



MILES DAVIS (1926-1991)**Untitled Abstraction**

Signed middle right, "Miles"

acrylic on canvas

110 1/4 x 60 1/4 in. (111 7/8 x 62 x 3 1/8)

1988

29107

PROVENANCE:

Paul Toledano, Davis' personal assistant from 1987-1990, acquired directly from the artist

Marie Gillen, Paul Toledano's sister, Abita Springs, Louisiana, acquired from the above

As a trumpeter and jazz auteur, Miles Davis (1926 – 1991) helped to define jazz music for over five decades. In addition to his unquestioned accomplishment as a musician, Davis was a skilled visual artist. The son of a dentist who harbored dreams of becoming an artist, Davis' learned to draw at a young age and treated sketching as a hobby for most of his life. It was not until the 1980s, during a long period of recovery from addiction and other health problems, that Davis' then-wife encouraged him to take his visual artmaking more seriously. Taking this advice, Davis embraced artmaking as a form of therapy and expression. In the early 1980s, Davis sketched constantly and trained with professional painters, producing large canvases painted on his studio floor in California. When Davis returned to music later in the decade, he incorporated his new passion for the visual arts, producing the cover art for his 1989 album *Amandla*.

Davis' painted canvases pull inspiration from many sources, some of the more apparent being Wassily Kandinsky, John Michel Basquiat, and traditional African art. His paintings and drawings also demonstrate a tremendous artistic range: At times, he draws delicately rendered faces of women and androgynous lovers, in other works, his forms are furiously gestural, confronting the viewer with dramatically crude forms and bold color combinations.

Although Davis never attempted to sell his artwork, it has become highly collectable. Most of Davis' work was kept in his estate or gifted to friends. The few works that have come up for public sale have demonstrated the growing market for his work. Davis' artwork has also been the subject of a 2013 monograph *Miles Davis: The Collected Artwork*.

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