

The background of the entire image is a dense, textured mosaic of small, irregular tiles in various shades of yellow and gold. The tiles are closely packed, creating a shimmering, mosaic-like effect. The colors range from bright, sunny yellow to deeper, more metallic gold tones, with some tiles appearing slightly darker or more saturated than others, giving the overall surface a rich, three-dimensional quality.

# **SHIRLEY GOLDFARB**

**PAINTING PARIS**



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## PAINTING PARIS

May 11 – June 17, 2017

LORETTA HOWARD  
GALLERY

521 WEST 26 ST NYC 10001 212.695.0164 [LORETTAHOWARD.COM](http://LORETTAHOWARD.COM)

Le couteau place la peinture, une couleur après l'autre, comme des empreintes d'animaux ou des notations musicales.



The knife places the paint, one color after another, like animal prints or musical notations.

- Shirley Goldfarb's diaries

# SHIRLEY GOLDFARB

## PAINTING PARIS



To mention Shirley Goldfarb is to conjure an image of Paris, a city she loved deeply and called home for 26 years. Born into a conservative Jewish family in Altoona, Pennsylvania, she was mentored by a local rabbi and eventually garnered a scholarship to attend the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. She never once looked back. Once in Manhattan, one of her instructors noted her artistic skills and suggested that she leave the Seminary and enroll at the Art Students League, where she ultimately enrolled in 1950. There she met fellow artist Gregory Masurovsky whom she married in 1953. Like many of their generation they soon moved to Paris, where they survived on the GI Bill. Goldfarb adopted a purely abstract style, breaking completely with the figurative Expressionism that had characterized her academic training in New York.

As the 1950s faded into the 1960s, she became closely associated with other American expatriates who flocked to the city in the aftermath of World War II, including Joan Mitchell and Sam Francis. Unlike the work of her peers, Goldfarb's paintings absorbed a unique Parisian quality. She is often likened more closely to the Paris School of Tachisme that included Jean Paul Riopelle and Pierre Soulages

in their number. The French Impressionists, especially Monet, deeply moved her and she internalized their delicate palette. The influence of the city upon the artist cannot be overstated. Goldfarb recounted how the light and atmosphere of the city affected her: "I went through a revolution here. When I saw the light in Paris and, after seeing a Monet, I realized they were one and the same thing." A chief influence, a selection of late Monet paintings could be easily viewed at the



nearby Musée de l'Orangerie with its collection of eight monumental water lilies paintings. Though this affinity is one she developed early, it is one that seemed to reassert itself throughout the remainder of her life. Shortly after her arrival, the L'Orangerie received the first of two major bequests of important Impressionist and Post Impressionist paintings.

In the early 1970s the densely chorded knots of paint in her abstractions gave way to a careful, hazy array of painterly marks. The drama of composition in her earlier works was supplanted by the woozy power of all-over color. George Seurat's influence is particularly pronounced in this development. Indeed, the carefully knifed grids of paint take their cues from pointillism. In the spirit of

Claude Monet,  
*Nymphéas, Nuages*,  
1914-1926,  
Courtesy Musée de  
l'Orangerie (Paris)

Georges Seurat  
*Study for La Grande Jatte*, 1884,  
Courtesy The National Gallery,  
Washington D.C.



over nine feet in length these works were made with careful, plodding insistence within the constrained confines of the tiny live-work studio she shared



North "Rose Window" of the  
Chartres Cathedral, 1235

her predecessor, Goldfarb has distilled the essence of the picture into an arrangement of color coordinates. These works abandon a centerline or obvious compositional motif in favor of the atmospheric power of Impressionism.

It is important to note the monumental scale of these paintings. Measuring

near Montparnasse with her husband and their son. The series of miniature works that she made throughout the 1960s and 1970s capture a similar infatuation with light and color, and provided a much needed respite from the intensive labor of making large works in the cramped family apartment.

Her canvas *Chartres*, mirrors the stunning blues, yellows and deep burgundy reds of Chartres Cathedral's thirteenth-century stained glass windows. Famous as a dramatic example of medieval stained glass, the church is emblematic of the storied architecture that pervades much of Paris. The luminous quality of her *Yellow Painting #1* recalls the heavy

impasto surfaces of Vincent Van Gogh's Sunflower paintings. His work from this series offers a poignant reflection on the fleeting, fragile nature of life. Similarly, the staccato marks of Shirley's pallet knife lend a frenzied effect to the otherwise cheerful tones of her canvas. Her journals, which she could be seen writing in constantly, reveal an inner dialog fraught with self-doubt and turmoil. One cannot help but imagine she might have felt kinship in the tortured, romantic figure of Van Gogh.



Vincent van Gogh, Sunflowers,  
1889, Courtesy of the  
Van Gogh Museum

6 Shirley was a fixture of the social milieu surrounding the many artists, poets and intellectuals who inhabited the cafés of Montparnasse and Saint-Germain-des-Prés. One can imagine Shirley herself as a modern counterpart to the flaneurs of impressionist era Paris. Ever the consummate socialite and dedicated bon vivant, she was always resplendent in her black wardrobe, oversized dark sunglasses and black makeup (her “war paint”), usually with her miniature Yorkshire terrier in tow. She could often be seen strolling the left bank, soaking in the scene at café terraces and watching for someone interesting to cross her path, sensitive to the moments of light promising to play out across the city's luminous boulevards. ■

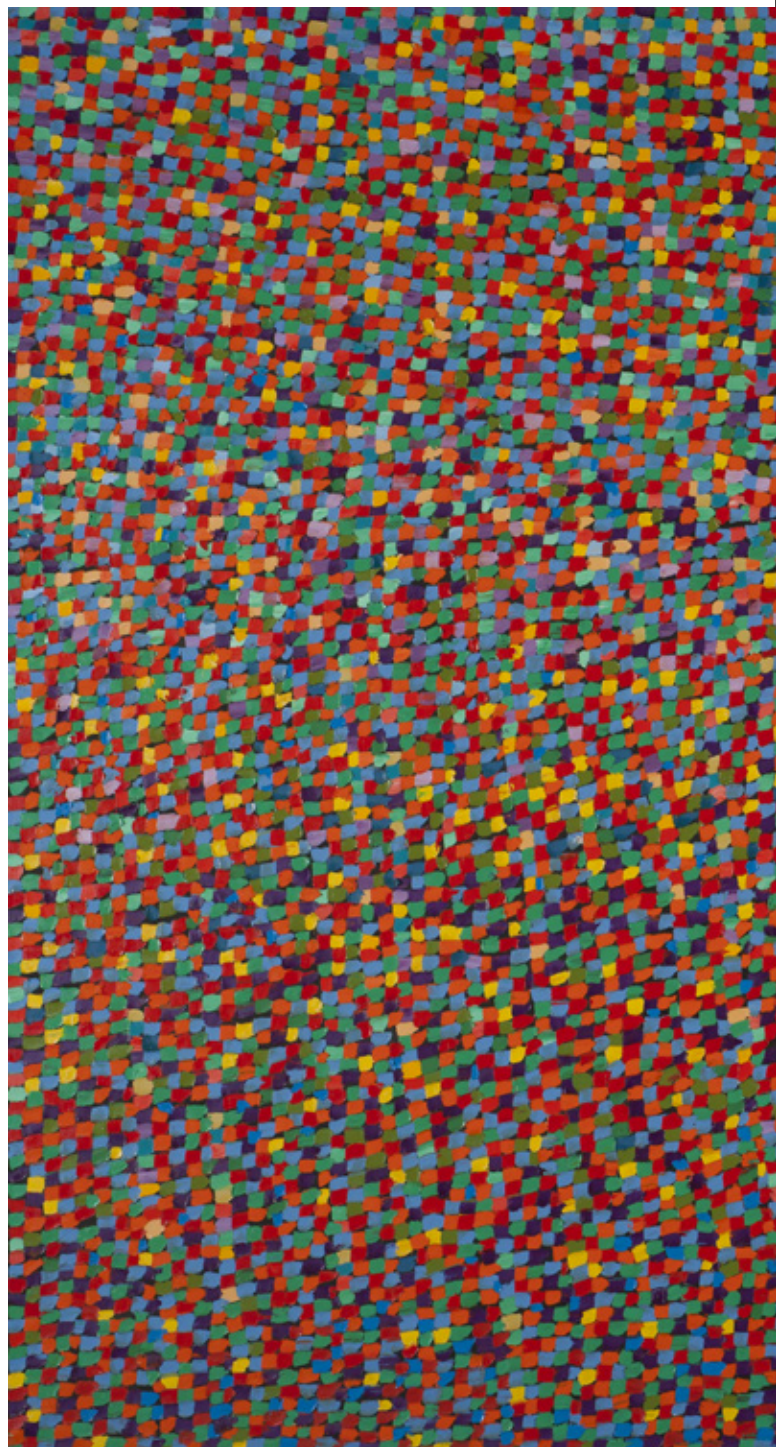
Howard Hurst, New York 2017





Untitled, 1962  
Oil on paper  
9.5 x 8 inches

Chartres, 1971  
Oil on canvas  
76 <sup>4</sup>/<sub>5</sub> x 118 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>10</sub> inches







Untitled, 1962  
Oil on canvas  
8 x 5 inches



Untitled, 1962  
Oil on paper  
8 x 5 inches



Untitled, 1962  
Oil on canvas  
5 x 8 inches



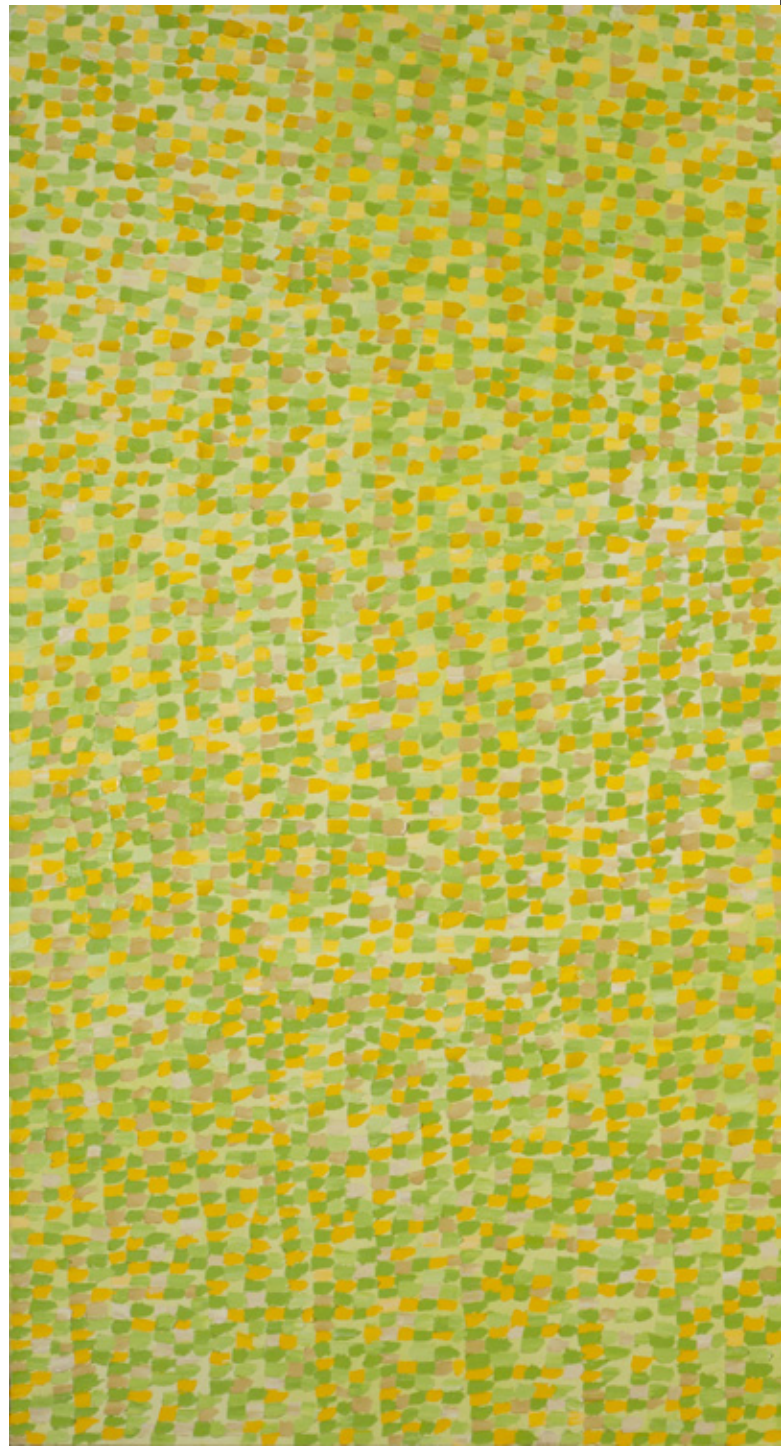
Untitled, 1962  
Oil on paper  
8 x 5 inches

Yellow Painting #1, 1967  
Oil on canvas  
76 <sup>4</sup>/<sub>5</sub> x 118 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>10</sub> inches

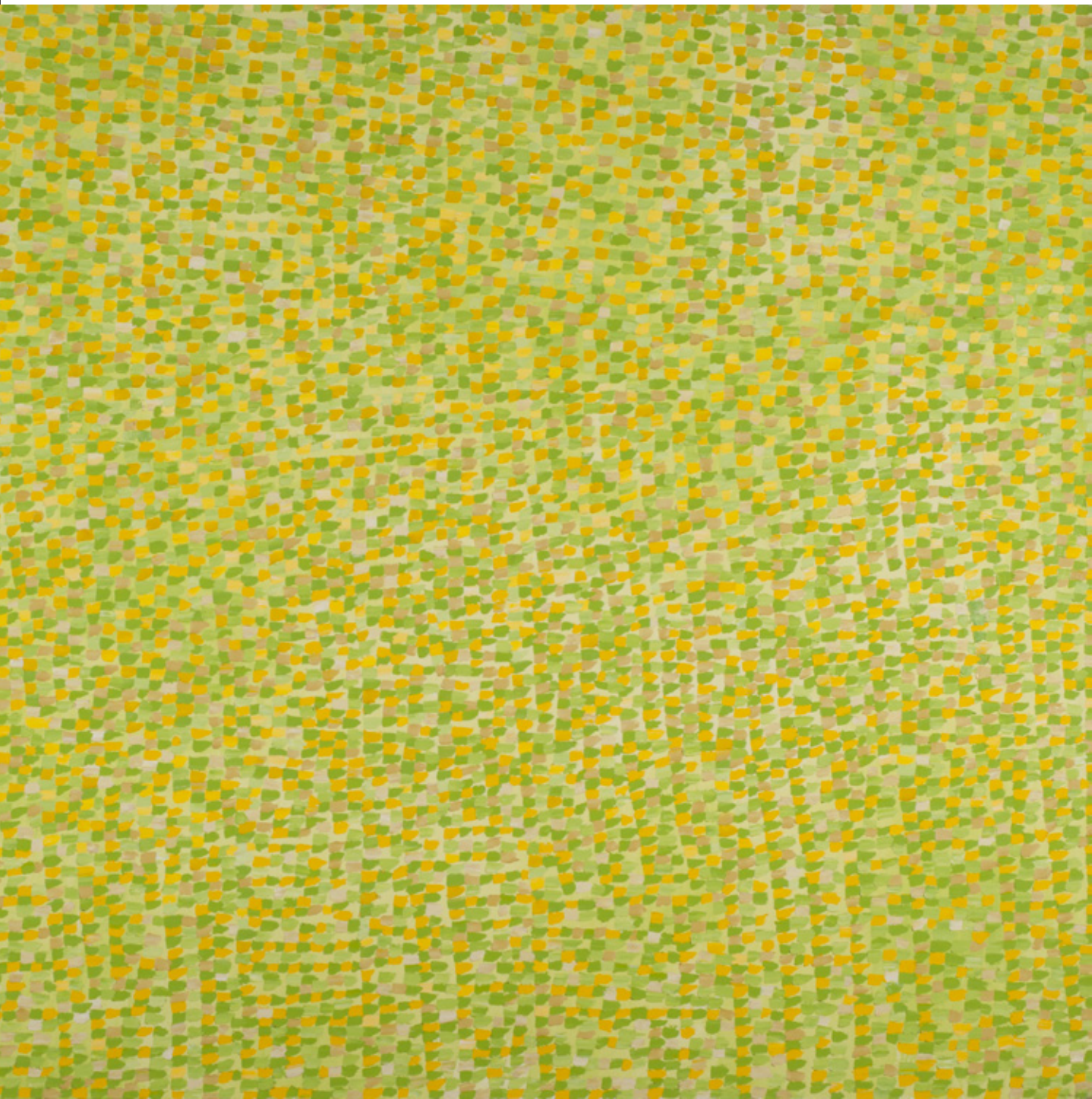




Yellows and Greens, 1972  
Oil on canvas  
76 <sup>4</sup>/<sub>5</sub> x 118 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>10</sub> inches









Untitled, 1962  
Oil on paper  
9 1/2 x 8 inches



Untitled, 1962  
Oil on paper  
7 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 5 inches



Untitled, 1962  
Oil on canvas  
5 x 8 inches

## SHIRLEY GOLDFARB (1925-1980)

### Selected One-Person Exhibitions

- 2013 New York, NY, Loretta Howard Gallery, Shirley Goldfarb: A Retrospective
- 2008 New York, NY, Zabriskie Gallery, Shirley Goldfarb: Paintings
- 2002 Shirley Goldfarb: Pink, Rose, Love, Zabriskie Gallery, New York, NY
- 2000 Shirley Goldfarb, Zabriskie Gallery, New York, NY
- 2010 Shirley Goldfarb: The early years, Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art
- 1998 Shirley Goldfarb, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.
- 1998 Galerie Mantoux-Gignac, Paris
- 1994 Galerie Zabriskie, Paris, France
- 1991 Galerie Zabriskie, Paris, France
- 1990 Hommage to Shirley Goldfarb, Musee de Pontoise, France
- 1983 Shirley Goldfarb: Retrospective, Galerie Eric Franck, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1983 Galerie Reckermann, Cologne, Germany
- 1983 Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
- 1981 Art Center OET Foundation for Culture, Paris, France
- 1981 Galerie Eric Franck, FIAC, Paris, France
- 1980 Musee de Pontoise, Pontoise, France
- 1976 Galerie la Derive, Paris, France
- 1967 The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN
- 1964 Eric Locke Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1963 Kipstein und Korneld, Bern, Switzerland
- 1962 Centre Culture Americain, Paris, France
- 1956 Studio Paul Facchetti, Paris, France



Untitled, 1962  
Oil on paper  
7 x 5 1/2 inches

## Literature

Women of Abstract Expressionism, Denver  
Museum of Art, Denver, CO., Yale University  
Press, New Haven, CT. Joan M Marter; Gwen  
Finkel Chanzit  
Shirley Goldfarb, Art Forum, 2013, Robert Pincus-  
Witten  
Art in Review, 2000, The New York Times, Roberta  
Smith  
American Art from the Collection, Centre  
Georges Pompidou.  
Trapped: Shirley Goldfarb at the Café Flore,  
Interview Magazine, Peter Lester  
Monet, Nympheas, 1972, F. Hazan, Paris, D. Rouard  
Adventures in Art, 1966, Harry Abrams  
American Sanctuary in Paris, Artnews Annual,  
1966, John Ashbery

## Selected Group Exhibitions

1986 A Look at Today's Art, Musee Promenade,  
Marly le Roi, France  
1985 Black and White, Musee de Pontoise,  
Pontoise, France  
1981 New Acquisitions, Musee de Pontoise,  
Pontoise, France  
1981 Americans in Paris, Art Center, Paris,  
France  
1981 The Best Works from the Collection of Peter  
Stuyvesant, Provinciaal Museum, asslet,  
Belgium  
1977 Some Americans in Paris, Centre Georges  
Pompidou, Paris,  
1969 9th International Salon, Juvisy, France

1969 Biennale de Menton, Menton, France  
1969 Art USA, Musee de Brest, France  
1968 Salon de Mai, Musee National d'Art  
Moderne, Paris, France  
1967 5th Biennial, Minneapolis Institute of Arts,  
Minneapolis, MN  
1966 Art Vivant USA, Kunsthalle, St. Gallen,  
Switzerland  
1966 Salon de Mai, Musee National d'Art  
Moderne, Paris, France  
1961 Salon des Realities Nouvelles, Musee  
National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France  
1961 Salon des Comparaisons, Musee National  
d'Art Moderne, Paris, France  
1958 Jackson Pollock, New American Painting,  
Kunsthalle, Basel, Switzerland  
1958 Salon de Mai, Musee National d'Art  
Moderne, Paris, France  
1956 Salon des Realites Nouvelles, Musee  
National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France

## Public Collections

Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA  
Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris  
Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris  
Kunsthalle, Basel  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
The National Museum of Women in the Arts  
Washington, D.C.  
Georges Pompidou Center  
Minneapolis Institute of Art  
Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

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Small paintings photographed by John Small  
Large paintings photographed by Art Pierson  
Photograph of Shirley Goldfarb (right) courtesy  
Estate of Shirley Goldfarb

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