



JULES OLITSKI (1922-2007)

Forth Hoyo

Signed verso, "Jules Olitski"

water-based acrylic on canvas

16 x 116 in. (20 5/8 x 121 1/8 x 2 1/2 in.)

1970

37939

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the Artist

Private Collection

Jules Olitski was born Jevl Demikovski in Snovsk, Soviet Union, on March 27, 1922. The government executed his father, a commissar, only a few months before his birth. In 1923 he immigrated with his mother and grandmother to Brooklyn, New York, where his mother married Hyman Olitsky, whose name the artist eventually took (the "y" became an "i" in 1958, after it was misspelled on a public announcement). Olitski was deeply affected by an early experience of viewing the portraits of the Dutch old master painter Rembrandt van Rijn at the New York World's Fair in 1939, an event that solidified his artistic calling and strongly influenced his early style. He studied under Sidney Dickinson at the National Academy of Design in New York from 1939 to 1942, while simultaneously taking sculpture courses at the nearby Beaux Arts Institute of Design from 1940 to 1942. During this time he discovered abstract art at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting, an early incarnation of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

After serving in the army from 1942 to 1945, he continued his artistic education in Paris under the G. I. Bill, studying at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and Ossip Zadkine's studio between the years of 1949 and 1951. It was in Paris at the Galerie Huit in 1951 that Olitski held his first solo show. In the ten years following his return to the United States in 1951, Olitski experimented with thick impasto in the manner of Jean Dubuffet and Jean Fautrier, until he settled upon a method that came to be characterized as Color Field painting, an offshoot of Abstract Expressionism for which he is now known. Like other artists working in this mode, such as Kenneth Noland or Morris Louis, Olitski stained the canvas with paint, allowing the color to soak into its fibers. At first, Olitski poured paint directly onto the canvas or applied it with rollers, brushes, or sponges, but after a suggestion by Noland, he finally settled on using a spray gun to saturate the surface with a thin layer of liquid paint. In this way he was not confined to a monochrome field limited in color and density. In addition, the spray-application process allowed for a certain level of accidental dripping and splattering that disrupts the surface of the works, preventing them from taking on a highly polished, commercialized finish.

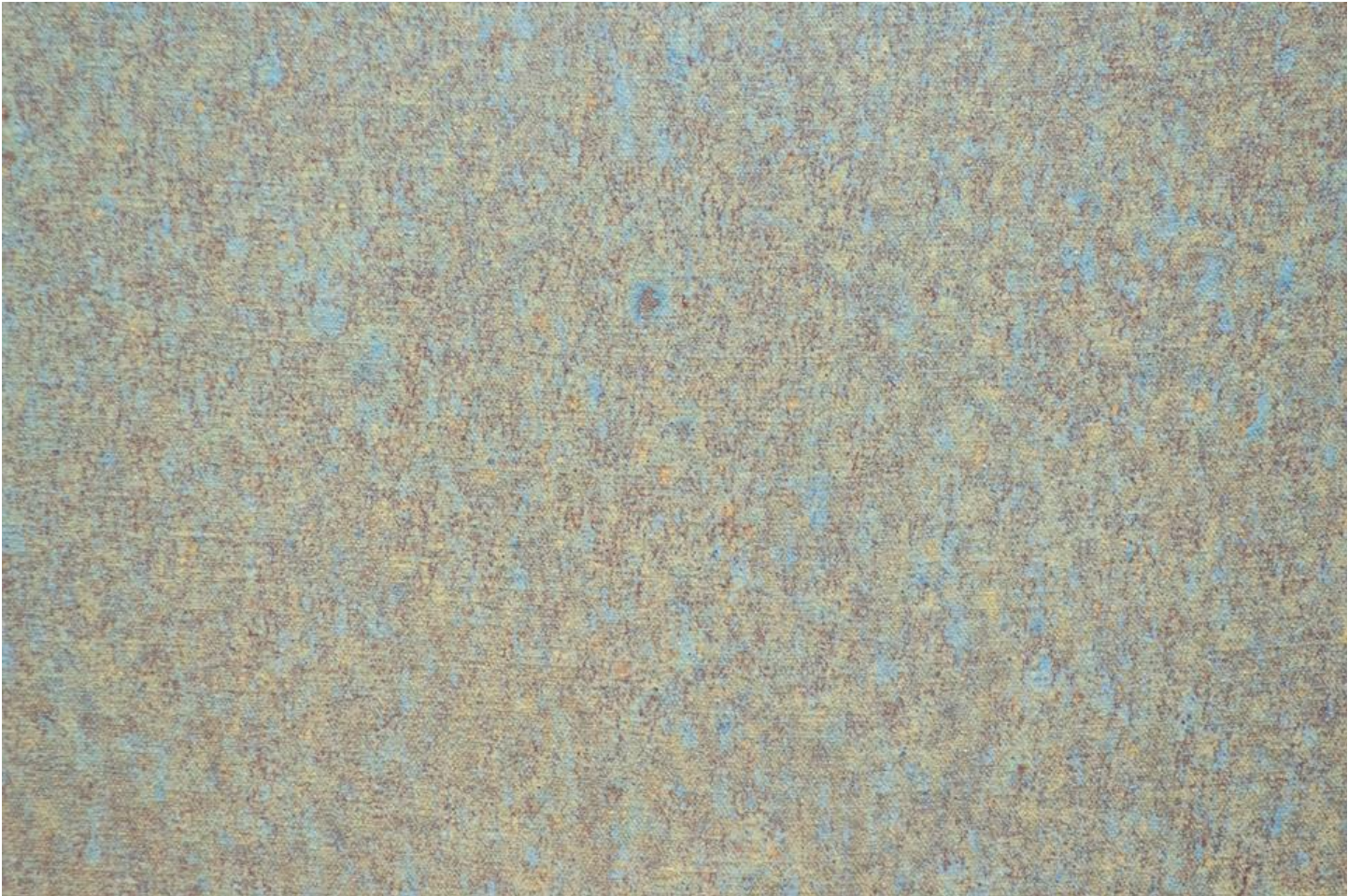
After receiving an MA in Art Education from New York University, Olitski taught at C.W. Post, Long Island, New York, from 1956 to 1963, and at Bennington College, Vermont, from 1963 until 1967. He exhibited widely during his lifetime, in over 150 solo shows, including one mounted by Alexander Iolas gallery, New York, in 1958, which, as his first solo show in the United States, brought him widespread praise from the American

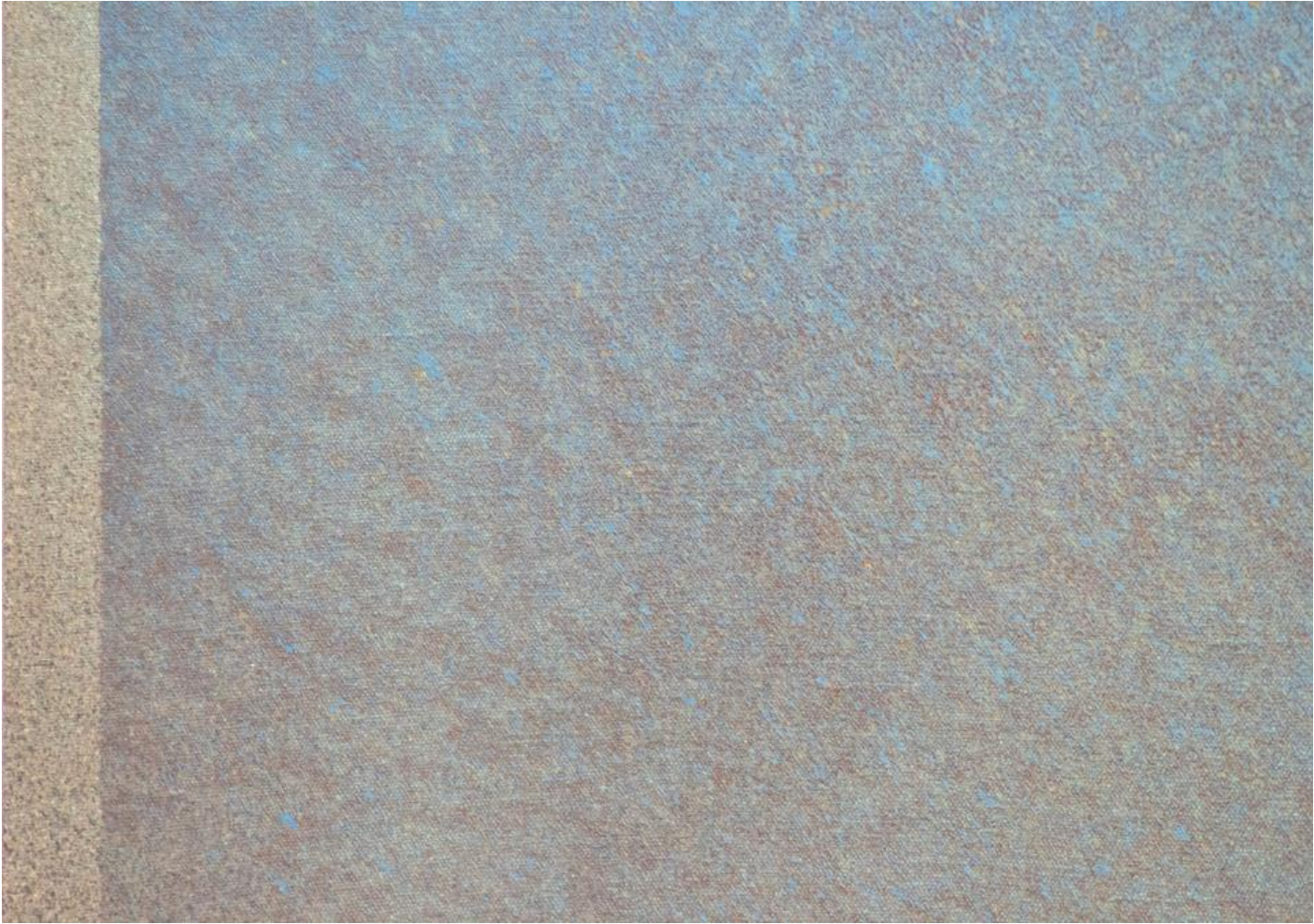
art world, including noted art critic Clement Greenberg. He was selected as one of four artists to represent the United States in the Venice Biennale (1966) and became the third artist in history to have a one-man show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1969). Recently, his painting *Lysander-1* (1970) featured prominently in the exhibition *Color Fields* at the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2010–11). Although his work fell out of the spotlight during the 1980s, it remains an important influence for younger generations of abstract artists. Olitski died in New York on February 4, 2007.

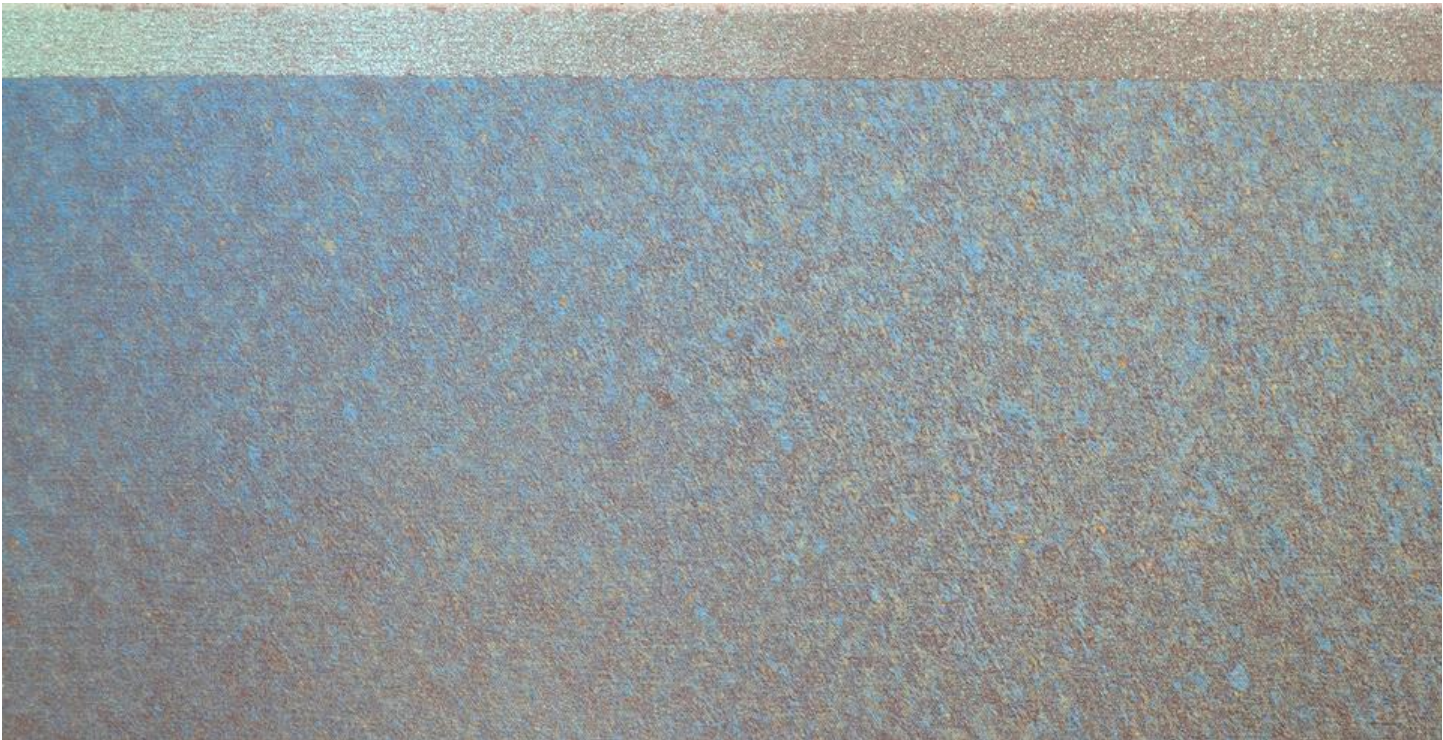
(Guggenheim)

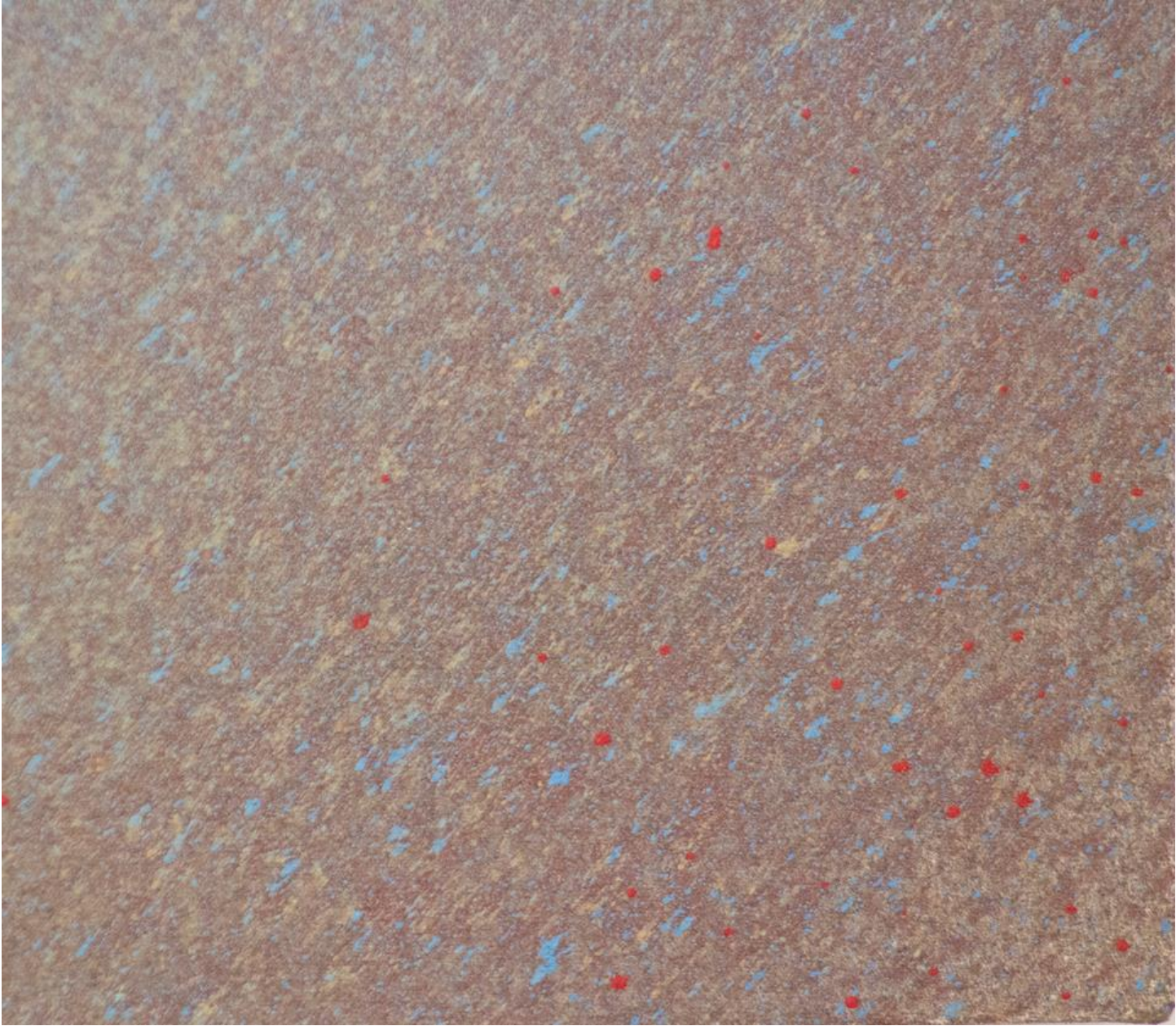
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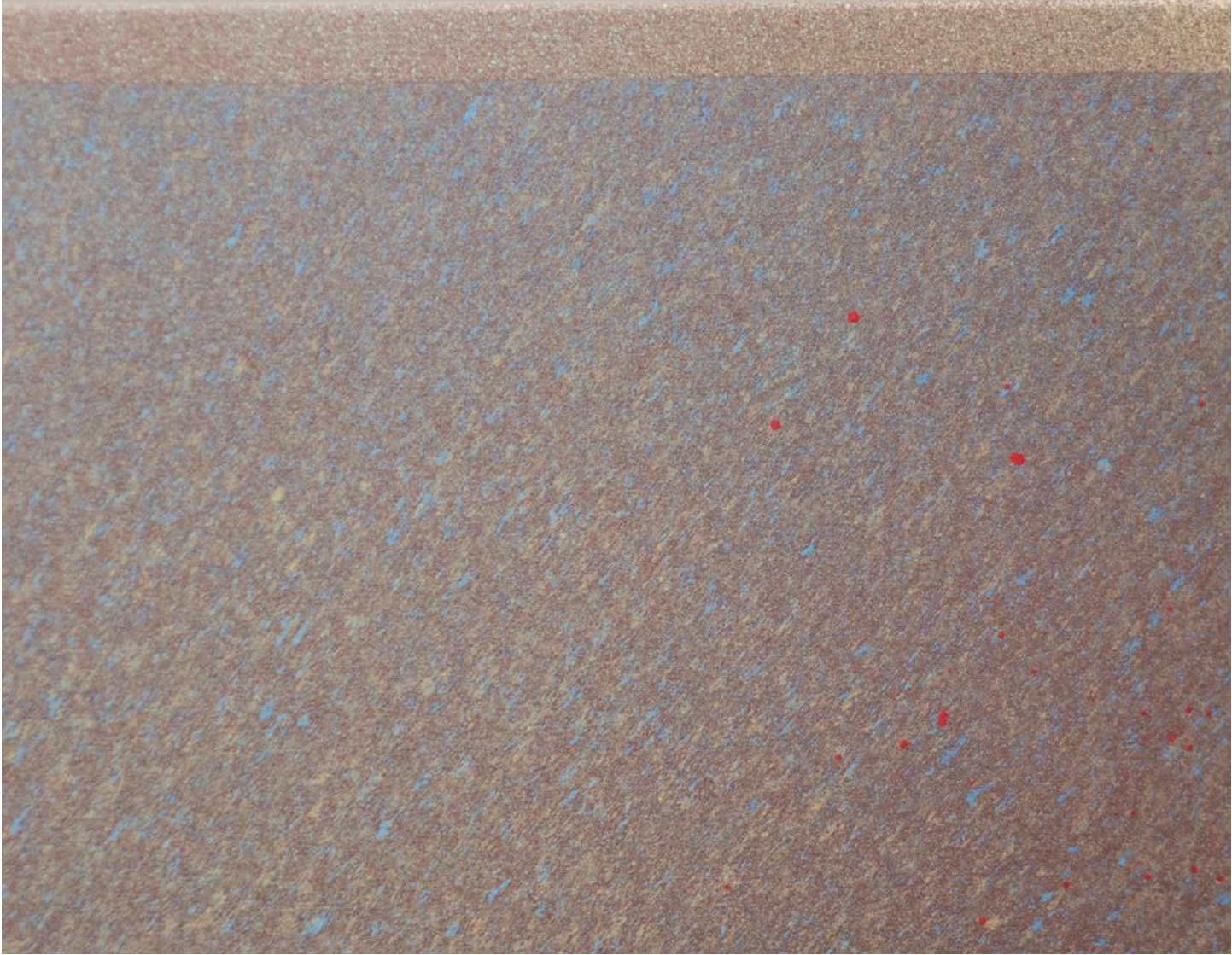


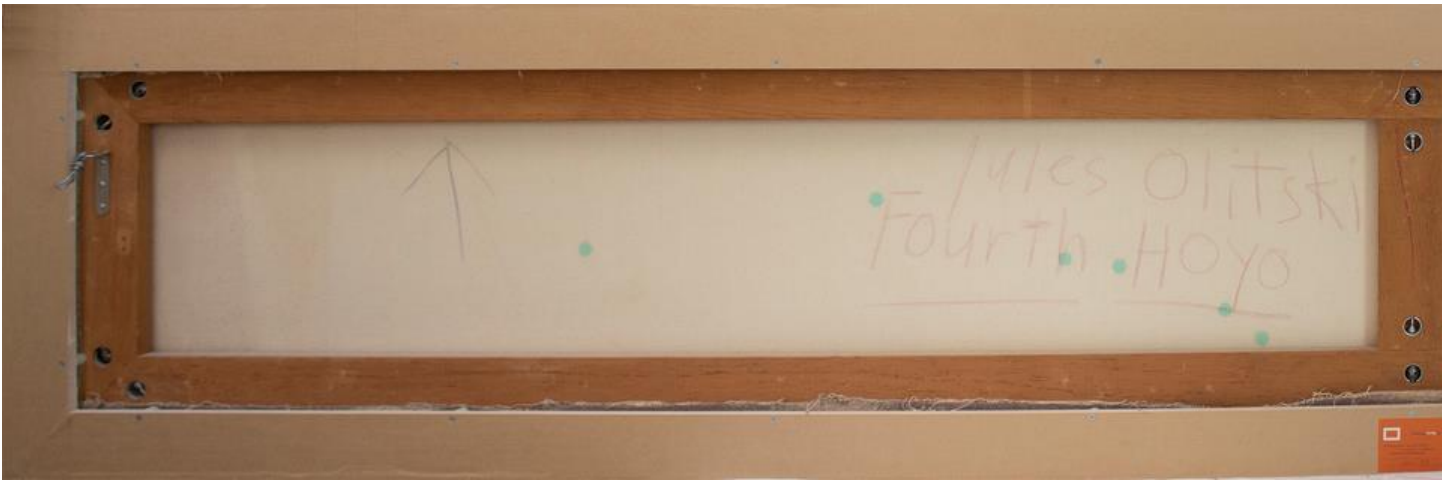












Jules Olitski
Fourth Hoyo



1970

Acrylic W.B.



