

NORMAN ZAMMITT (1931-2007)

North Wall

Signed verso, "September 1976, Norman Zammit"

acrylic on canvas

96 x 168 in.

1976

7129

PROVENANCE:

Private Institution Collection, Wisconsin

EXHIBITION:

Los Angeles, The Getty Center, "Pacific Standard Time: Crosscurrents in L.A. Painting and Sculpture 1950-1970", October 1, 2011 - February 5, 2012

North Wall was exhibited at the Getty Museum in the Pacific Standard Time exhibition tracing the history of art in L.A. from 1945 to 1980, which reignited interest in Light and Space and brought fresh eyes to the work of Norman Zammitt. For this piece, the artist measured the width of each band and created parabolic graphs to calculate the exacting color progression — not only for aesthetic precision, but also for emotional and spiritual effect. The colors seem to radiate as they shift from dark bands of black and blue to fiery yellows, oranges and reds. The hard edges of these bands bring to mind the school of L.A. artists who worked in geometric abstraction during the same period, predominantly the 1960s and '70s, particularly Karl Benjamin's classic stripe paintings. But Zammitt's ethereal pictures defy any such classification. His edges appear seamless — a moment in space frozen in time. The expanse evokes a sky in its full coastal California drama, although that was not necessarily the artist's intention. Rather, he might have used these as an approach to the sublime — portal to a mystical realm. His late, longtime dealer, Joni Gordon of Newspace, suggested the exacting bands of brilliant color relate to Native Indian sand paintings.

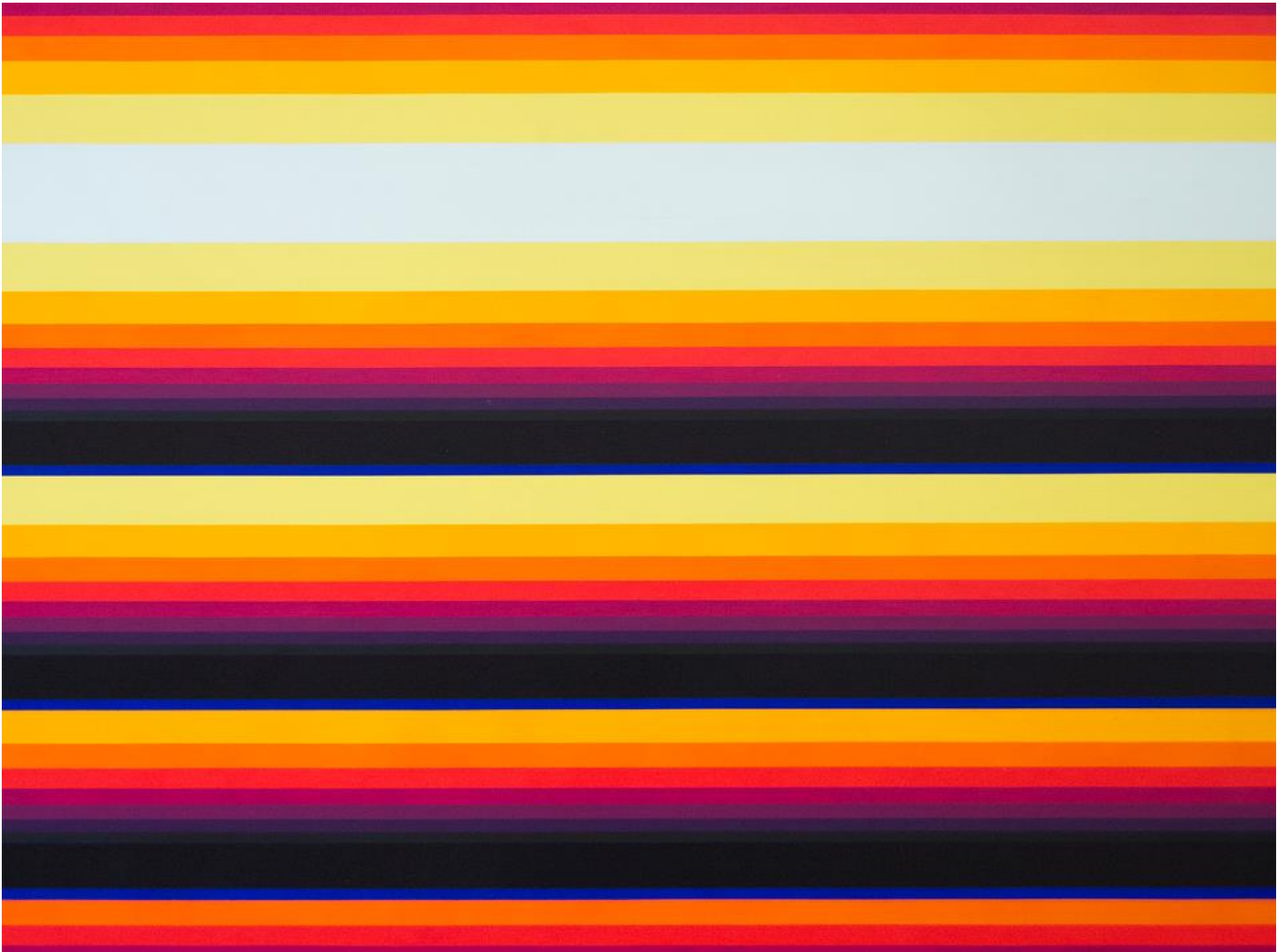
Norman Zammitt was among the artists who pioneered Southern California's Light and Space/Finish Fetish movement, known for his transcendent resin sculptures and expansive canvases of immersive color. A family man who was settled in life when the movement was taking off, he flew below the radar, while others — including Robert Irwin, James Turrell, Larry Bell, Craig Kauffman, Douglas Wheeler and Peter Alexander — became its biggest names.

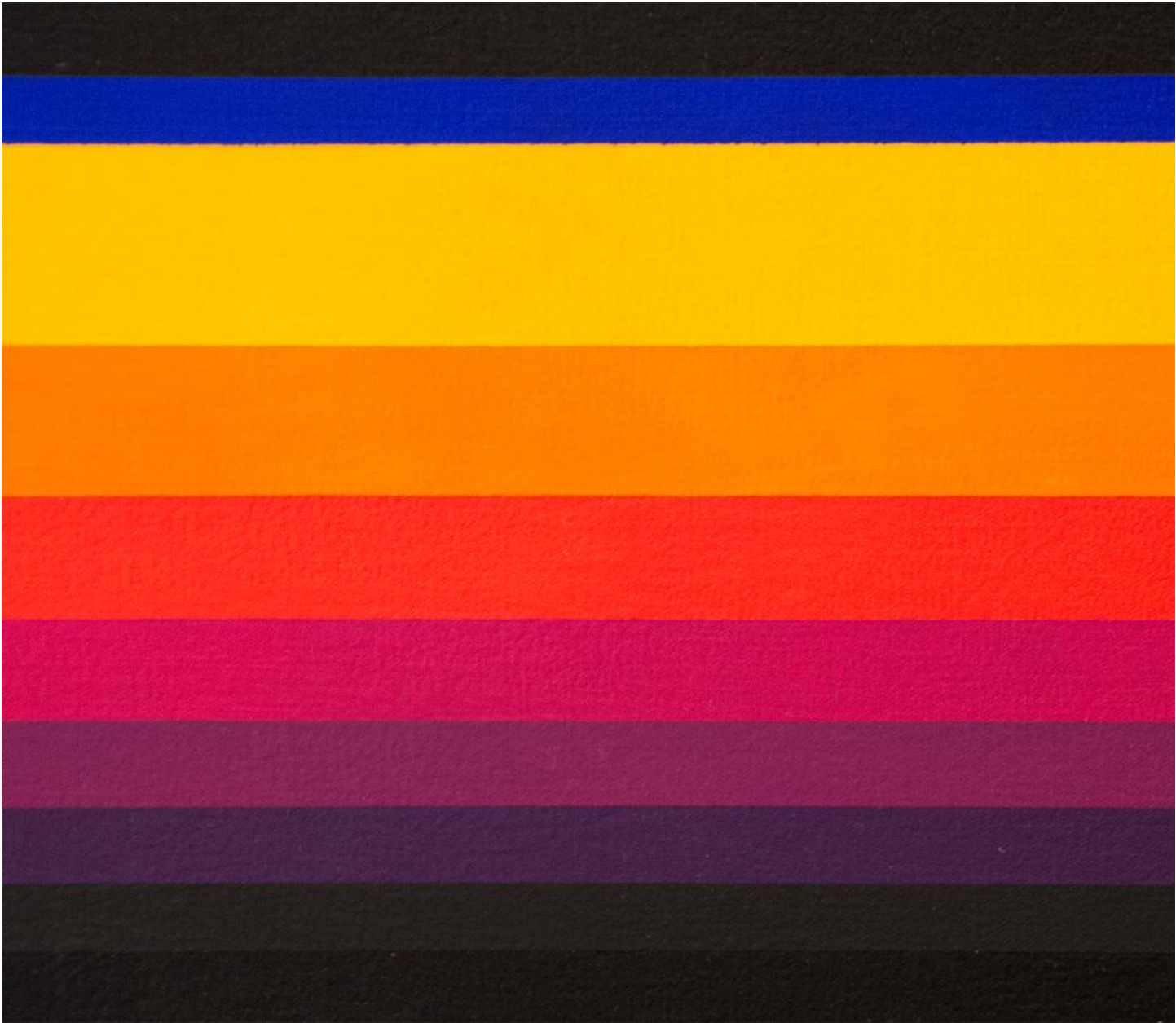
Zammitt earned his MFA in 1961 from Otis College of Art and Design, where John Baldessari was also a student. In an interview with Los Angeles Times critic Christopher Knight, Baldessari said of Zammitt: "He could do anything. He was great. You know there's always the best student at school. He was the best student."

Because of their scale, Zammitt's paintings went largely to institutions. Among these are MoMA, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the Hirschhorn Art Museum on the East Coast, and LACMA, the Norton Simon Museum, the Palm Springs Art Museum, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on the West Coast.

Zammitt died in 2007 after suffering a heart attack and stroke at his Pasadena home.

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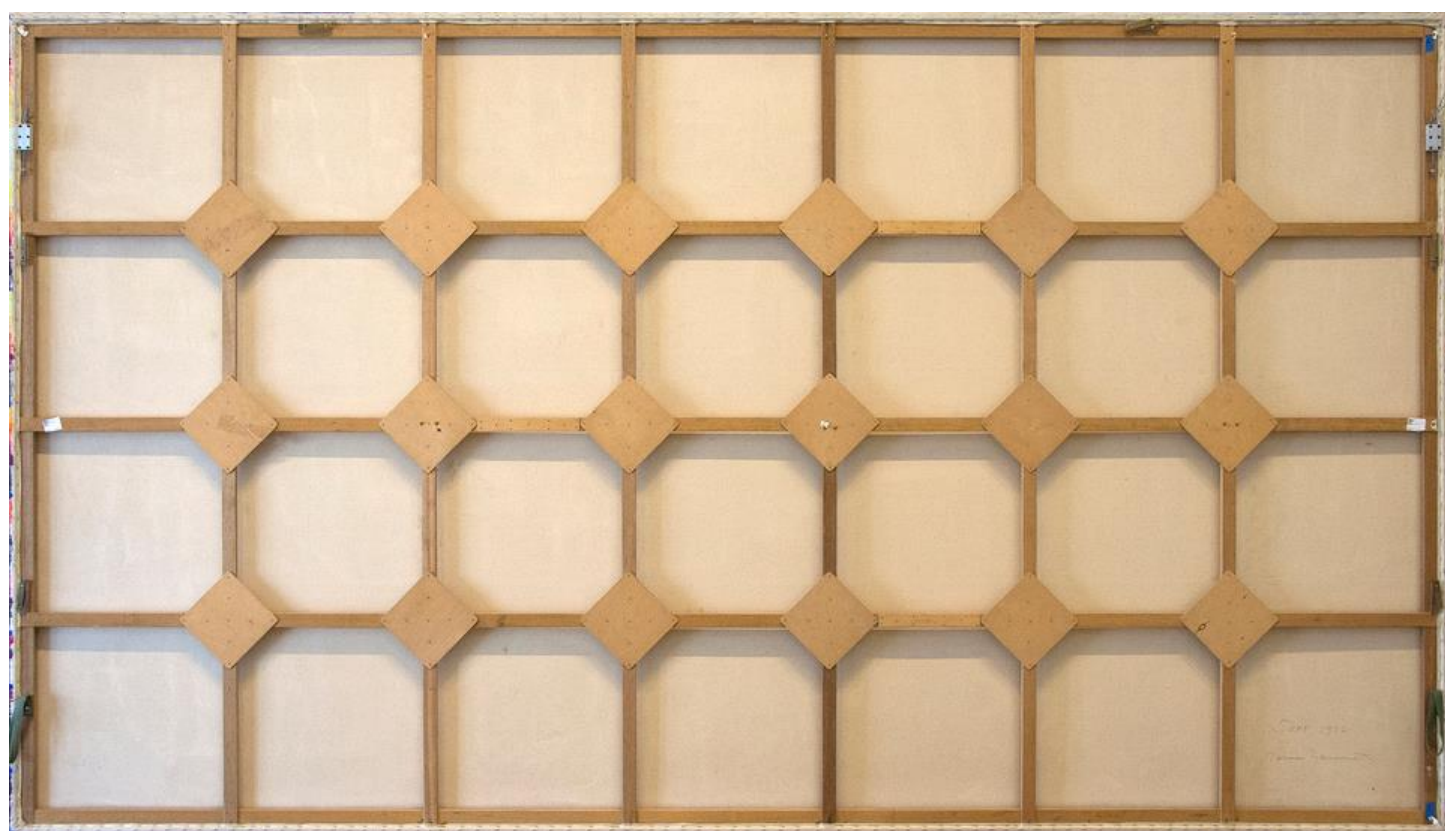


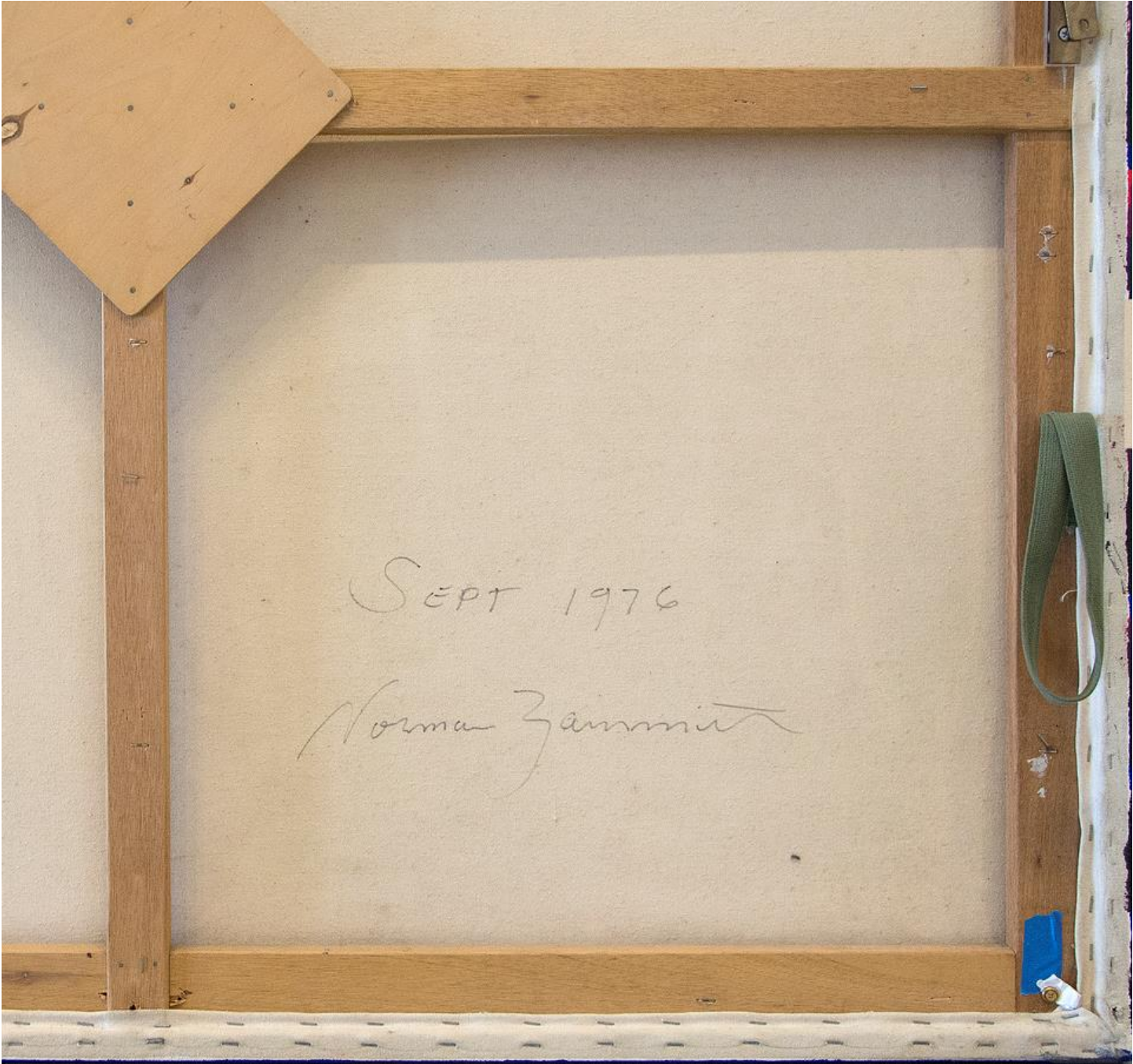












The image shows the back of a wooden picture frame. The frame is made of light-colored wood and is surrounded by a white fabric binding with visible stitching. A piece of tan cardboard is attached to the top-left corner of the frame. In the center of the back panel, the date "SEPT 1976" and the name "Norman Zammitt" are handwritten in dark ink. On the right side, a green fabric strap is attached to the frame. A small blue piece of tape is visible at the bottom right corner of the frame.

SEPT 1976

Norman Zammitt