



DUMAS+LIMBACH
FINE ART

Jean Miotte

Sillages du geste

35 avenue matignon, 75008 PARIS

Jean Miotte

Sillages du geste

summary

Les dates

1

Fragments of a Life in Motion

2

Gross surface area

6

Dance of the Gesture

8

Under the Asian Sky

11

The Work Bare to the Soul

14



Jean Miotte

1926-2016

1945

Early nature painting and imaginary compositions

1947

He began studying at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris

1951

Tension towards form, sign

1952

meets Japanese artist Atsuko Tanaka

1957

Lyrical spontaneity, movement takes center stage

1967

International recognition with exhibitions in the United States, where he is associated with the school of lyrical abstraction.

1970

White becomes space, integration of Indian ink

1977

Leaves the unbleached canvas as the only support, leaving no room for retouching

1981

Participation in the Paris Biennale and other international art events.

Jean Miotte

born in Paris on September 8, 1926

His adolescence took place in Nazi-occupied Paris. As a result, Jean Miotte developed a deep hostility toward any form of indoctrination or group conformity. At 19, he completed his military service and, struck by the ugliness of the barracks, decided to repaint its walls. Diagnosed with tuberculosis, his service was cut short. While hospitalized for several months, Jean Miotte painted and drew extensively.

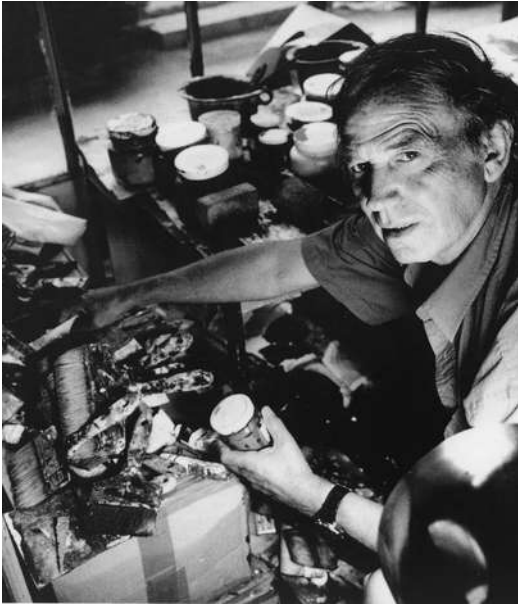
In 1940, it was ballet and its dancers that captivated the artist. He developed friendships with several prominent figures in the world of dance, creating stage sets for them. "I am passionate about dance and choreography. I dream of a magnificent synthesis of painting, music, and choreography."

Movement lies at the heart of the artist's passion—the movement of dancers on the floor, and that of the brush on the canvas. One follows the notes of an orchestra, the other follows the rhythm of his soul, his intuition, and his inner conflicts.



"Movement is my life"





Jean Miotte never relies on sketches. His works are the result of an immediate gesture, a sudden flash of the mind. In this, he differs from Franz Kline and Willem de Kooning. His work is free from the constraints of deliberation.

Deeply connected to his Nordic origins, Jean Miotte had a particular attachment to the work of Frans Hals, with whom, according to Karl Ruhrberg, he shares a painting style that combines spontaneity with harmony, balancing impulse and equilibrium.

Between 1953 and 1960, numerous exhibitions were dedicated to the artist in France, as well as in Germany, where he achieved such success that it earned him ten exhibitions throughout the 1950s, along with shows in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark.



International recognition soon followed, and the artist was invited to spend six months in the United States after receiving the Ford Foundation Prize.

In 1963, a Jean Miotte retrospective was held at the Stedelijk Museum in Schiedam, later presented at the Groningen Museum in the Netherlands.

Starting in 1971, after becoming a member of the Comité des Réalités Nouvelles the previous year, Jean Miotte decided to incorporate the raw surface of the canvas into his compositions. This unprimed, untouched surface emerged through the layers of color, enhancing the contrast and bringing a new dimension to his work.



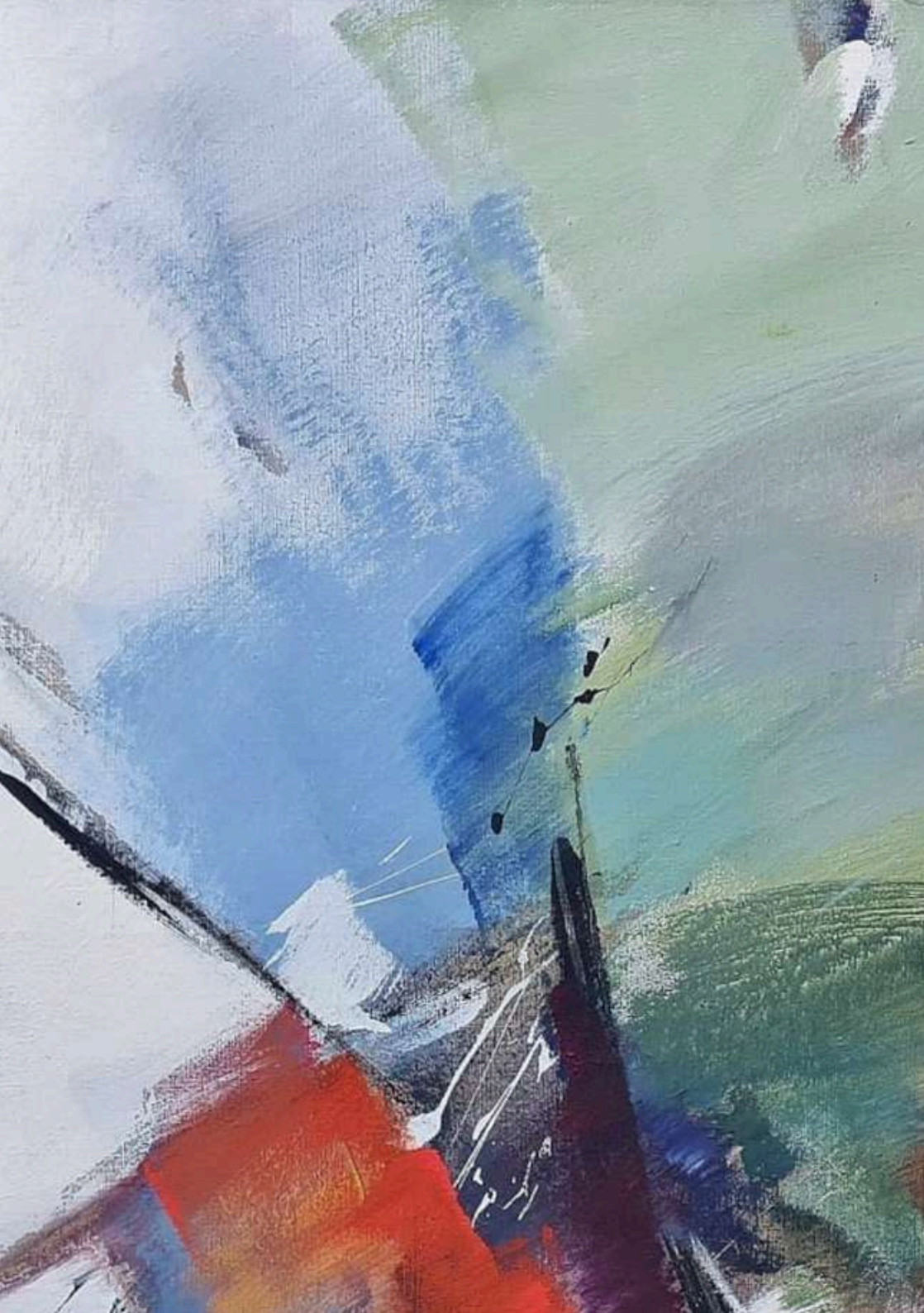
This raw surface, previously a mere support for the artist's expression, would now become an integral part of the canvas composition. These untouched yet not empty areas invite endless interpretation, taking their rightful place as an undeniably essential element, breathing life into the colors they sustain.

A choice that leaves no room for error, at least not for its correction. Reflecting the artist's interest in choreography, the 1970s and 1980s bring forth eccentric, dynamic forms. This marks a renewal in the painter's vocabulary.



While white had previously held a special place in his work—serving to create a universe, to open the space of the artwork—the raw, unprimed surface does not exclude it but instead traverses and engages with it in its density and quantity.

Starting with the unprimed canvases of 1977 and continuing until the end of his career, the space he creates in his paintings becomes unparalleled in the history of modern painting. These canvases erase the traditional boundaries of formal composition, opening a new symbolic space. The artist no longer faces the limit of a pictorial plane, a flat surface on which the paint would sit. The raw color does not serve as a background; it becomes an infinitely open space, a territory in which the artist unfolds his energy, his sensitive reflection, and his impulse.





Jean Miotte identifies himself both in the act of painting and in his paintings, which he associates with the very universe. In this way, the unprimed canvases become the pure translation of experience, a space where each gesture erases traditional boundaries to open a more symbolic dimension. In G. Langevine's film *Jean Miotte, Espace secret* (1983), we see him painting on a large transparent glass surface, as if he were tracing his forms in the surrounding air.



While Miotte's interest in dance has often been highlighted, it is impossible not to be struck by this connection when observing the movement of his body, which carries the brush to make the color dance in an infinite space.



The paintings of the late 1970s and early 1980s are constructed differently from his previous works. There is a "sabreing" of the color, a graphic slicing. Some compositions evoke calligraphy, but more accurately, one should speak of a graph, a signature: a form of the artist's gestural identity, the very expression of his uniqueness. At this stage, the canvas no longer simply reflects the artist's experience; it becomes the very identity of that experience.



Jean Miotte's unprimed canvases mark a fundamental break in his artistic journey. They represent a desire to surpass the formal conventions of modern painting, exploring an open, limitless pictorial space. The raw surface, far from being just a background, becomes a true matrix where the gesture is directly inscribed, without mediation.





In 1980, Jean Miotte became the first Western artist to be exhibited in China since the death of Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong, the leader of the People's Republic of China, passed away in 1976. His regime was characterized by the country's significant isolation from the outside world, especially the Western world, and by rigid cultural policies such as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This period was marked by the suppression of many forms of free art that did not align with Maoist ideology, as well as the rejection of Western influences, which were seen as capitalist and bourgeois.



With the arrival of Deng Xiaoping, China gradually began to reopen its doors, and the exhibition of the artist at the French Cultural Center in Beijing in May 1980 symbolized this desire for openness. This choice was not insignificant: Jean Miotte's lyrical abstraction transcends cultural and ideological boundaries. His work, driven by spontaneous and emotional gestures, offers a universal language. It was a historic exhibition on a sociopolitical level, bringing together fifty works by the artist.

This direct contact with Asian culture marked a decisive step in his artistic journey. He first exhibited at the French Cultural Center in Beijing, then continued his exploration with presentations at the Hong Kong Arts Center and the Franco-Japanese Institute in Tokyo. These moments of immersion in Eastern art and philosophy had a profound impact on his work.



From this period onward, his pictorial gesture seems to draw from the principles of Asian calligraphy. The spontaneity of his brushstrokes, the rhythm, and the fluidity of his lines evoke a subtle yet profound dialogue with the aesthetics and spirituality of Eastern art. Far from being an imitation, this influence integrates into a more personal and reflective practice, where the gesture, rather than being just a means of expression, becomes a space of identification with the very universe, as seen in his early works of this period.

While Miotte's style remains true to the lyrical abstraction that defines him, the dimension of Asian thought—the concept of infinite space, of timelessness—subtly permeates his canvases. Through this dialogue between East and West, it is not merely a cultural opening, but an extension of his own language, an enrichment of his gestural vocabulary, where each trace becomes the very act of his existence.

Thus, the influence of Asia on Jean Miotte's art is not a radical transformation of his style, but rather an additional dimension, a renewal of his quest for a pictorial space where the energy of the gesture and the fluidity of movement blend with Eastern philosophical and aesthetic principles.



"No imitation, no reproduction, but the inner event finds its expression in color and gestural dynamism... Miotte's painting is a place where the contradictions of our time are no longer expressed in a dualistic sense... In this way, Jean Miotte is an important creator of new forms."



The artist's work has a deeply introspective dimension, where each mark is both a creative act and an affirmation of identity. The dialogue between movement and matter, particularly noticeable in his canvases from 1977-1980, reveals a quest for the absolute: the canvas is no longer an object, but a space for the projection of the artist himself. In this way, Miotte redefines the boundaries of painting, transforming it into a total experience, at the intersection of gesture, energy, and thought.

DUMAS+LIMBACH
FINE ART



In *Tache solaire*, Jean Miotte captures the raw energy of the gesture, revealing a dynamic dance between light and matter. The bursts of solar yellow seem to erupt from the canvas, splashing the spaces of white and black with incandescent vitality. True to his informal language, the artist seeks neither to depict nor to narrate; he simply expresses.

This 1980 work is a testament to the gestural intensity that defines Miotte's approach, swinging between spontaneity and mastery. The color becomes vibration, a luminous wave evoking the cosmic breath or the brilliance of a solar explosion. It also reflects Miotte's place within an open modernity, between lyrical abstraction and an almost telluric energy.

More than just a composition, *Tache solaire* is a true visual pulse, an invitation to be swept away by the movement and light that radiate from it.

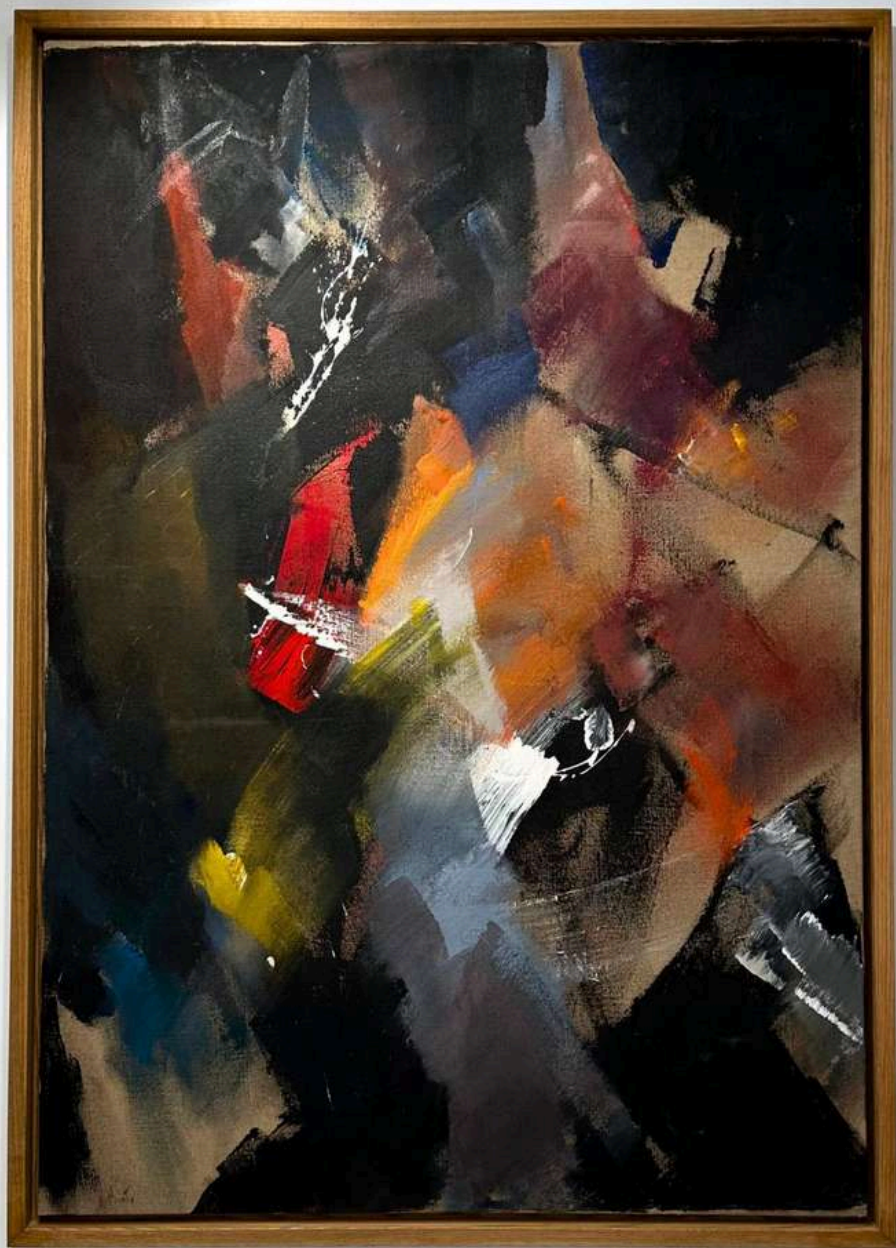




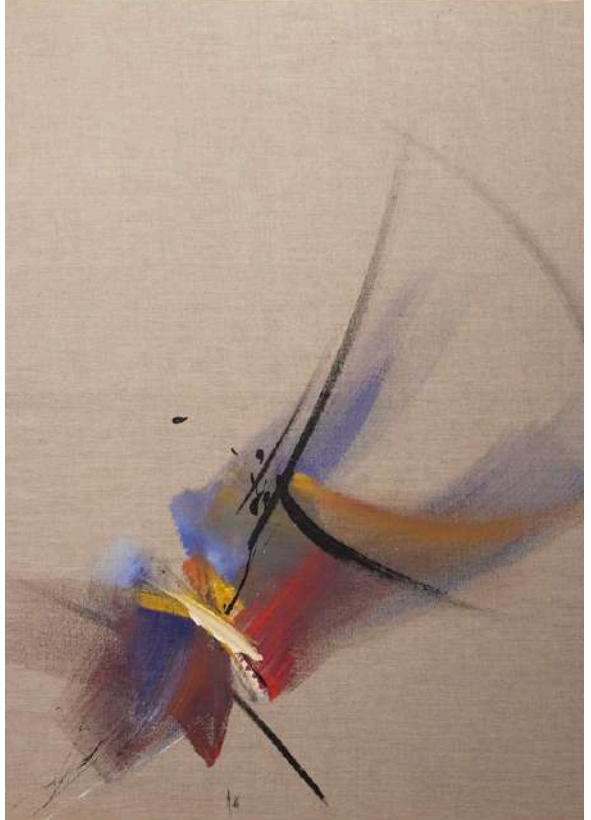
Initially inspired by dance and choreography, which captivate the artist, this movement is not solely referenced by the body. Minuit, a 1978 work, is a perfect example of the expression of gesture and movement as present in the nature surrounding the artist. The passage of clouds in the sky, the trail of a shooting star or the sun, beginning with a powerful yellow that gradually shifts into a warm, soft purple.

The movement of time, that of a night, leaving in its wake the thousand and one colors crossing the sky from dusk to dawn.





Allegro, derived from the Italian, defines a lively and cheerful movement. Frequently used in the musical realm, it indicates a fast tempo. By titling his work thus, Jean Miotte offers us what words cannot convey: the very expression of joy and vivacity. The colors then become the visual translation of a musical tempo. Each color finds its place in this surge of spontaneity, first asserting itself with force, then gradually fading, leaving a subtle imprint. Like musical notes: vibrant at first, they slowly recede, requiring one to listen closely to catch their final echoes. But this is not to overlook black. Paradoxically, in this work, it becomes the origin of light.



As a chromatic support, it belongs to the chiaroscuro tradition, a technique Miotte began to explore in 1971 by playing with the contrasts between the raw canvas and the applied pigments.

As a graphic support, black slices through the canvas, energizing the diffuse touches of color. This graphic framework structures the composition and guides the viewer's gaze.

By 1983, *Allegro II* reflects, through its central black composition, the influence that Asian calligraphy might have had on the artist, while maintaining the lyricism that is inseparable from his work. Without the use of words, Jean Miotte invites us to discover his pictorial score, whose beginning is found at the intersection of these jet-black lines, bearers of light.

In *Frontières*, Jean Miotte explores the dialogue between movement and abstraction in a vivid and gestural composition, characteristic of his unique pictorial language. Created in 1983, this canvas reflects a period where the artist deepens his reflection on physical and symbolic boundaries, crossings, and ruptures.

The broad and dynamic strokes intersect, clash, and sometimes overlap, conveying a liberating energy. The use of colors—calming blue, intense red, and areas of luminous white—establishes a controlled tension, evoking a subtle play between balance and chaos. The bold, incisive black lines become vectors of a vital momentum, while the diffused forms appear as territories to be crossed



The concept of boundary in Miotte's work is not a fixed barrier but rather a space of transition, a threshold where freedom and constraint, openness and restraint intertwine. Each gesture is a fragment of emotion, a trace of an inner journey, inscribed on the canvas as a quest for infinity.

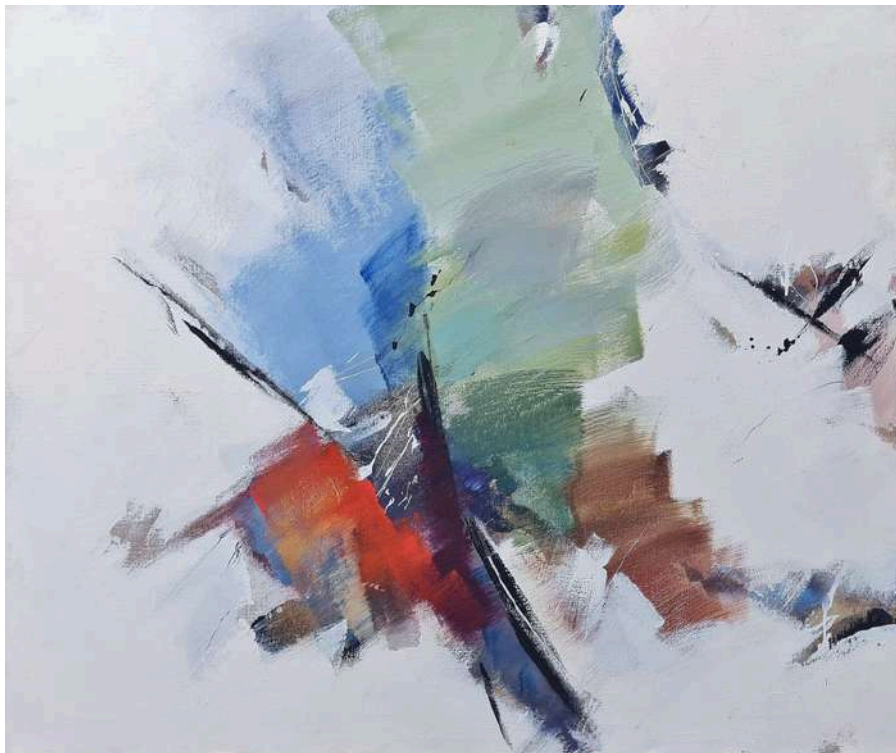
Frontières invites the viewer to surrender to the rhythm of the material and be carried by the flow of movement, where abstraction becomes a universal language, free from any definition.

Expositions

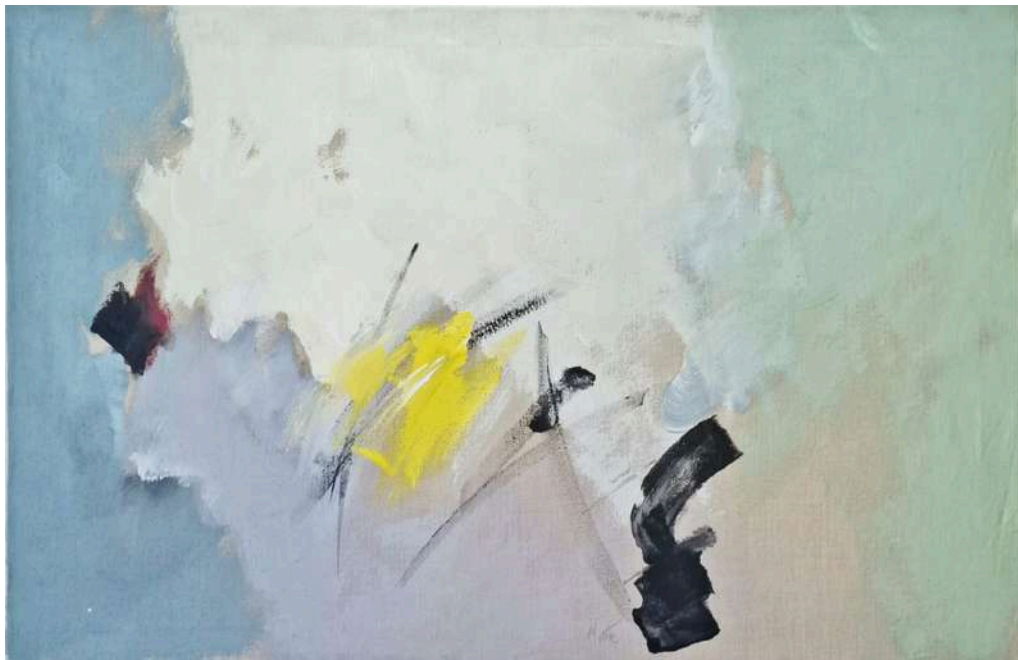
- 1952: Personal Exhibition - Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lille, France
- 1961: Salon Comparaisons - Paris, France
- 1963: Biennale de São Paulo (itinerary section in Tokyo) - Brazil and Japan
- 1964: International Contemporary Art Exhibition - Tokyo, Japan
- 1972: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris - Paris, France
- 1976: Venice Biennale - Italy
- 1979: Retrospective at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery - Buffalo, New York, USA
- 1980: First exhibition of a Western artist in China after the Cultural Revolution - Beijing, China
- 1982: International Art Exhibition - Osaka, Japan
- 1983: Musée Rath - Geneva, Switzerland
- 1984: Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) - New York, USA
- 1986: Fukuoka Art Museum - Japan
- 1987: Seoul Art Festival - South Korea
- 1987: Kunsthaus Grenchen - Switzerland
- 1988: Kunsthalle Darmstadt - Germany
- 1988: Korean Culture & Art Foundation - Seoul, South Korea
- 1990: Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Étienne - France
- 1992: Art Beijing - Beijing, China
- 1993: Kunstverein Ludwigsburg - Germany
- 1995: Hiroshima City Museum - Japan
- 2002: Creation of the Jean Miotte Foundation - New York, USA
- 2005: Jean Miotte Foundation, Chelsea Art Museum - New York, USA
- 2011: "Jean Miotte, L'abstraction en mouvement," Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain - Strasbourg, France



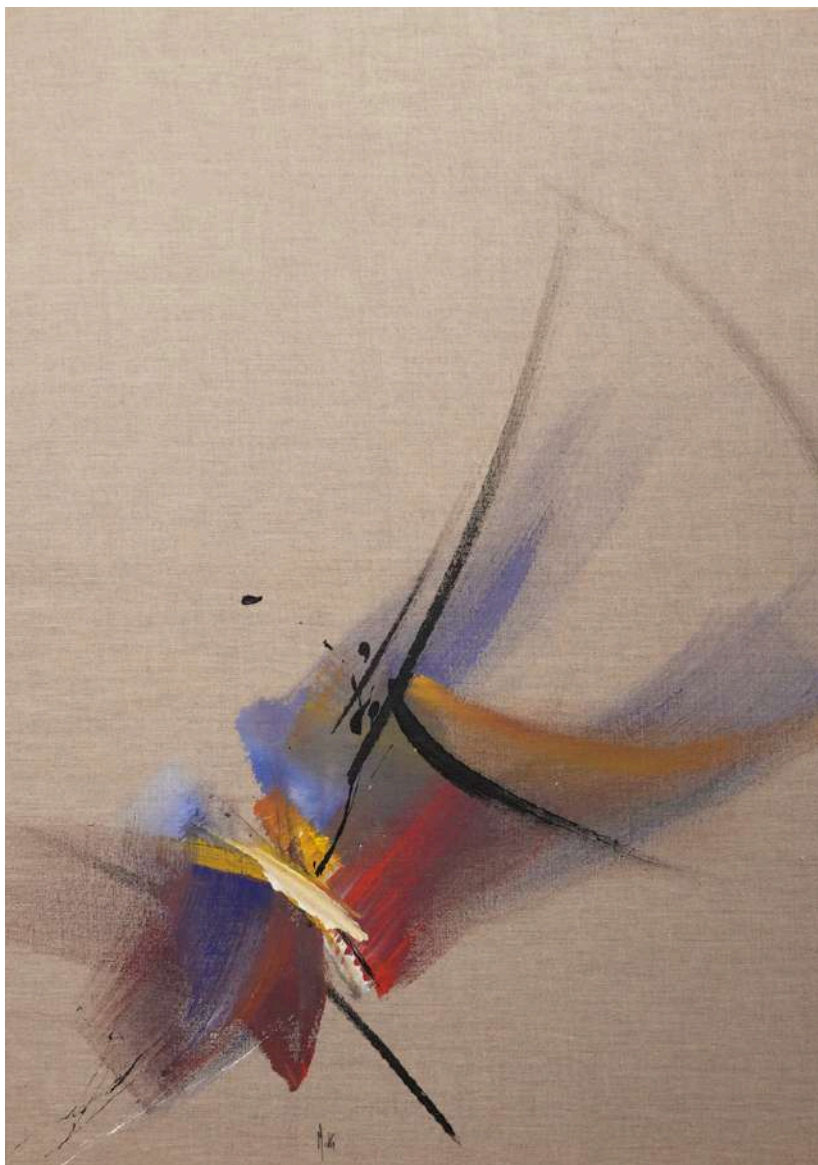
Minuit, 1978,
Acrylic on canvas
162,5 x 114,5 cm | 170 x 122 x 5 cm (framed)



Frontière, 1983,
Acrylic on canvas
106,5 x 124,5 cm | 124,5 x 106 cm (framed)



Tâche Solaire, 1980,
Acrylic on canvas
66 x 102 cm | 74 x 110 cm (framed)



Allegro II, 1983,
Acrylic on canvas,
92 x 74 cm | 100 x 82 cm (framed)

pre ss

Designed and conceived as warm spaces, the galleries drastically move away from conventional white walls. One guiding principle: bringing art back to its audience. The boundaries are dissolved, and art and life become one. Design, digital art, plastic art, and decorative art merge and blend within the same space.

Entirely dedicated to creativity, these are true meeting and sharing spaces between artists, newcomers, and seasoned collectors.

The galleries work in close collaboration with the families of artists, foundations, other institutions, as well as numerous collectors and private museums, to offer authentic and rare works of art.

Our collaborators are dedicated to creating lasting relationships with collectors, guiding them in their appreciation of art, and helping them find exceptional pieces that match their aspirations. By ensuring we surround ourselves only with trusted professionals in the art market, we guarantee our clients bespoke service with complete confidentiality.

rele ase

DUMAS+LIMBACH
FINE ART

35 Avenue Matignon, 75008 - Paris
+336 49 33 76 58
www.dumaslimbach.com
[@dumaslimbach](https://www.instagram.com/dumaslimbach)

DUMAS+LIMBACH
FINEART

JEAN MIOTTE

Sillages du geste

February 2025

35 Avenue Matignon, 75008 PARIS
www.dumaslimbach.com
communication@dumaslimbach.com

DUMAS+LIMBACH
FINE ART