

FOR THE  
**ANTONI** ARTIST'S 100<sup>TH</sup>  
**TÀPIES** ANNIVERSARY



**GALERIE THOMAS**

# ANTONI TÀPIES

1923 – Barcelona – 2012

„PAINTING  
IS A  
RETURN  
TO  
ORIGINS..“

Antoni Tàpies is one of the most important painters of the Informel. At the same time he represented a highly independent position in terms of both form and content. Colours and shapes as images of the visible world meant nothing to him, and the contrast between representational and abstract painting also seemed irrelevant to him. Instead, he understood his art as the direct expression of a physical and metaphysical reality that cannot be grasped in any other way. Thus, Antoni Tàpies can be seen as the ‘perfector’ of a philosophical painting tradition of the 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde.

Biographical circumstances and a threatening illness brought Antoni Tàpies, who was supposed to become a lawyer, to art: it expressed his interest in existential questions and his resulting pre-occupation with mystical and meditative philosophy of both the eastern and occidental-medieval traditions.

Dadaism and Surrealism, especially Joan Miró, Paul Klee and Max Ernst, had the most significant artistic influence on his work. The hermetic symbols and signs in Antoni Tàpies’s works, such as crosses, stars or letters, come from this source, but also the painterly techniques, which include collage, grattage, the relief-like physicality and use of ‘non-artistic’ materials like sand or fabric, have their origins here, along with Cubism and Dadaism. Moreover, the stylistic and technical characteristics of Jean Dubuffet’s Art Brut had an influence on Tàpies, who became one of the pioneers of Arte Povera and the material collage.

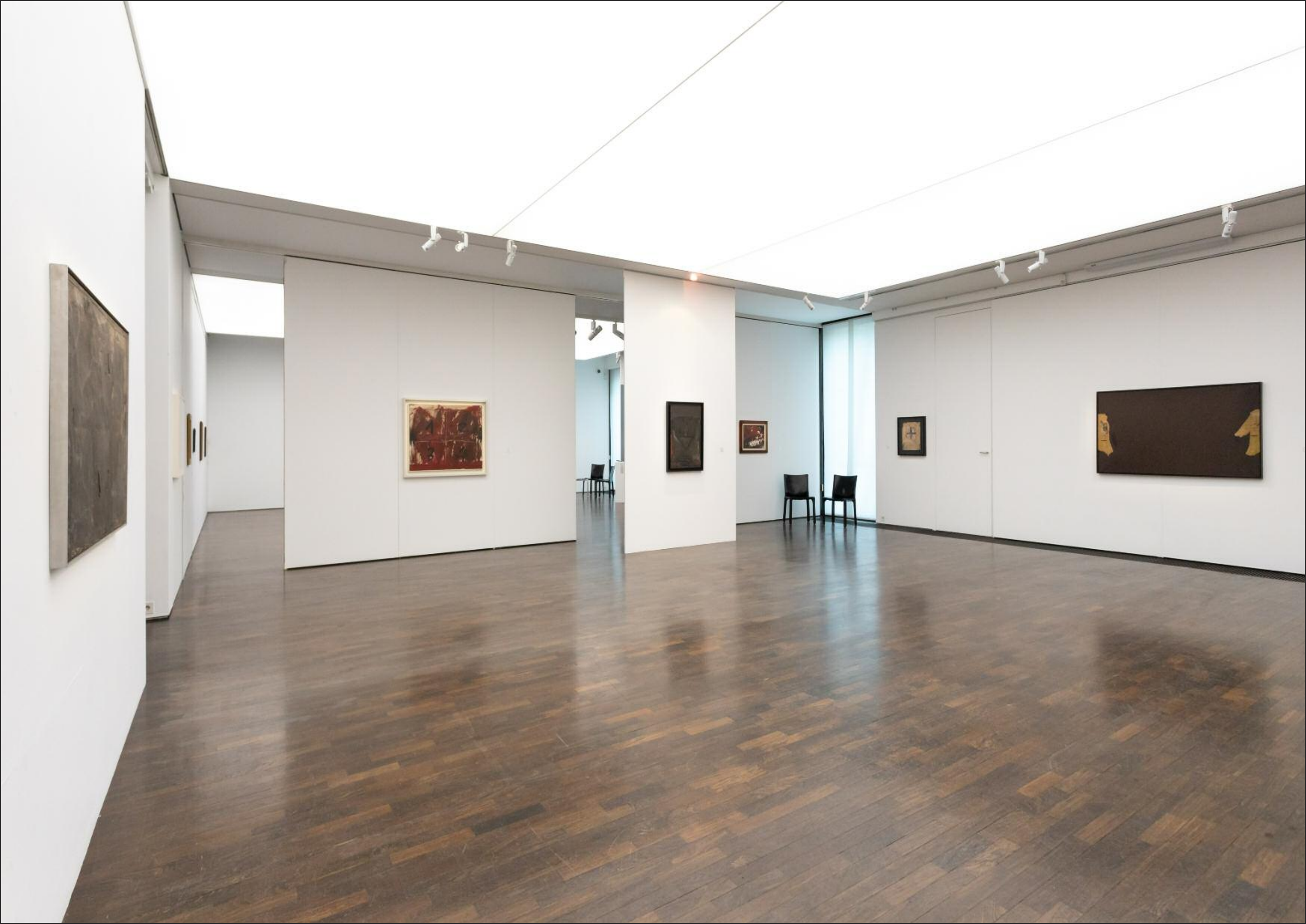
Contingent painting processes, haptic material quality, erratic sign-like quality and meditative austerity combine with the tonal non-colourfulness to create the unmistakable style of Antoni Tàpies’s works, linking classical modernism with post-war modernism and contemporary art.

Tàpies himself described the core of his artistic goals, the visualisation and manifestation of a spiritual, immaterial reality, as follows:

“It is essential to keep in mind that the world of mysticism, like that of modern physics, cannot always be ‘explained’ in normal words, but is often better ‘shown’ through visual images. From the accumulation of matter and of objects to the radicality of a gesture, what matters is to paint the essential and nothing else.”

Celebrating Antoni Tàpies’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2023, Galerie Thomas is pleased to present a selection of about 25 works from all of his creative periods, thereby offering a profound insight into his oeuvre.









"The material presence of the work serves only as a transmitter,  
inviting the viewer to participate  
in the comprehensive play of a thousand and one  
emotions and visions."

## DUES FORMES LATERALS SOBRE MARRÓ TWO LATERAL FORMS ON BROWN

mixed media on canvas  
1961  
97.5 x 162.5 cm / 38 3/8 x 64 in.  
verso signed and dated

Agustí 940

Provenance  
- Galerie Stadler, Paris  
- Galerie Alfred Schmela, Düsseldorf  
- Private collection, Germany  
- Private collection, Europe

Exhibited  
- Galerie Stadler, Paris 1961. Tàpies

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 2, 1961-1968. Barcelona 1990, p. 33, no. 940 ill.  
- Bonet, Blai. Tàpies. Barcelona 1964, p. 4-5 ill.  
- Tapié, Michel. Antoni Tàpies. Milan 1968, no. 151 col. ill.













## MATERIA SOBRE TELA

oil and sand on canvas

1961

81.3 x 54.5 cm / 32 1/8 x 21 1/2 in.

verso signed and dated

Agustí 968

### Provenance

- Martha Jackson Gallery, New York
- Private collection, Switzerland

### Literature

- Agustí, Anna (ed.). *Tàpies, The Complete Works*, vol. 2, 1961-1968. Barcelona 1988, no. 968, p. 48
- Raillard, Georges. *Tàpies*. Paris 1976, p. 135, pl. 123

The work, made of oil and sand, is reminiscent of a ramshackle wall, as marked by notches, scratches, abrasions and other traces. The V or triangular shape appears on it several times: in the upper part of the painting, a series of small arrows is arranged vertically on a relief-like elevation, which ends in a downward triangle and thus doubles the V motif. This is mirrored at the lower edge of the work, where an A becomes visible that refers to Tàpies's initial letter. Whether these are ultimately signs, letters or forms, however, remains uncertain and lies in the eye of the beholder. This superimposition or openness in interpretation is typical of Tàpies's approach and underlines the evocative character of the work, which stands out through contrasts between red and grey tones and the different surface structures.

Tàpies became known for his wall paintings in the 1950s. In his works, he reflected the zeitgeist of the dispensable post-war years – similar to Brassäi in his graffiti photographs or Dubuffet in his material paintings. Tàpies visited Paris for the first time in 1950 and dealt with the prevailing art trends there. He repeatedly employed poor materials such as sand or earth, which were also used in Arte povera. Tàpies was by no means concerned with a formal exploration of the material, but rather with a language that was able to express his feelings and state of mind in the best possible way. The motif of the wall itself has various meanings: as a place of protection and multiple inscriptions, as a barrier, a seismograph of time and bearer of signs. It seems all the more fitting that the name Tàpies is coincidentally derived from the Catalan word for wall.







## NOIR AUX QUATRE ENTAILLES BLACK WITH FOUR CUTTINGS

oil, sand and mixed media on canvas  
1961  
81 x 139 cm / 31 7/8 x 54 3/4 in.

Agustí 989

Provenance  
- Galerie Stadler, Paris  
- Private collection

Exhibited  
- Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hanover 1962. No. 86  
- Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich 1962. Antoni Tàpies, Bilder, Zeichnungen. No. 88 ill.

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 2, 1961-1968. Paris 1990, p. 60, no. 989







## PINTURA-COLLAGE

mixed media on canvas  
1964  
33.6 x 55 cm / 13 1/4 x 21 5/8 in.  
verso signed and dated

Augustí 1297

### Provenance:

- Sala Gaspar, Barcelona
- Martha Jackson Gallery, New York
- Galleria Notizie, Turin
- Private collection, Rome (since 2007)

### Literature:

- Agustí, Anna (ed.). *Tàpies, Obra Completa*, vol. 2, 1961-1968. Barcelona 1990, no. 1297, p. 209 ill.
- Gimferrer, Pere. *Tàpies i l'esperit català*. Barcelona 1974, p. 218 ill.
- Teixidor, Joan. *Antoni Tàpies, Fustes, appers, cartons i collages*. Barcelona 1964, p. 172 ill.

*Pintura-Collage* is an outstanding example of Tàpies's material paintings, characterised by its multi-faceted texture. Although the work with its earthy tones appears very dense and confusing at first glance due to its variety of materials and small-scale structure, it reveals some principles of order: In the centre, a fabric is arranged in an ellipse shape, which is overlaid by a piece of wood on the central perpendicular. In the outer area, lighter accents suggest a kind of visual framing. While Tàpies reveals the canvas in some places, other areas seem cluttered with earthy particles. The dark colouring gives the work a certain heaviness; at the same time, the interplay with lighter sections and reflections creates a composition rich in contrast.

With his material paintings from the late 1950s onwards, Tàpies increasingly departed from the classical picture and thus dissolved the boundary between painting and sculpture. Instead, the focus shifted to the surface and the image carrier. Although Tàpies's engagement with texture and matter is crucial to his art, he pursued a completely different intention: his works serve as mediators on the viewer's path to self-knowledge. Tàpies understood art as

"a communication with things"

and

"a kind of contact with an all-encompassing matter that determines the whole existence of the universe".











## UNTITLED

mixed media and collage on cardboard  
c. 1970  
48.5 x 58.8 cm / 19 x 23 1/4 in.  
signed lower right

With a certificate of authenticity from the artist's son,  
Antoni Tàpies Barba, President of the Comissió Tàpies,  
dated July 20, 2017, no. T-9756

Provenance  
- Estate of the artist  
- Galeria Jordi Pasqual, Barcelona  
- Private collection, London  
- Private collection, Turin

The cross appears in Tàpies's work in numerous variations: whether as an essential image motif, compositional design principle or casual sign. It may have equal sides or a t-shape, appear as an inclined version or in the shape of an x. As varied as the design of the cross is, as

complex is its meaning. In Tàpies's works, the cross is not only a reference to the first letter of his surname and thus an expression of his artistic identity and authorship, but it is also to be understood in the context of Christian iconography and the Passion of Christ although Tàpies,



## UNTITLED

mixed media on paperboard  
1970  
44 x 35 cm / 17 3/8 x 13 3/4 in.  
signed lower right

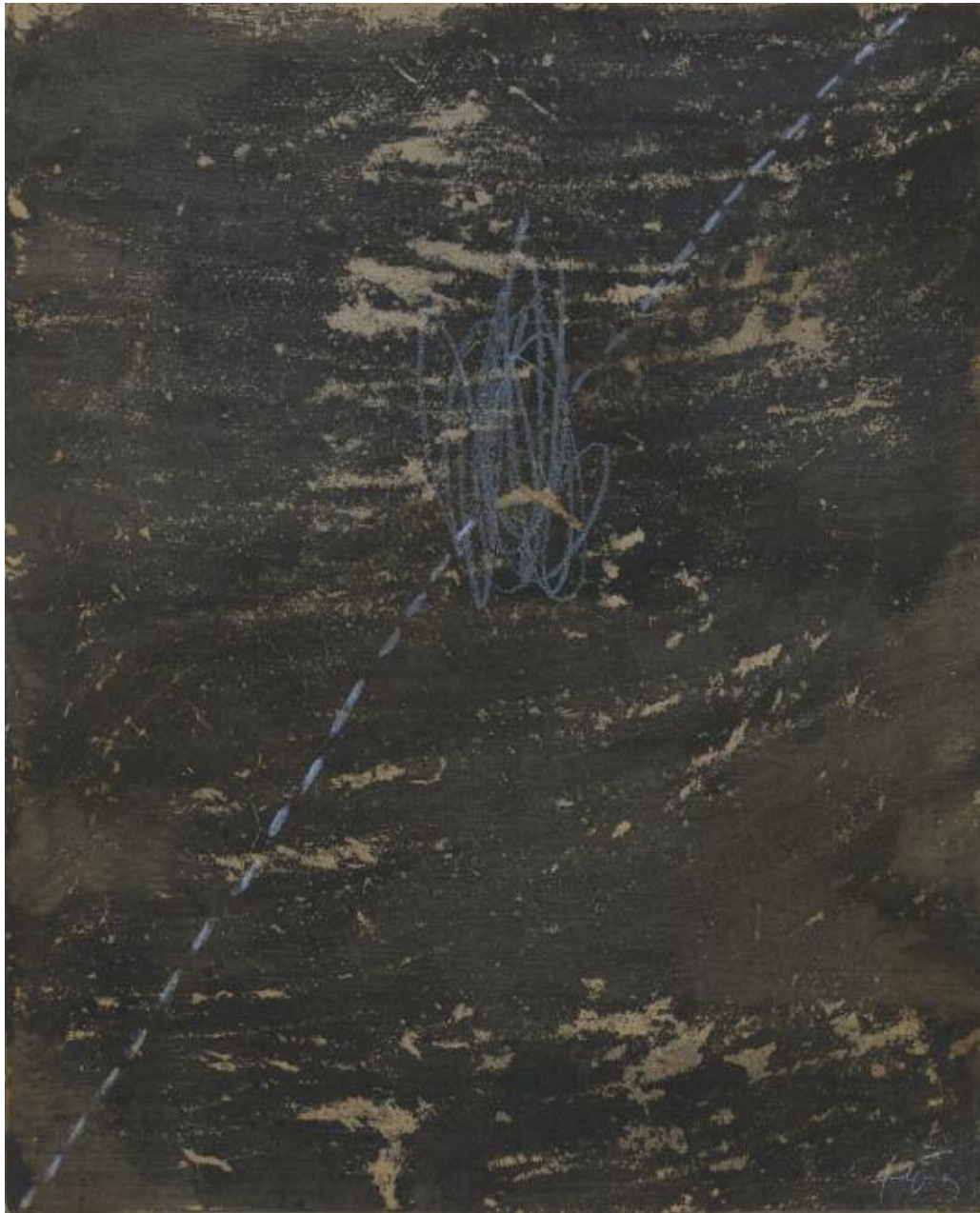
With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies

Provenance  
- Sala Gaspar, Barcelona  
- Collezione Josep Antoni Codes, Olot  
- Private collection

who had a strictly religious upbringing, distanced himself from the practices of the Catholic Church at an early age. Rather, he saw himself connected to mysticism "in order to advance to knowledge that cannot be attained by any other means". The medieval mystic and

philosopher Ramon Llull, to whom Tàpies often referred, recognised the cross as the only true and meaningful artistic subject.



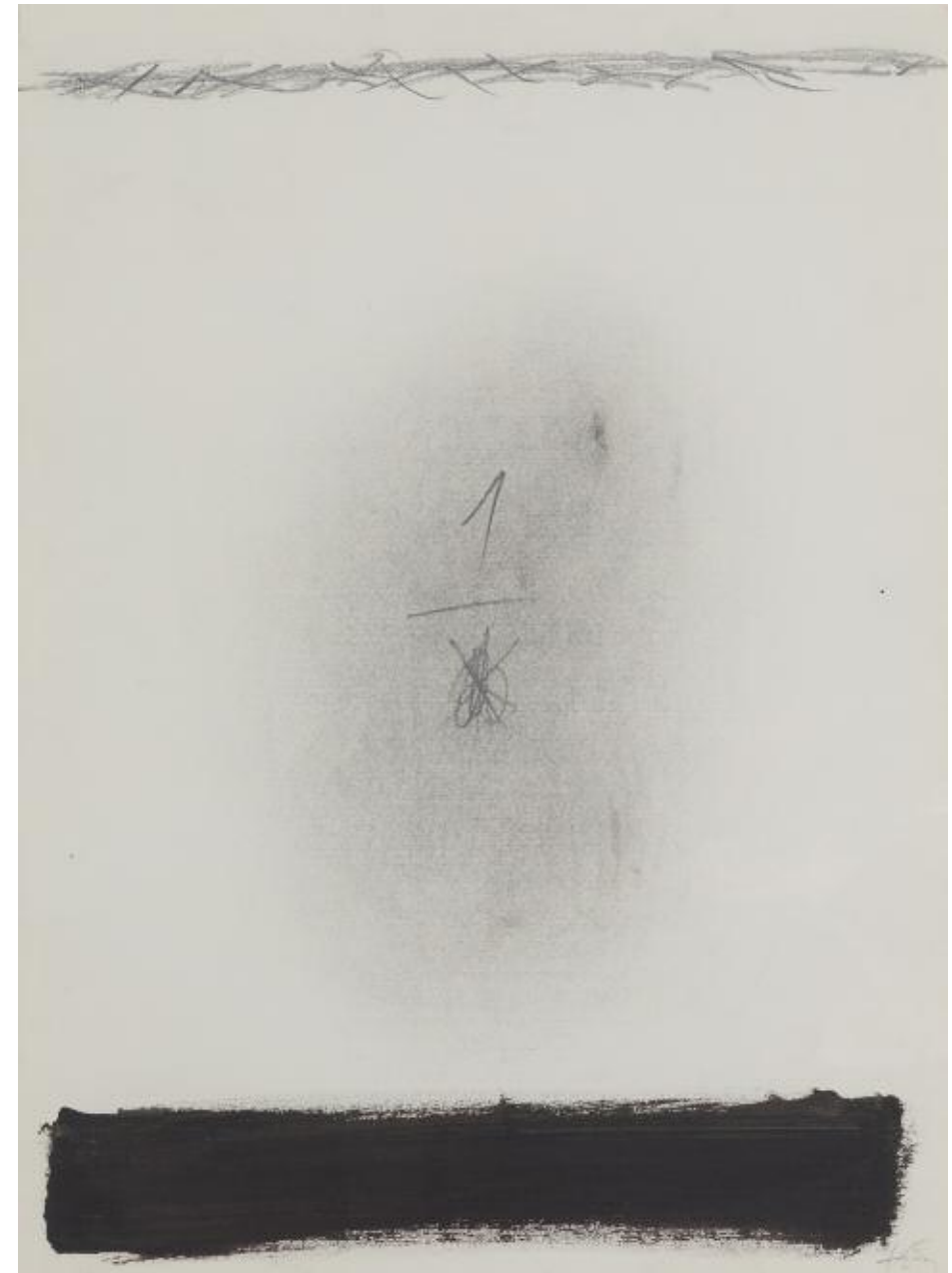


## UNTITLED

mixed media on cardboard  
c. 1970  
49 x 40.2 cm / 19 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 15 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. 9747

Provenance  
- Private collection, Barcelona



## UNTITLED

mixed media on paper  
c. 1970  
77 x 57 cm / 30 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 22 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
signed lower right

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. T-9877

Provenance  
- Galeria Jordi Pascual, Barcelona  
- Private collection, London





## UNTITLED

mixed media on cardboard

c. 1970

60.5 x 80 cm / 23 7/8 x 31 1/2 in.

signed lower right

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. T-9759

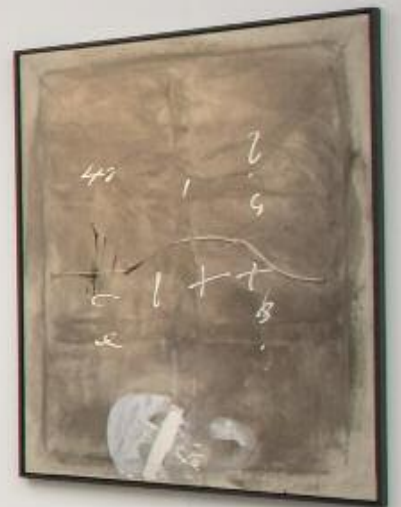
Provenance

- Galeria Jordi Pascual, Barcelona
- Private collection, London













"When I speak of reality,  
I always think of the essence.  
Spiritual depth is not located in a remote, inaccessible region.  
It is rooted in everyday life.

This is what great thinkers have taught me, especially the philosophers of the Far East,  
for whom true wisdom – from which I am far removed – is the connection between samsara (the ordinary world)  
and nirvana (deep reality).  
To achieve contact with reality  
does not mean putting yourself somewhere else;  
it is not transcendence, but a thorough immersion in one's own environment.  
A reality that is neither purely physical nor metaphysical,  
but both at the same time."

## MARRÓ SOBRE NEGRE AMB COLLAGE BROWN ON BLACK WITH COLLAGE

mixed media on canvas  
1972  
146 x 89 cm / 57 1/2 x 35 in.  
verso signed

Agustí 2559

Provenienz  
- Galerie Maeght, Paris  
- Galerie Schmela, Dusseldorf  
- Private collection, Germany

Exhibited  
- Galerie Beyeler, Basel 1988. No. 22

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (Ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 3, 1969-1975. Barcelona 1992, p. 304, no. 2559 ill.  
- Penrose, Roland. Tàpies. Barcelona 1977, p. 112, no. 74 ill.  
- Permanyer, Lluís. Tàpies i la nova cultura. Barcelona 1986, p. 197, no. 140 ill.





## CARTES PER LA TERESA II

oil and monotype on paper

1974

76.5 x 63.5 cm / 30 1/8 x 25 in.

signed lower right

Agustí 2934

### Provenance

- Galerie Maeght, Paris
- Galeria Diagonal Art, Barcelona
- Private collection

### Literature

- Agustí, Anna (Ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 3, 1969-1975. Barcelona 1992, p. 429, no. 2934 col. ill.





## UNTITLED

mixed media on paper

1974

27.5 x 74.5 cm / 10 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 29 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.

signed and dedicated lower right

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. T-9760

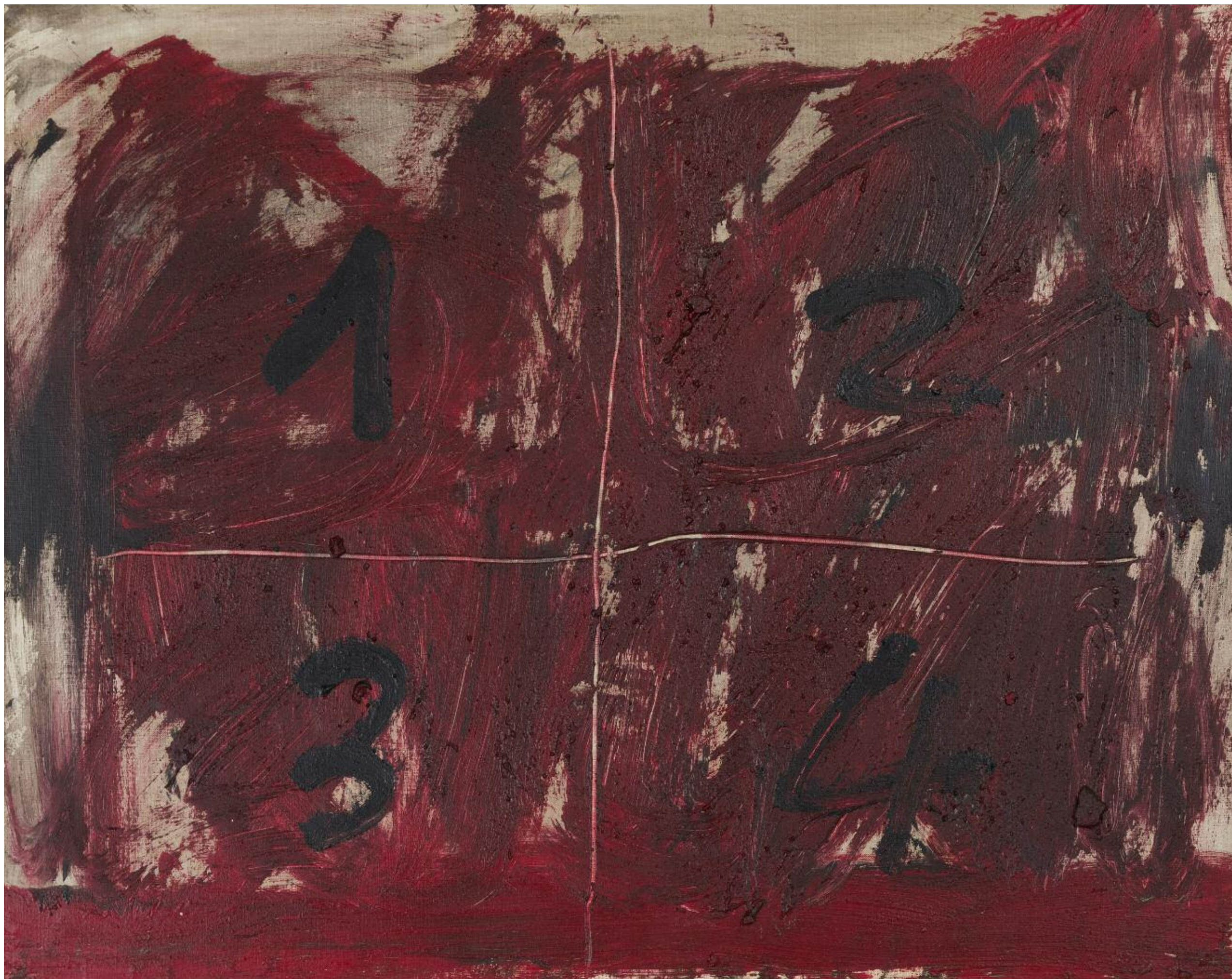
Provenance

- Private collection











## 1,2,3,4

oil on canvas  
1974  
81 x 100 cm / 31 7/8 x 39 1/3 in.  
verso signed

Agustí 2771

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. T-2095

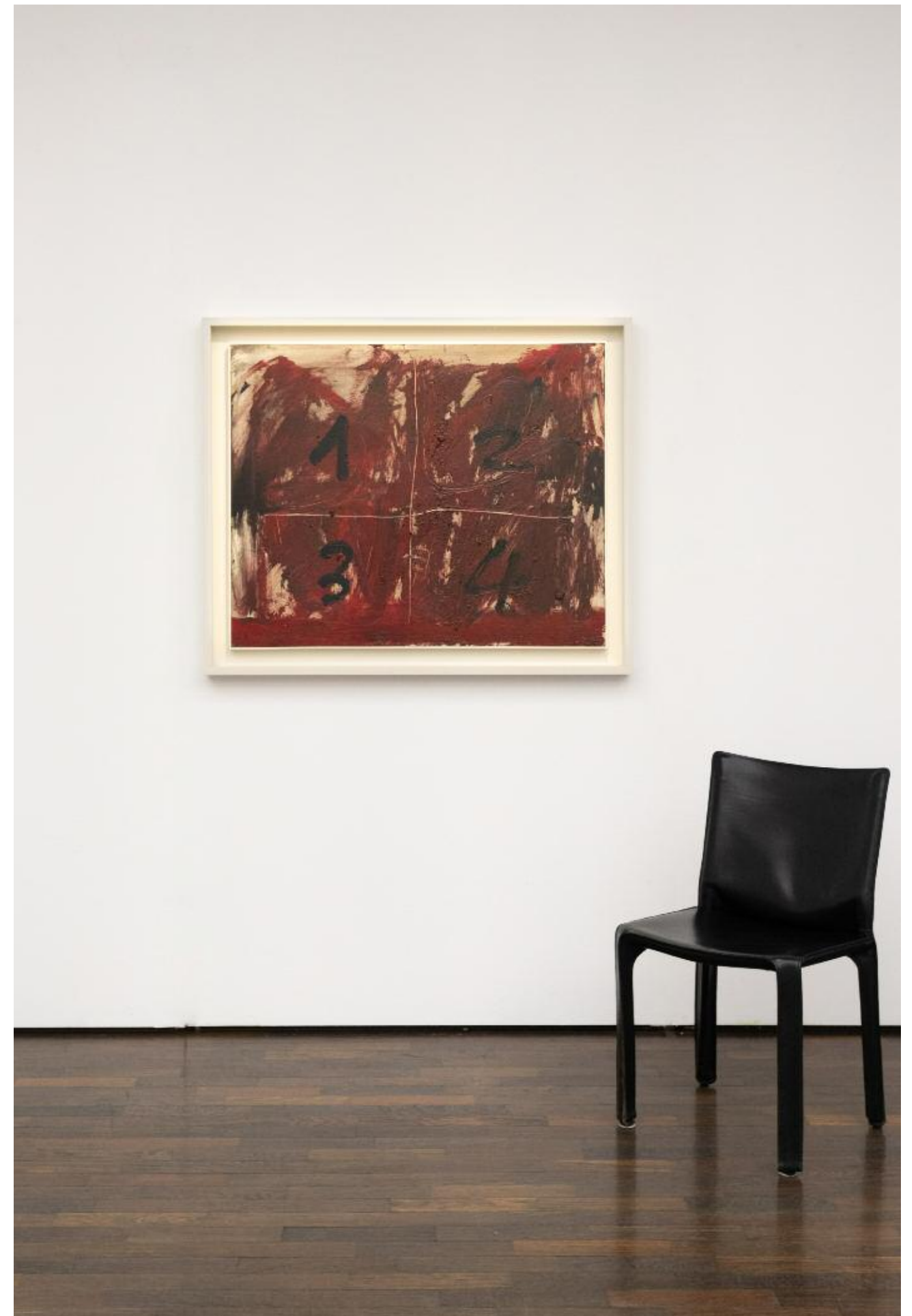
Provenance  
- Galerie Maeght, Paris  
- Private collection

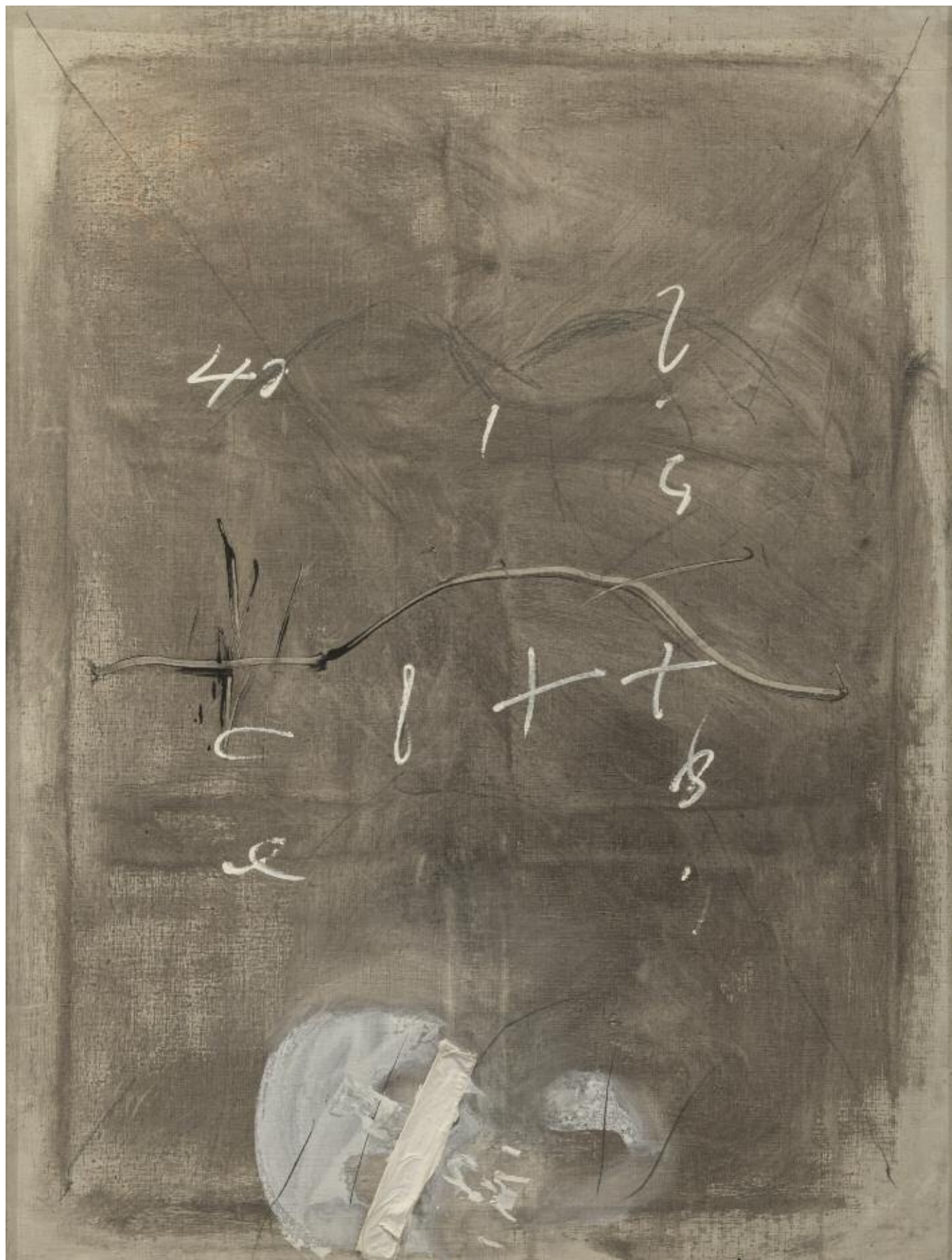
Exhibited  
- Galerie Maeght, Barcelona 1975. No. 12

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 3, 1969-1975. Barcelona 1992, p. 398, no. 2771 ill.  
- Marín-Medina, José. Tàpies meditationes. Madrid 1976, p. 132 col. ill.

Tàpies explored the mystery of number and its meaning many times in his work, as in this oil painting that shows the numbers one, two, three and four in chronological order. The composition is divided into four fields by a freely executed white cross of lines, on which the numbers can be seen in black lettering on an abstract red and black background. The work reveals a spontaneous, lively brushstroke that gesturally loosens up the arrangement and at the same time refuses compositional rigour. The numbers are clearly legible, but merge with the background to form a visual unit. The artist makes use of the colours so typical of him, which are always to be understood in connection with his Catalan heritage.

By including ciphers, letters or – as in this case – numbers to his abstract paintings, Tàpies added another spiritual level to his work, however, without assigning a meaning to it. He often arranged numbers in a chronological rhythm, which in Taoist painting symbolises change. Tàpies not only often dealt with Far Eastern philosophies, but also in depth with the number symbolism of different cultures. Principles of enigma and ambiguity are part of his artistic strategy.







## WHITE WRITINGS

oil, pastel, graphite and fabric collage on canvas  
1977  
130 x 97.4 cm / 51 1/4 x 38 3/8 in.  
verso signed

Agustí 3240

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. 2550

### Provenance

- Galerie Maeght, Paris
- Private collection, Spanien
- Galeria Maeght, Barcelona
- Private collection, Barcelona

### Exhibited

- Galeria Maeght, Barcelona 1978-1979. Tàpies. No. 36
- M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York 1981. Antoni Tàpies. No. 36
- Galeria Maeght, Barcelona 1987. Tàpies. No. 23
- Galeria d'Art Sarda i Sarda, Barcelona 1990. Antoni Tàpies, Miquel Barceló. No. 8 col. ill.
- Cajalón Exhibition Hall, Saragossa 2005. Antoni Tàpies en las colecciones privadas. Col. ill.

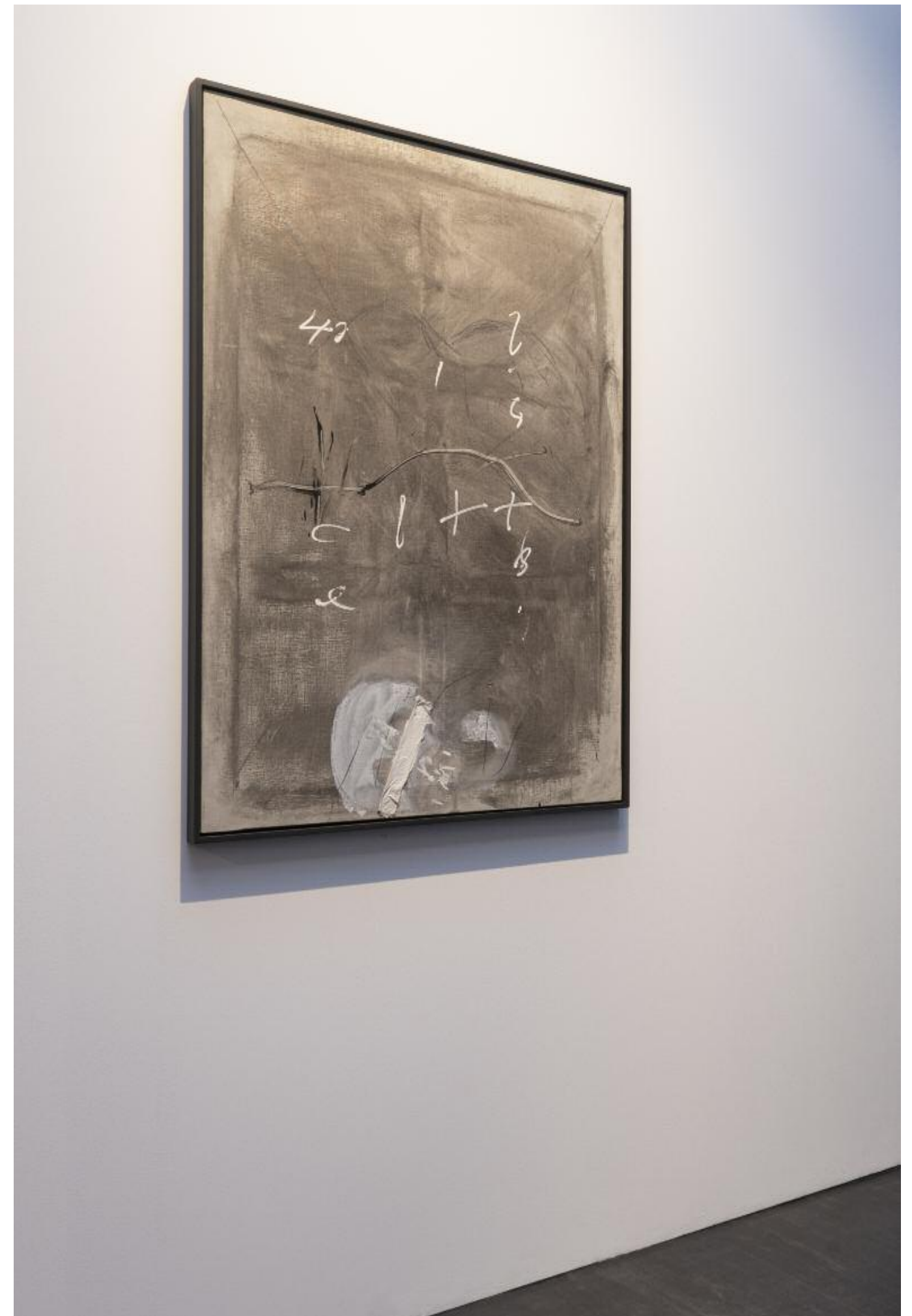
### Literature

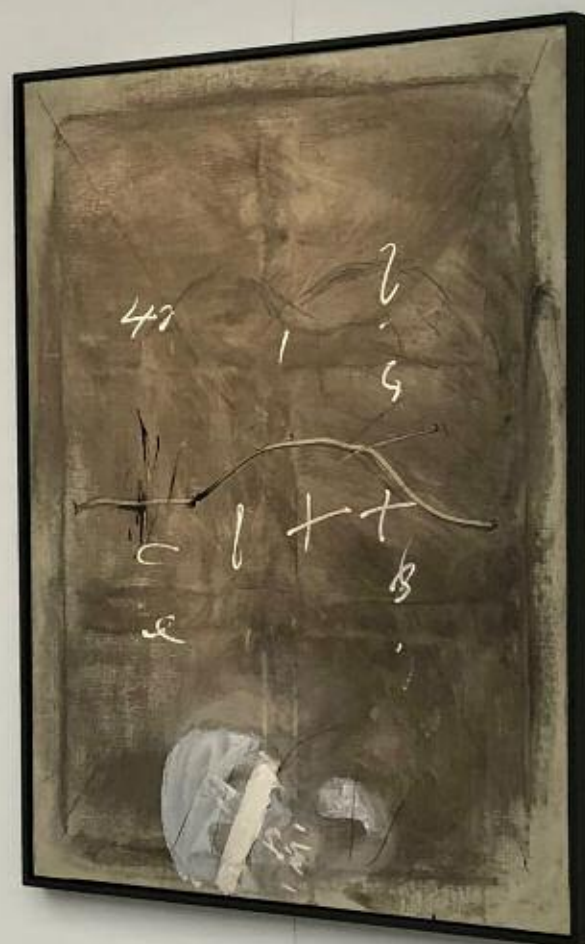
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 4, 1976-1981. Barcelona 1996, p. 98, no. 3240 ill.

"I create these marks spontaneously,  
intuitively, and in doing so  
I simply feel pleasure."

This is how Tàpies describes his free associative artistic approach. White letters, numbers and signs, separated by a curved line in the centre of the painting, stand out as 'white writing' against a brown background. Distinctive graphite lines run from the four corners of the work towards its centre, alluding to the cross often used by Tàpies. In the upper part of the work a hill-like formation is outlined, which sets additional markings. In the lower area, the composition is complemented by an abstract structure that evokes various associations, such as

a skull. This motif, associated with death and pain, appears several times in Tàpies's work. Above all, however, it is the cross that the artist includes in various forms: whether in a t-shape, as a plus sign with equal-length sides, slightly tilted or as an x. Following the Catalan thinker Ramon Llull, to whom Tàpies refers in many of his works, only the cross could live up to the claim of capturing what is most elemental and meaningful. In addition, Tàpies relates in his works to his artist friend and poet Joan Brossa, who juggles with letters, punctuation marks and words in his texts in order to capture their essence. Oscillating between abstract painting and ciphers, Tàpies enriches his art with new levels of meaning that always allow for different readings.











## UNTITLED

paint, graphite and collage on cardboard  
1977  
60.3 x 80 cm / 23 3/4 x 31 1/2 in.  
signed lower right

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. T-9900

Provenance  
- Galeria Jordi Pascual, Barcelona  
- Private collection

When looking at the work, the gaze is immediately drawn to the centre, where the equation 'a=t' can be read in black letters on a light field. The square clearly stands out from the surrounding dense, black formations, which make the cardboard visible in various places and reveal a piebald, almost floral pattern. Four dashed lines running diagonally from the corners to the white-brownish field additionally draw the focus to the prominently placed combination of letters, which can be found many times in Tàpies's works: it not only represents the artist's initials and the first letter of his wife Teresa, but also evokes various associations. As the artist states:

"I use the letters with very different meanings.  
A as a beginning, as a boundary, t as a stylisation  
of the Crucified and also as the initial of my name  
like an interaction of coordinates, etc."

Signs and letters have appeared repeatedly in Tàpies's work since the early 1950s. Besides A and T, M, R, S, V and X are recurring elements. The artist found inspiration, among other things, in the writings of the Catalan philosopher, logician and mystic Ramon Llull, whose medieval doctrine of the Ars magna provided a mechanical concept that served to find the truth through letter combinatorics. A and t simultaneously refer to the first two main figures from Llull's work 'Ars inventiva veritatis'.









## RELLEU EN X

oil and mixed media on paper  
1979-1980  
51 x 67 cm / 20 x 26 1/3 in.

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies

Provenance  
- Marisa de Re Gallery, New York  
- Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Los Angeles  
- Private collection, USA

A striking x, which is complemented by horizontal lines in the upper and lower parts of the work, divides the visual space in strictly geometrical areas. While scribbles, such as an indicated eight, can be found on the right, coloured accents are set on the left. Just as the colour blobs may leave the impression that Tàpies has made holes or indentations here, the x on this paper work conveys a relief-like structure, as the title suggests.

Dissolving the boundaries between two- and three-dimensionality, between painting, object and sculpture,

is as characteristic of Tàpies's oeuvre as the use of the x as a motif and compositional principle: it may suggest a process of erasure or, in the political sense, symbolise opposition and resistance for the convinced Catalan and Franco opponent that Tàpies was.

The works of the late 1970s repeatedly show formally reduced, geometric arrangements as well as a hermetic approach. Throughout his life, Tàpies was concerned with Far Eastern philosophy, especially Zen, which at times gives his works a contemplative effect.









## COLOR DE CARNE

mixed media on panel  
1981  
54.5 x 65 cm / 21 1/2 x 25 1/2 in.  
verso signed and dated

Agustí 3901

Provenance  
- Galerie Maeght, Barcelona  
- Private collection, Valencia  
- Private collection

Exhibited  
- M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York 1981. Antoni Tàpies. No. 10  
- Galerie Maeght, Barcelona 1983/84. Tàpies, Pintures i Ceràmiques. No. 24

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 4, 1976-1981. Barcelona 1996, p. 345, no. 3901 col. ill.

Broad, sweeping painting traces draw the gaze directly into the painting. Irregular splashes of colour and structures enter into an exciting dialogue with the flat, powerfully gestural sections. The work, in its earthy, 'fleshy' tones, is characterised by a lively surface texture. Striking notches, which have a sign-like character, set additional accents.

Materiality already played an important role in Tàpies's early works. For example, he described a viscous mixture of colours he once used as

"a kind of most primal, elemental matter,  
a materia prima in which the real nature  
revealed itself, the 'spiritual' reality".

The choice of his materials remains as free as the interpretation of his works. Tàpies's main focus is on the viewer's knowledge as gained through own interpretations and reflections, and so even a purely abstract work like *Color de carne* offers diverse levels of meaning.









## DENTS

oil on paper on canvas  
1984

41 x 55 cm / 16 1/8 x 21 5/8 in.  
signed lower right

Agustí 4771

### Provenance

- Galerie Grafiart, Finland
- Galerie Maeght Lelong, Paris
- Galleria Arte Centro, Milan
- Private collection, Milan

### Exhibited

- Galerie Maeght Lelong, Paris 1984. Antoni Tàpies. No. 36, p. 39 col. ill.

### Literature

- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, Obra Completa, vol. 5, 1982-1985. Barcelona 1998, p. 264, no. 4771 ill.

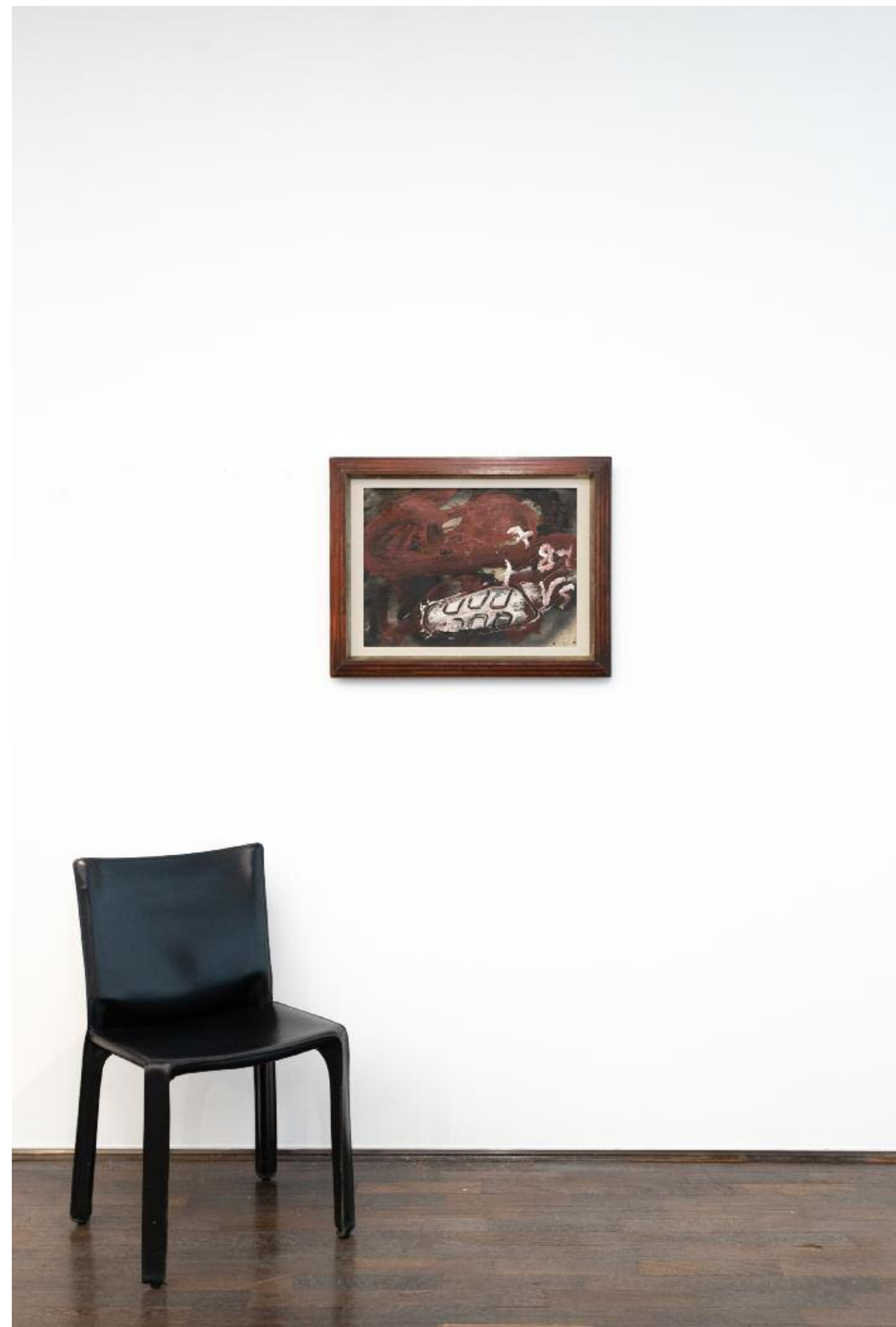
The teeth mentioned in the work's title are at the centre of this painting: reduced to their basic forms and highlighted in white, the mouth section stands out strikingly against the abstract red-blue background. Also shown in white on the right side are the year of creation and other numbers or signs, including a seven and the cross so characteristic of Tàpies.

Individual body parts such as hands or legs as well as outlined faces remained a recurring motif in the works of the 1980s, which Tàpies continued to explore in the following years. In their fragmented figurative represen-

tation, these pieces become human codes. As Tàpies concluded:

"I want to evoke the human being indirectly – through imprints or parts of the human body."

Ultimately, Tàpies put the human being at the centre of his artistic universe without concretising the respective context. He proceeded in a similar way with the ciphers he used as well as the number symbolism he dealt with intensively: from medieval concepts, as developed by Ramon Llull, to baroque thought models and approaches of the Kabbalah.









## 3 + 4 I DIT

mixed media on paper  
1987  
59.5 x 85 cm / 23 1/2 x 33 1/2 in.  
signed lower centre

Agustí 5480

Provenance  
- Galerie Lelong, Zurich  
- Private collection

Exhibited  
- Galerie Lelong, Zurich 1987. Antoni Tàpies. No. 32 ill.

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, Obra Completa, vol. 6, 1986-1990. Barcelona 2000, p. 159, no. 5480 ill.

Mighty black bars, which can be interpreted as crosses or letters, typical of Tàpies, dominate the left side of the work. The oval composition is condensed by grey scribbles that leave room on the right side for a face with closed eyelids, a hand with an outstretched index finger that seems to point at the formula '3+4', and an indicated foot.

In addition to the body parts, as Tàpies repeatedly integrated them into his works, in this powerfully gestural

paperwork he again makes reference to the number symbolism that fascinated him throughout his life. In the artist's work, the numbers three and four appear more frequently, which – depending on cultural background and interpretation – have different meanings. In the case of three as a sacred number, these range from the Trinity to other religious, mythical and epistemological triads, while four refers, among other things, to the four elements as the basic components of all being.









## PERSONATGE

mixed media on cardboard  
1987  
32 x 45 cm / 12 5/8 x 17 3/4 in.  
signed lower right

Agustí 5464

Provenance  
- Galerie Lelong, Paris  
- Joan Prats, Barcelona  
- Private collection, Banyoles/Girona

Exhibited  
- Espais Centre d'Art Contemporani, Girona 1991. Fons d'Art: Miquel Barceló, Jaume Plensa, Susana Solano, Antoni Tàpies

Literature  
- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 6, 1986-1990. Barcelona 2000, p. 153, no. 5464 ill.

*Personatge* is reduced to the essential and demonstrates great immediacy and spontaneity: consisting of a simple white surface and black strokes, Tàpies has vividly captured his motif. The structure of the cardboard is clearly visible in the brush marks, just as the holes placed by the artist emphasise the materiality of the work. The indentations are at the same time a compositional principle used for the profile figure. In its extension, a cross is depicted in a kind of speech bubble – or is it a hand after all?

In contrast to the sombre and rather heavy material and mural paintings for which Tàpies is known, sketchy works like this convey a light, ephemeral impression. Moreover, the concentration of form and content puts the focus on the essence of what is depicted.













## COLOM

oil and sand on canvas

1990

54.3 x 65.1 cm / 21 3/8 x 25 1/2 in.

signed with monogram lower right, verso signed

Agustí 6096

With a certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies

### Provenance

- Galerie Toni Tàpies, Barcelona
- Private collection, New York
- Private collection

### Literature

- Agustí, Anna (ed.). Tàpies, Obra Completa, vol. 6, 1986-1990. Barcelona 2000, p. 448, no. 6096 ill.

While Tàpies created strictly composed works of great calm and clarity, *Colom* exemplifies those works that are a manifestation of energy, spontaneity and an expressive gesture. Only the title, which translates from Catalan as 'dove', gives a possible clue to the subject of the painting. Framed in an elliptical composition, wildly placed red strokes accumulate on a white-grey background, not allowing an identification of the subject. Sandy sections that mix with the other (non-)colours reinforce the anarchistic character of the work. Moreover, Tàpies quickly captured his initials on the canvas in a clearly visible size.

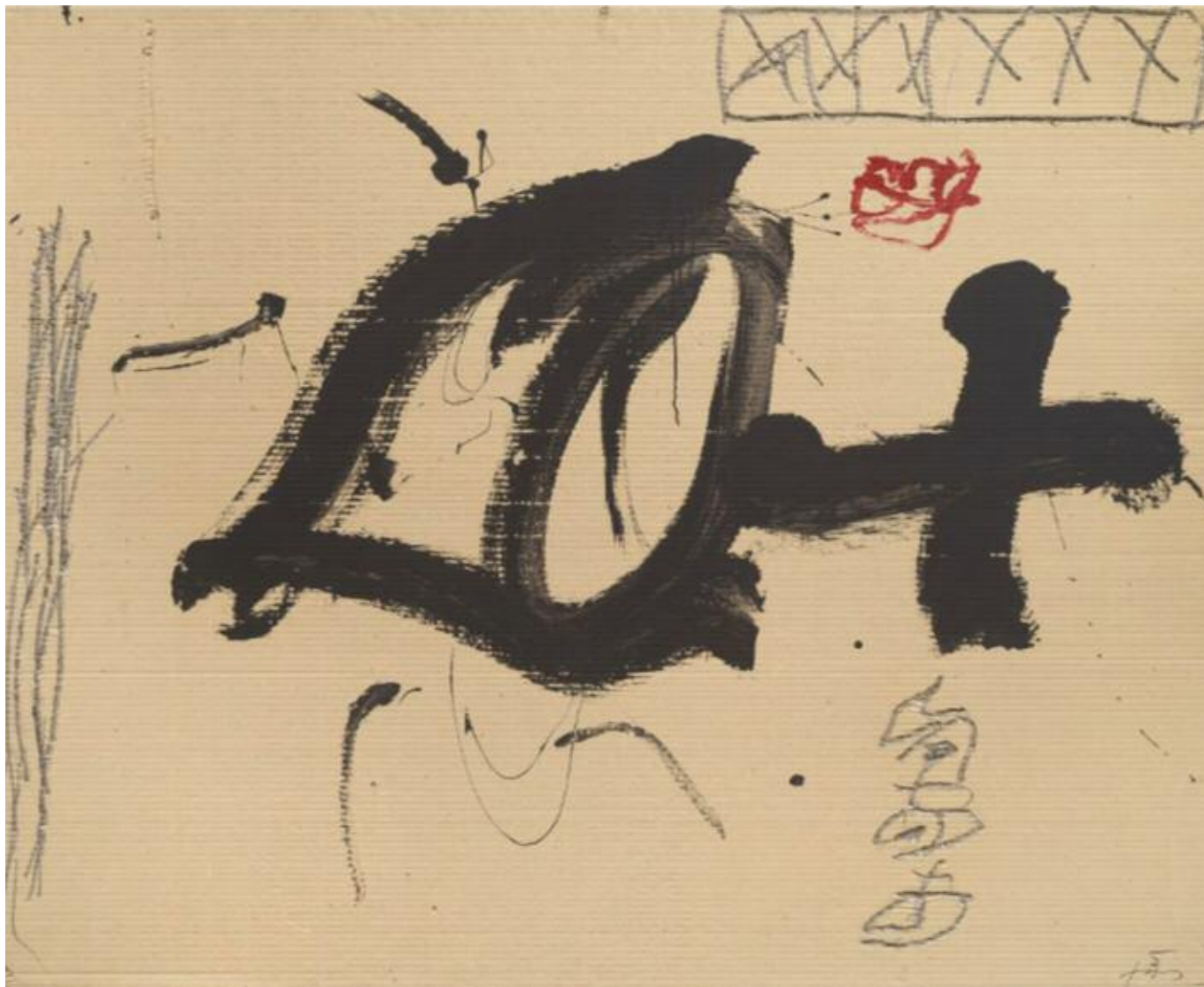
In this painting, special attention is paid to the surface structure, which stands out through 'craquelé' and other irregularities. Materiality plays a major role in Tàpies's work: whether it is sand, as in this case, or earth, plaster, marble dust or glue mixed with paint in other works. With their indentations and markings, the image carriers themselves become a visual experience.

"You have to enter into a dialogue with the materials first because the materials speak, they have their own language. Out of this comes the dialogue between the artist and his material.

Often you have to drop an idea because the material contradicts the work. Then a kind of struggle begins between the idea I am trying to express and the material form I want to give it."







## GRAN ULL BIG EYE

acrylic and pencil on cardboard on canvas

1992

132.5 x 163 cm / 52 1/8 x 64 1/8 in.

signed lower right

Agustí 6449

With a certificate from Comissió Tàpies, registered under no. T-6823

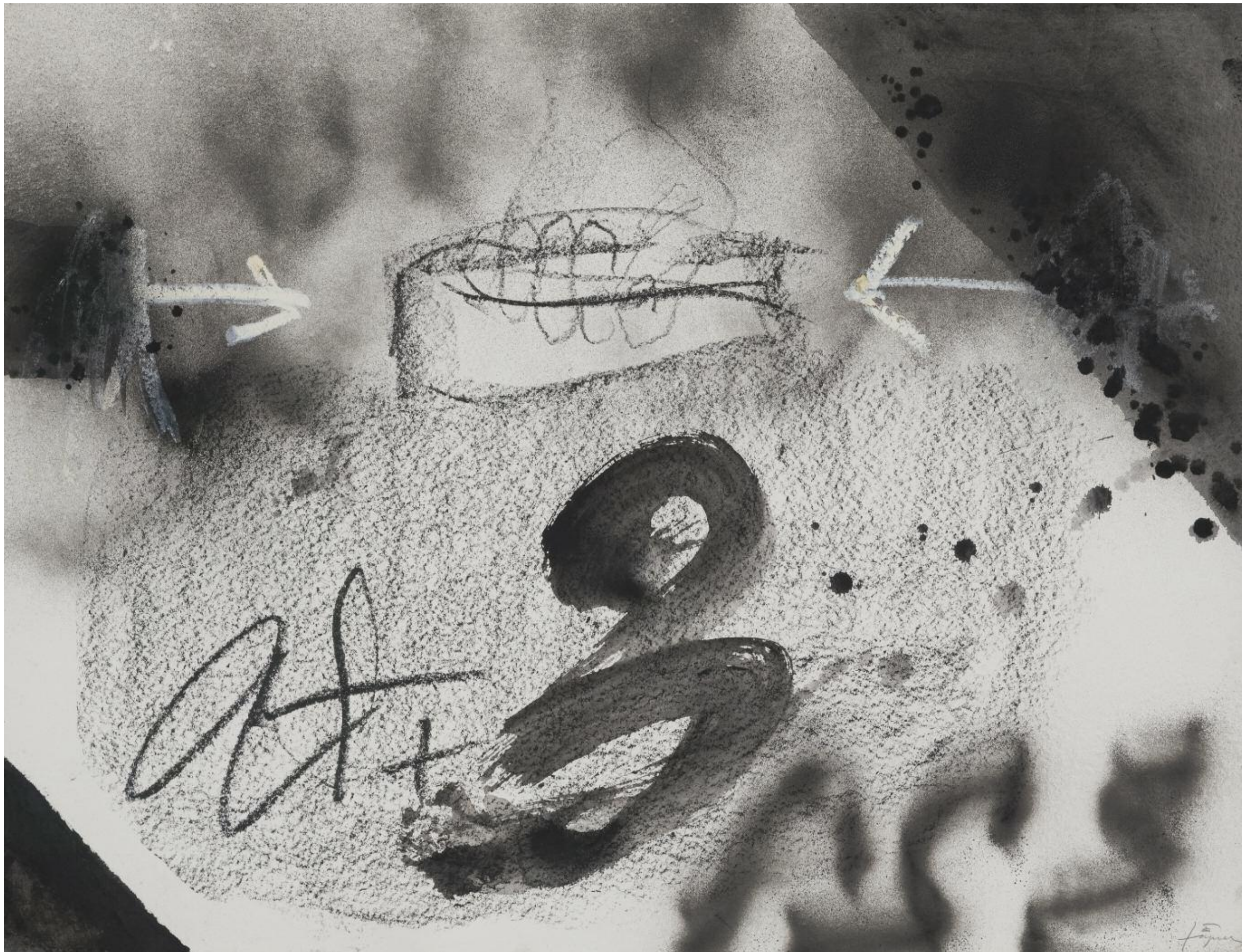
Provenance

- Estate of the artist
- Private collection, Barcelona

Literature

- Agustí, Anna (Ed.). Tàpies, The Complete Works, vol. 7, 1991-1997. Barcelona 2003, p. 178, no. 6449 ill.







## CISTELL

mixed media on paper  
2006  
65.5 x 85 cm / 25 3/4 x 33 1/2 in.  
signed lower right

With a photo certificate from Fundació Antoni Tàpies, no. T-8950

Provenance  
- Galeria Toni Tàpies, Barcelona  
- Private collection, Barcelona

Translating from Catalan as 'basket', *Cistell* belongs to Tàpies's late period. Not only has the artist repeatedly explored the basket subject before; both technically and formally, the painting summarises the characteristics of Tàpies's work. By using different drawing pencils and painting utensils, he emphasises different qualities and textures: from clear lines to diffuse sections to delimited surfaces. As far as the motifs are concerned, Tàpies draws on his familiar vocabulary: next to his prominently visible initials appears the cross so characteristic of him, followed by a centrally placed black signet that can be read as a three, but also allows for other possible interpretations. Three smaller, blurred-looking signs can be found at the lower right edge of the painting, also

executed in a buoyant style. Are these letters or even a word? In the upper part of the picture, two arrows point to the central object: the basket?

Tàpies ultimately gives no answer how the composition, which is framed by dark corners, is to be interpreted. What matters is the insight of the viewer, to whom he offers multiple thought-provoking approaches through the complexity of his works. Just as there is not just one interpretation, Tàpies cannot be clearly or exclusively linked to a particular art movement such as Informel, Arte Povera or Minimal Art, even though there are various parallels.









ANTONI TÀPIES

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