

An abstract painting featuring several vertical bands of color. From left to right, the bands are: a light blue band with a green horizontal stripe; a dark red band; a light blue band with a green horizontal stripe; a purple band with a red horizontal stripe; a yellow band with a green horizontal stripe; and a dark brown band with a yellow horizontal stripe. The background is a textured, light greenish-grey. The overall effect is that of a spectrum or a series of overlapping colors.

GERARD MOSSÉ



# GERARD MOSSÉ

*Paintings on Paper*

2008–2013

## Jill Newhouse Gallery

4 East 81st Street New York, NY

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This catalogue accompanies the exhibition

*Gerard Mossé: Paintings on Paper 2008–2013*

from May 9 to 31, 2013

Jill Newhouse Gallery

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*With special thanks to Dorothy*

COVER DETAIL:

*Paper Painting C3, 2008–13*

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper

23¾ × 17½ inches (60.3 × 44.5 cm)

## LUX NOVA

*The other's entire being is constituted by its exteriority, or rather its alterity, for exteriority is a property of space and leads the subject back to itself through light.* —EMMANUEL LEVINAS

In the same breath, Gerard Mossé, limner of luminosity, upholds and violates modernist strictures. “The same stroke,” I should perhaps have written, except that something about Mossé’s brushstrokes, something kinesthetic in his touch, consistently feels respiratory. A work by Mossé pulsates, eliciting in the viewer a centeredness that corresponds to an almost pulmonary, or diaphragmatic, rhythm as the eye savors a back and forth, a “push-pull,” between surface and symbol.

Whether in the medium of painting or drawing—and his works in each contain the essence of the other, or at least materials associated with the other—Mossé dwells on and penetrates the support, trading with equal intensity in the actuality of the physical plane and the illusion of depth. Put another way, he makes paintings that are also pictures: his are works that revel in their own sensuousness while going about the business of transporting the eye to another place.

As a composer of images, Mossé is unabashedly figure-ground. He nests his characteristically binary forms—menhir-like and figural,

naturalistic and abstract, living and timeless—in “family of man” constellations that recall a sculptural group by Barbara Hepworth or an installation of works by Anne Truitt. Their jostle and swagger sometimes gives them a life-like quality, other times precarious tilt can put viewers in mind of renaissance towers (Bologna, San Gimignano) that are at once communal and competitive. In either case, they stand apart from the receding and receiving ground around them.

And then there is the light. The glow, the glare in Mossé is his signature device in which color and glaze are deployed not merely to define light through subtle contrast of complementary hues (the chiaroscuro of Georges de La Tour, the luminous ingenuity of William Trost Richards) but to represent light with aggressive independence, deceiving the eye into thinking there must be some actual source of illumination encased within the picture, or behind it, bright enough to pierce both canvas and pigment. Even when we know that’s not the case the fantasy persists. Nor are there representational devices like halos or emanations denoting rays of light (Van Gogh, Joseph Stella) but instead patient, deliberated upon layer-upon-layer of chroma that collectively achieve pure dazzle.

Even without knowing that before Mossé committed to a career in painting he was an accomplished, collected and exhibited cerami-



*Vellum Painting E4*, 2012–13

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 24 × 18 inches (61 × 45.7 cm)

cist it is tempting to think of his trademark rectangles as vessels, as forms that carry form. They are at once the source and the object of light. The light that scorches their surface emanates from within.

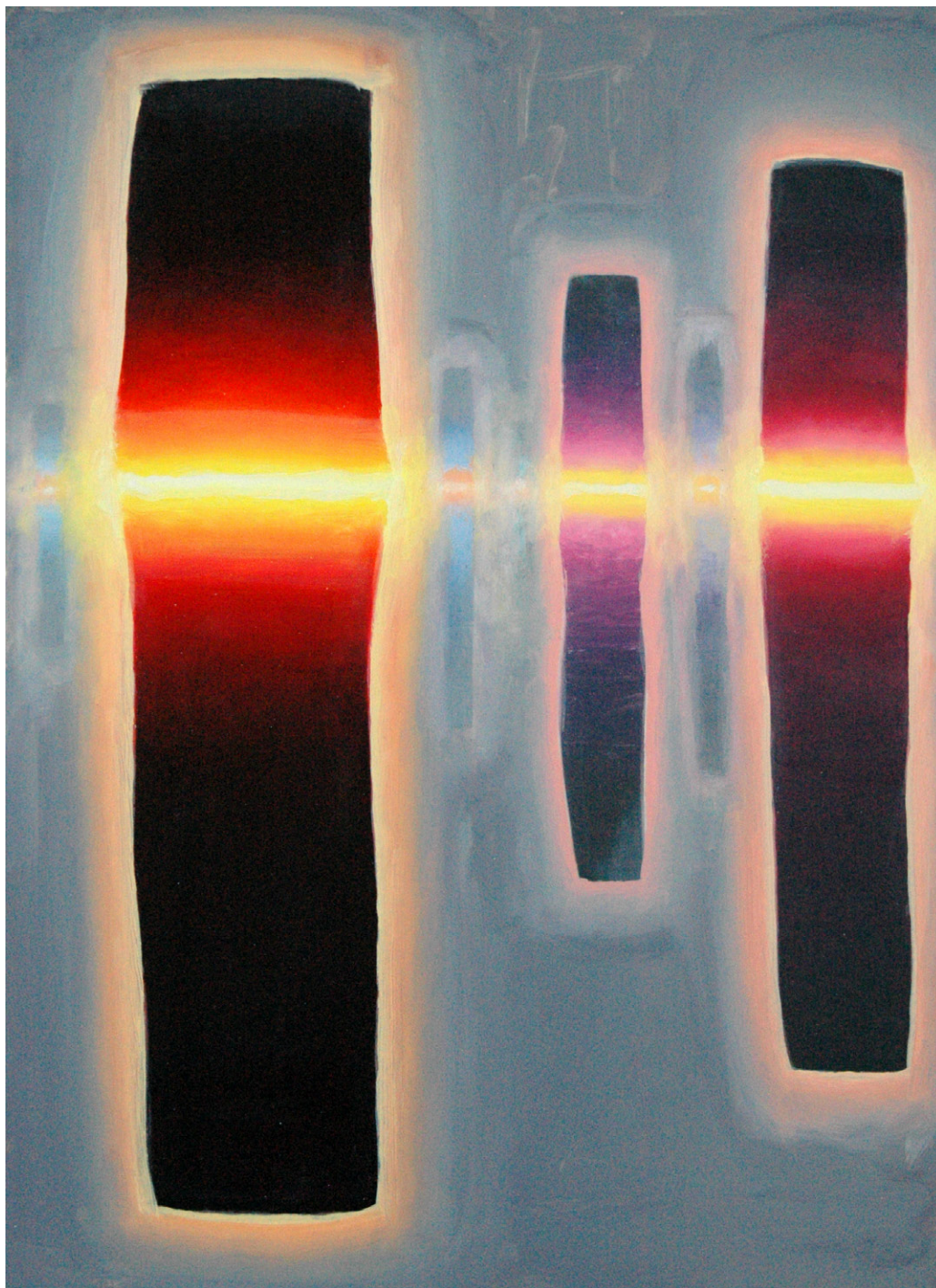
Maybe Mossé is postmodern abstraction's answer to Morandi. Both artists are the servant of servants in their strange, obsessive relationship with ubiquitous, mute, banal yet insistently individuated and subtly personalized containers. Their vessels are, literally, familiar: they are a family, and family to their depicter, and like family more other, more unknowable, than the remotest of strangers, precisely because they are the closest to ourselves while yet remaining acutely mysterious.

Perhaps light, as well as animating Mossé's forms, tenderizes his relationship with them, ameliorating their otherness. Without light the forms would be even more unknowable, but with light their very unknowableness is illuminated.

David Cohen

David Cohen is Publisher/Editor of *artcritical.com* and founder/moderator of The Review Panel. Formerly gallery director at the New York Studio School (2001–10) and art critic of the *New York Sun* (2003–08), Cohen presently teaches at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Pratt Institute, FIT and the Studio School.





*Vellum Painting E1*, 2012–13

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 17 × 12¾ inches (43.2 × 32.4 cm)

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I have been working on vellum for the past 20 years, alongside works on canvas. The pale grey translucency of vellum makes me feel as though I am looking at a space as well as a surface. In addition, the non-absorbent nature of the paper gives me the freedom to remove paint and return to the original surface, rather than painting on top of a passage with opaque pigments. I strive towards a feeling of freshness and spontaneity despite the many re-visitings that occur during the process.

I tend to favor transparent and semi-transparent pigments, much as in watercolor.

Even though they are on paper, the works are fully developed paintings. I spend extended periods of time, sometimes years, to get to the point where I am convinced that color has been transformed into light and I can feel the placement of every element in space. All the while I am attempting to make every passage work in harmony with the others, much as the various parts of an orchestra resonate side by side and enhance each other, here on the intimate scale of a thin piece of paper which fits on a small table. Each of the “passages,” or forms, is created with roughly 8 to 12 different tones, which are applied, removed, adjusted and re-reworked; at times the pro-

cess feels endless. Eventually something happens which I have come to think of as “the poetic moment,” when I step back and look, in surprise, at what has evolved, which I could never have anticipated when I started the process. I still then need to live with the work to test my sensations, to see if this feeling lasts and if I am still convinced after many viewings. If after a while I experience doubt and see something which I suspect might serve the piece better, I put it back on the table. The works in this exhibition give the full range of my preoccupations of the last five years.

Gerard Mossé

*Vellum Painting C10*, 2009–11

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 16<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 13 inches (42.8 × 33 cm)



*Paper Painting B6*, 2008

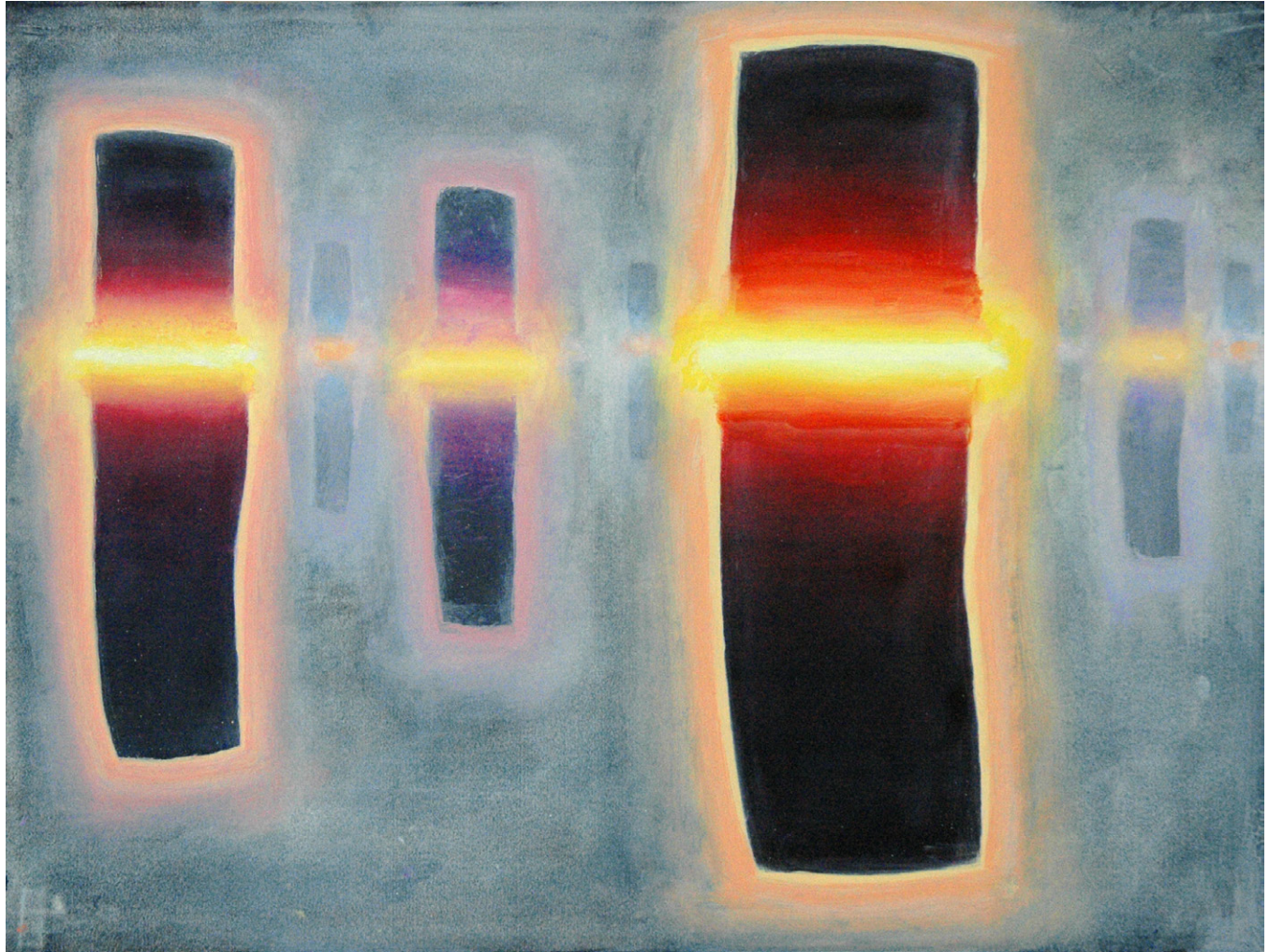
Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 13 inches (42.5 × 33 cm)



*Paper Painting E3*, 2012–13

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 17 inches (32.4 × 43.2 cm)





*Vellum Painting D3*, 2011-12

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 17 × 13 inches (43.2 × 33 cm)



*Vellum Painting C7*, 2010-11

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 12<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (42.2 × 32.7 cm)



*Vellum Painting C9*, 2009–11

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 24 × 17¾ inches (61 × 45.1 cm)



*Paper Painting C3*, 2008–13

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper,  $23\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$  inches (60.3 × 44.5 cm)





*Untitled #3, 2009*

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 23 × 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (58.4 × 45.1 cm)



*Paper Painting B4*, 2008

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 16½ × 12¾ inches (41.9 × 32.4 cm)



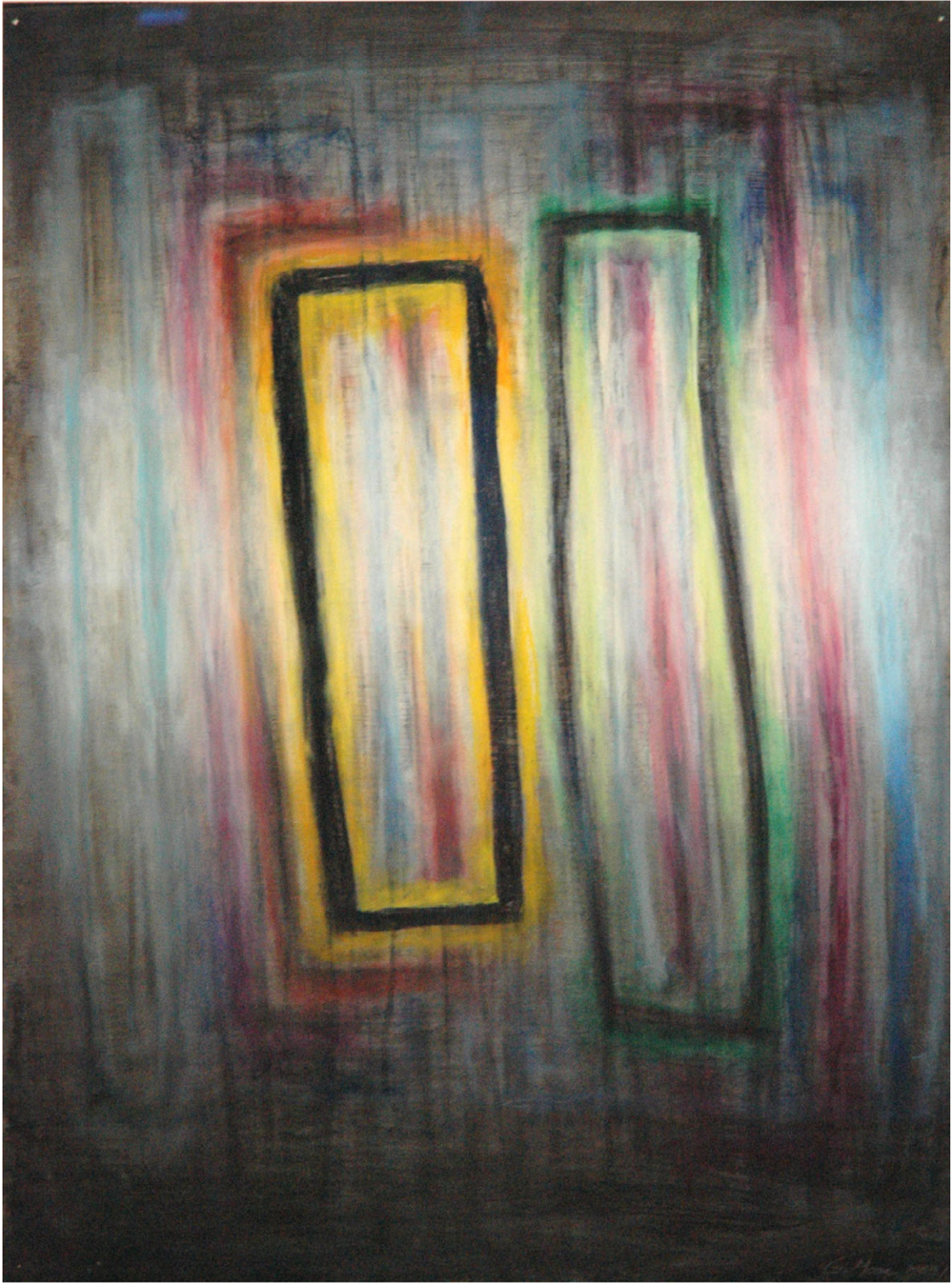
*Paper Painting B1*, 2008

Oil and graphite on vellum mounted to paper, 16 × 13 inches (40.6 × 33 cm)



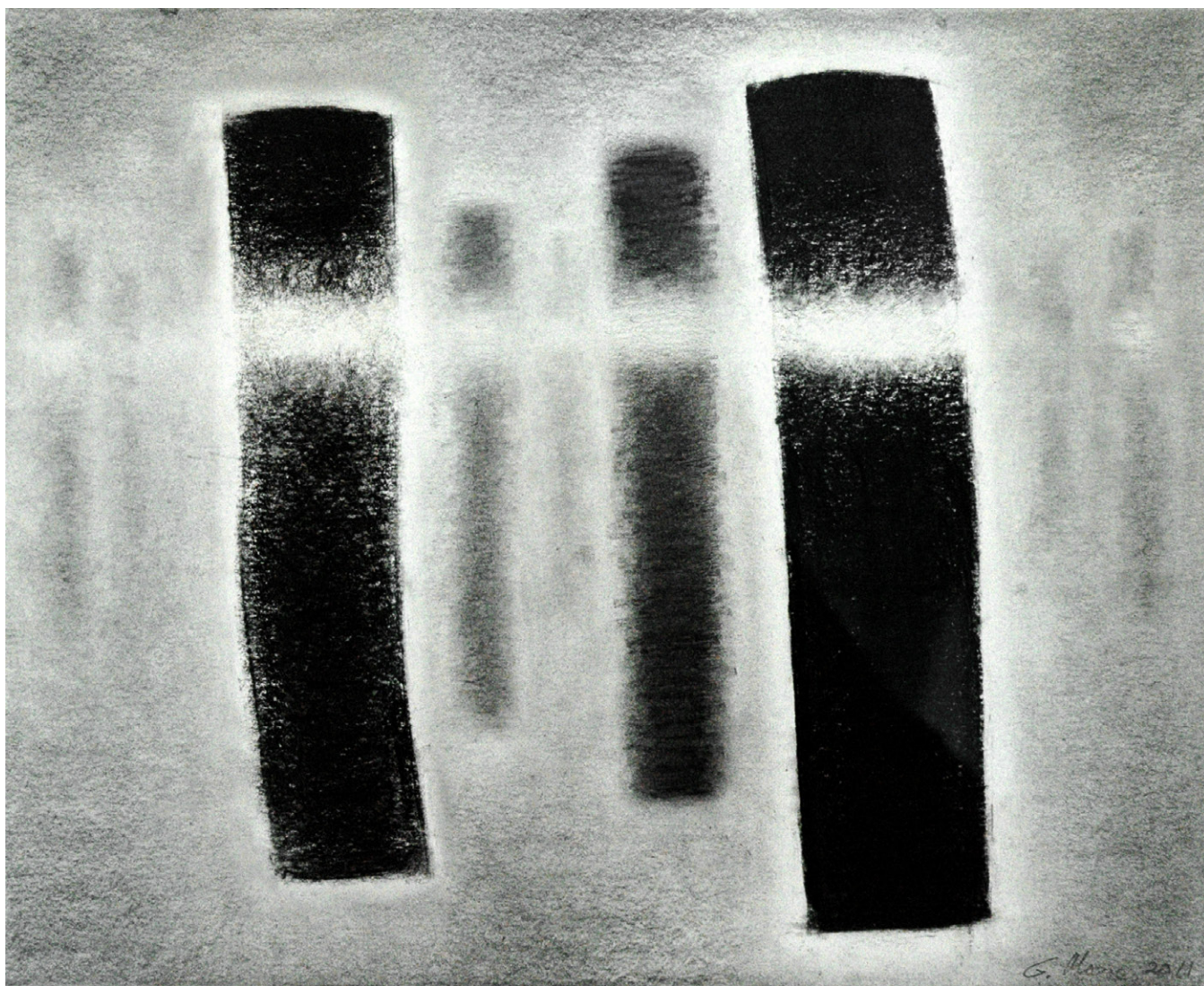
*Untitled #4*, 2009–10  
Graphite, charcoal, and oil pastel on paper, 24 × 18 inches (61 × 45.7 cm)





*Ocean Drawing #2*, 2010  
Graphite and charcoal on paper, 10 × 7 inches (25.4 × 17.8 cm)





*Ocean Drawing #II, 2011*  
Graphite and conte crayon on paper, 11 × 13½ inches (27.9 × 34.3 cm)

**Born in Casablanca, Gerard Mossé** spent his childhood in Morocco and Marseilles before moving to Los Angeles at 16. He began his artistic career as a painter, but soon began working in other media as well. He apprenticed with the well known ceramicist Michael Frimkess before studying sculpture, painting, and drawing at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles. Mossé earned an MFA in painting at the Claremont Graduate School of Art in California, where along with his own studies he taught classes on contemporary art.

Mossé moved to New York in 1987, where he still lives and works. His work shifted from figurative to abstract as he explored questions about the nature of painting and the freeness of line, form, and color. Mossé had his first solo exhibition in New York in 1991, and has been showing regularly since. In the 1990s, he lectured at Hampshire College in Amherst on the relationship between art and philosophy. Today, Mossé focuses exclusively on his painting. His art has been shown nationally and internationally, in both solo shows and group exhibitions, from New York to Tokyo.

## Education

1985  
M.F.A. Painting, Claremont Graduate School of Art,  
Claremont, CA  
1975-78  
Studied at Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA  
1973-74  
Apprenticeship with Michael Frimkess, Venice, CA

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

2013  
"Paintings on Paper," Jill Newhouse Gallery,  
New York, NY  
2010  
Elga Wimmer Gallery, Chelsea, NY  
2006  
Janet Kurnatowski Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
2005  
Katherine Markel Gallery, Chelsea, NY  
1996  
Andrea Pintsch, Munich, Germany (3 featured artists)  
1991  
Berland Hall Gallery, New York, NY  
1985  
Claremont Gallery, Claremont, CA  
1980  
Kaplan/ Bauman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2013  
Schema Projects, "Drafted," Brooklyn, NY  
2012  
"Highlights," Elga Wimmer Gallery, Chelsea, NY  
2012  
"Highlights," Francine Seders Gallery, Seattle, WA  
2012  
"Denzil Hurley, Robert Storr, Gerard Mossé," Francis  
Seders Gallery, Seattle, WA  
2011  
"In the Presence of Light," Danese Gallery,  
New York, NY  
2011  
"Works on Paper II," Danese Gallery, New York, NY  
2010  
"Abstraction Revisited," Chelsea Museum of Art,  
New York, NY  
2010  
"Winter Salon," Björn Ressle Gallery, New York, NY  
2010  
"Works on Paper" Danese Gallery, New York, NY  
2009  
Elga Wimmer Gallery, New York, NY  
2009  
Nina Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA  
2008  
Björn Ressle Gallery, New York, NY  
2006  
Nina Nielsen Gallery, Boston, MA  
2003  
Art in General, Studio Tour, New York, NY

2000

“Abstraction/ Construction,” Soil Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1996  
Group Exhibition, Galleries of Hampshire College,  
Amherst, MA

1995

Art in General, Annual Studio Tour, New York, NY

1995

“Maximum Capacity,” Artists Initiative, New York, NY

1994

Group Exhibition, Apex Art, New York, NY

1994

“Night of One Thousand Drawings,” Artists’ Space,  
New York, NY

1989

International Artists, Laforet Museum, Tokyo, Japan

1984

Three person Exhibition, Downey Museum,  
Los Angeles, CA

1983

Claremont Gallery, Claremont, CA

1981

Mandell Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

## Teaching Experience

2006

Lecture, “On my work,” The New York Studio School,  
New York, NY

2000

Visiting lecturer, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

1996

Adjunct Assistant professor of Art, Hampshire College,  
Amherst, MA

1995

Visiting lecturer, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA

1992

Visiting lecturer, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA

1984-85

Ideas in Contemporary Art, Claremont Graduate  
School of Art, Claremont, CA

## Bibliography

2010

Review of Solo Exhibition at Elga Wimmer by Jonathan  
Goodman in Art Critical, June 2010

2010

Catalog Essay by Carter Ratcliff

2010

Review of “Works on Paper” at Danese Gallery by  
Barbara A. MacAdam in Art News, March 2010

2005

Review of Solo Exhibition at Kathryn Markel by Lilly  
Wei in Art in America, December 2005

1992

Review in Tema Celeste, January/March 1992

1981

Review in Artweek, Fall 1981

## Jill Newhouse Gallery Digital Editions

**Kikuo Saito** Recent Watercolors (2012)

**Fulvio Testa** Recent Watercolors (2012)

**Lino Mannocci** Recent Monotype and Postcards (2012)

**Unknown Corot** Unpublished Drawings (2012)

**Edouard Vuillard: Portraits Reconsidered** (2012)

**Josep Santilari Pere Santilari** Paintings and Drawings (2011)

**Drive / Wendy Mark: New Work** (2011)

**Auguste Rodin: Intimate Works** (2011)

Sculpture, Drawings and Watercolors; Photographs and Letters

**On Paper: Painted, Printed, Drawn** Curated by Karen Wilkin (2010)

**Bonnard, Roussel, Vuillard** (2010)

**Drawings from the Collection of Curtis O. Baer** (2010)

**Wolf Kahn: Early Drawings** (2009)

**Graham Nickson: Italian Skies** Recent Watercolors and Early Oil Paintings (2009)



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GALLERY ASSISTANT: AMY RUSSO

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