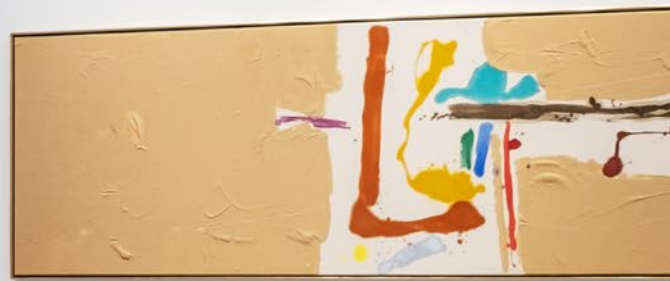


James Barron Art

Kikuo Saito: Paint with Drawing

June 3 - August 5, 2022



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Kikuo Saito: Paint with Drawing

June 3 - August 5, 2022

We are pleased to exhibit *Kikuo Saito: Paint with Drawing*, a selection of five superb works from 1980 through 2010. *Azalea* (1981) and *Blue Kettle* (1980) exemplify Saito's earlier style, for which he first gained acclaim, combining large expanses of color with fluid, calligraphic flourishes. Later in his career, Saito wove together dense layers of colorful, freewheeling brushstrokes to execute works like *Copper Moon* (2010).

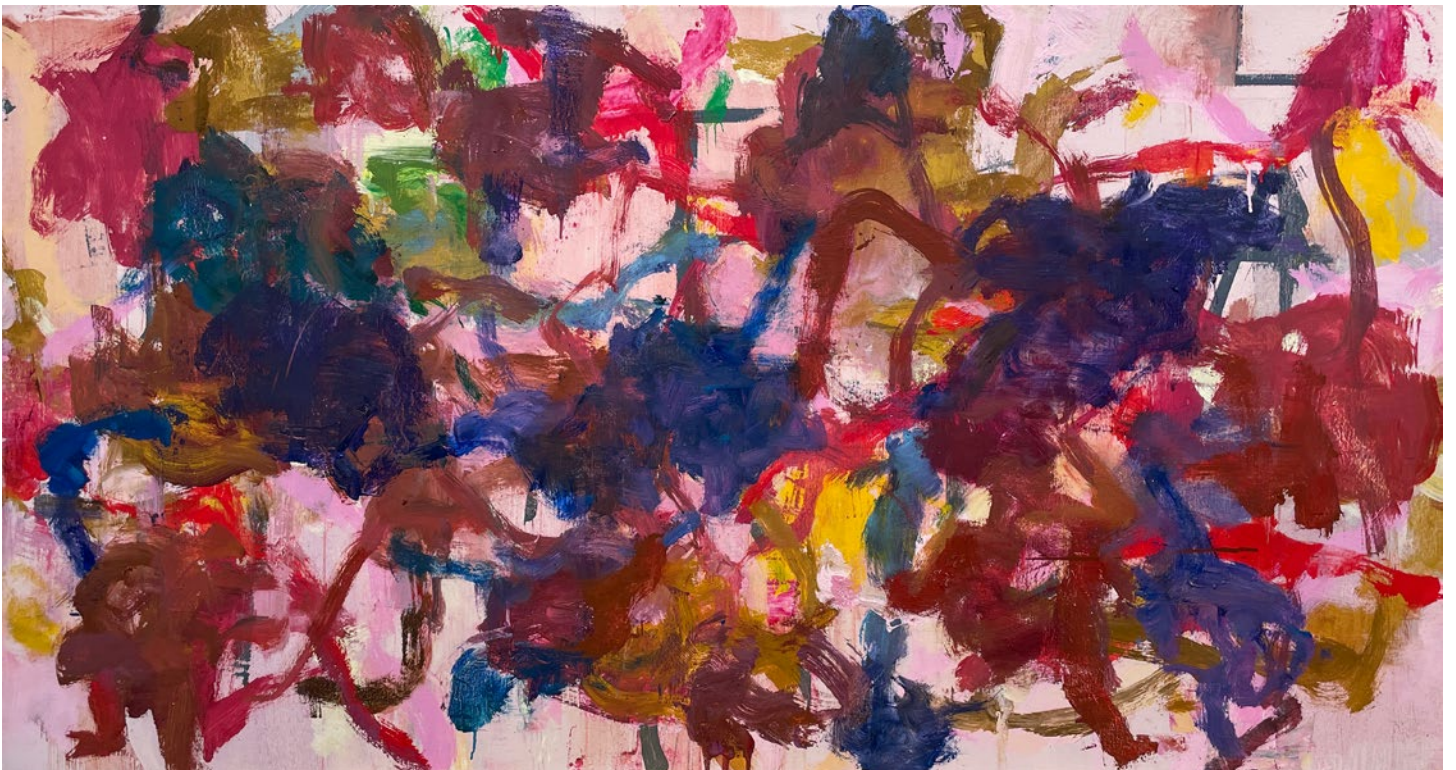
“I always wanted to paint with drawing.”

Kikuo Saito



KIKUO SAITO

Copper Moon, 2010
acrylic on canvas
29 x 54 inches
(73.7 x 137.2 cm)





Painted in 2010, *Copper Moon* exemplifies Saito's late style of loose, colorful brushstrokes. Works from this period have been widely collected in both private and corporate collections, along with select public collections.



Quenka, 2012
oil on canvas
65 1/4 × 44 3/4 inches
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

“The marks in his paintings, now floating, now gathering in conversational groups, now purposefully traversing the canvas, have become eloquent signs, carriers not only of the complex colors with which Saito builds his paintings, but also of deep feeling and energy. It’s not an overstatement to say these poetic, energetic works are among Saito’s best.”

Karen Wilkin

KIKUO SAITO

Azalea, 1981
oil on canvas
52 x 90 1/2 inches
(132.1 x 229.9 cm)





KIKUO SAITO

Blue Kettle, 1980
oil on canvas
33 x 120 1/4 inches
(83.8 x 305.4 cm)





“[Saito’s work is] a terrain inhabited by fluent calligraphy, bold gestures with the brush, and delicate traces of line—a population of unnamable, widely varied painting incidents that the artist disposes against expanses of luminous color like a director moving performers around a stage.”

Karen Wilkin

Azalea and *Blue Kettle* exemplify Saito's style in the late 1970s and early 1980s, for which he initially gained recognition. Originally working as a set designer in Tokyo, Saito moved to the United States in 1966 and continued to design sets for theatrical and modern dance productions. At the same time, Saito began working as a studio assistant to legendary painters like Helen Frankenthaler, Larry Poons, and Kenneth Noland.

Saito pursued his own painting career on the side, and eventually abandoned his theatrical work to focus more intently on painting. During this time, Saito developed his early trademark style of Color Field abstraction mixed with calligraphic flourishes. These flourishes were not derived from English or Japanese; they were a language of Saito's own invention, serving as an additional layer of abstraction over his colorful forms.

These works are also widely collected, including an early Color Field work at the Museum of Modern Art.



Regatta Night, 1981

oil on canvas

54 x 95 1/4 inches

The Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL



Untitled, 1980

paint on handmade paper

30 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches

The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Wistar's Night, 1978
acrylic on unprimed canvas
62 1/4 x 72 1/4 inches
Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, NC
Duke University



Slippery Point, 1981
oil on canvas
51 1/2 x 111 1/3 inches
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Ontario



Windy Paws, 1979
oil on canvas
106 2/3 x 64 inches
Ulster Museum, Belfast
National Museums of Northern Ireland

KIKUO SAITO

Silver Camel, 1985
acrylic on canvas
44 1/2 x 86 inches
(113 x 218.4 cm)



Works related to *Silver Camel* have also been widely collected, appearing in private, corporate, and public collections. Examples include:



Spider's Window, 1988
acrylic on canvas
49 x 81 1/4 inches
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Ontario



Spanish Arrow, 1987
acrylic on canvas
61 1/2 x 66 1/2 inches
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Ontario



Monkey's Alphabet, 1985
acrylic on canvas
81 1/4 x 50 3/4 inches
Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, NC
Duke University



"Kikuo Saito had two métiers, as an abstract painter and as a creator of experimental theater performances...These polarities can also be seen clearly in his paintings, which unite the contemplative coolness of Color Field with the energetic gestures of Abstract Expressionism."

John Dorfman

KIKUO SAITO

Saw Grass, 1980
oil on canvas
43 1/2 x 79 1/2 inches
(110.5 x 201.9 cm)

