

S a l v a d o r C o r r a t g é

F r a g m e n t o f a S y m p h o n y

September 29th to October 30th, 2017

LATIN ART CORE

CUBAN FINE ART GALLERY

1646 SW 8th St Miami, FL 33135 • Ph. 305.989.9085

Fuga #1 1970
oil on board
24 x 24 in



Salvador Corratgé: The Shape of Music

By Rafael DiazCasas

My freedom begins with the infinitude of space
SALVADOR CORRATGÉ¹

Through the years music has been for many visual artists a companion while painting; a subject for some, a source of inspiration for others. Likewise for some musicians, paintings have acted as a parameter to follow for their compositions.

In relation with Abstraction it is unquestionable that for some of the avant-garde artists music opened the path for non-figurative painting; it was a source of inspiration and an open avenue for enhancing creativity. In 1896, after attending a performance of *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner at the Bolshoi in Moscow, artist Wassily Kandinsky recalled:

“The violins, the deep tones of the basses, and especially the wind instruments at that time embodied for me all the power of that pre-nocturnal hour. I saw all my colors in my mind; they stood before my eyes. Wild, almost crazy lines were sketched in front of me. I did not dare use the expression that Wagner had painted “my hour” musically. It became, however, quite clear to me that... painting could develop just such powers as music possesses.”²

Early in the 20th century, following the lead of Wagner’s inspirational colorful music, Arnold Schönberg approached his musical composition with the tools learned while he was studying painting. He pledged to write musical phrases intended to capture feelings as if they were colors, in that way developing his notion of *total chromaticism*. Kandinsky observed how Schönberg’s musical intention was to remove “the comfort and familiarity of melody, traditional harmony, and conventional development; he has created a moment that it is possible to imagine as the birth of abstraction in Western classical music.”³ Today we have enough historical evidence proving that Kandinsky knew Schönberg’s musical composition, Five Pieces for Orchestra, op 16, and its third movement, *Farben* (Colors).

After this encounter Wassily Kandinsky, who possess an extensive musical knowledge and was educated as a musician, became deeply inspired to translate music into painting. Kandinsky’s artistic gesture was relevant in the way it led him to develop what became his personal style, opening creative avenues for other artists to follow. From that point on, the depiction of music in painting was no longer

confined to scenes of humans playing and enjoying it; rather, painting could become an inner representation of what music was all about.

The music of Wagner and Schönberg was well known in Cuban artistic circles, and frequently played. Since the 1950s Schönberg’s musical style built a following among up-and-coming local composers like Jose Ardévol, Juan Blanco, Leo Brouwer, Julián Orbón, Harold Gramatges and Aurelio de la Vega, among others – all contemporaries and close of a young Salvador Corratgé.

Loosely these musicians were associated with *Sociedad Cultural Nuestro Tiempo* (1951- 1960), an organization created by Gramatges to promote high-culture music, but which later opened its doors to other artistic manifestations. By February of 1953 Corratgé, as part of a group of young painters and sculptors, had exhibited drawings at the *Sociedad Cultural*.⁴

Corratgé was always fascinated by music. In the middle 1960s he started experimenting with sounds, asking himself what forms or colors music should take in case it could be represented dimensionally. For his first solo show in Prague, he projected fifty photographic slides that moved in a loop under the Prelude and Fugue No. 1 of J. Sebastian Bach.

In 1969, after expending time living and working in Cuba, Hans Werner Henze (1926 -2012), German classical composer and follower of Schönberg, premiered in Havana his Sixth Symphony, inspired by the poetry of Cuban authors. Corratgé attended some of the composer’s orchestra rehearsals for opening night, and his reaction was not different from the one Kandinsky had had after experiencing Wagner’s *Lohengrin* in Moscow.

Later Corratgé remembered the experience:

“I was struck by Hans Werner Henze’s Sixth Symphony (...). To the extent that while listening, I could view auditory forms and made about fifty drawings later shown at the UNEAC. At the end of the exhibition, I put twenty-five of the works in a binder and gave it to Henze, and he gave me a tape with his piece recorded.”⁵

The series of drawings was later named *Fragmentos de una Sinfonía* (Fragments of a Symphony) and it was extensively exhibited in Cuba, from the UNEAC headquarters in Havana to Camagüey and Santiago de Cuba. In addition, five drawings of the series were shown at Salon 70, a groundbreaking oversized national exhibition with which the government was trying to showcase up to that moment the advances of the 1959 Cuban Revolution in design and the visual arts.

Following his passion for music and within the frame of the series' work, Corratgé engaged in a project with Conjunto Instrumental Nuestro Tiempo,⁶ a classical musical experimental group, using the tape gifted by Henze. Thereupon he created another twelve drawings, matching each with a musical instrument and presenting them to the musicians, while asking them to musically interpret and write what the lineal forms suggested. At the time, this type of visual and musical experiment was unprecedented in Cuban visual art history.

Until recently the twenty six drawings in this exhibition were under custody of Cuba's National Museum, and exhibited at the institution. They were returned to Corratgé's estate after his death in 2014.

In December 1970, the painter and art critic Pedro de Oraá, a fellow member of Los 10 Pintores Concretos group, as part of the catalog exhibition in Galería de La Habana, defined Corratgé's series *Fragmentos de una Sinfonía* as a "linear essay... where the volumes want to be dance, the lines want to be melody."⁷

Later, in 2007, Elsa Vega Dopico, curator of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Cuba national museum, referred to this series as "built by virile strokes full of musicality [...where] the sonic intensity was charged by the colors, the extension of the sounds by the lines' design."⁸

Today this series stands on its own for being one of the most audacious and significant experiments within Salvador Corratgé's body of work, and of Abstract Art coming out of Cuba.

The simplicity of the drawings and the firmness of the steady lines are striking statements of Corratgé's mature language. They are also a confession of devotion toward a Minimalist aesthetic, one which at the time did not resonate within Cuba's visual art scene but was building internationally. Arguably, *Fragmentos de una Sinfonía* could be described as the most depurated series of work created by Salvador Corratgé in his lifetime.

1 Mi libertad empieza por la infinitud del espacio. Carlos Velasco. Unión conversa con... Salvador Corratgé. Unión, Revista de Literatura y Arte. Año LI, 78, 2013, p 44.

2 Kandinsky, "Reminiscences", 1913 in Leah Dickerman. Vasily Kandinsky, without words. Inventing Abstraction 1910 -1925. MoMA, December 2012, p 52.

3 David Lang. Colors and games: Music and abstraction, 1902 to 1912. Inventing Abstraction 1910 -1925. MoMA, December 2012, p 47.

4 Exposición de Dibujos de 15 Pintores y Escultores Jóvenes [February 16 26]. Nuestro Tiempo, Havana, Cuba.

5 Me impacto la Sexta Sinfonía de Hans Werner Henze (...). Al extremo de que al escuchar, podía visualizar formas auditivas y realice unos cincuenta dibujos que se mostraron en la UNEAC. Al término de la exposición, guarde veinticinco de los trabajos en una carpeta y se las regale a Henze, y él me obsequio la cinta con la grabación de la pieza. Velasco. Unión conversa con... Salvador Corratgé. Unión, Revista de Literatura y Arte. Año LI, 78, 2013, p 51.

6 An annex of the National Symphonic Orchestra. At the time the group was formed by Leo Brouwer, Carlos Fariñas, Juan Jorge Junco and Pura Ortiz, Corratgé latest wife.

7 Pedro de Oraá. Corratgé y la Notación Plástica in Visible e Invisible. Letras Cubanas, 2006, p 227 -230. In Spanish: "los ensayos lineales (...) el volumen quiere ser danza, la línea quiere ser melodía".

8 Elsa Vega. Siguiendo a Corratgé. La Mar de Formas [July 20 - October 8]. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana Cuba, catalog, p3. In Spanish: "... trazos vigorosos llenos de musicalidad. (...) la intensidad sonora está dada por el color; la extensión del sonido, por el diseño de la línea."

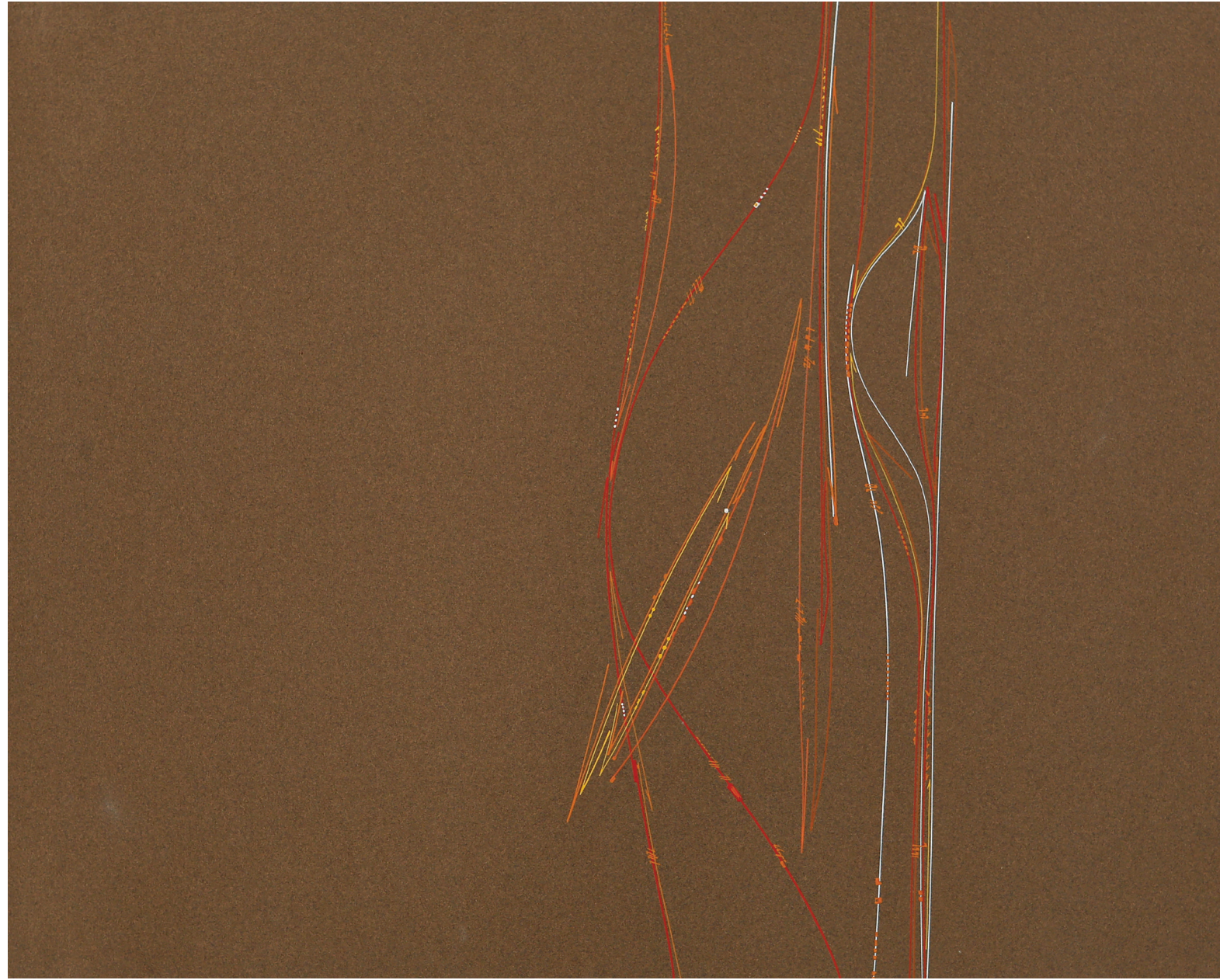
Rafael DiazCasas is an art historian and independent curator, working as an art advisor based in New York City. Interested in modern and contemporary art, with a focus on Latin American and Cuban art. He has curated exhibitions in the United States and abroad. He writes about art and culture for several national and international publications, and is co-author of *Hard Light: The Work of Emilio Sanchez*. (Prestel London - New York, 2011). He have been research and writing and working on a documentary about the history of abstraction in Cuba in the second half of the 20th century.



Fragment of a Symphony 16
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 9
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

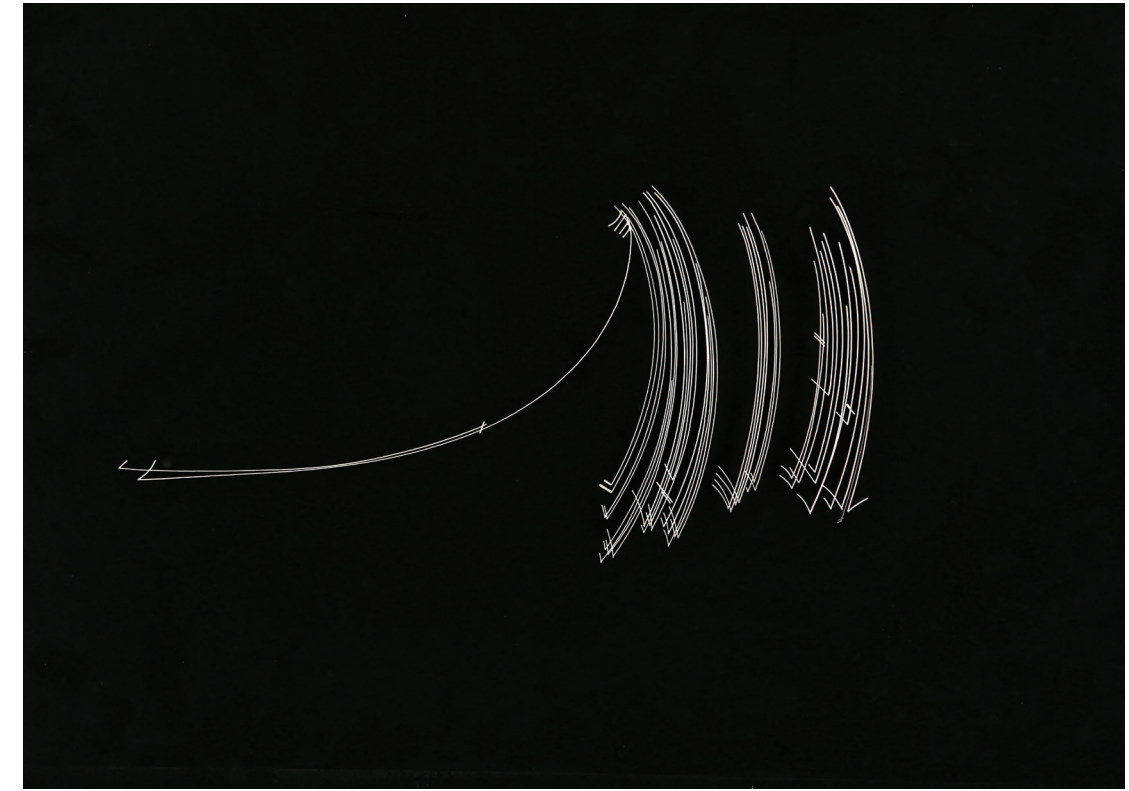


Fragment of a Symphony 11
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

Fragment of a Symphony 10
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 2
acrylic on cardboard
16 x 22 in

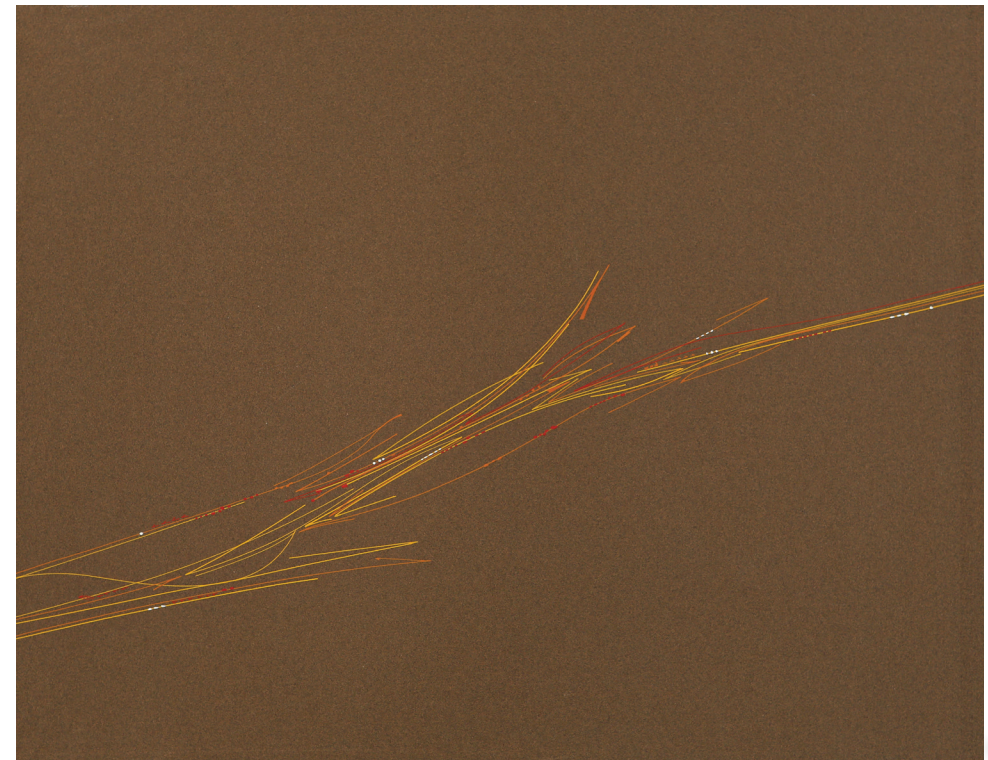


Fragment of a Symphony 19
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in



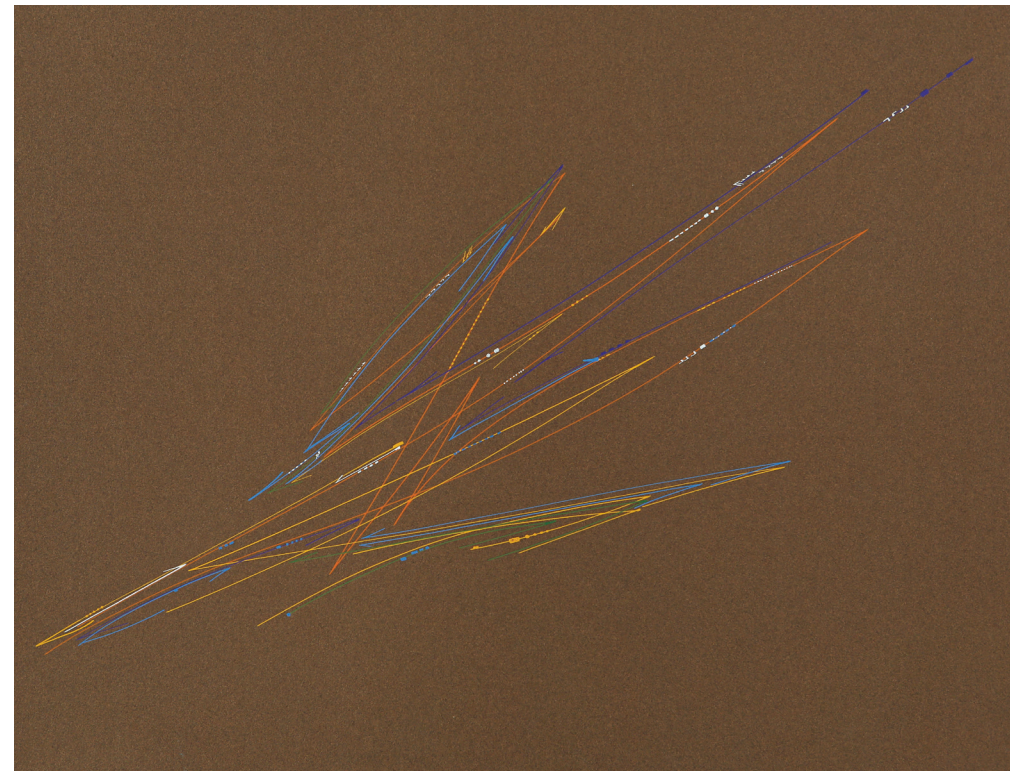
Fragment of a Symphony 12
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

Fragment of a Symphony 14
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

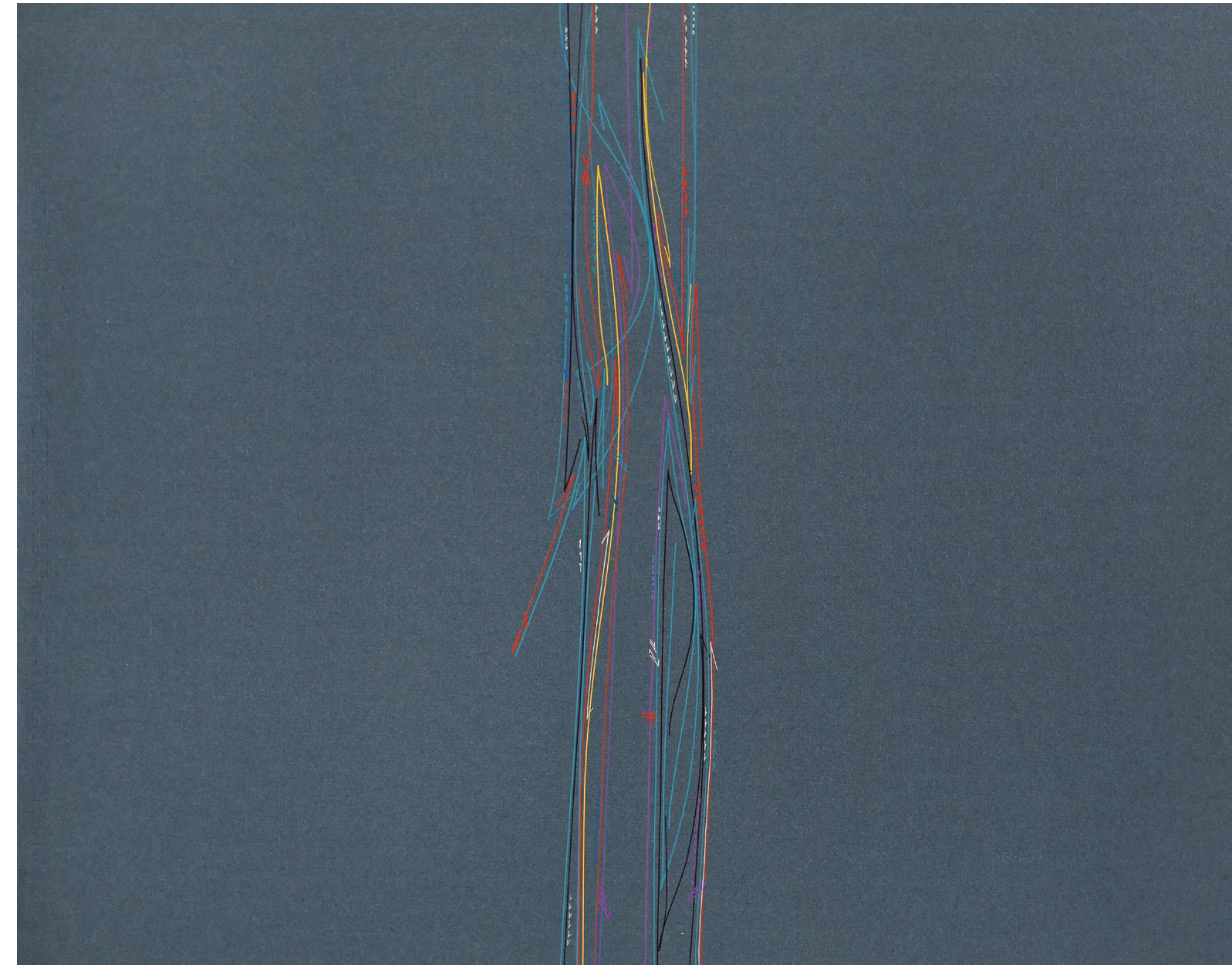




Fragment of a Symphony 8
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

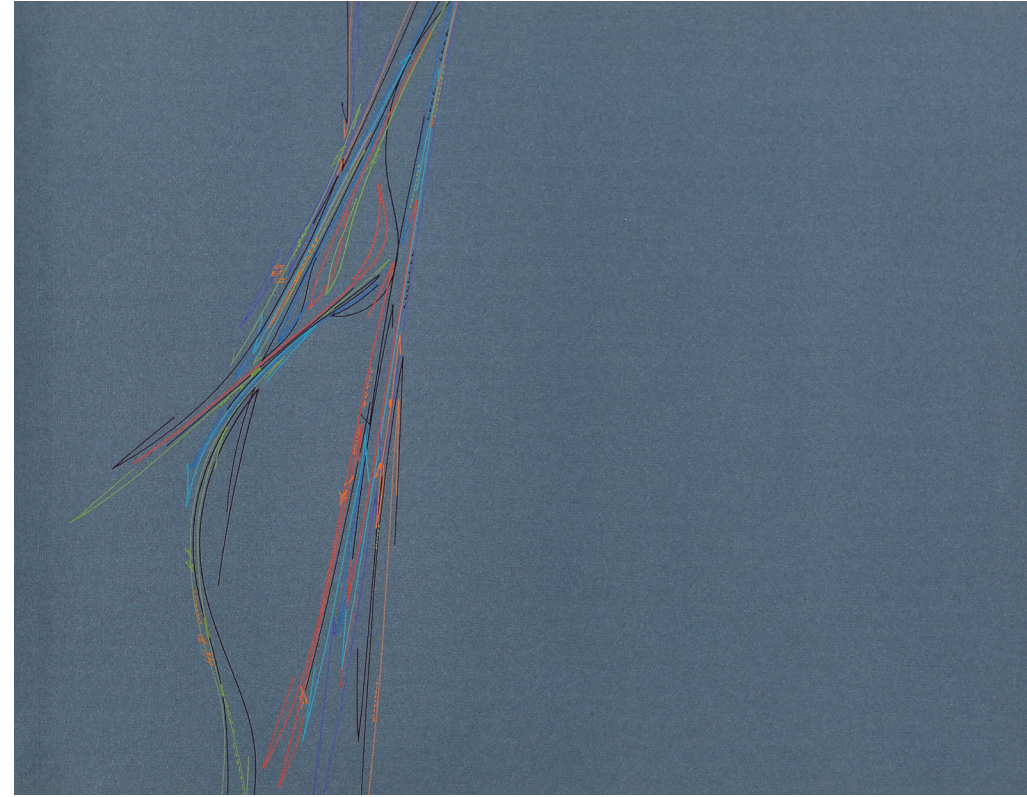


Fragment of a Symphony 13
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 5
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

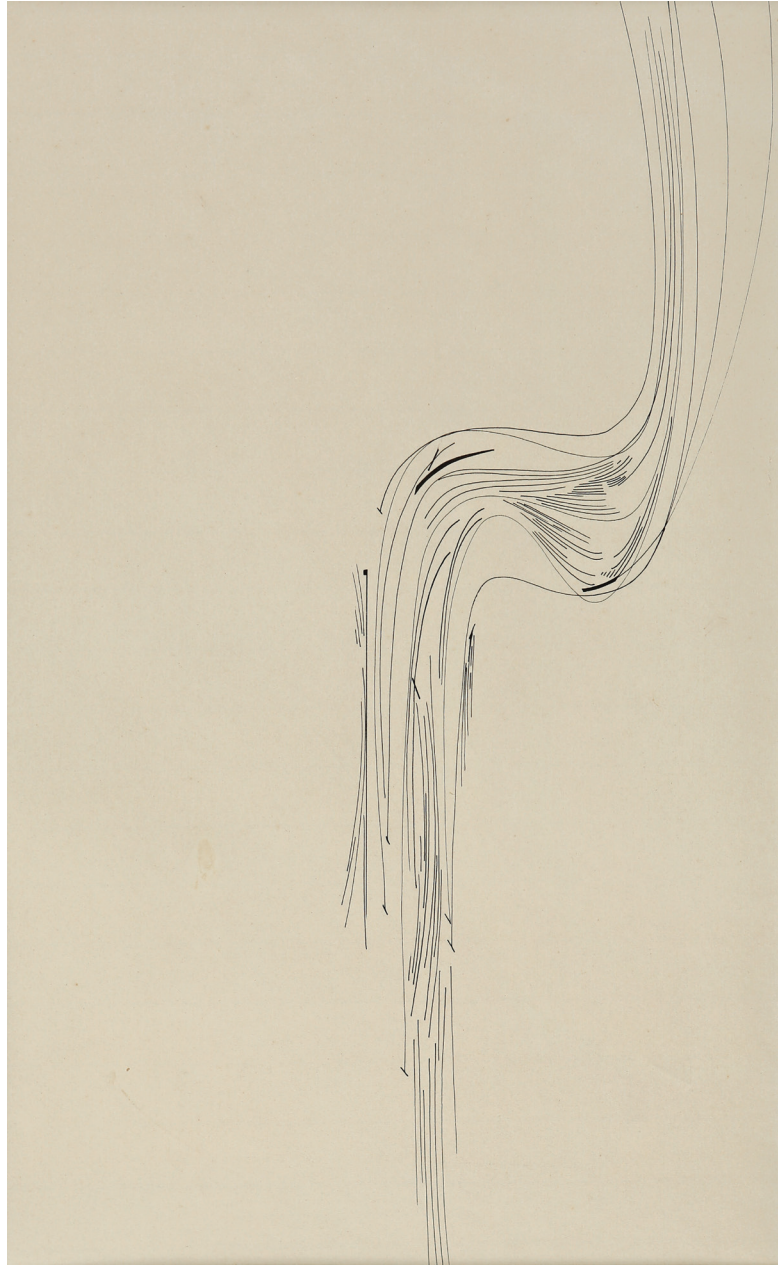
Fragment of a Symphony 15
acrylic on paper
20 x 26



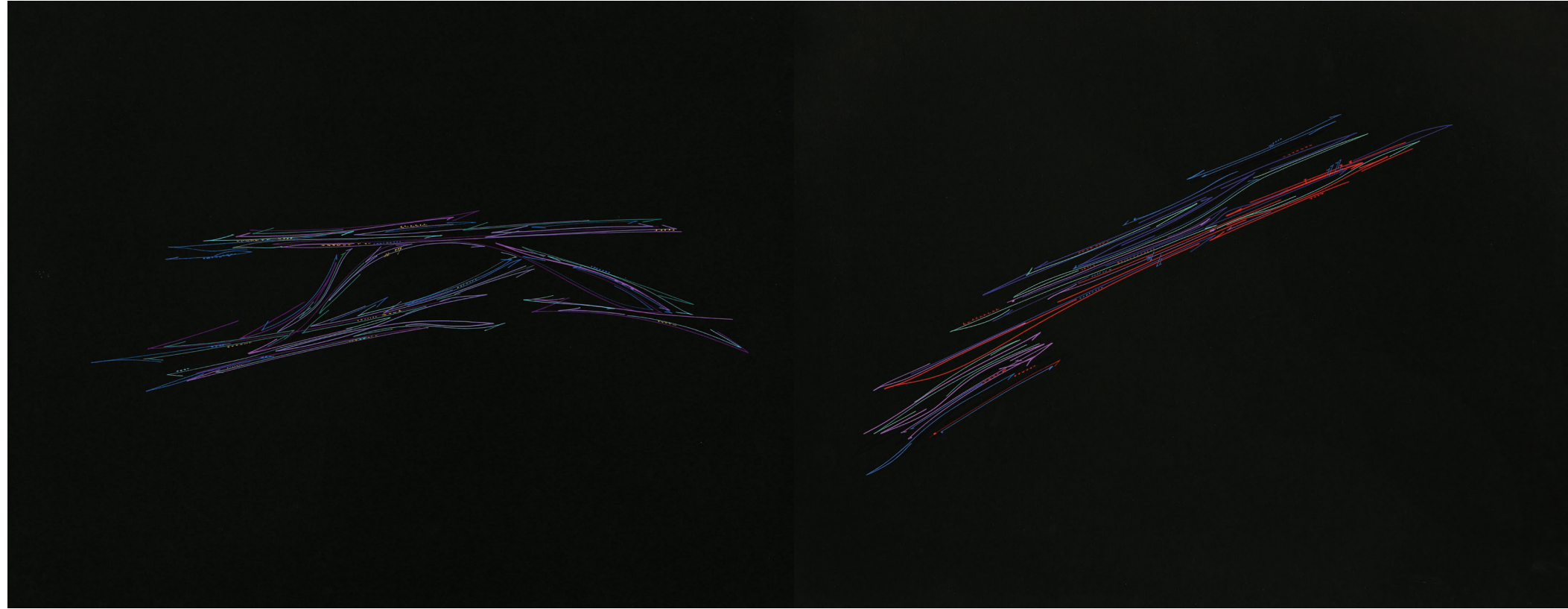
Fragment of a Symphony 1
acrylic on cardboard
16 x 22 in

Fragment of a Symphony 7
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in



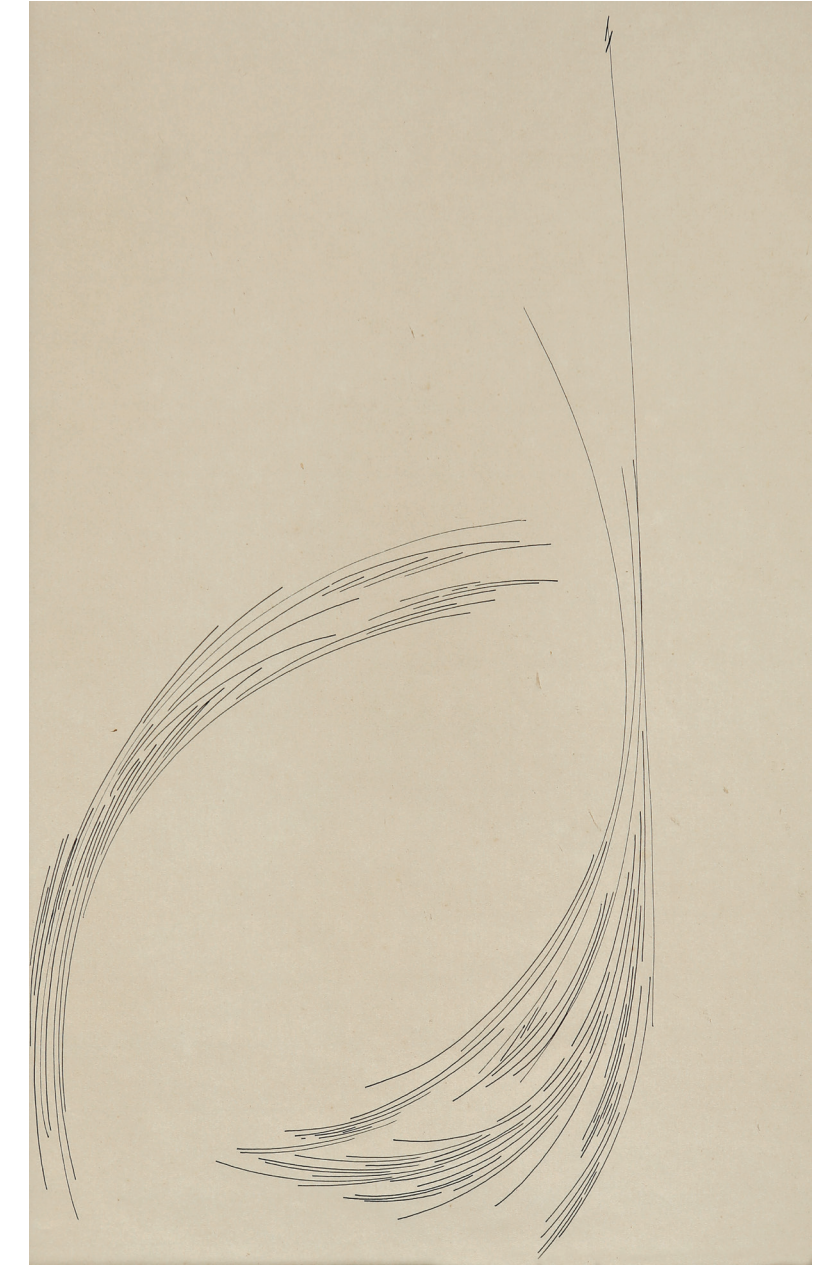


Fragment of a Symphony 6 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 18
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in

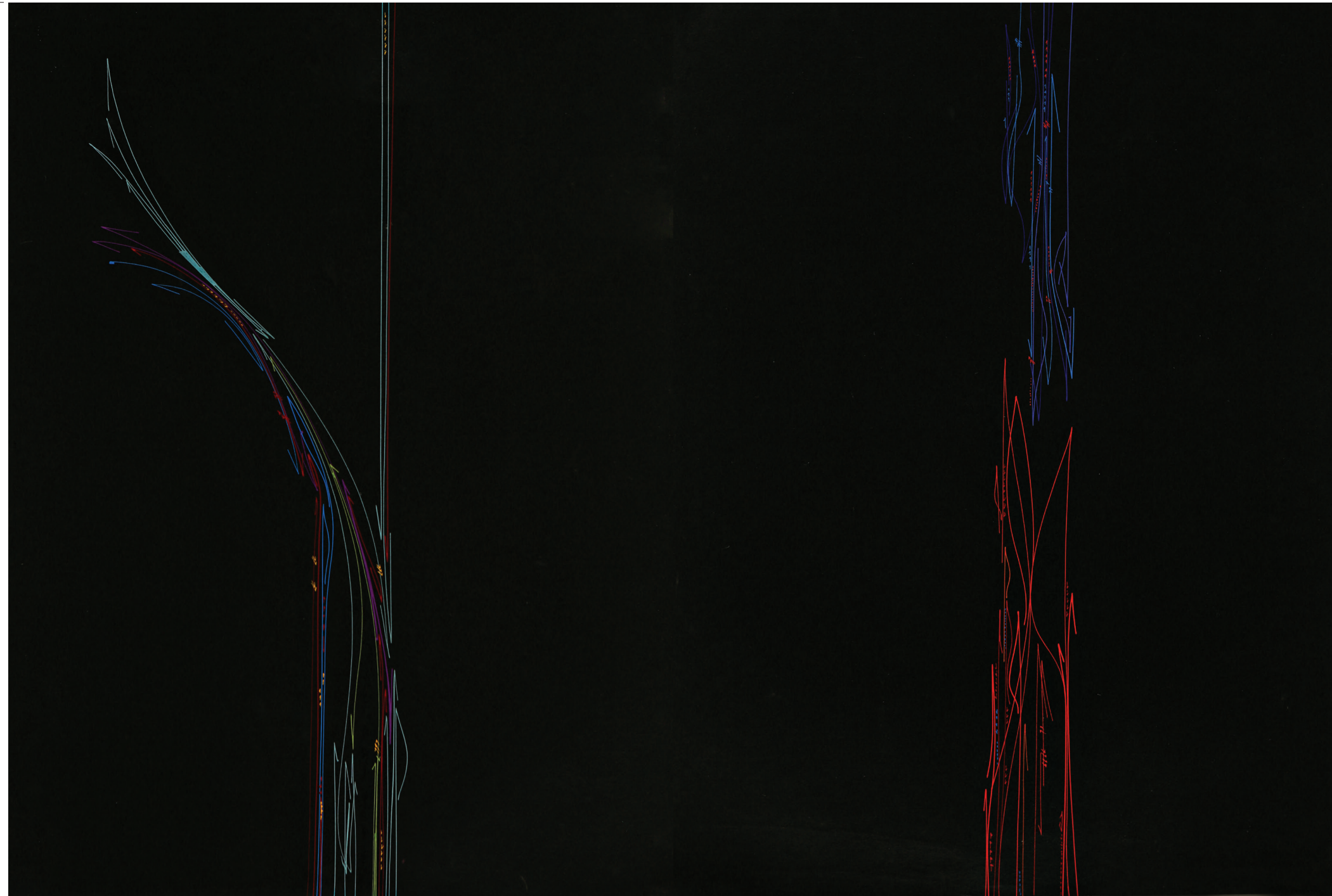
Fragment of a Symphony 6
acrylic on paper
20 x 26 in



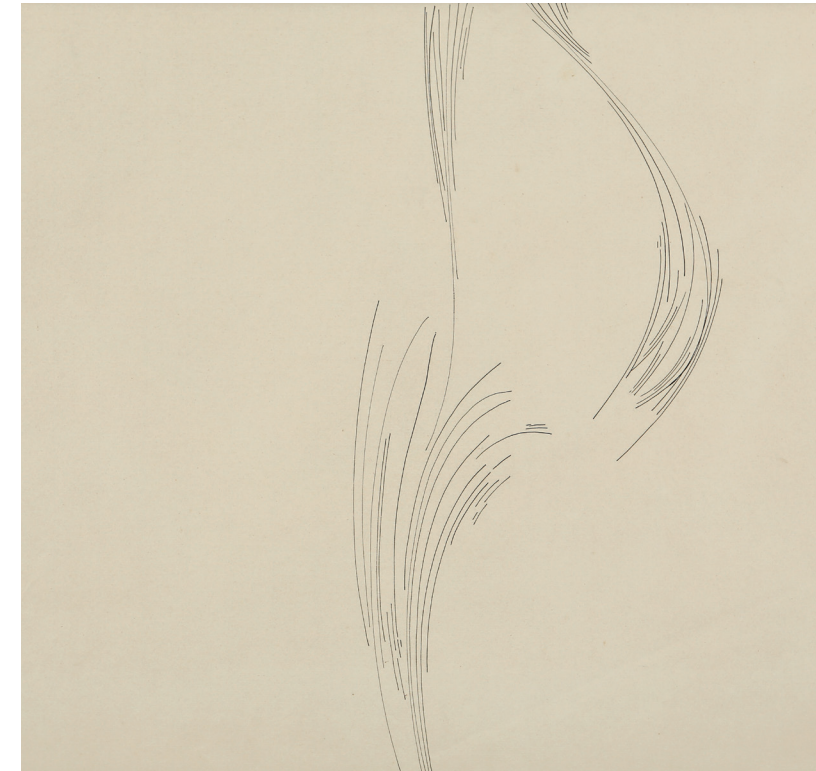
Fragment of a Symphony 5 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 2 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 3
acrylic on cardboard
22 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 4 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in

Fragment of a Symphony 4
acrylic on cardboard
22 x 26 in

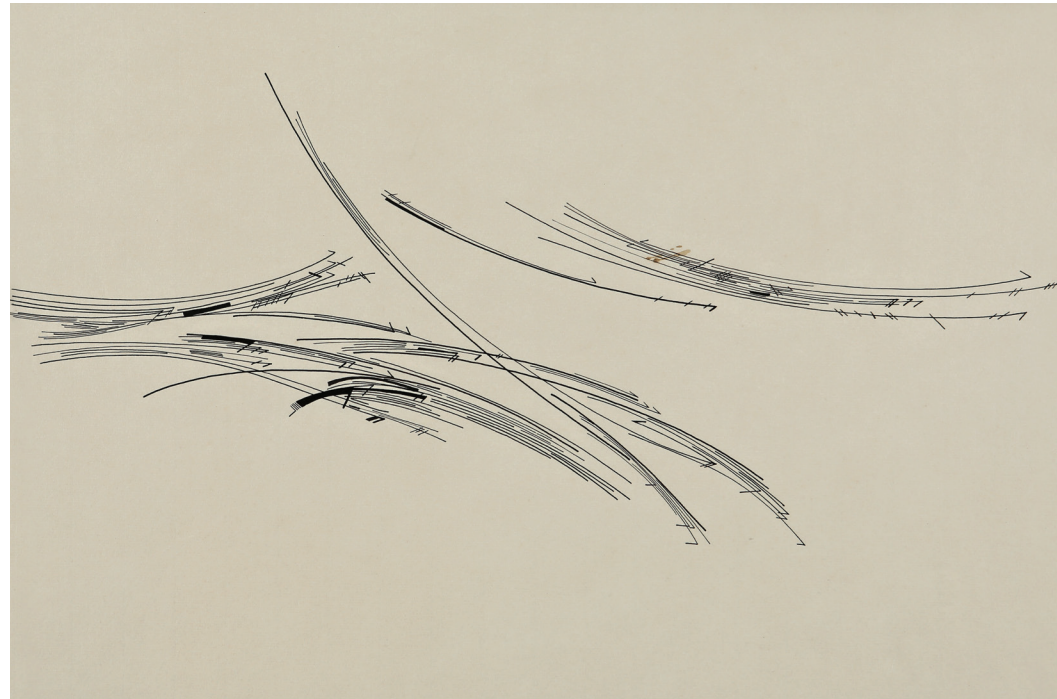
Fragment of a Symphony 17
acrylic on cardboard
22 x 26 in





Fragment of a Symphony 7 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in

Fragment of a Symphony 1 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 8 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in



Fragment of a Symphony 3 1970
ink on paper
22 x 26 in

Salvador Zacarías Corratge Ferrera

Havana, 1928 - Miami, 2014

Education

1949 1950 Escuela Elemental de Artes Aplicadas Anexa a “San Alejandro,” Havana [unfinished]
 1950-1951 Architecture, Universidad de La Habana, Havana [unfinished]

Professional Activity

1958 1961 Member. Group “Diez Pintores Concretos,” Havana
 1961 Founding member. Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba, Havana
 1963 1967 Cultural Attaché. Cuban Embassy in Prague
 1977 1981 Cultural Attaché. Cuban Embassy in the P.R. of Korea
 1995 Professor. Practical Course of Serigraphy and Unique Pictorial Techniques. Universidad de Oviedo, Asturias

Solo Shows

2015 Parallel Paths. Recent Works by Two Cuban Concrete Painters: Salvador Corratge & José Rosabal. Latin Art Core, Miami
 2014 Un mar de formas. Latin Art Core, Miami
 2012 Salvador Corratge. Maxoly/Latin Art Core, Miami
 2008 La telaraña de mis sueños. Galería La Acacia, Havana
 2007 Mi pequeño espacio. Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas de Holguín, Cuba
 2005 Persiguiendo al cuadrado. Club Irlandés de Raqueta / Restaurante Pumaró / Galerías Louis C Morton, Mexico City
 2003 Mi pequeño espacio. Memorial José Martí, Havana
 2001-2002 Un color para este miedo. Seattle, Washington, USA & Galería La Acacia, Havana / La Mar de Formas. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1999 El ojo erótico. Hotel Inglaterra. Havana
 1997 Abstracción. Galería Teodoro Ramos Blanco, Havana
 1996 Dibujo y Color de Salvador Corratge. Museum of Contemporary Art, Ateneo de Yucatán (MACAY), Mérida, Mexico / Dibujo y Color de Salvador Corratge. Museo Universitario Contemporáneo de Arte (MUCA), Mexico City / El mundo secreto de las plantas. Salvador Corratge. Exhibition Hall, Historical Building of the University of Oviedo, Spain
 1995 Exposición de pintura de Salvador Corratge. Historical Building of the University of Oviedo

1993 S. Corratge. Homenaje a su 65 Aniversario. Galería La Acacia, Havana
 1991 Corratge Trillo. Centro de Arte 23 y 12, Havana
 1990 Salvador Corratge. El mundo secreto de las plantas. Salón de los Vitrales, Fondo Cubano de Bienes Culturales, Havana / S. Corratge. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1973 [Drawings about music]. Salón del DOR, Camagüey, Cuba
 1970 Dibujos. Fragmentos de una Sinfonía. Sala Rubén Martínez Villena, Galería UNEAC, Havana / Corratge. Museo Ignacio Agramonte, Camagüey / Corratge. Hospital “Comandante Fajardo,” Havana / Corratge. Galería Oriente, Santiago de Cuba / Corratge. Gallery of MINSAP Building, Havana / Corratge. Galería de La Habana, Havana 1965 House of Cuban Culture, Prague

Selected Group Shows

2017 Adios a la Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
 2016 Concrete Cuba. David Zwirner Gallery, New York
 2015 Concrete Cuba. David Zwirner Gallery, London
 2014 Hot of the Press. Panamerican Art Projects, Miami
 2011 América Fría: La abstracción geométrica en Latinoamérica 1934-1973. Juan March Foundation, Madrid
 2010 La otra realidad. Una Historia del Arte Abstracto Cubano. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 2007 Espacios abstractos. Galería La Acacia, Havana
 2002 La razón de la poesía. Diez Pintores Concretos Cubanos. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 2000 Tono a Tono. Brief historiography of Cuban abstraction. 7th Havana Biennial. Salón de la Solidaridad, Hotel Habana Libre Trip
 1997 Pinturas del Silencio. Galería La Acacia, Havana
 1996 Estampas Cubanas de Tres Siglos. Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá & Salón Avianca, Barranquilla, Colombia
 1994 Cuban Art. The Last Sixty Years. Panamerican Art Gallery, Dallas, Texas / Nuevas Adquisiciones. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1993 1e. Internationale Grafick Biennale. Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Center (MECC), Holland / Algunos de los Cincuenta. Galería Juan David, Havana
 1990 Salón de Artes Plásticas UNEAC’90. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1986 Segundo Encuentro Internacional de Serigrafos. Taller Artístico Experimental de Serigrafía, Havana
 1983 La estampa Latinoamericana. Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana

1985 Salón de Artes Plásticas UNEAC’85. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1980 Salón de artes plásticas UNEAC’80. Centro de Arte Internacional, Havana
 1977 50 Años de la revista de Avance. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1973 Exposición de Pequeño Formato. Pinturas y Esculturas. Galería L, Havana
 1972 Encuentro de plástica Latinoamericana. Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, Havana
 1970 IX Premi Internacional Dibuix Joan Miró. Col·legi d’Arquitectes. Catalunya i Balears, Barcelona / Salón 70. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Inter-Grafik’70. Altes Museum, Berlin
 1968 Panorama del Arte en Cuba. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Pintura Cubana Contemporánea. Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte, Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City / Pittura Cubana Oggi. Istituto Italo Latinoamericano, Piazza Marconi, Rome / Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1967 Exhibition of Contemporary Cuban Paintings. Galerie Libre, Montreal / Pintura Contemporánea. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / I Bienal Internacional de Pintura. Premio F. Estrada Saladich, Barcelona
 1963 1913 1963. Cincuentenario del Museo Nacional. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Primer Salón Nacional de Dibujos/1962 sobre Temas de la Revolución. Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana
 1962 Salón Nacional. Homenaje a Carlos Enríquez. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Exhibition of Cuban Painting. Zhivopisi Kube, URSS; Manes Gallery, Prague; Ernst Müzeum, Budapest; National Gallery, Sofia; Sala Dalles, Bucarest; Gallery Zacheta, Warsaw
 1961 Exposición de pintura, Grabado y Cerámica. Primer Congreso Nacional de Escritores y Artistas Cubanos. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / VI Bienal São Paulo. Museu de Arte Moderna. Parque Ibirapuera, São Paulo
 1960 Segunda Bienal Interamericana de México. Palacio de Bellas Artes, Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, Mexico City
 1959 Salón Anual 1959. Pintura, Escultura y Grabado. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana
 1958 I Bienal Interamericana de Pintura y Grabado. Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Mexico City
 1953 VI Salón Nacional de Pintura y Escultura. Salones del Capitolio Nacional, Havana / Exposición de Dibujos de 15 Pintores y Escultores Jóvenes. Nuestro Tiempo, Havana
 1951 V Salón Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado. Centro Asturiano, Havana
 1950 XXXII Salón Anual de Pintura y Escultura. Círculo de Bellas Artes, Havana

Awards

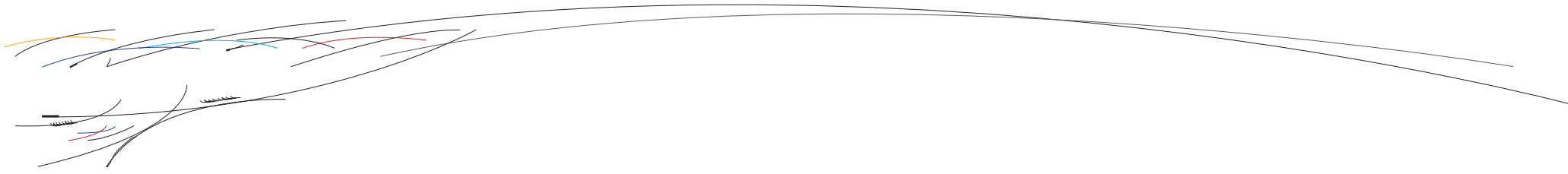
1975 1976 Award. VI Salón Nacional de la Propaganda Gráfica 26 de Julio, Camagüey, Cuba
 1991 Mention. II Bienal de Cerámica Pequeño Formato Amelia Peláez, Castillo de la Fuerza, Havana
 1995 Orden Por la Cultura Nacional, State Council, Republic of Cuba

Main Collections

Biblioteca Nacional “José Martí,” Havana / Collection Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINREX), Cuban Embassy in Prague, Bern & Cuban Delegation at the UN, New York / Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City / Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow / Museo Ignacio Agramonte, Camagüey, Cuba / Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana / Imperial Palace of Japan, Tokyo / Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (UNEAC), Havana

Main Work in Public Places

Mausoleo a los mártires de Pino 3 [with architect Octavio González Morgado], 1975



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