

GRAY

LEON POLK SMITH &
JUDY LEDGERWOOD

FRIEZE NEW YORK

May 7 - 11, 2025
Booth D07

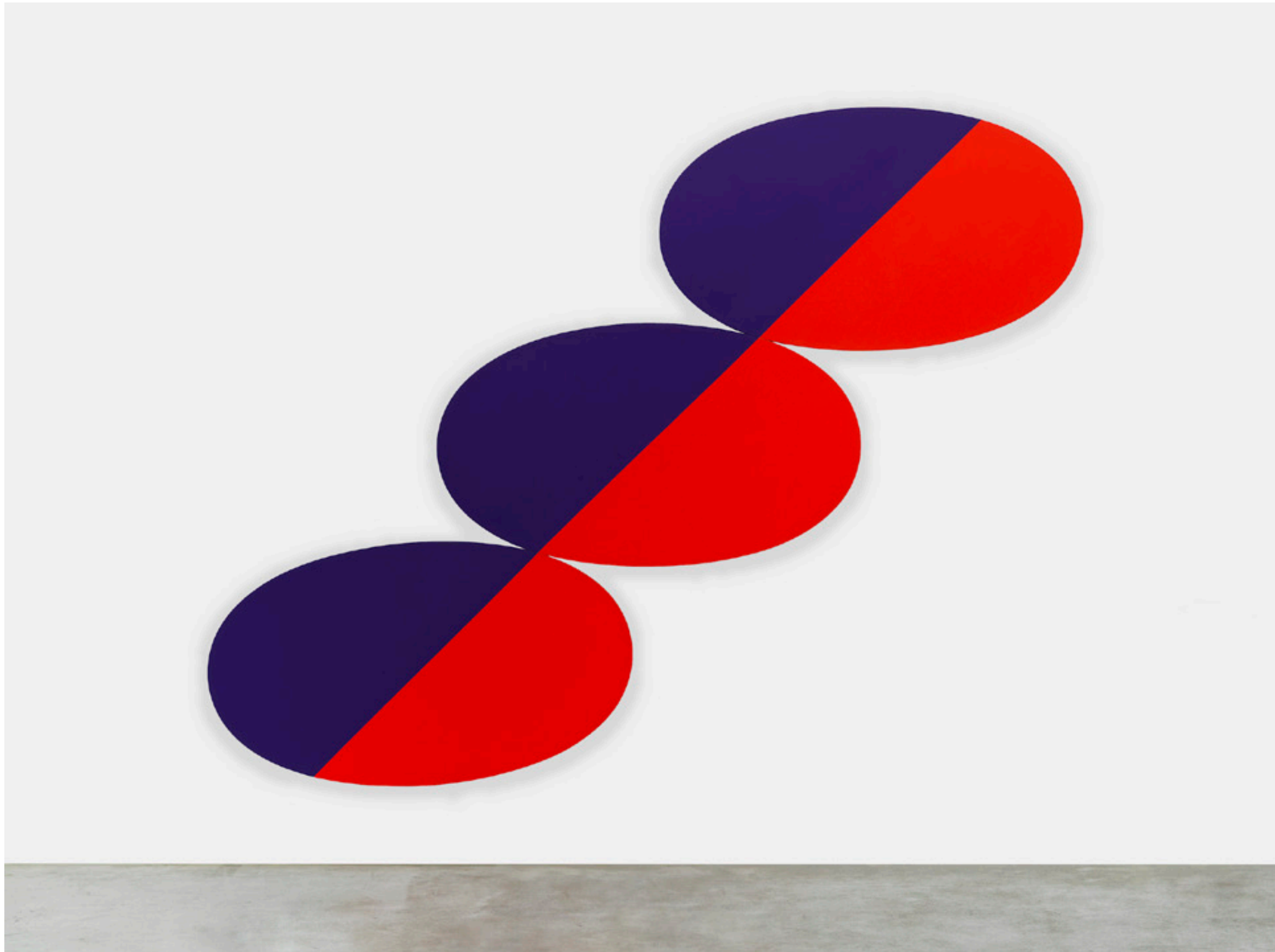


GRAY is pleased to present in Frieze New York 2025 with a two-person exhibition of paintings by Judy Ledgerwood (b. 1959) and Leon Polk Smith (1906 - 1996). Through distinct yet complementary practices, both artists confront the presumed neutrality of abstract painting — Ledgerwood through a feminist lens, and Smith through a queer one.

Michigan-based artist Judy Ledgerwood challenges the minimalist, male-centric legacy of abstraction by embracing unapologetically feminine colors and forms. Using repetitive circular shapes and her signature quatrefoil pattern, Ledgerwood bends and relaxes the traditional grid by incorporating influences from the Pattern & Decoration movement, quilting, and textiles into her bold, thickly impastoed paintings.

Working in response to the rigidity of Mondrian's geometric abstraction and the dominance of Modernism in his time, Leon Polk Smith pursued gently warped geometries and shaped canvases that allowed his compositions to expand beyond the limitations of the painting's edge. Smith made careful and deliberate color choices, typically only two or three colors per painting, that activate the canvas from an optical perspective, creating the tension and vibration of a total environment. Even when working in a rectilinear format, Smith did not want the outside shape to "determine the arrangement of what is on or inside it."

Judy Ledgerwood
Footsteps, 2022



Leon Polk Smith
Constel: Blue Red straight line thru three Ovals, 1969
Paint on canvas
121 x 132 inches (307.3 x 353.3 cm)



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Judy Ledgerwood
Crepuscolo, 2025
Oil on canvas
84 × 96 inches (213.4 × 243.8 cm)



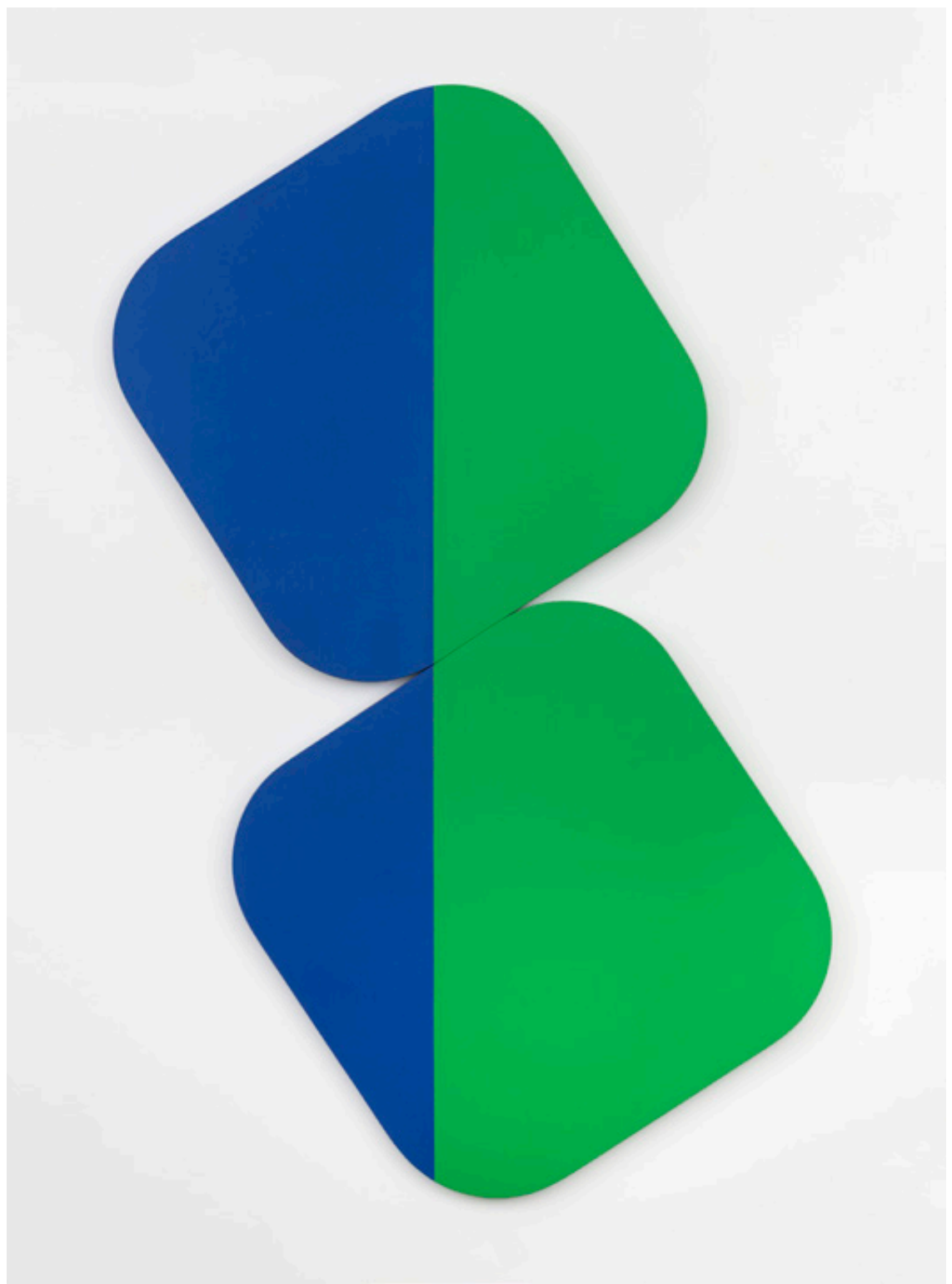
Leon Polk Smith
Red Violet Red, 1967
Paint on canvas
76 × 17 ¼ inches (193 × 43.8 cm)



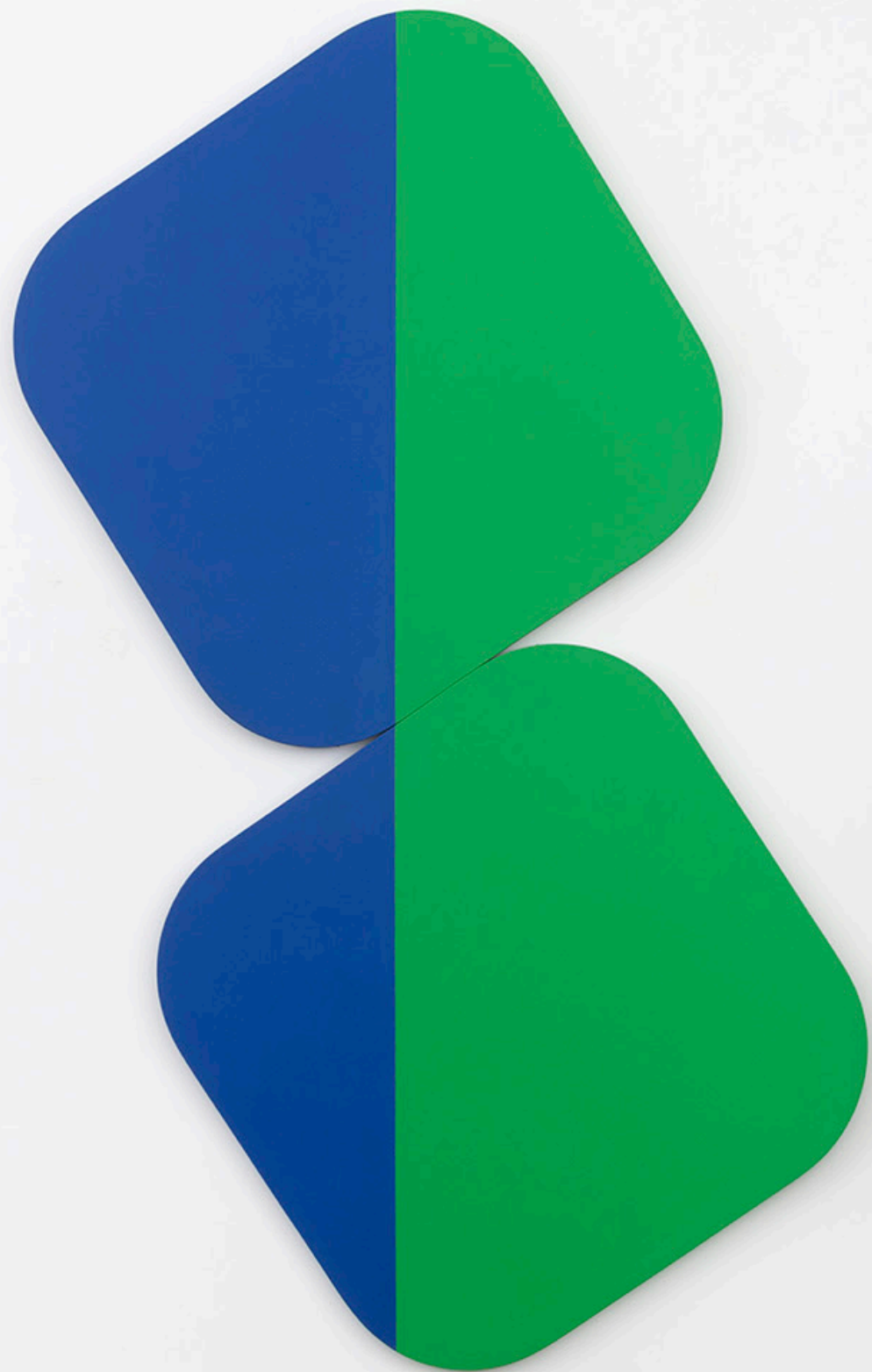


Judy Ledgerwood
Footsteps, 2022
Oil and metallic oil on canvas
72 × 48 inches (182.9 × 121.9 cm)





Leon Polk Smith
Constellation No. 4 Vertical Blue-Green, 1971
Acrylic on canvas
87 ³/₄ × 56 ⁵/₈ inches (222.9 × 143.8 cm)



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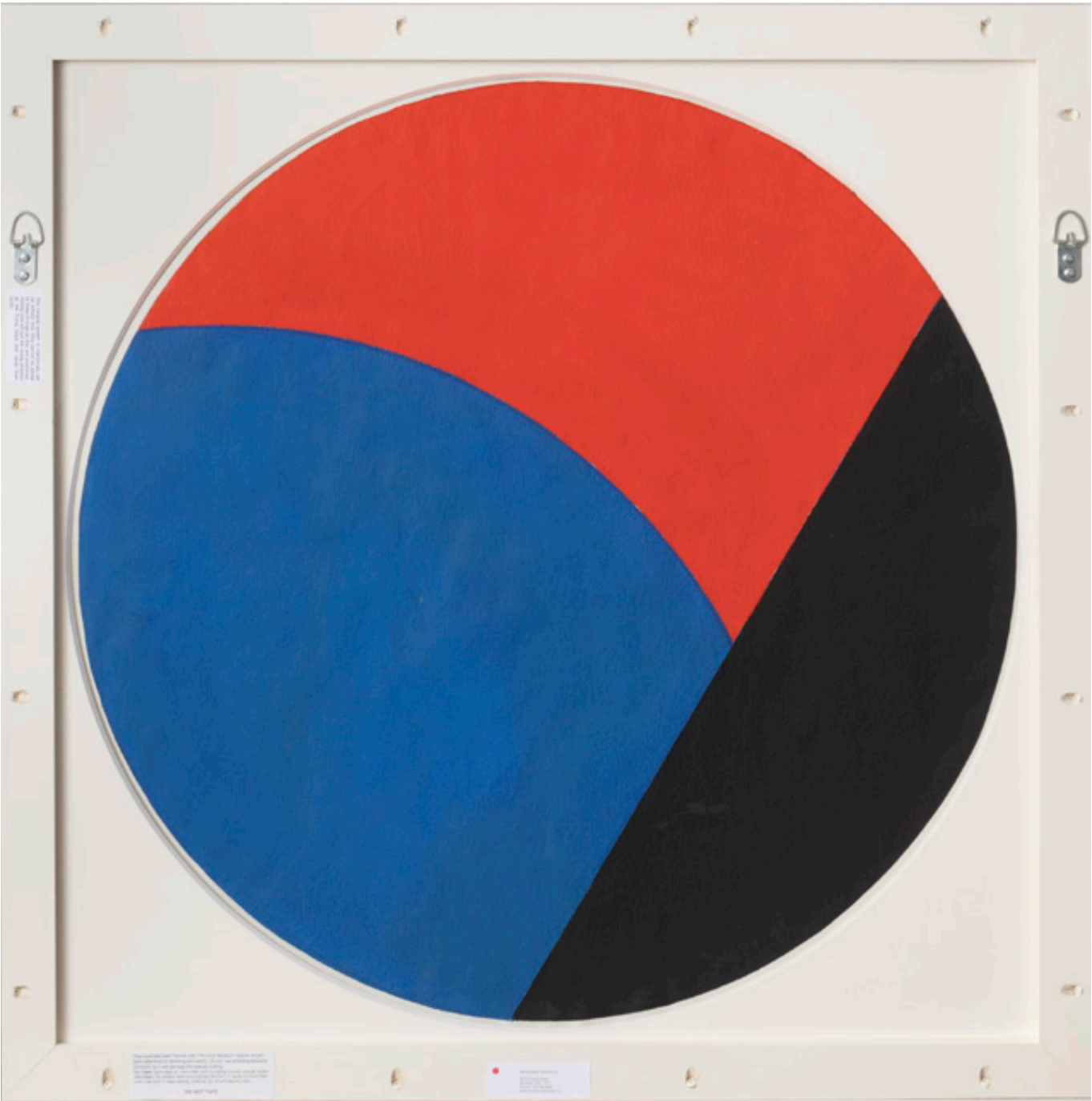
Judy Ledgerwood
Cotton Candy Kisses, 2009
Oil on canvas
71 × 59 inches (180.3 × 149.9 cm)



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Leon Polk Smith
Untitled, 1961
 Paint on paper
 27 ½ × 27 ⅝ inches (69.9 × 70.2 cm)





Judy Ledgerwood
Absalon, 2022
Oil on canvas
36 × 30 inches (91.4 × 76.2 cm)



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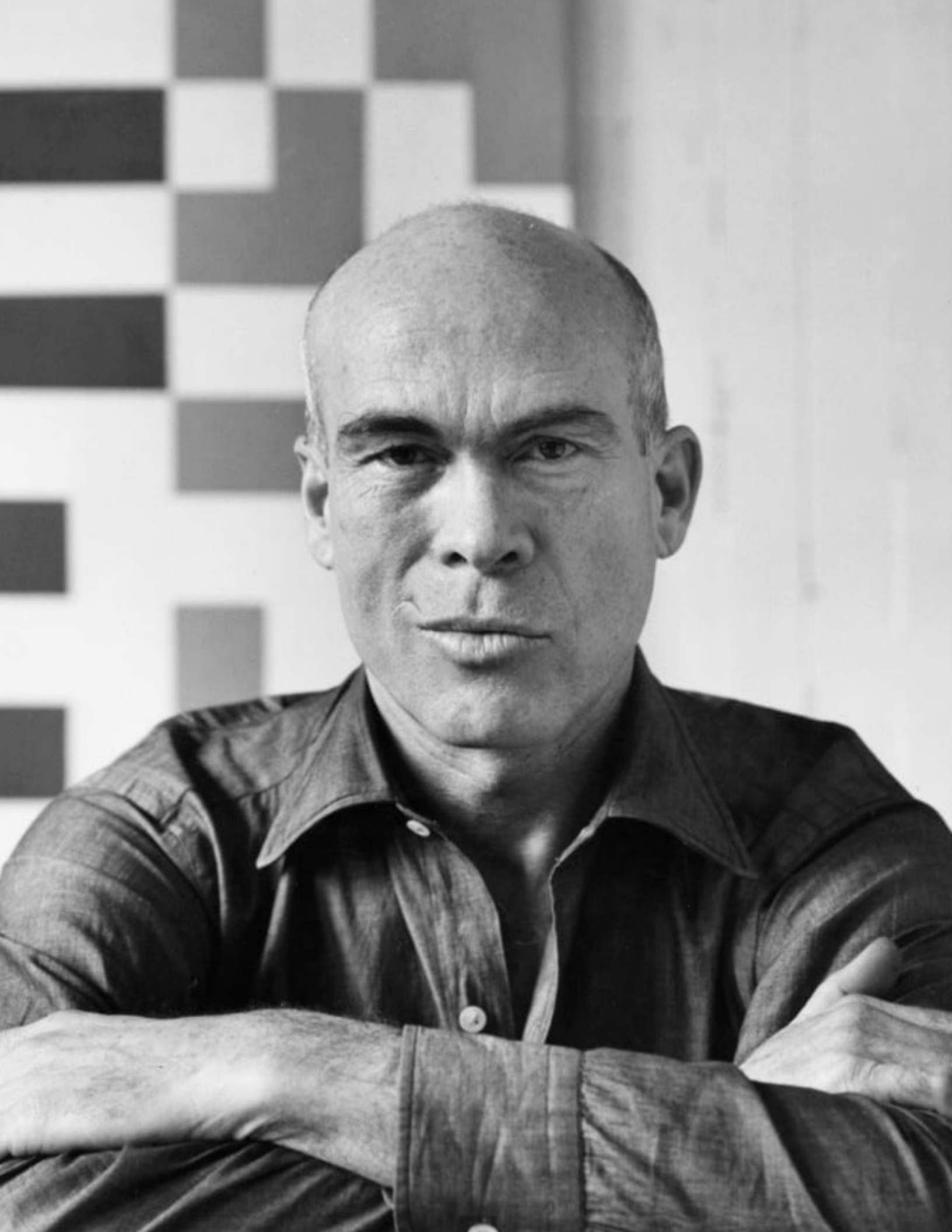
Leon Polk Smith
Untitled (No. 7613), 1976
Paint on canvas
Diameter: 47 ³/₄ inches (121.3 cm)



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Judy Ledgerwood
Minn, 2022
Majolica
9 × 8 × 8 inches (22.9 × 20.3 × 20.3 cm)



Leon Polk Smith (American, 1906 - 1996) was a painter heralded for his lifelong commitment to simplified shapes, brilliant colors and minimal, pressurized compositions. Born outside Chickasha in what would become Oklahoma, Smith was educated in New York City in the 1930s. He later attributed his encounters with the works of Piet Mondrian and Constantin Brancusi during these years as formative to his artistic development. In his hard-edged paintings, Smith would push the geometry of Mondrian into curved compositions that celebrated optical tenseness and restraint. From his first solo exhibition in New York City in 1941 through his death in 1996, Smith's paintings—frequently on shaped or multipart canvases—exuded a buoyancy that was identified as quintessentially American. Writing in the *New York Times*, Roberta Smith analyzed his relationship to Americanness, connecting the overt simplicity, the evocation of the expansive landscape, the balance of boldness and pensiveness to what she called a “slightly unhinged optimism.”

Smith has been the subject of numerous retrospectives and his work resides in major institutional collections including the Art Institute of Chicago, Brooklyn Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, Hirshhorn Museum, L.A. County Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Leon Polk Smith. Photo by Gene Pyle.
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In a painting career spanning four decades, Judy Ledgerwood (b. 1959, Brazil, Indiana) has confronted and expanded the history of abstract painting by decentering perceptions of its neutrality and prioritizing visual engagement and pleasure. Drawing upon rich and diverse sources from the realms of both fine art and popular culture, Ledgerwood's optically bold, large-scale canvases engage viewers in active looking and challenge conventional notions of beauty and taste. She explores light, color, and structure with great specificity, and early on in her career, she embraced traditionally feminine colors like pastels, pinks, and fluorescent hues to undermine the male-dominated milieu of abstract painting. Through repetitive circular shapes and her signature *quatrefoil* pattern, Ledgerwood bends and relaxes the grid, bringing influences from the Pattern and Decoration movement, quilting, and textiles into the arena of her paintings. Ledgerwood's work includes an exploration of architectural spaces through her creation of monumental wall paintings and environmental installations, which have been exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, among other venues.

Ledgerwood received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Art Academy of Cincinnati and a Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has held solo exhibitions at numerous venues, including the Graham Foundation, Smart Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Renaissance Society, and Rhona Hoffman Gallery in Chicago, Illinois; and Häusler Contemporary in Zürich, Switzerland, Munich, Germany, and Lustenau, Austria. Ledgerwood lives and works between Chicago, Illinois and Sawyer, Michigan.

Judy Ledgerwood. Photo by Chris Strong.





ALEX KATZ (b. 1927)
Washington Square, 2014
Oil on board
12 × 9 inches
30.5 × 22.9 cm
0715052

\$85,000



LEON POLK SMITH (1906–1996)
Untitled, 1968
Paint on board
21 ¾ × 15 inches
55.2 × 38.1 cm
0519021

\$30,000



LEON POLK SMITH (1906–1996)
Untitled, 1968
Pencil and paint on paper
21 ¾ × 15 inches
55.2 × 38.1 cm
0519023

\$30,000



ALEX KATZ (b. 1927)
Twelve Hours 2, 1984
Oil on board
24 × 18 inches
61 × 45.7 cm
0323002

\$375,000

875 N Michigan Ave, Ste 3800
Chicago, IL 60611
+1 312 642 8877

1018 Madison Ave, 2nd Fl
New York, NY 10075
+1 212 472 8787



JUDY LEDGERWOOD (b. 1959)

\$5,000

After the Rain, 2019

Acrylic gouache on Twinrocker handmade paper

17 ¼ × 22 inches

43.8 × 55.9 cm

0724015

Closet



TORKWASE DYSON (b. 1973)

\$16,000

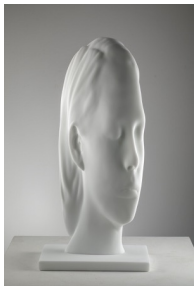
Hand to Hand, Heart to Heart 7, 2024

Graphite, gouache and ink on paper

16 × 11 ½ inches

40.6 × 29.2 cm

0724031



JAUME PLENSA (b. 1955)

\$135,000

Compressed in White (Julia), 2024

Glass

22 ¾ × 10 ⅝ × 6 ¼ inches

56.8 × 27 × 15.9 cm

Edition 1 of 6

1224008



JUDY LEDGERWOOD (b. 1959)

\$6,000

Dot, 2021

Majolica

9 ½ × 10 × 10 inches

24.1 × 25.4 × 25.4 cm

0225033

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New York, NY 10075
+1 212 472 8787



JUDY LEDGERWOOD (b. 1959)
Minn, 2021
Majolica
9 × 8 × 8 inches
22.9 × 20.3 × 20.3 cm
0225034

\$6,000



CANDIDA ALVAREZ (b. 1955)
BTCA Drawing 5, 2024
Watercolor pencil on Yupo paper
12 × 9 inches
30.5 × 22.9 cm
0325006

\$12,000



CANDIDA ALVAREZ (b. 1955)
BTCA Drawing 7, 2025
Watercolor pencil on Yupo paper
9 × 12 inches
22.9 × 30.5 cm
0325008

\$12,000

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