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MFA THESIS EXHIBITION

By

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Dedicated to my parents, Gregg and Melody Bond.

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“I think what one wants from a painting is
a sense of life
The final statement has to be
not a statement
It has to be what you can't avoid
a sense of life”

-Jasper Johns

I have always been interested in both the history of painting and the process in which a painting is made. A brushstroke or mark in any size, scale, texture, or length is an essential part of the way a painting is made. Within the history of painting artists commonly work with a signature mark that they use for most of their life. These marks are used to build form, fields, and line in representational or abstract means. It is the commonality in the use of marks by artists through history and process, which becomes my focus and an investigation to find a universal mark within painting.

One brushstroke I have chosen for my paintings represents to me a collective mark in all painting within history. This mark becomes a vehicle for an intuitive system of painting and mark making that I use. One of my first paintings exploring this collective mark is *Untitled (Homage to Matisse)*(Plate II). It is the only painting in the series for which a study, *Maquette for Untitled (Homage to Matisse)*(Plate I). The maquette consists of two Matisse prints covered with marks. The marks do not fully take over the Matisse prints. The shapes and forms of the images beneath the marks bleed through so one can find and examine the forms and shapes that are of interest.

In transition from the maquette to the full scale painting of *Untitled* (Homage to Matisse) I found it unnecessary to directly copy the paintings from the prints but merely reuse the colors that Matisse used. By continually over layering Matisse's colors with my collective marks I reduced the view of those colors by process. Each color is layered one at a time. As the painting is built up in layers, the brushstrokes begin to show the history of process in which the painting is made. The final white layer acts as a screen or mesh like pattern, which holds the system of marks behind it. The painting becomes a window the viewer must look through to get to the layers of information behind the final layers of marks.

This window created and added another essential part to my body of work, which is a paradox between the reductive nature of late modernism and the reinvestigation of the traditional in post modernism. In taking a post modern perspective I am reutilizing the traditional notion of the painting being a window that the viewer must look through. In respect to the reductive nature of late modernism the top layer of white marks overtake the past trying to resolve the canvas to a pure form. The top layer of marks consumes the surface to the point that it almost becomes a blank canvas or once again a blank slate. This collective mark and paradox combine to become the springboard for the rest of my body of work.

As the paintings progressed I continued to use the white mark as the top layer, but found the need to let go of the historical reference to artists. The decisions on what

colors to use became both logical and emotional. At times a layer of color going from one layer to the other was based on a personal preference or an emotional state of mind. At other times, decisions of color seem logical, placing one color with the next layer being the complementary color of the layer before. No matter how I built up the layers of colors in the paintings with white marks as the top layer, these paintings all seemed to express some theme. For instance, *Untitled* (Eastermint)(Plate VI), where as the title suggests, the colors are those that are seen around Easter. Another good example of this thematic sense of color is *Untitled* (playground)(Plate V) in which the colors are that of a primary palette that a child might use.

Even though the top layer of my collective mark being white was essential to the idea of the painting deconstructing itself and returning to a blank white canvas, the white marks began to become visually problematic to this notion of looking into a window. The white marks being the top layer mute the colors that are layered behind it. In addition to this, the space or density, which you look through, is flattened by the relationship between the top white layer and open white spots of canvas. This left a shallow visual passage into the layer of the painting, which I felt needed to get visually deeper.

As the paintings progressed I began using different colors for the top layers. This gave a more dramatic field of depth when looking into the painting. The top layer now pushed off the white of the canvas therefore gave me more play with color relationships that I could use to create depth. In the painting *Untitled* (Boston ties)(Plate XV) I used a

complementary series of greens and reds to work against each other in addition to the top layer of green pushing off the white of the canvas. Now with the white layer gone, the paintings became more referential about the process and time in which the layer of colors are placed. This concept of process and time exist thorough this body of paintings, but seems to be more apparent in the paintings that a specific color is used as the top layer.

The collective mark I use contains many different qualities. One layer of marks may be very painterly with shown brushwork. Another layer may be completely flat. In addition, there are matte and glossy qualities of the paint in each layer. These juxtaposing differences in surface are used to emphasize the relationships between each layer. Some of the marks of each layer have run offs or drips. The drip adds immediacy to the brushwork and the painting, although there is the suggested visual window of the painting to look through. The drip also forces the viewer to confront gravity and experience the physicality of the painting being as object.

These qualities of my collective mark create a dialog between the visual nature of the paintings and physical nature of the process in which they are made. The paintings exist in a parallel of a visual passage and that of an object made from process.

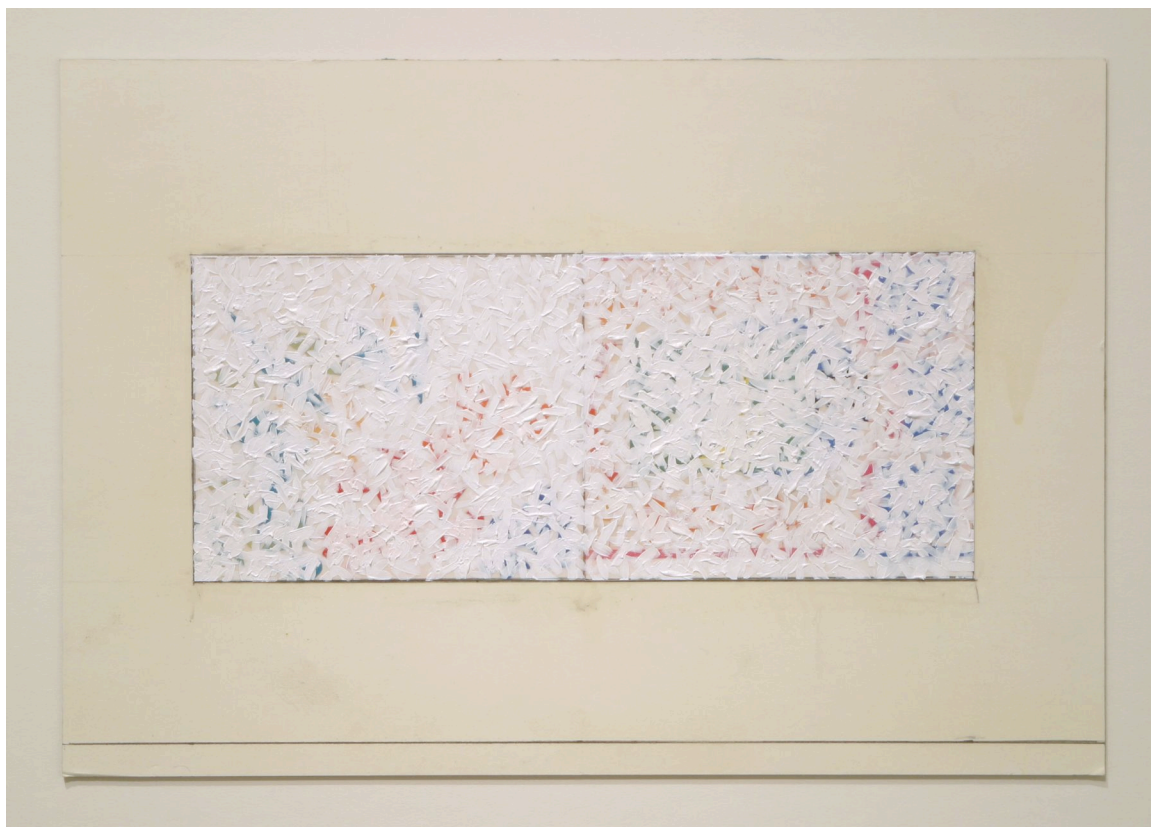


PLATE I

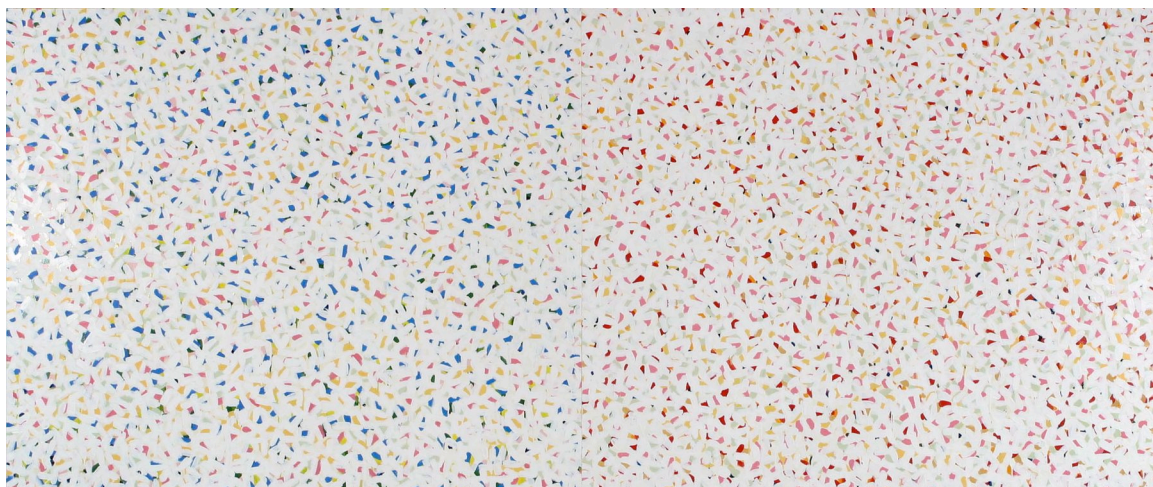


PLATE II



PLATE III



PLATE IV



PLATE V



PLATE VI



PLATE VII



PLATE VIII



PLATE IX



PLATE X



PLATE XI



PLATE XII

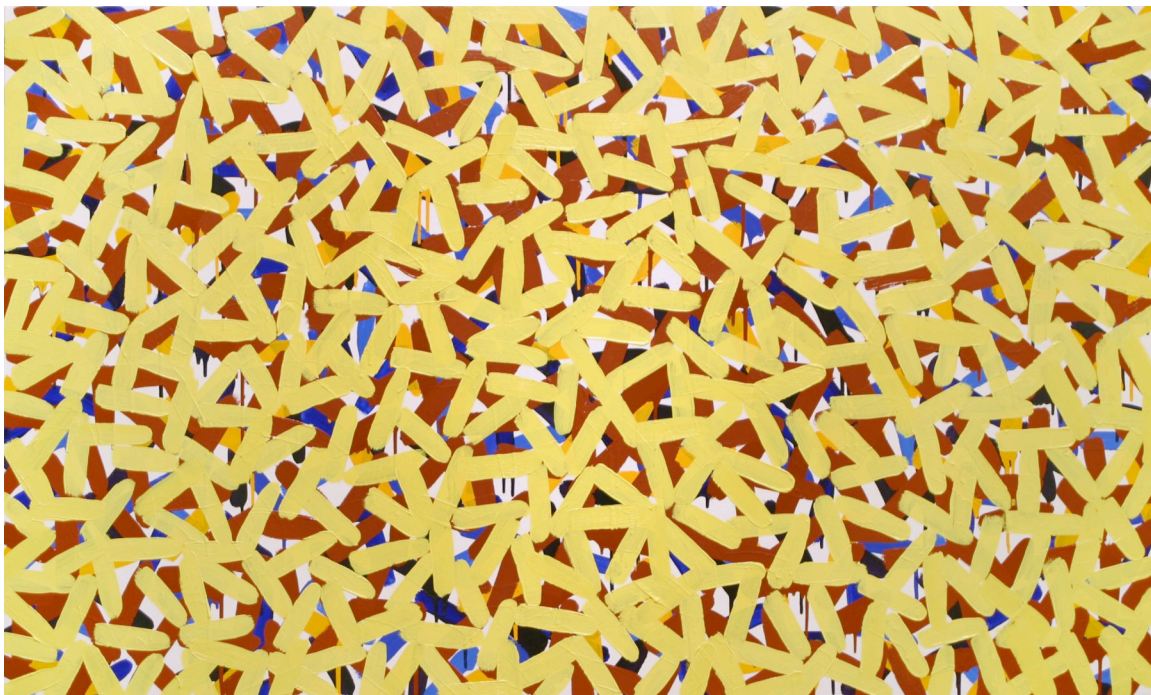


PLATE XIII

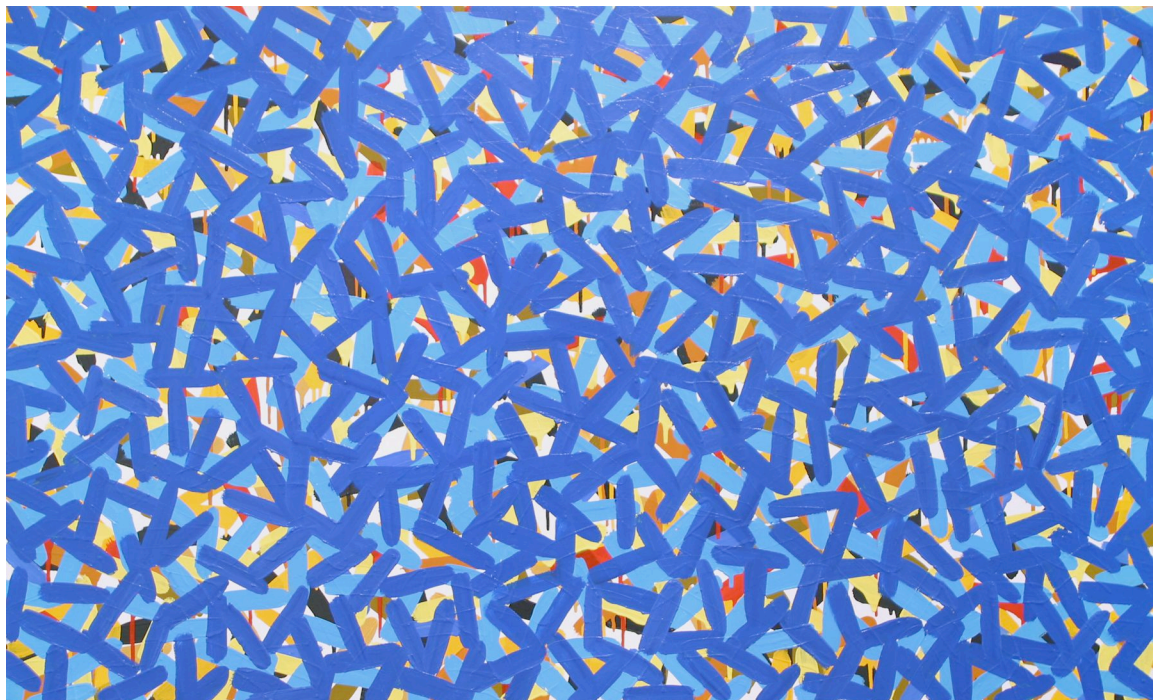


PLATE XIV

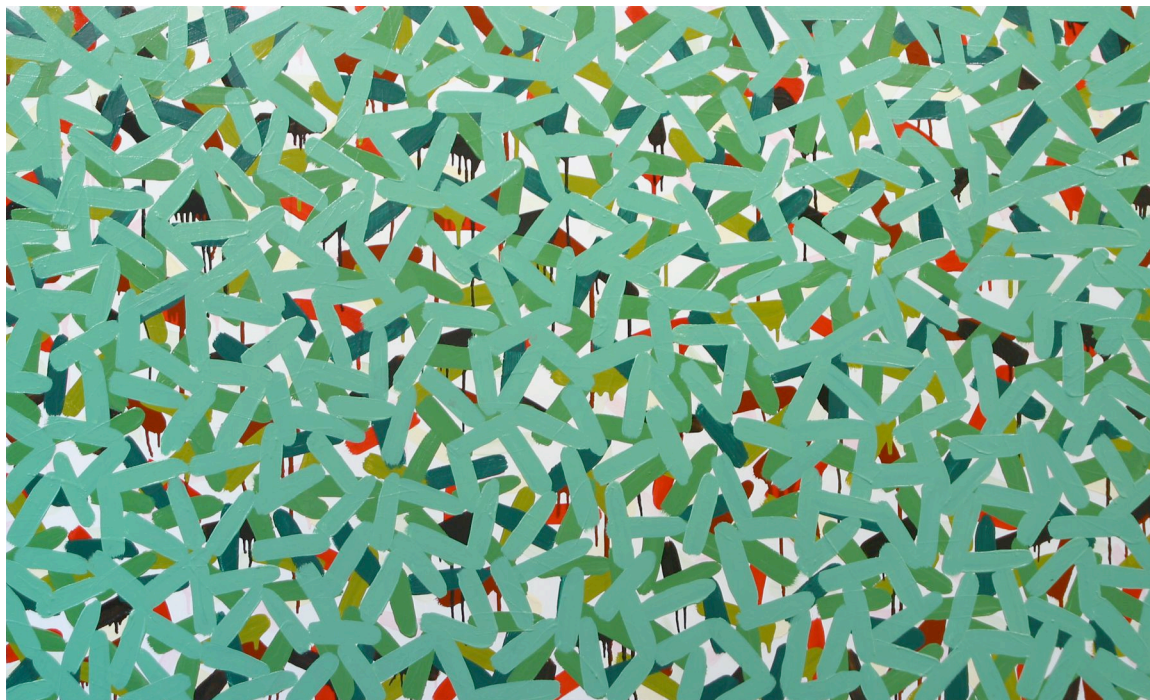


PLATE XV



PLATE XV



PLATE XVII

VITA

Personal Background	Christopher Michael Bond Born September 8, 1976, Nashville, Tennessee Son of Gregg and Melody Bond
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Collections	Neely School of Business Texas Christian University

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of abstract paintings, which are made of my collective mark to create dialog between the visual nature of the paintings and physical nature of the process in which they are made. The paintings exist in a parallel of a visual passage and that of an object made from process. It is the commonality in the use of marks by artists through history and process, which becomes my focus and an investigation to find a universal mark within painting.