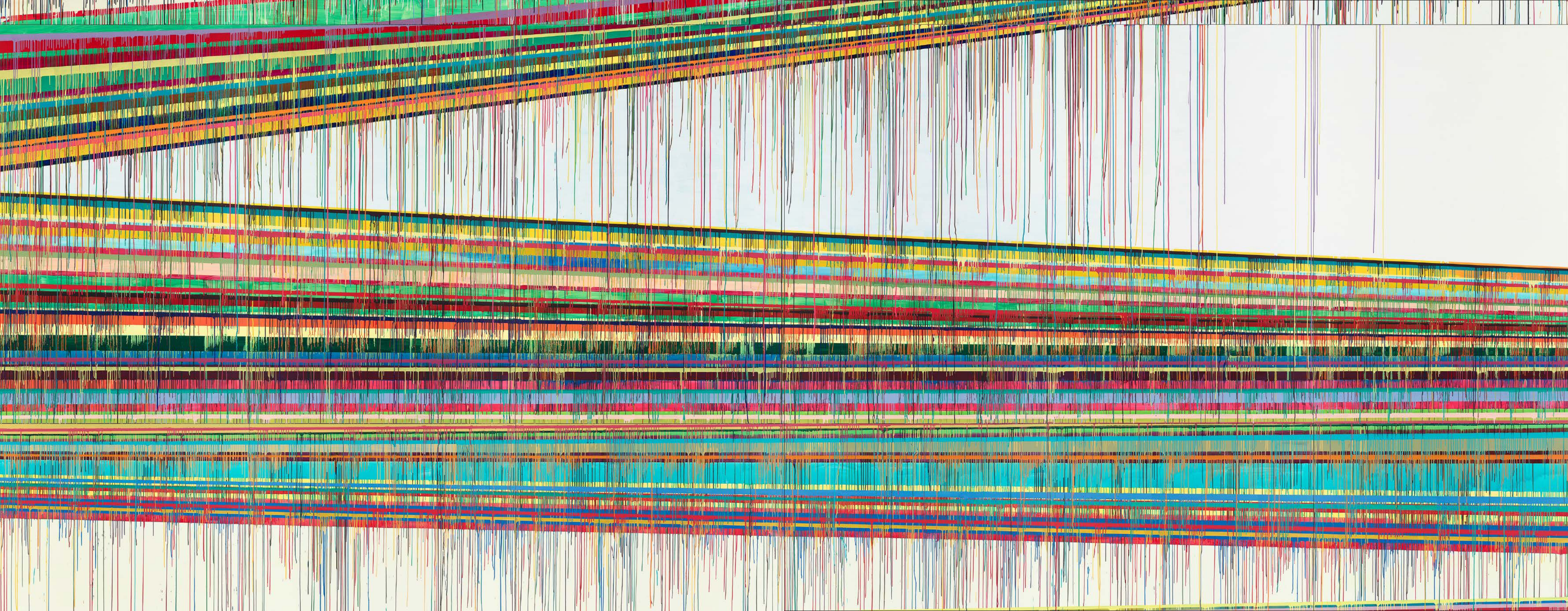


**MARKUS  
LINNENBRINK**







EVERYBODYWILLBEDANCINGIFWE'REDOINGITRIGHT

**MARKUS  
LINNENBRINK**

AMERINGER

McENERY

YOHE

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**THE COLORING OF LIFE  
MARKUS LINNENBRINK'S SPACES  
OF COLOR AND IMAGE**

6 Color moves us. Very few people are capable of viewing the colors that surround them with indifference. They can stimulate or pacify. They can trigger pleasant sensations or unpleasant states of mind. They are even capable of inducing a sense of meditative peace, a light trance. And they can spark a joyful delirium, arousing a near ecstatic state in their viewer.

A small number of people attribute such elementary significance to the emotional-psychological dimension of colors that they are willing to do almost anything to champion their cause. The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for instance, spent half of his life on a work of almost 1,000 pages destined to rescue the world of colors from the clutches of a banal, rational-physical approach that was becoming fashionable in his time. Goethe's color obsession was triggered by a small experiment carried out by the English scientist Isaac Newton. Newton had demonstrated with the aid of a pinhole aperture and a glass prism that light could be refracted into its

characteristic stripes of color, and thus that the colors of the rainbow were all contained in white light. This was a downright scandal to the scholar from Weimar. He was not only sure that colors developed from the interplay between light and darkness, in his opinion Newton had exerted illegitimate force over nature with his experiment, banishing the sensory phenomenon of color into a "dismal empirical-mechanical-dogmatic martyr's chamber."

Strong words. For Goethe, seeing colors was an experience based on reciprocal energies between nature and the observer. It was a phenomenon that did something to the observer, something linking a man's innermost being to the world around him via the detour of the seeing eye.

Examining the extensive oeuvre of the artist Markus Linnenbrink, who lives in Brooklyn, New York, brings an intuitive understanding of the controversy that shook the world in the age of the Enlightenment, all because of a few stripes of color. And we cannot avoid the impression

that Goethe—even though he was utterly wrong in scientific terms—was somehow in the right. For color is at the heart of Linnenbrink's artistic work, along with its full wealth of emotional and psychological impact. It makes no difference whether we are face-to-face with one of his large-format images, in which he allows the pigments dissolved in epoxy resin to run slowly down the picture carriers in satiated, glistening vertical stripes; or whether we study those works in which small drilled craters disclose what seem to be many archeological layers of paint; or find ourselves in one of his site-specific, all-over paintings that cover the walls, floors and ceilings, their iridescent stripes of color subduing entire architectures and permanently altering viewers' perceptions. In Linnenbrink's works, one thing is encountered above all else: color. Pure, vital, or—to be precise—luminous and pulsating color. Colors that seem to communicate and do something to us, colors that seem to oppose an enlightened, rational Newtonian and Euclidean view of the world.

DANIEL SCHREIBER

7 EVERYBODYWILLBEDANCINGIFWE'REDOINGITRIGHT is the title of the exhibition of Linnenbrink's most recent works at Ameringer | McEnergy | Yohe. It is more than a tongue-in-cheek reference to a song by the French pop duo Daft Punk. It is a promise.

Linnenbrink's radical debate with color was the outcome of a long process. The German artist, born in Dortmund in 1961, studied painting in Kassel when the college of art was still firmly in the hands of reactionary forces. At the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin, where he studied for another three years, he resisted the use of powerful, luminous color in his paintings. His work—although noticeably owing a debt to the fundamental painterly and conceptual research by Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke—was not influenced by either the Düsseldorf or the Hamburg school, which were the two most important trends for German artists of his and the next generation. It was only shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when he and his family moved back to Dortmund and he began to exhibit in Cologne, New



York and San Francisco, that Linnenbrink began to work truly with color. But he noted on several occasions that he did not initially allow color into his works, whether because of intellectual snobbery, habitual prejudices against the “decorative” or specific psychological barriers. The artist recounts the affirmation of the colorful that he finally made as if remembering a liberation. After some exhibitions in museums and galleries, most significantly in North America and Germany, Linnenbrink's radical color positions began to appear in works that can now be found in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Hammer Museum and many other institutions and private collections.

Today, the extent to which color is no longer merely the medium of Linnenbrink's painting but its indisputable protagonist becomes particularly clear in the temporary murals he produces for museums worldwide. He utilizes the site-specific forms of the relevant spaces for such works, transforming them into accessible, intense painterly works. In a process that often takes several weeks, Linnenbrink paints the floors, walls and parts of the ceilings with differently colored stripes of differing widths until the rooms lose their individual spatiality and become unique color spaces. These are color spaces that oscillate for the viewer between two- and three-dimensionality, leading one's gaze in a dynamic accelerating manner that disturbs one's sense of space permanently. The colored stripes create a play with perspectives that is illusionary, but is nonetheless perceived as real.

Linnenbrink himself makes the paints for all his works. He always uses the same pigments: Kremer pigments from the Kremer color mills in Aichstetten, Germany, ranging from ones made on a cadmium basis to organic pigments, from cheap titanium white to a precious cobalt violet. He mixes these pigments with epoxy resin for his works

on canvas, but the paint for his works on walls is produced by adding a matt acrylic emulsion. The colors and nuances that he develops in this way are spectacular. We are surprised repeatedly by the color compositions that can be seen, and by just how many colors there are. Linnenbrink's image spaces make it clear that every color can actually be combined with any other color, as long as the necessary context is created and a dialogue between them is enabled. They seem to say that even the completely contrary can be led together in conversation.

In Linnenbrink's work, color not only tells us something, but is also permitted to be attractive, decorative and beautiful. Although artists like Linnenbrink, Mark Grotjahn, Jim Lambie and Richard Wright have done a lot to change the situation, this dimension of esthetic experience is still something of a taboo in the contemporary art business. Without justification, beauty—although it has constituted one of art's most important purposes since time immemorial—is often equated with a lack of seriousness. Linnenbrink's works, with their unusual faith in visual beauty, reveal the possibilities we are missing when we persist in this dogma. Looking at his paintings is an utterly delightful sensual process. Spaces evolve where perception can find a home—spaces that provide sensual impulses and spaces to immerse oneself in—which explains how paintings, by their very existence, function with their viewers.

Linnenbrink's art is often linked to the tradition of Color Field painting centered around protagonists like Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Helen Frankenthaler and Gene Davis. When reference is made to Linnenbrink's murals, the minimalism of artists like Sol LeWitt and Daniel Buren also comes into play. There is certainly a visible affinity to these stylistic trends, but it can still lead us astray. The

legacy of modernism and postmodernism, which is the prime factor behind Linnenbrink's work, lies in exploration of the dialectics of intention and chance, spontaneity and planning, intuition and intellect. Minimalism meets conceptual performance in Linnenbrink's art. His painting follows its intuitions and the dynamic flow of the paint, allowing itself to be led by the method through which it evolves. Linnenbrink's works cannot be conceived of without the process by which they develop. They submit with pleasure to the contrasts, the moods, the caprice and the judgments of the artist's hand—to visual sensibilities and the desires of the creative eye.

This performative quality becomes clear not only when Linnenbrink pours the resin with its added pigments onto the image carrier or drills holes in the hardened paint layers of some paintings. It also becomes particularly obvious with his murals. Linnenbrink's conceptual minimalism evolves in the specific, empty space. Every work remains connected to the place in which it has emerged. While Sol LeWitt and Daniel Buren generally conceived their murals as certificates with instructions for realization by assistants, and so allowed collectors the right to “re-perform” the images at any time, in a different space and often with different dimensions, Linnenbrink does not carry around his use of colors and forms as a concept. Instead, they are generated as he examines the space, absorbing it, pacing through it, and measuring it out, with his own body. His murals cannot be repeated; often they exist only for a few months until they are lost irretrievably.

This intuitive, performative painting process follows highly complex patterns, however. Linnenbrink begins by first applying transparent layers of paint to the walls, which he believes cause a space to vibrate. New layers of color are added gradually, and the width of the stripes is reduced. Throughout this process, all the glazed layers of color

shine through each other, setting the space in motion. The coloration of the walls—in contrast with the massive epoxy resin materiality of his paintings—has a translucent quality reminiscent of watercolors. The paint glazes have hardly any corporeal presence: They can be seen but not felt. Even the running paint drippings left behind appear to be confusingly ephemeral. Their texture is unique.

In this way, Linnenbrink's works succeed not only in revealing to us their own genesis and production. They also make the generally passive activity of seeing into an active and unrepeatably aesthetic experience in itself, into a performance that the viewer fulfills to a certain extent, albeit without wishing to do so. The effects of these image spaces cannot be grasped at a glance; they only develop when we walk through the spaces. Depending on the viewer's agility and size, color spaces and image spaces with different esthetic, emotional and psychological impacts emerge.

In a certain sense, we stride through Markus Linnenbrink's spaces of color and image as we do through life. The perspectives change. We face new impressions and new events en route, encountering new colors as well as new people. This is how a form of painting develops that is emotionally charged, although it is abstract, and exudes a highly personal aura. Linnenbrink's spaces are permeated by a special inner musicality; they resemble subconscious landscapes. They are spaces that appear to communicate something, calling upon the viewer to follow his or her own impulses, moods and emotions. They are spaces that breathe.

Even the outraged Goethe would have been happy with the stripes of color in these spaces, for it is hard to imagine a more beautiful defense of the emotional and psychological importance of color, in contrast to the prosaic physics of the Newtonian Enlightenment.





PLATES



**WITHEARSINMYEYES** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
24 x 36 inches (61 x 91.4 cm)





**THATTHINGISUP** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
24 x 36 inches (61 x 91.4 cm)



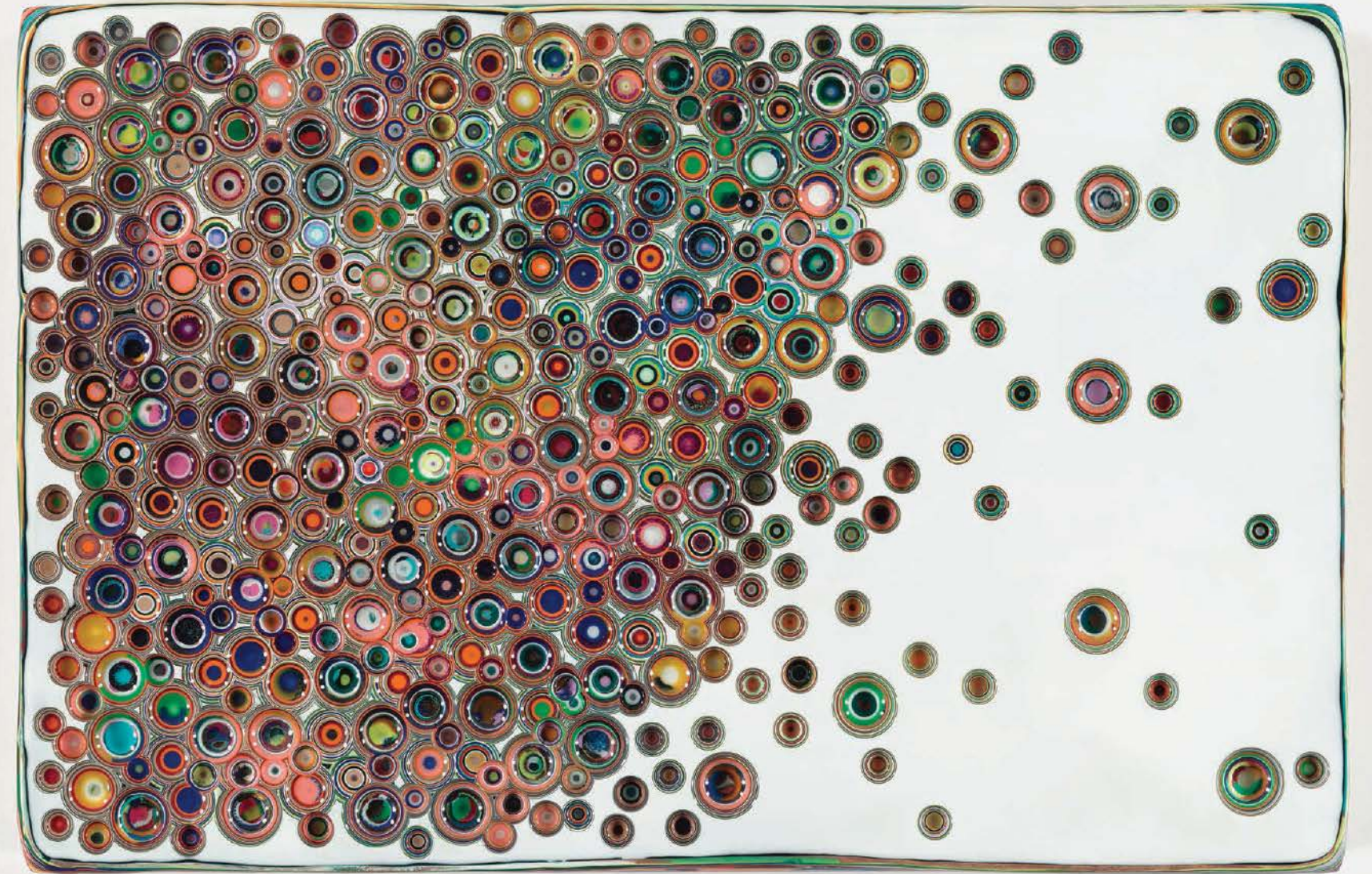


**ANDITHINKMYHEADISMELTING** 2013  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
28 x 28 inches (71.1 x 71.1 cm)



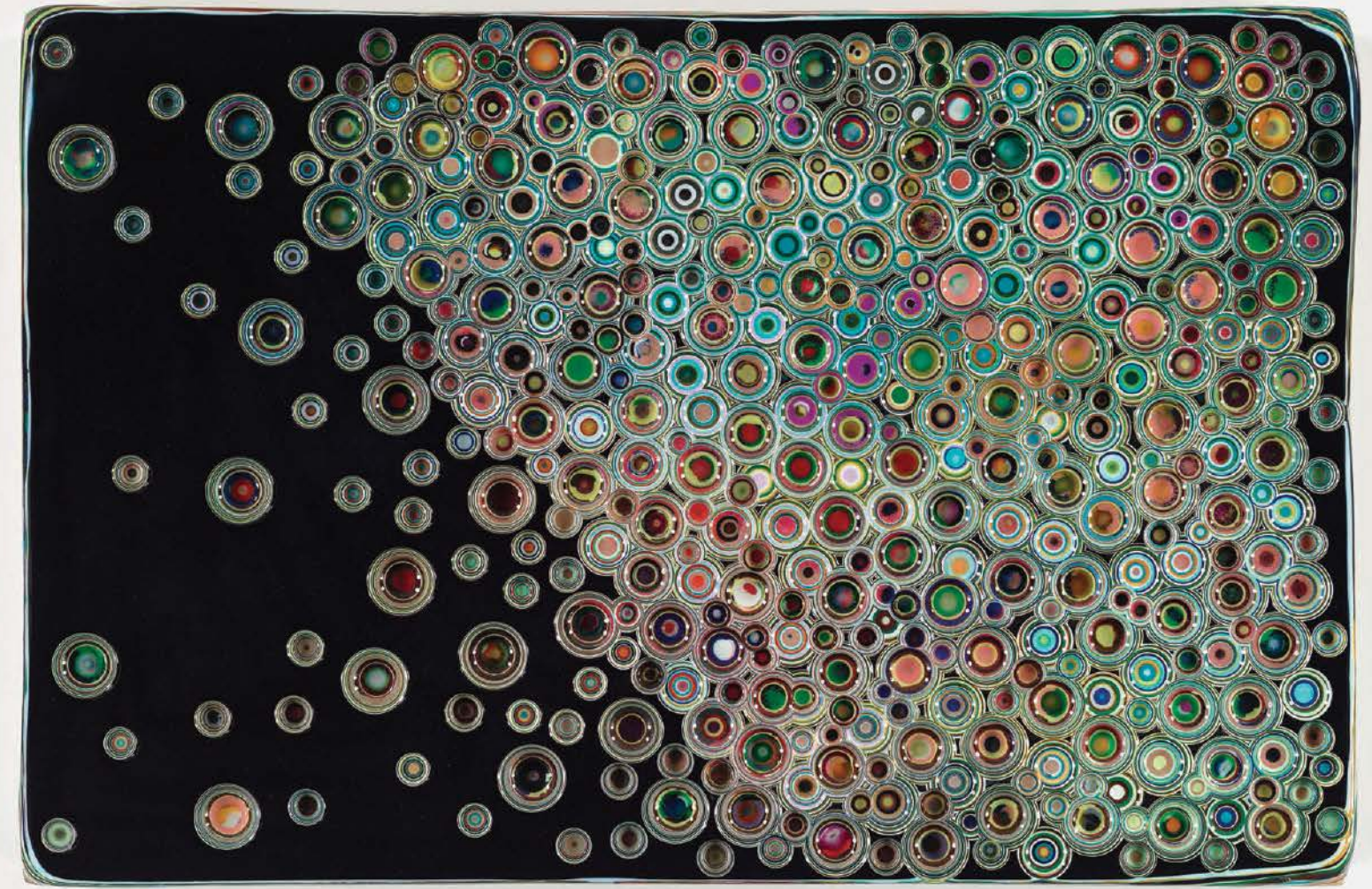


**YESDOWNTIME(WHITE)** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
24 x 36 inches (61 x 91.4 cm)





**YESUPTIME(BLACKBLUE)** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
24 x 36 inches (61 x 91.4 cm)





**GRAVITYREARRANGING** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
48 x 48 inches (121.9 x 121.9 cm)





**CUTTHEDARNPHONE!** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
24 x 96 inches (61 x 243.8 cm)





**COMEBACKTODISCO(REMIX)** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
73 x 73 inches (185.4 x 185.4 cm)





**(YOUAREALRIGHT)** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
24 x 96 inches (61 x 243.8 cm)





**HELPMEFINDMYPROPERPLACE** 2013  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
72 x 72 inches (182.9 x 182.9 cm)



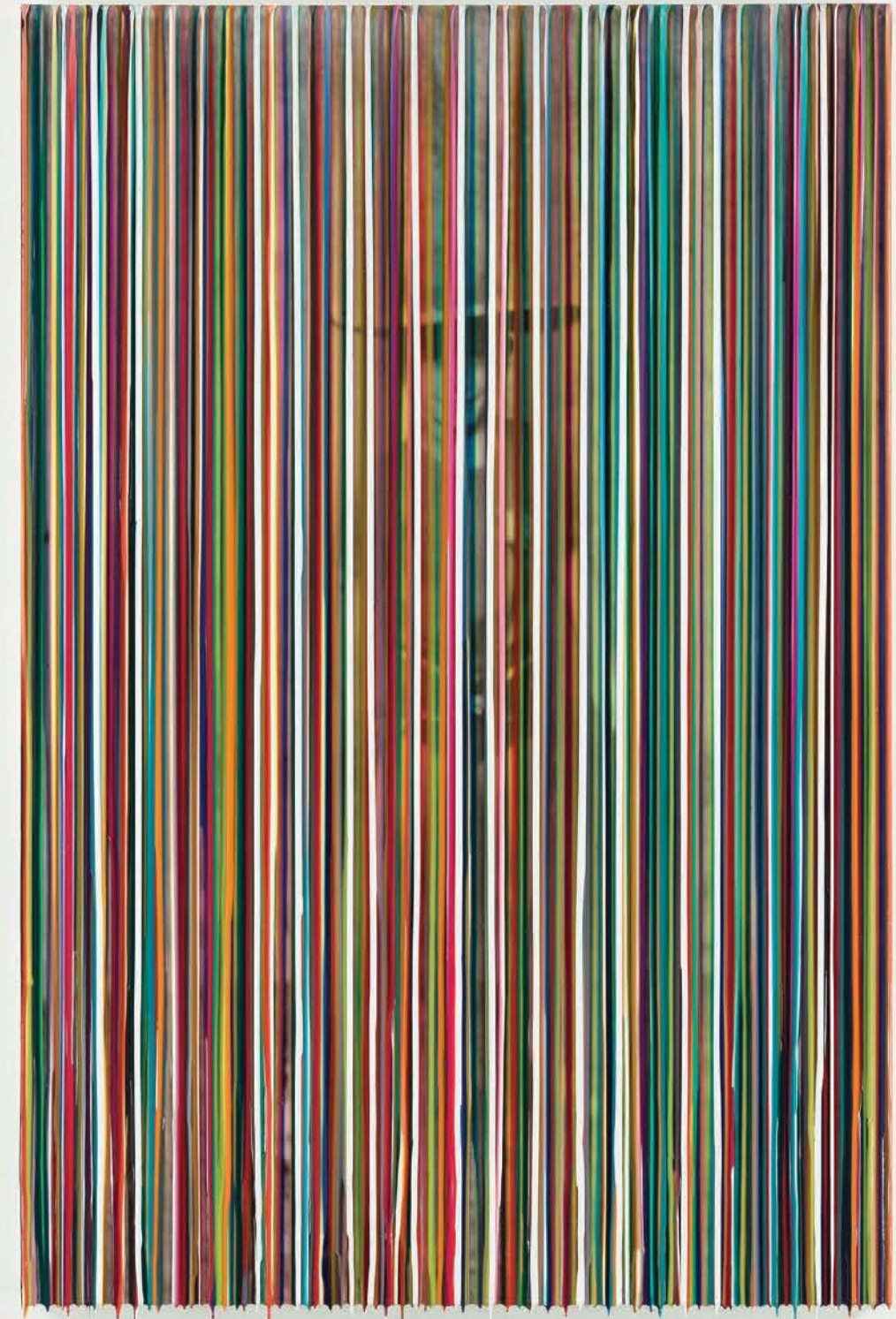


**POISONTHESTREETS** 2013  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
60 x 90 inches (152.4 x 228.6 cm)





**NOTHINGISWORTHLOSINGTHAT** 2014  
Epoxy resin, c-print, and pigments on wood  
90 x 60 inches (228.6 x 152.4 cm)





**PLEASEDON'TSAVEMEFROMTHISONE** 2014  
Epoxy resin, c-print, and pigments on wood  
60 x 90 inches (152.4 x 228.6 cm)





**I WISH IT COULD HAPPEN TO ME** 2013  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
60 x 96 inches (152.4 x 243.8 cm)



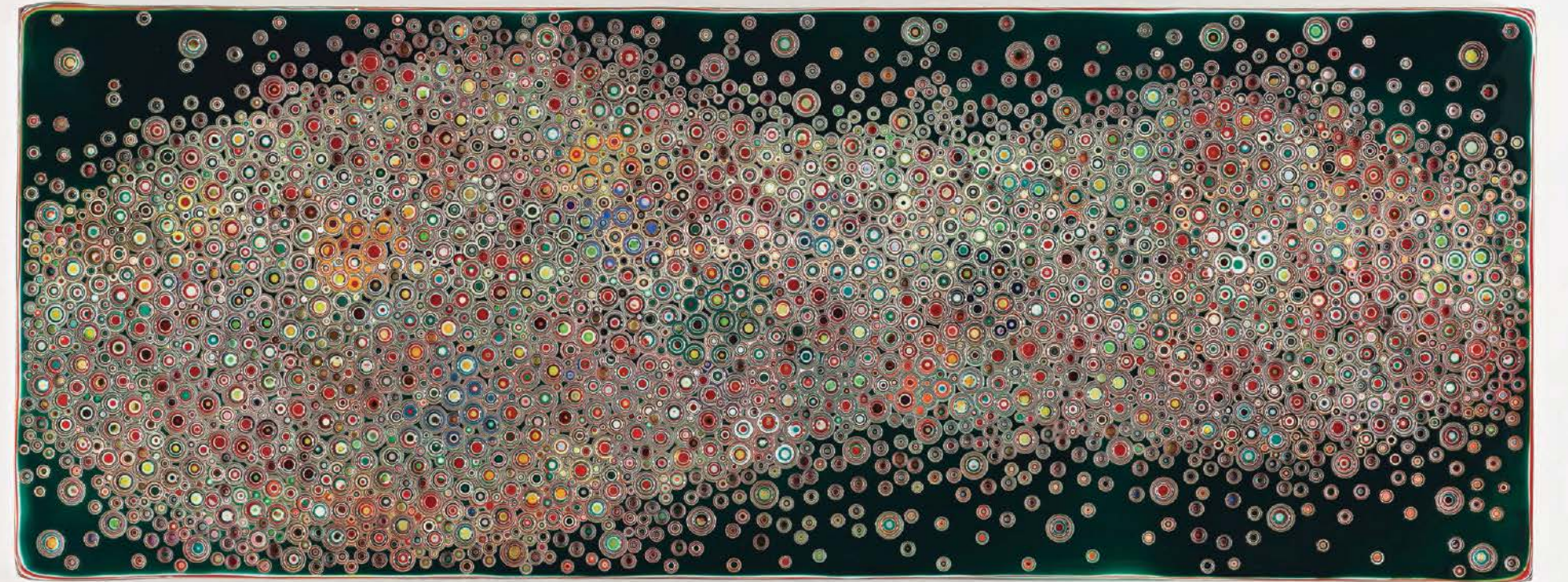


**ANOTHERLOVERHOLEINYAHEAD** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
60 x 96 inches (152.4 x 243.8 cm)





**SPIRITDOESNOTWORK** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
36 x 96 inches (91.4 x 243.8 cm)



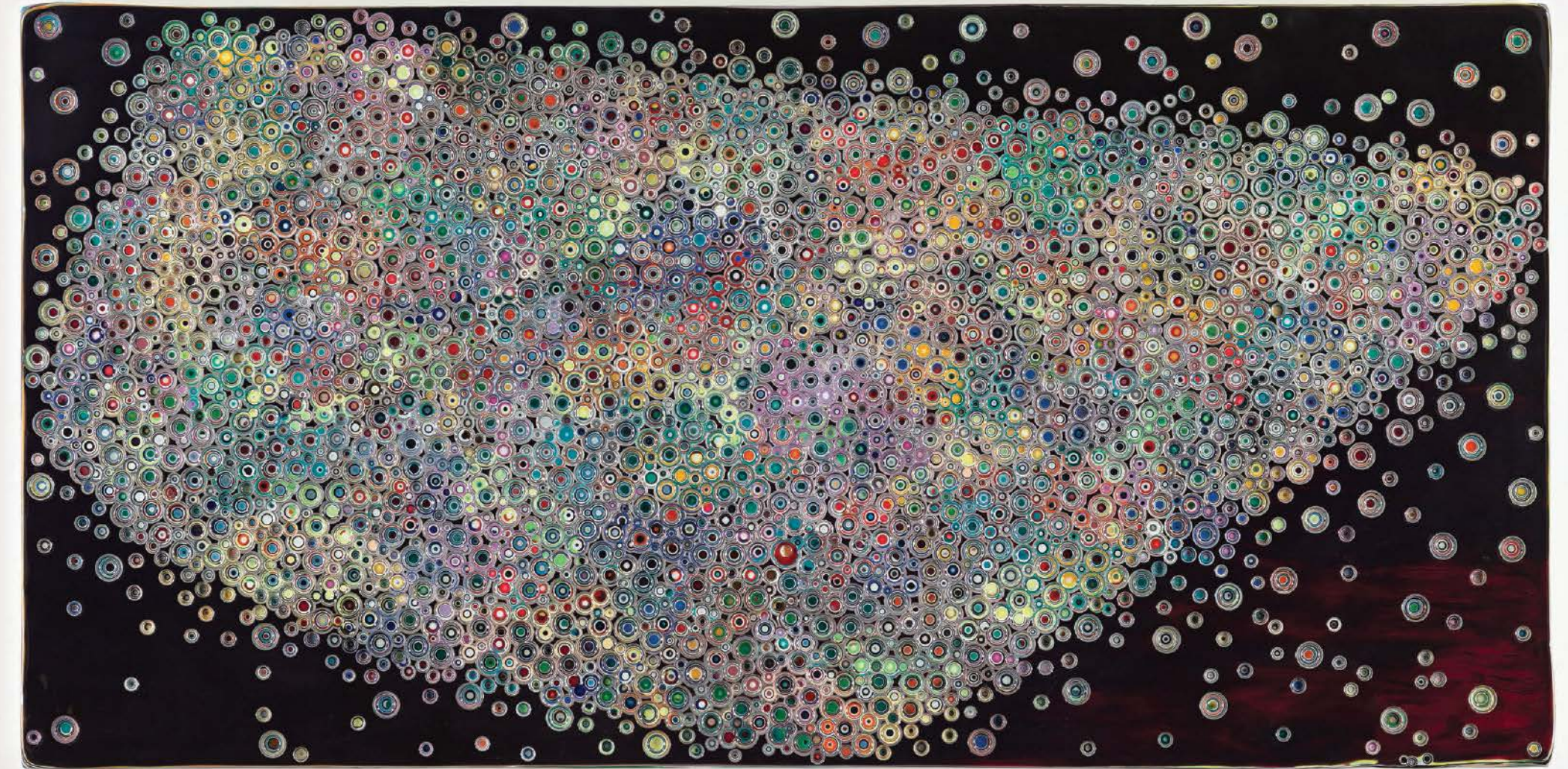




**WHATITWASWILLNEVERAGAIN** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
36 x 144 inches (91.4 x 365.8 cm)



**WHENINASDEADASLEEPINSIDETHEYBUILTAWORLDOUTSIDE** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
48 x 96 inches (121.9 x 243.8 cm)





**BABYBEGOODDOWHATYOU SHOULDYOUNOWIT'LLBEALRIGHT** 2013  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
60 x 120 inches [diptych] (152.4 x 304.8 cm)



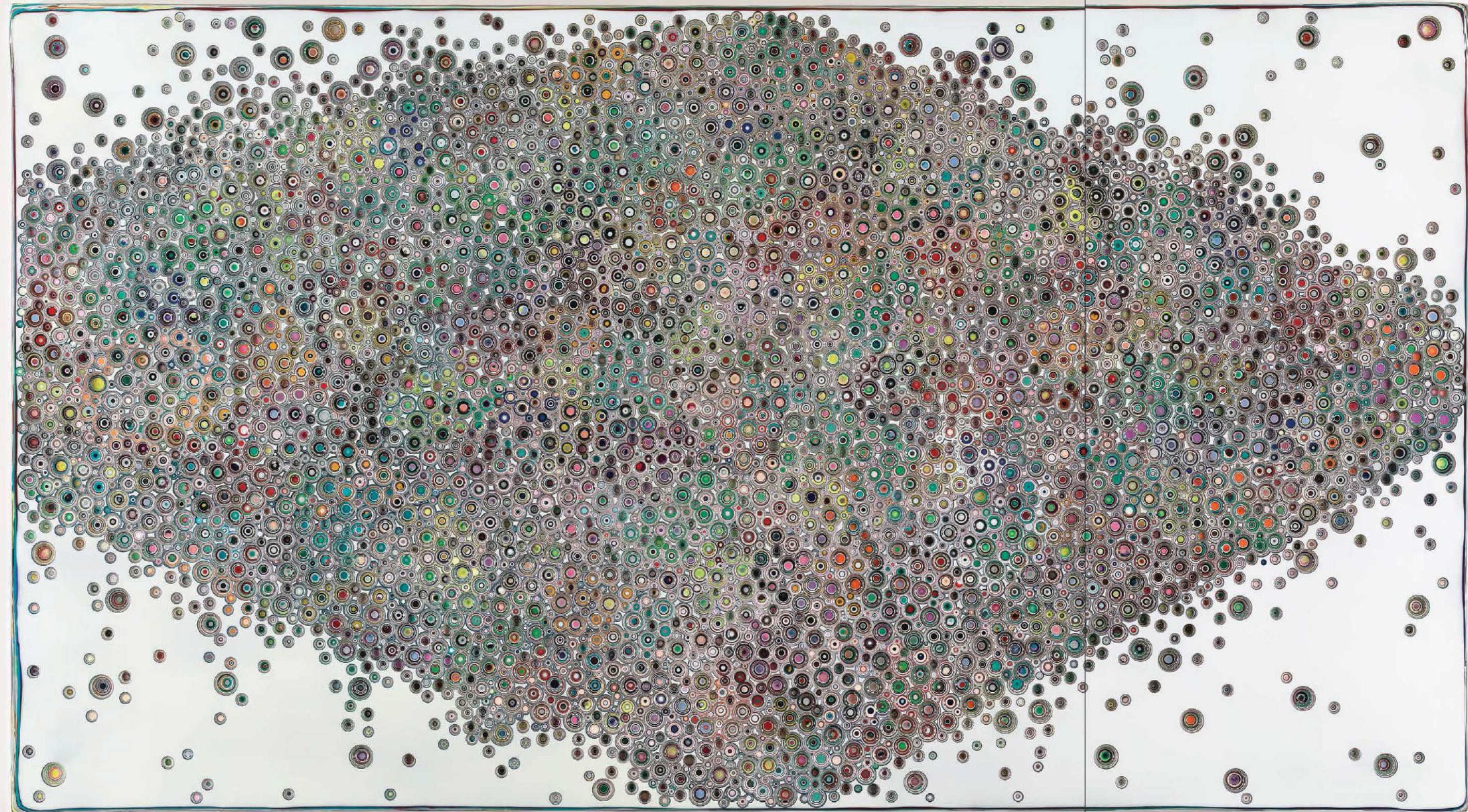




**TAKEMEHOMETWON'TBELONG** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
48 x 192 inches (121.9 x 487.7 cm)



**YOUGO** 2014  
Epoxy resin and pigments on wood  
60 x 108 inches (152.4 x 274.3 cm)





**INTHEWORLD TODAY(PIMPMYRIDE)** 2013-14  
Epoxy resin, pigments, objects  
00 x 00 x 00 inches (000.0 x 000.0 x 000.0 cm)









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