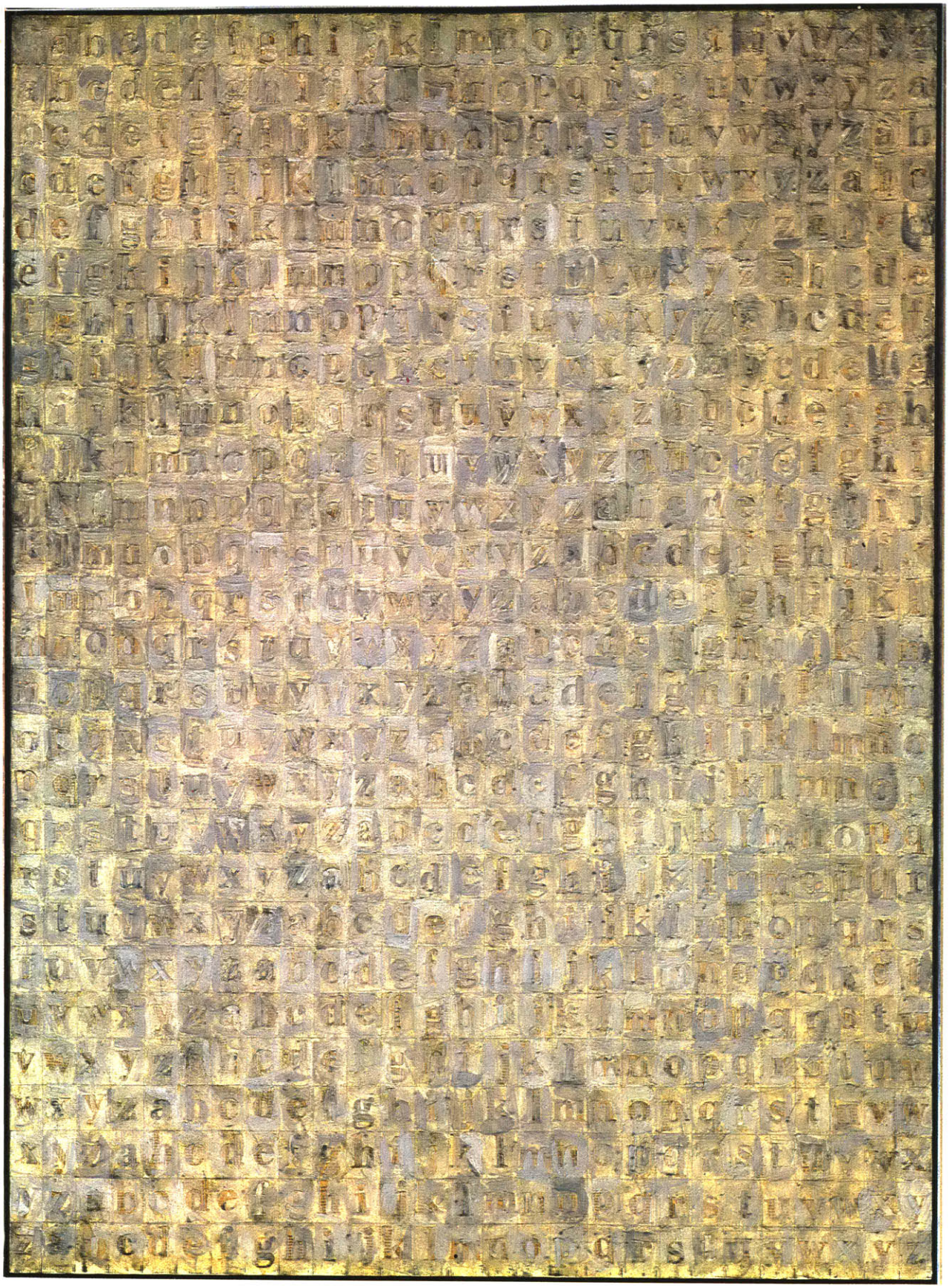

FIG. 20 - JASPER JOHNS, SHADE, 1959

FIG. 21 - JASPER JOHNS, DEVICE CIRCLE, 1959

FIG. 22 - JASPER JOHNS, TARGET, 1958

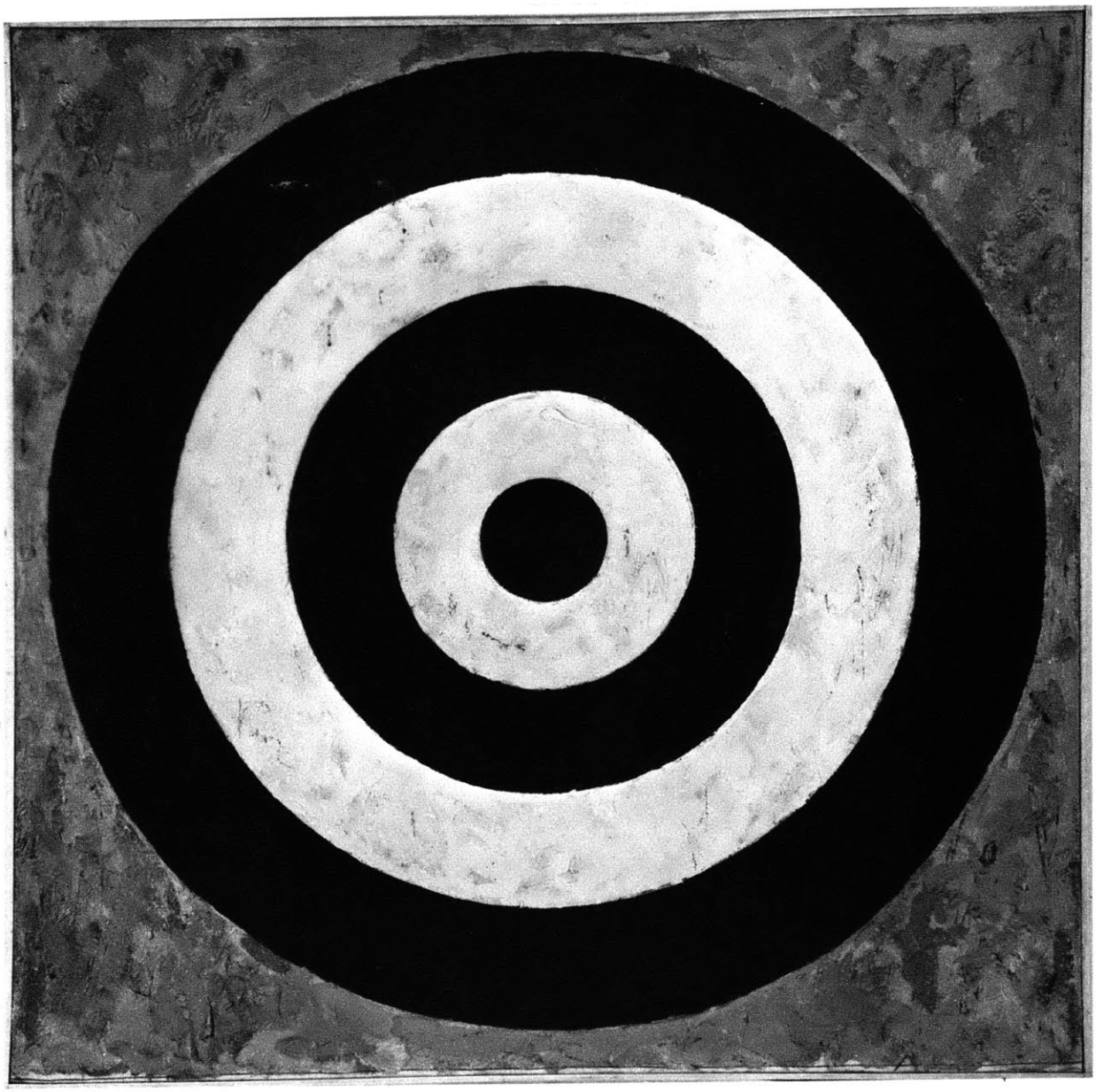

FIG. 23 - JASPER JOHNS, PASSAGE, 1962

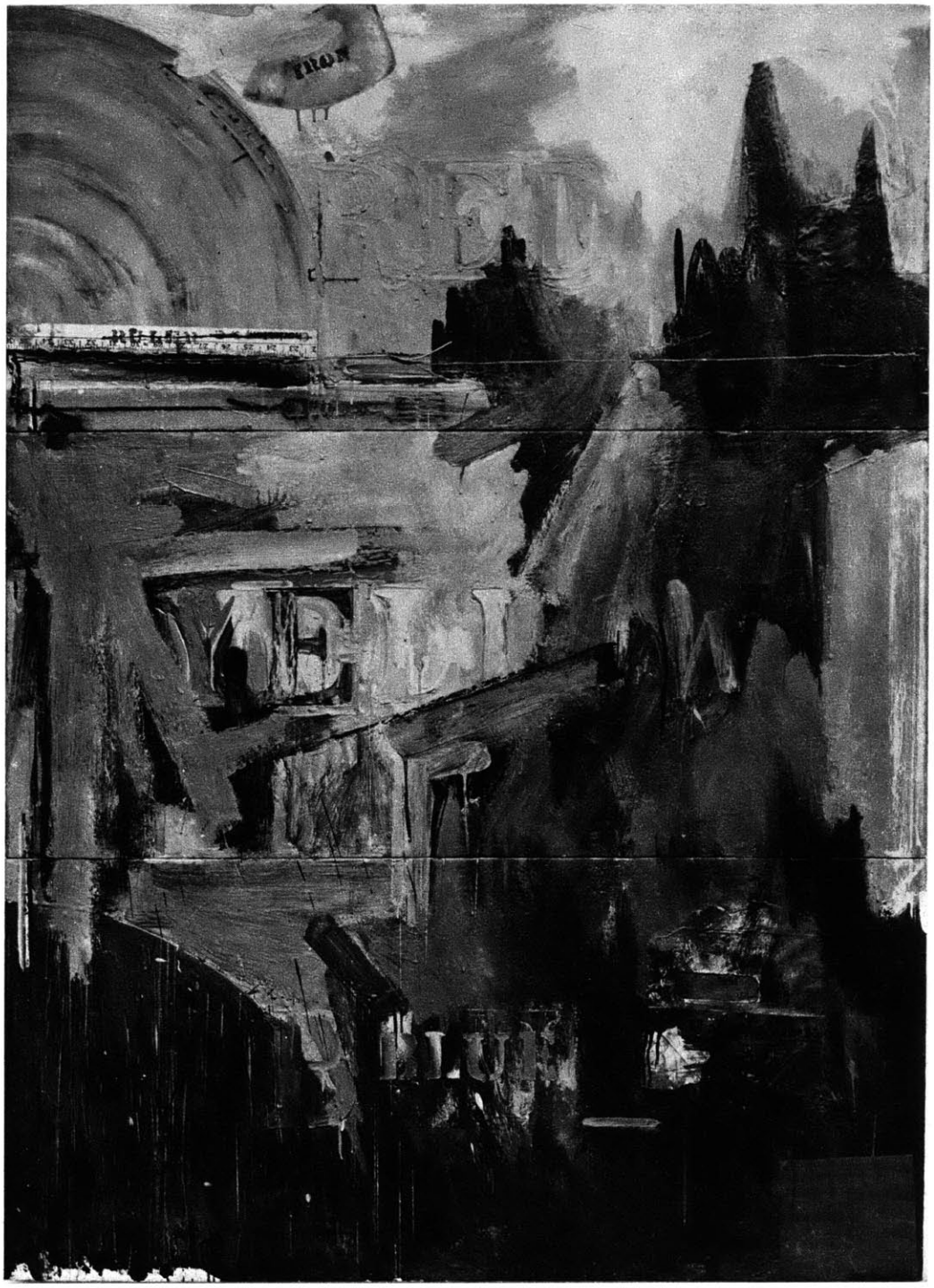

FIG. 24 - JASPER JOHNS, O THROUGH 9, 1960

FIG. 25
JASPER JOHNS, 0 THROUGH 9 (NEWHOUSE COLLECTION)

FIG. 26

JASPER JOHNS, 0 THROUGH 9 (HIRSHHORN)

FIG. 27.

JASPER JOHNS, 0 THROUGH 9, 1961

(TITLEMAN COLLECTION)

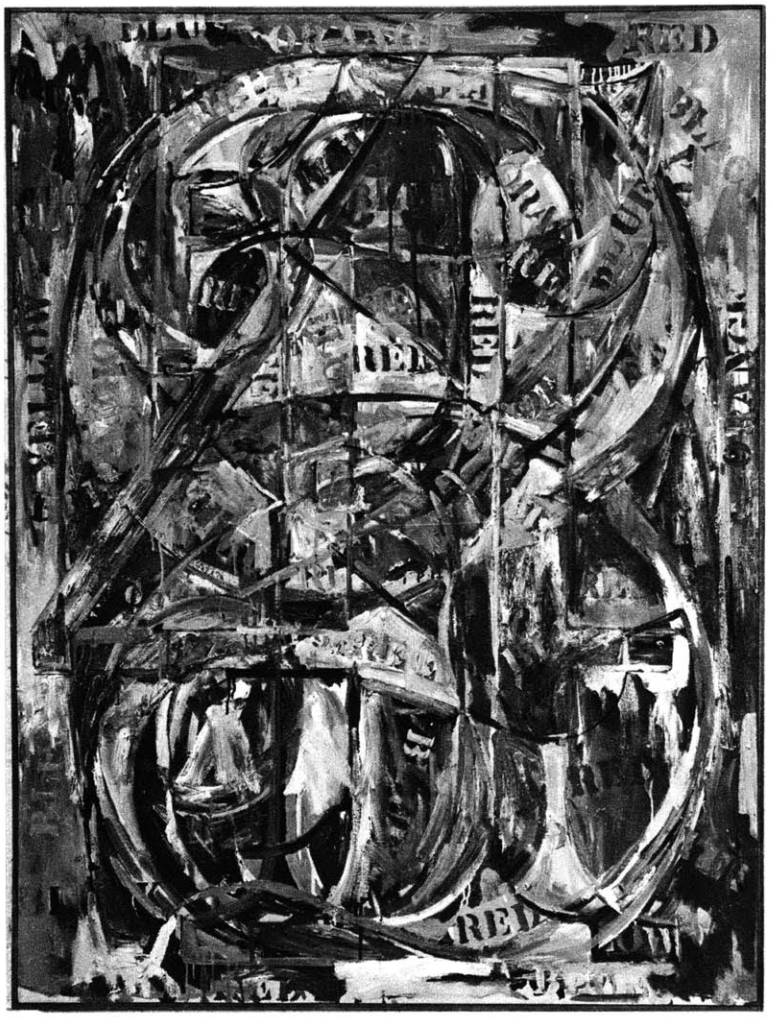

FIG. 28 - JASPER JOHNS, MAP, 1961 ←

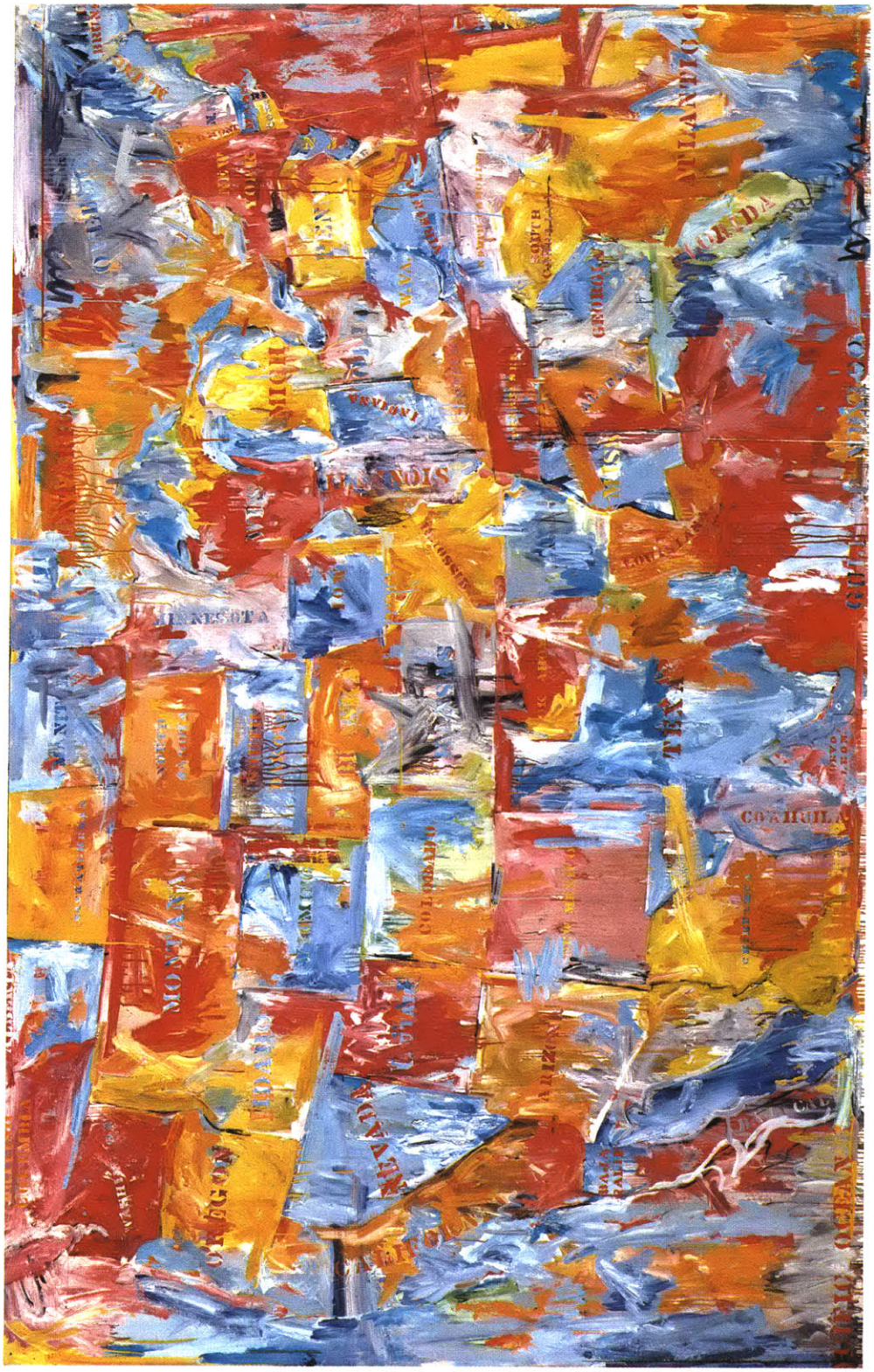

FIG. 29 - JASPER JOHNS, MAP, 1962

FIG. 30 - JASPER JOHNS, MAP, 1963

FIG. 31. JASPER JOHNS, ARRIVE/DEPART, 1963-1964

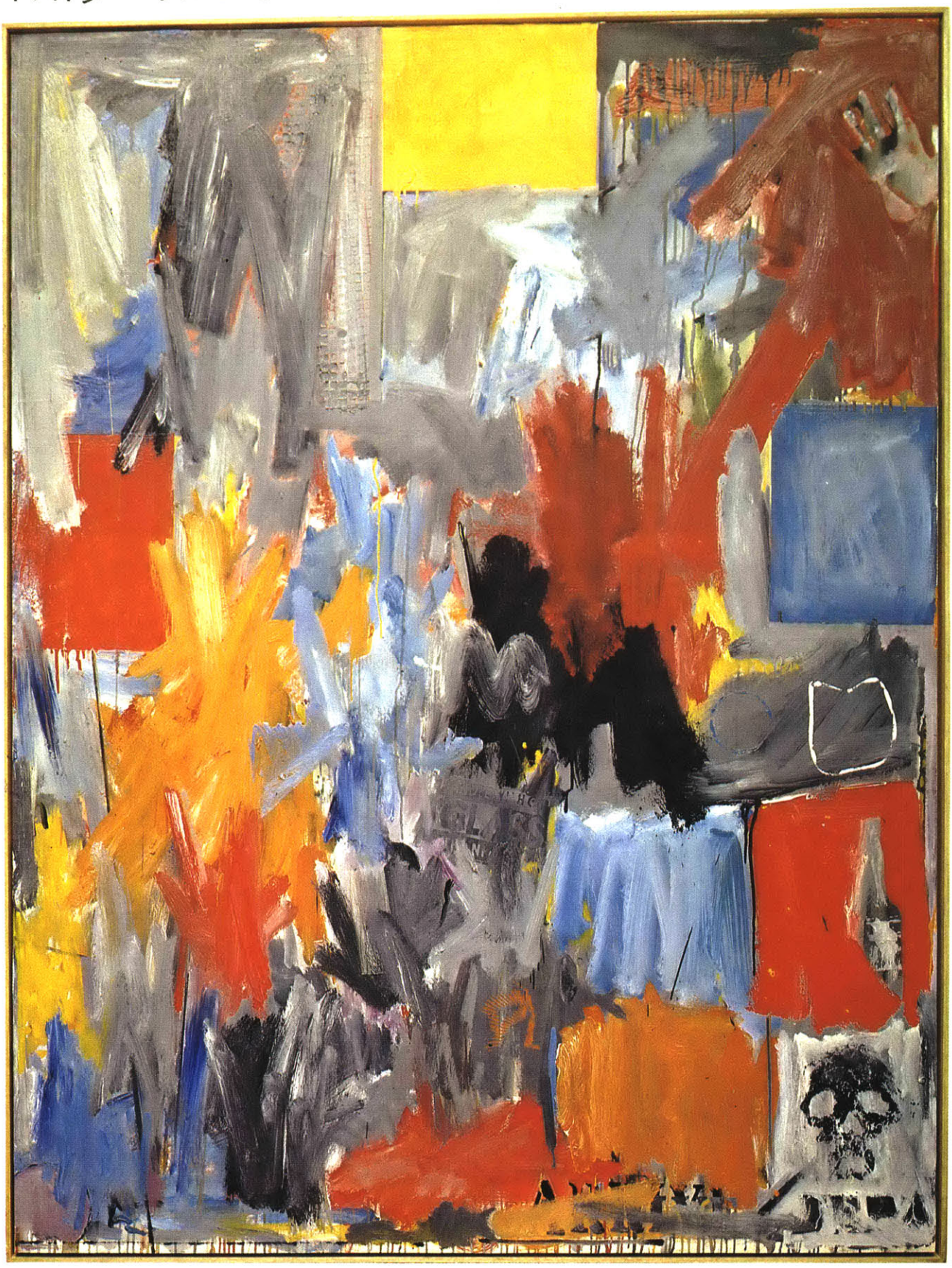

FIG. 32. – JASPER JOHNS, OUT THE WINDOW, 1959

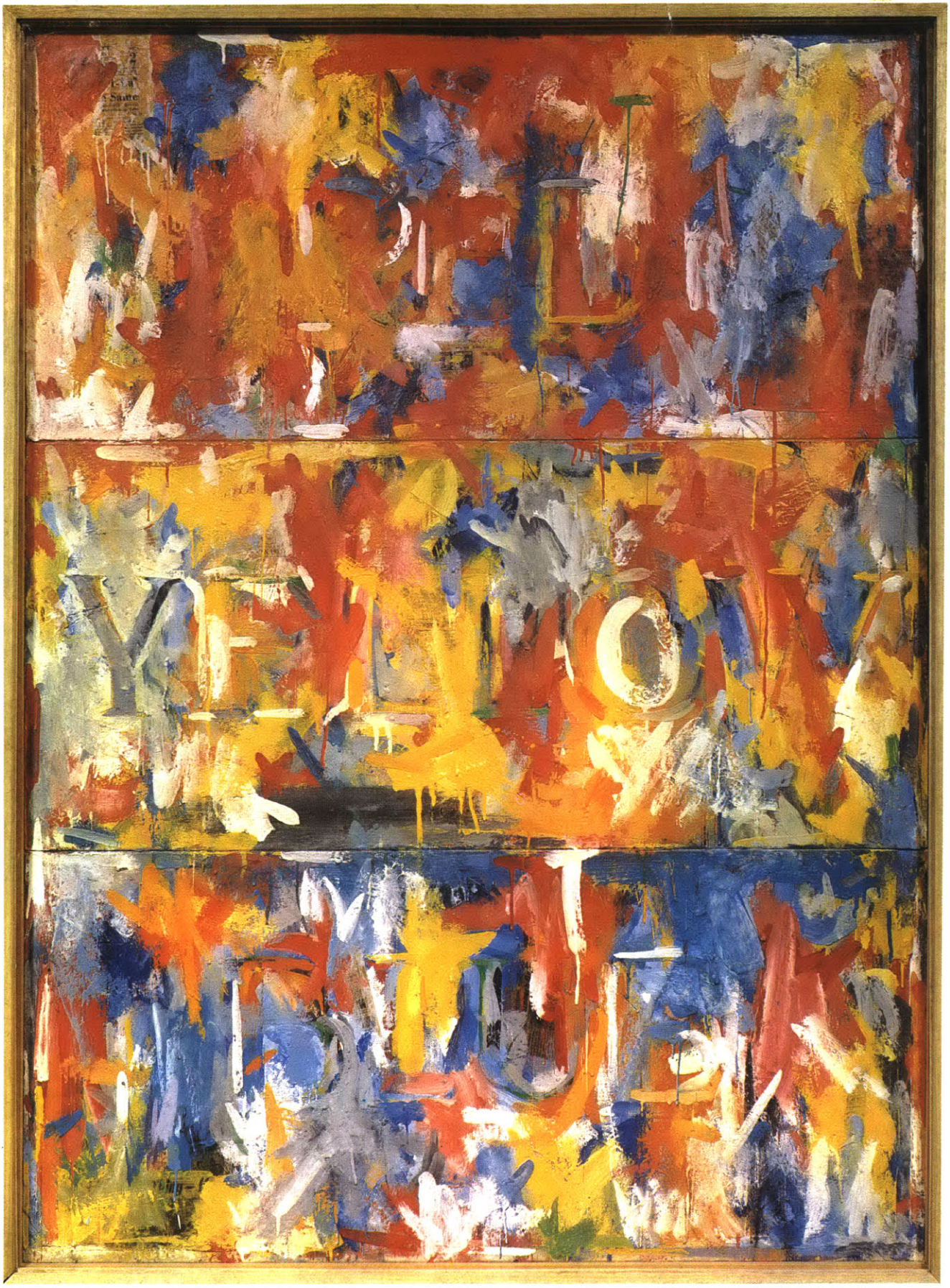

FIG. 33 - JASPER JOHNS, BY THE SEA, 1961

FIG. 34.
JASPER JOHNS, LAND'S END, 1963

FIG. 35 . JASPER JOHNS . PAINTING WITH TWO BALLS, 1960

FIG. 36 - JASPER JOHNS. THERMOMETER, 1959

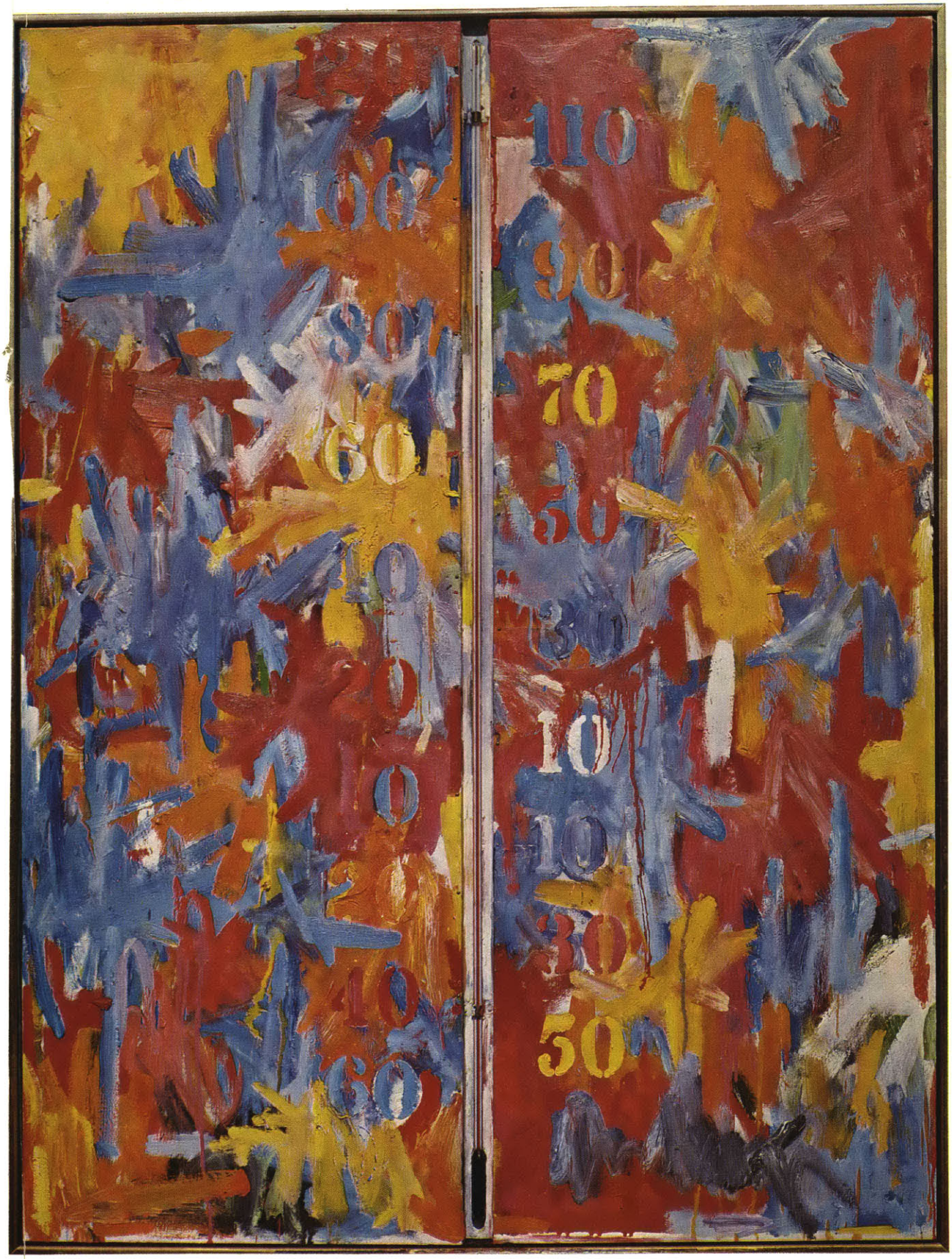

FIG. 37
JASPER JOHNS, PAINTING WITH ROLLER AND "GRAY", 1960

FIG. 38
JASPER JOHNS, GOOD TIME CHARLEY, 1961

FIG. 39.
JASPER JOHNS. NO, 1961

FIG. 40
JASPER JOHNS,
FOOL'S HOUSE,
1962

FIG. 41 - JASPER JOHNS, IN MEMORY OF MY FEELINGS - FRANK O'HARA, 1961 ←

FIG. 42 – JASPER JOHNS, DISAPPEARANCE II, 1961

FIG. 43
JACKSON POLLOCK,
LUCIFER, 1947

←

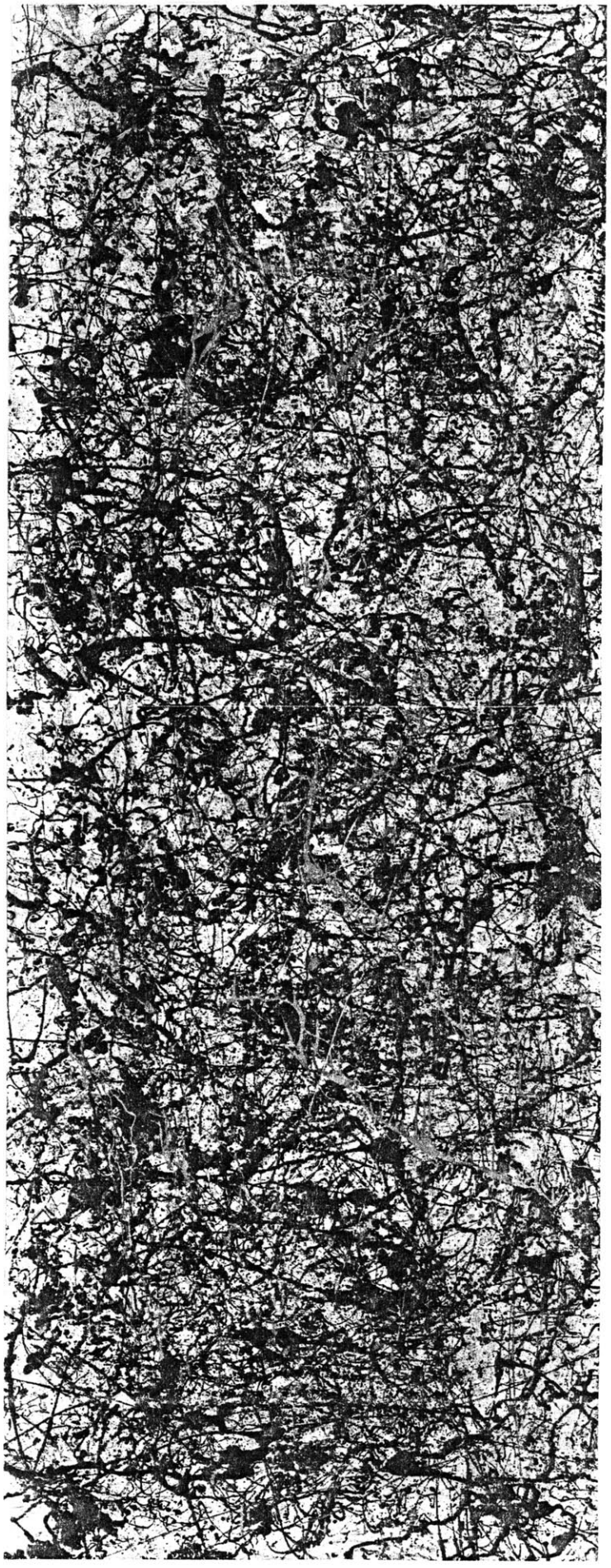

FIG. 114.
JASPER JOHNS · BOOK, 1957

FIG. 45. PIET MONDRIAN, TABLEAU I, 1921 →

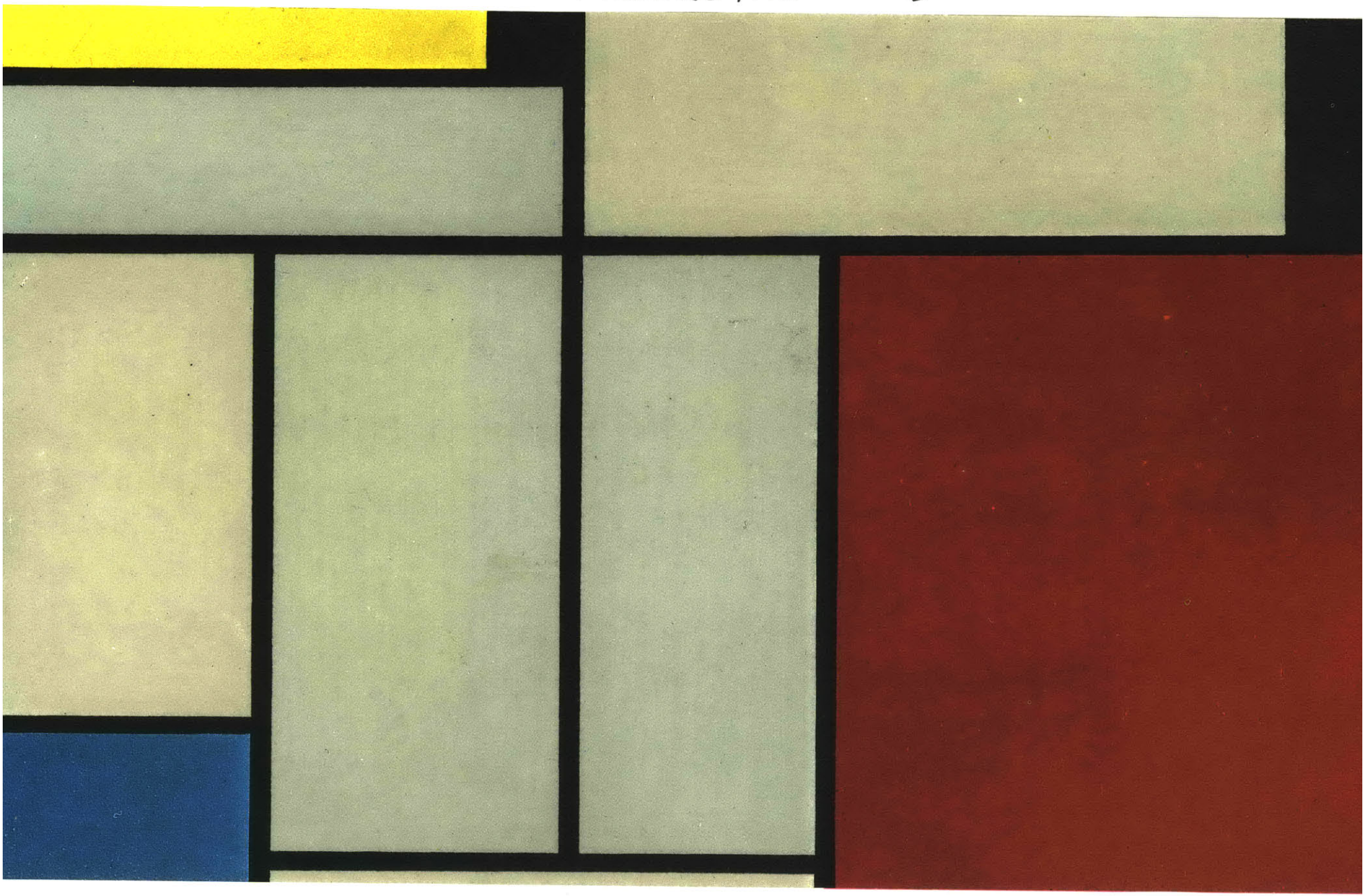

FIG. 46. JASPER JOHNS, OUT THE WINDOW NUMBER 2, 1962

FIG. 47.
JASPER JOHNS. PERISCOPE (CHART CRANE), 1963

FIG. 48
JASPER JOHNS, DIVER 1962

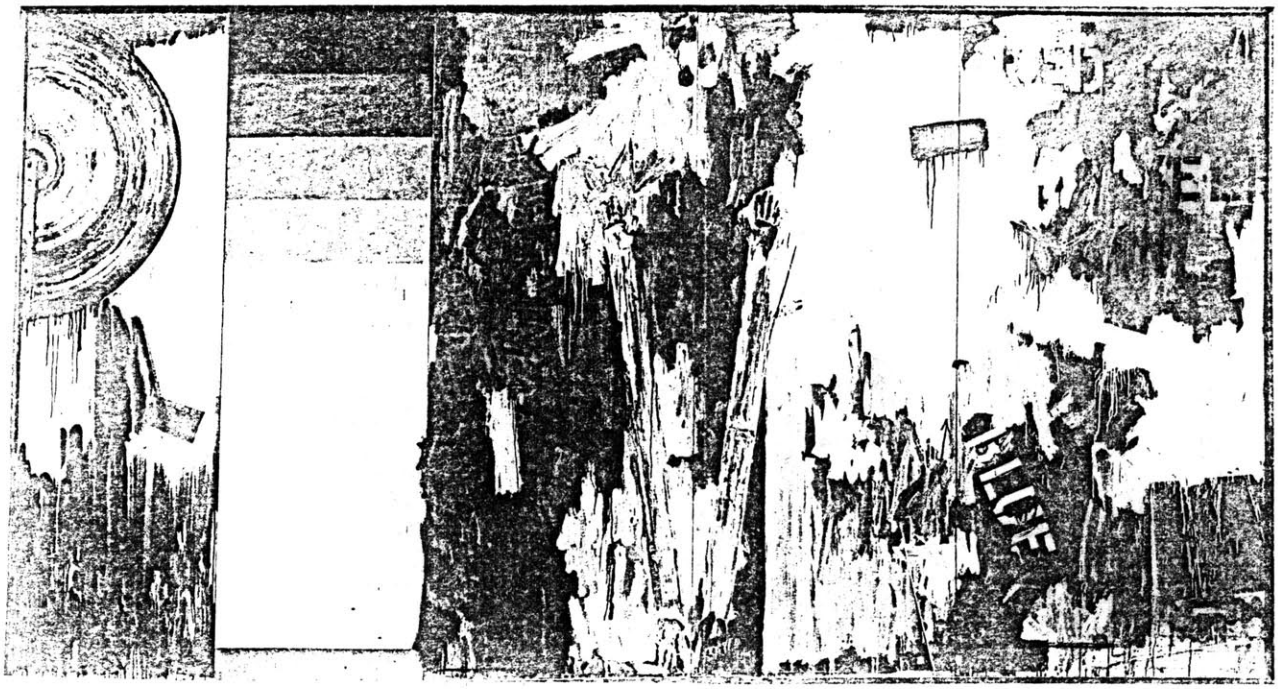

FIG. 49
PABLO PICASSO, MA JOLIE, 1911–1912

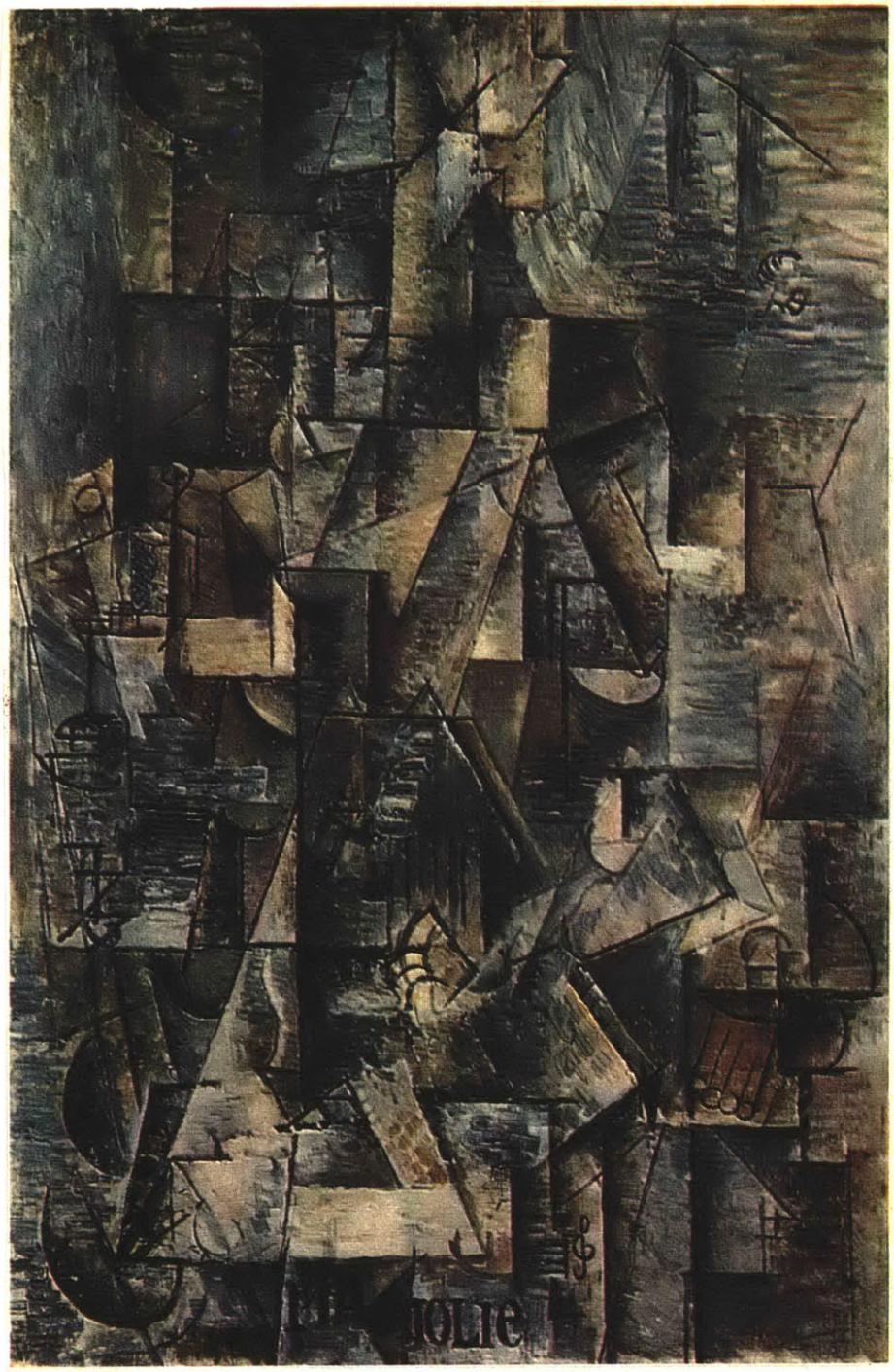

FIG. 50.
PABLO PICASSO,
LA BATAILLE S'EST ENGAGÉE, 1913

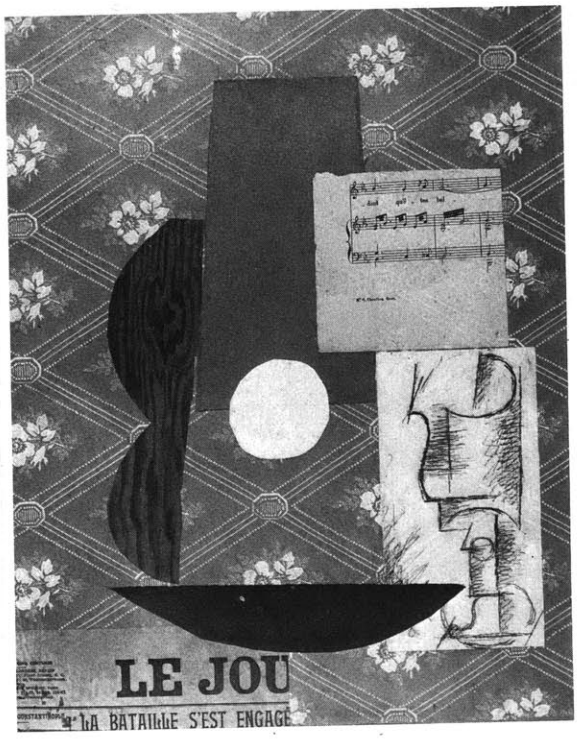

FIG. 51
JASPER JOHNS · COAT HANGER, 1958

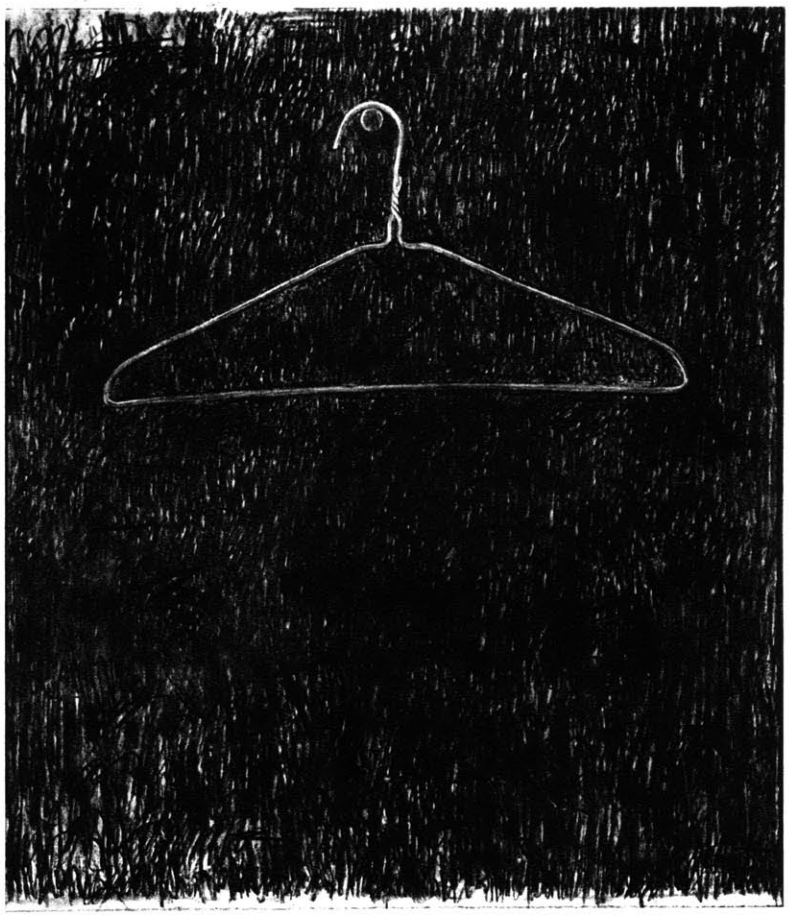

FIG. 52
JASPER JOHNS. THE, 1957

FIG. 53 – CLAUDE MONET, POPPY FIELD NEAR GIVERNY, 1885

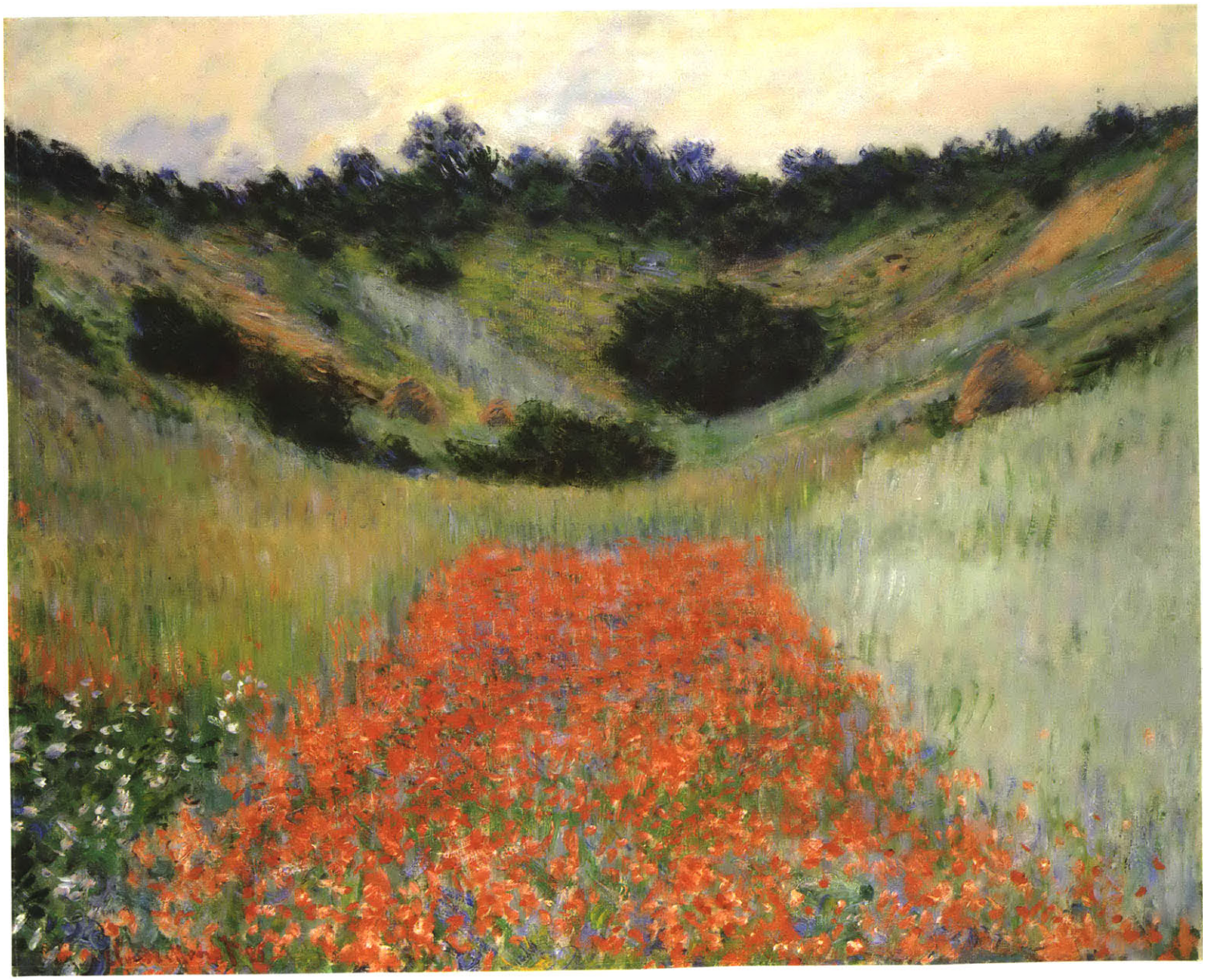

FIG 54 — CLAUDE MONET, WATERLILIES, 1905

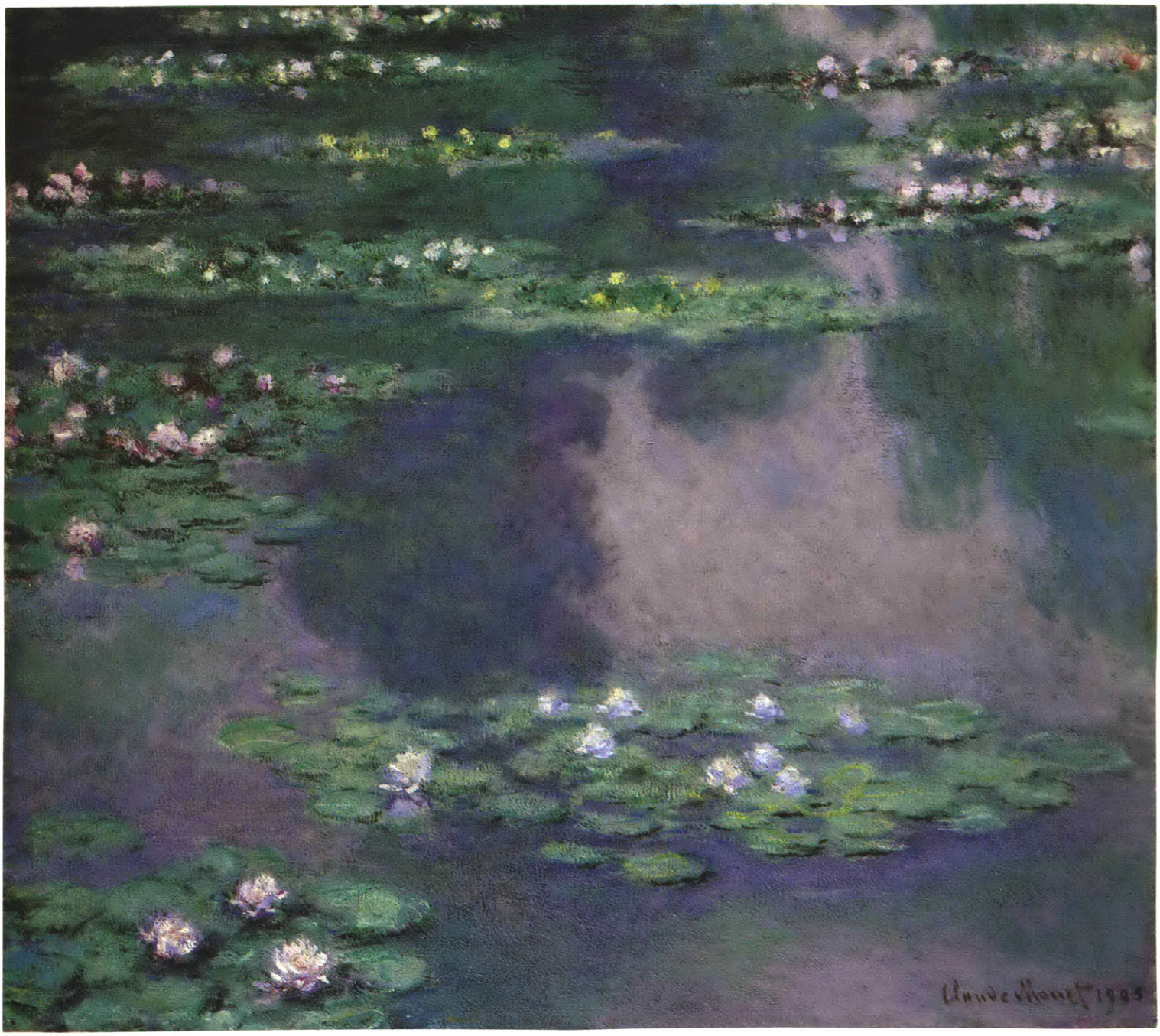

FIG. 55
JASPER JOHNS, PAINTED BRONZE, 1960

FIG. 56, JASPER JOHNS. PAINTED BRONZE, 1960

FIG. 57. JASPER JOHNS, WATCHMAN, 1964

FIG. 58 - JASPER JOHNS, SLOW FIELD, 1962

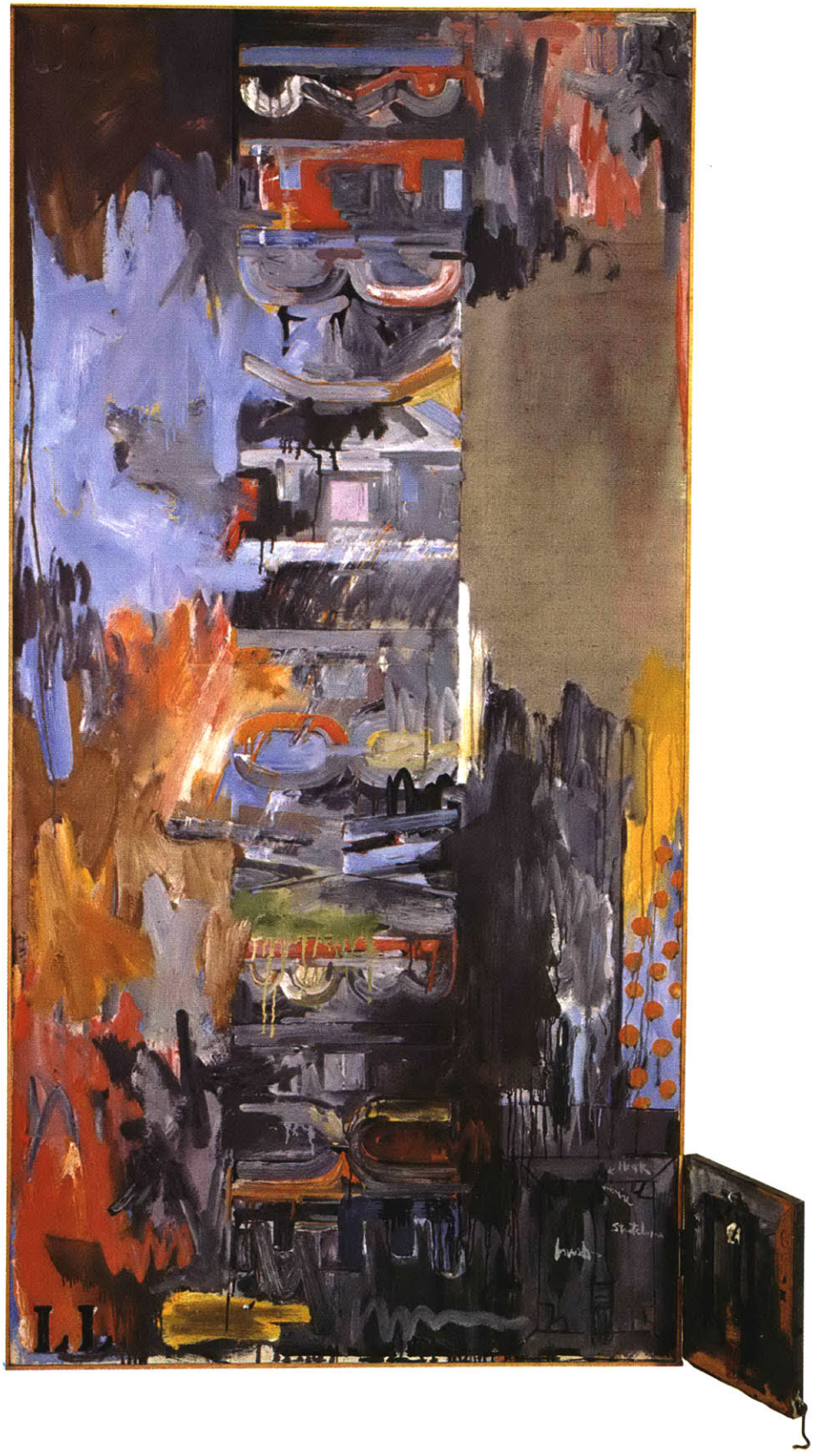

FIG. 59 - JASPER JOHNS, DEVICE, 1961-1962

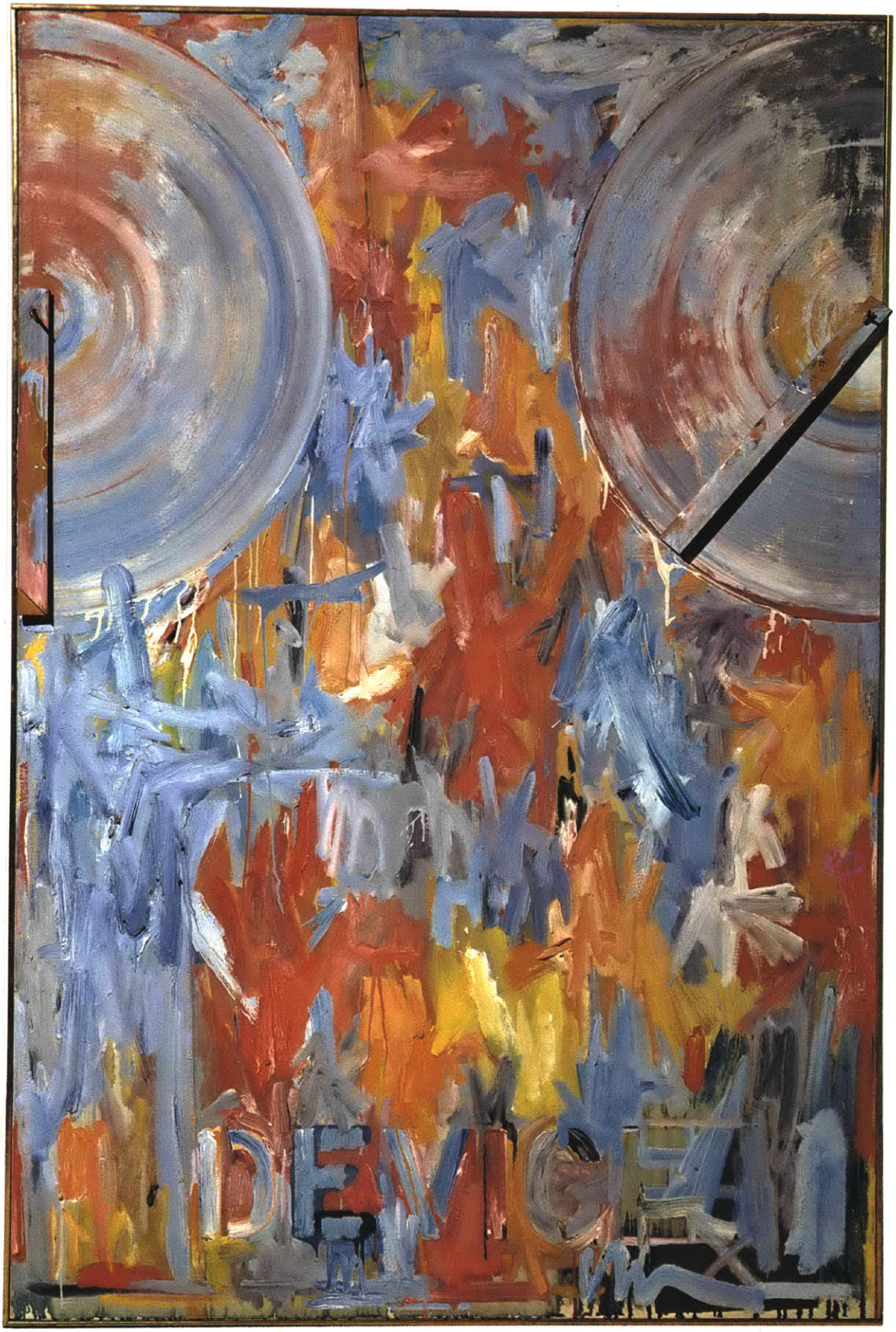

FIG. 60
JASPER JOHNS, WATER FREEZES, 1961

FIG. 61
JASPER JOHNS, LIAR, 1961

FIG. 62.
JASPER JOHNS, HATTERAS, 1963

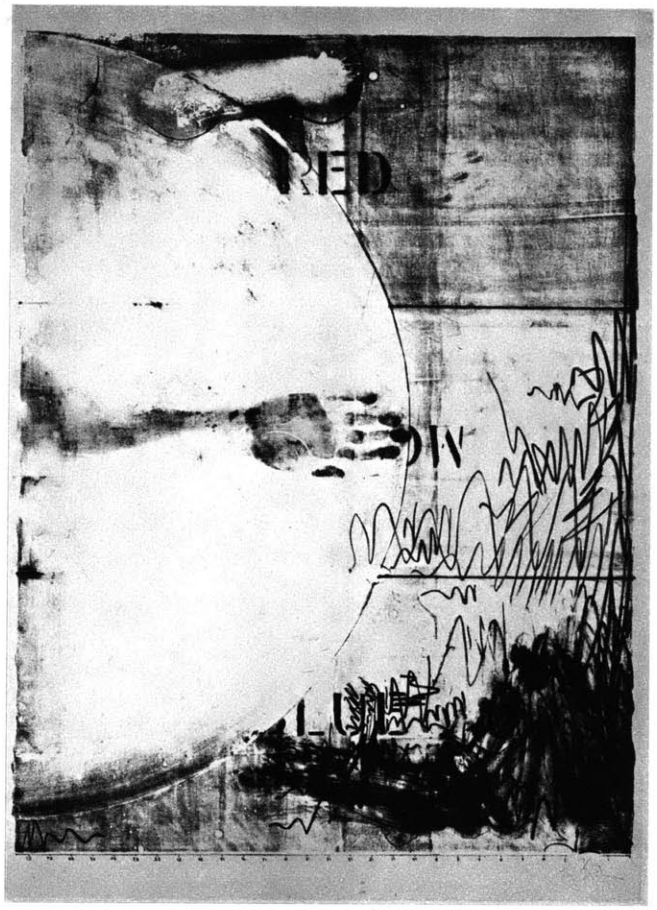

FIG. 63. JASPER JOHNS, DIVER, 1963 (DRAWING)

FIG. 64. - JASPER JOHNS, PASSAGE II, 1966

FIG. 65

JASPER JOHNS, *ACCORDING TO WHAT*, 1964

FIG. 66
JASPER JOHNS, PASSAGE I (LITHOGRAPH) 1966

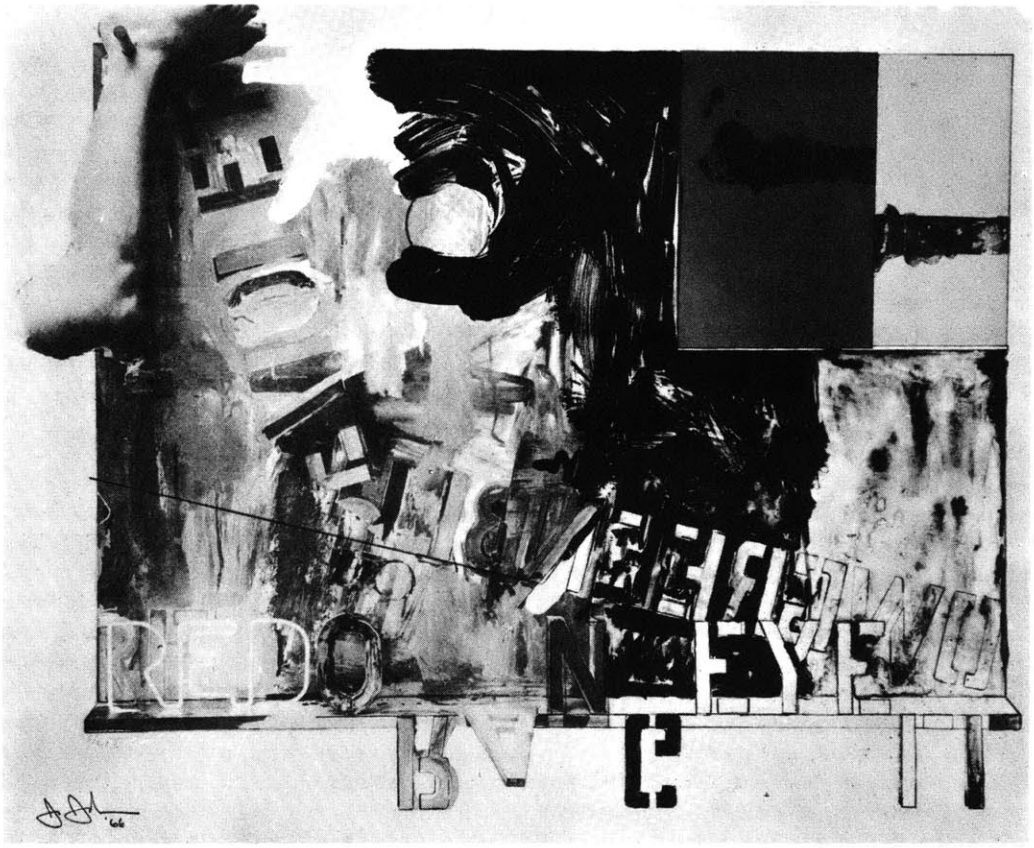

FIG. 67
JASPER JOHNS, DECOY II, 1971-1973

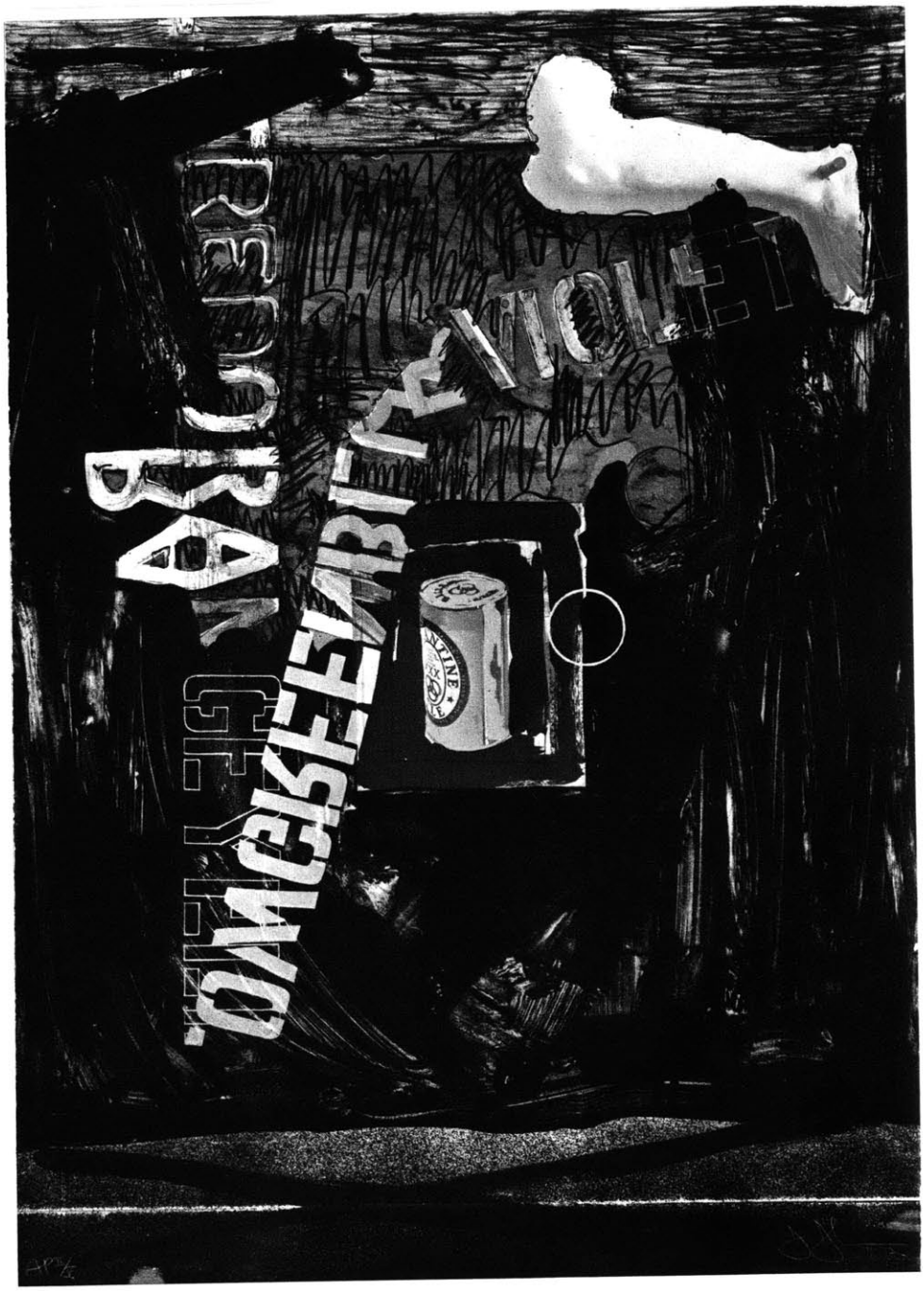

Fig. 68 - JASPER JOHNS, EDDINGSVILLE, 1965 ←

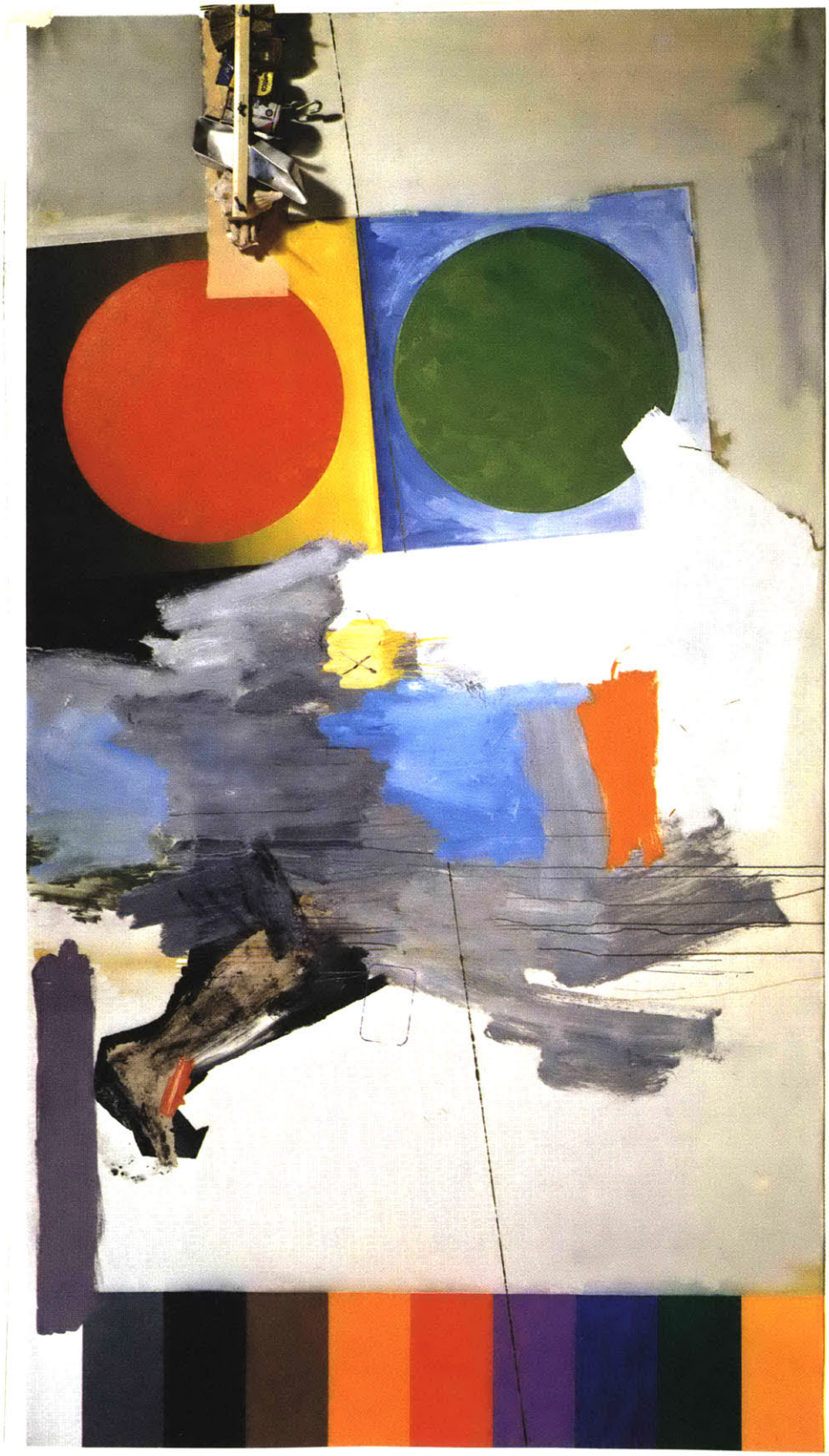

FIG. 69 - JASPER JOHNS, NUMBER 7, 1968