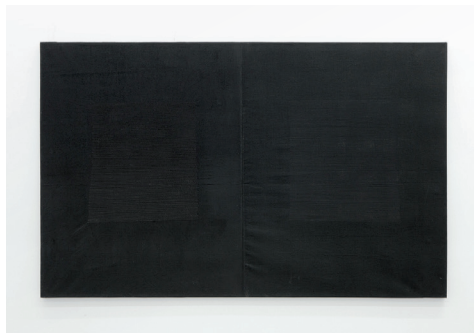
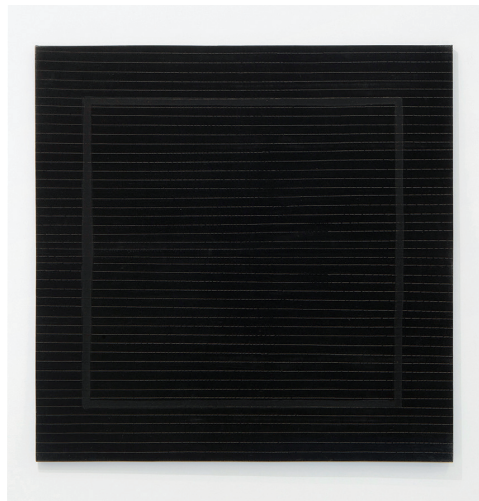




Top:
Rose, 1959
 Oil on canvas. 94 x 129 cm



Bottom left:
Noma, 1977
 Acrylic paint on canvas. 130 x 206 cm



REPORT-PASSE-TOILE (III), 1978
 Acrylic on canvas. 130 x 130 cm



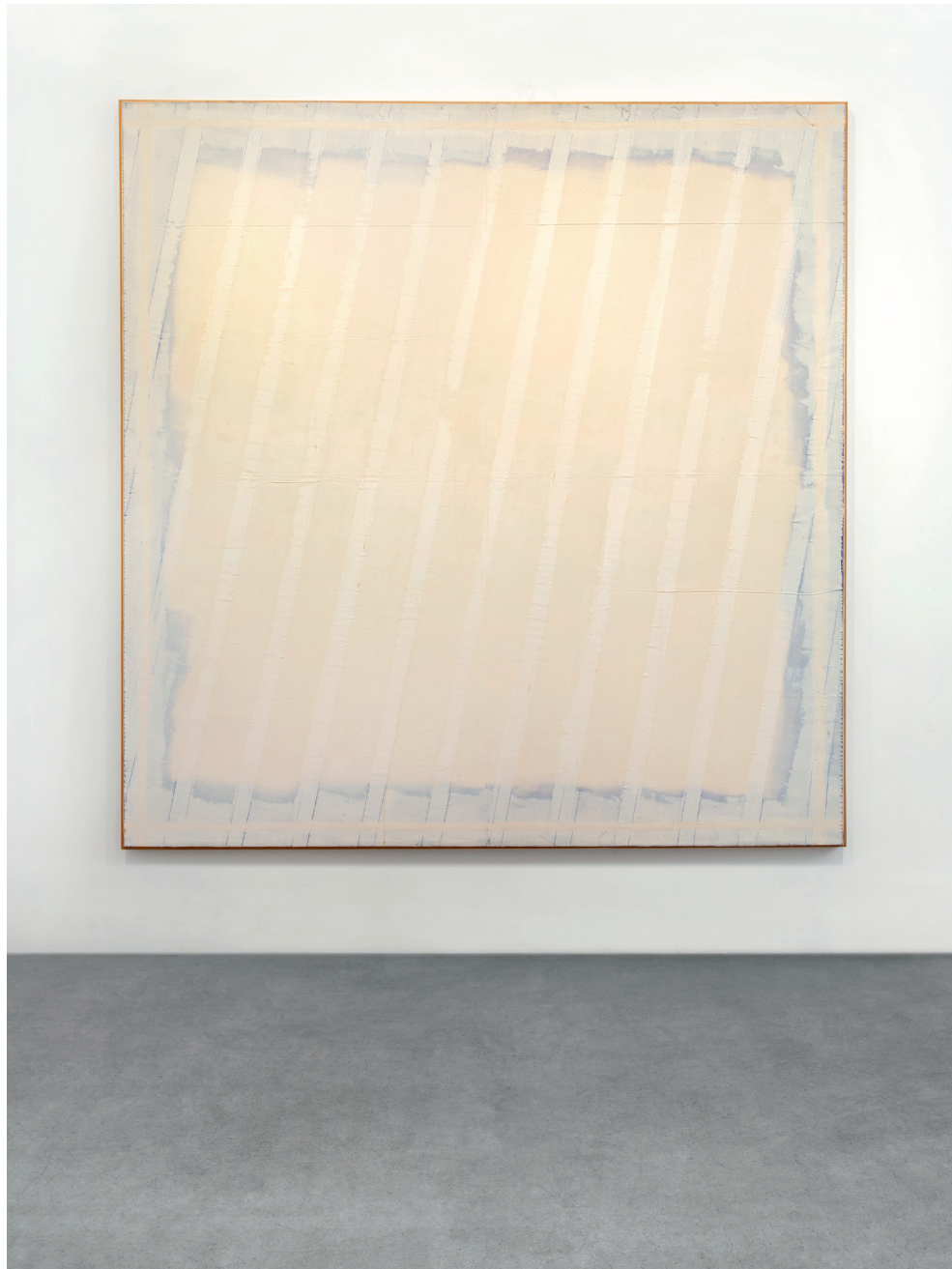
Lignes d'écritures, 1963
 Oil on canvas. 195,5 x 130 cm



Papier - marges II, 1977
 Mixed media on Wove paper Arche. 170 x 95 cm



Dépli-Graphite (IV), 1979
 Acrylic, graphite and Kraft paper on cotton canvas. 204 x 202 cm



Marges Bleu Oblicollor, 1984
Acrylic on canvas. 220 x 214 cm

JEAN DEGOTTEx

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5 May by invitation only
6-10 May 2022

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The development of the work of Jean Degottex (1918-1988) is fascinating to say the least, moving as it did from an informal aesthetic, where different versions dominated the international art scene in the 1950s, to the analytical practices of the painterly avant-gardes of the 1970s.

In 1955, André Breton saw in Degottex's work the proof of an accomplished automatism in painting. He believed the radicality of Degottex's gestural abstraction was the purest, most convincing testament of the pictorial expression of the psyche. While drawing attention to the work and making it a point of reference, this attempt to align lyrical abstraction with Surrealism brought it into contact with the Far East, Zen Buddhism, and *sumi-e*. It was through these fields that, paradoxically, Degottex's work would go beyond this expressive conception of painting that had been the reason for which Breton had singled it out in the first place. Over the period of ten years, from 1956 to 1969, signs and writing would replace the lyrical gesture, banishing all subjectivity in favor of pictorial marks that, unlike symbols or codes, offered nothing to perceive but themselves. Degottex's painting, which had been reputed to be the paragon of an unmediated expressivity, now affirmed itself as perfectly intransitive. It's only logical then that eventually—in a tropism that brought him significantly closer to *Pittura analitica* and *Supports/Surfaces*—he reached the point, if not of an ordered analysis of his painting's constituent parts, at least of a visual experimentation with them. From the very early 1970s, Degottex began to tear up, cut, glue, fold, unfold, print, transfer, let drip: all procedures that, among others, demonstrated how one of the heroes of lyrical abstraction remarkably transformed himself into a devotee

of a pictorial 'materialism', when understood as the desire to extol the material parameters of the medium.

Degottex's work thus stands out in art history, in the second half of the twentieth century, for its development of one of the most accomplished realizations of informal lyricism, and for its analytic inventiveness of the series that covered the last two decades of his production. It's necessary, on the one hand, to tell the story of this movement, by describing its stages, its wanderings. On the other hand, it's also necessary to understand its deeper logic. The glory of Degottex's early work, as championed by Breton, has perhaps obscured the importance of this trajectory, the meaning of the transformation of a body of painting that *expresses something* into one that *expresses itself*. It is also important not to leave Degottex's painting imprisoned in the period that brought it to light because the movement that animated it for four decades is highly significant in a wider scope. It shows the modalities through which—contrary to the rupture that is often proclaimed, at least in Europe—informal painting could very directly engender analytical painting. In other words, there is a need today to structure the history of Degottex's body of work, as this is a decisive tool to reengage with an essential sequence of pictorial abstraction.

—Michel Gauthier
Curator at the Centre Pompidou and
art historian
(extract from a forthcoming essay)

Born in 1918 in Sathonay-Camp (France),
JEAN DEGOTTEx moved to Paris in 1933 where
he died in 1988.

His work has been presented in numerous solo
exhibitions in museums and institutions such as
the Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels, 1961),
the Kölischer Kunstverein (Cologne, Germany,
1965), the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (1970),
the Centre Pompidou (Paris, 1981) and the Hong
Kong Arts Centre (1996).

His work was also shown in many group shows
such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
(New York, 1953), the Documenta (II) (Kassel,
Germany, 1959), the Minneapolis Institute of Art
(Minneapolis, USA, 1959), the 32nd Venice Biennale
(1964), the 8th Bienal de São Paulo (1965),
the National Gallery of Art (Washington, 1968),
the Grand Palais (Paris, 1972, 1985), the Musée
d'Art Moderne de Paris (1977, 1998), the Centre
Pompidou (1977, 1998), the Museum of the 20th
Century (Vienna, 1982), the Museo Nacional
de Bellas Artes (Buenos Aires, 1987), the National
Museum of Art of Romania (Bucarest, 1988),
the Museum Ludwig (Cologne, 2000),
the Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery
(2005), the Musée Rath (Geneva, Switzerland,
2011), the Centre Pompidou-Metz (Metz, France,
2014), the Stefan Gierowski Foundation (Warsaw,
Poland, 2019) and the Pushkin Museum (Moscow,
2019).

His works are present in prestigious collections
in France: Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Centre
Pompidou (Paris), Bibliothèque Nationale de
France (Paris), Centre national des arts plastiques
(Paris), MAC VAL (Vitry-sur-Seine), Musée Cantini
(Marseille), Musées d'arts de Nantes, Toulon; Musée
des Beaux-Arts de Brest, Dijon and various FRAC
(Bretagne, Normandie, Occitanie Montpellier, Pays

de la Loire, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur); and in
the world: Royal Museums of Fine Arts (Brussels),
Fondation Gandur pour l'Art (Geneva),
Museum of Modern Art (Vienna), Museum
Abteiberg (Mönchengladbach, Germany),
Israel Museum (Jerusalem), Minneapolis Institute
of Art (Minneapolis), Nakanoshima Museum of Art
(Osaka, Japan), Ōhara Museum of Art (Kurashiki,
Japan), among others.

Degottex won the Kandinsky Prize in 1951
and was awarded the Grand National Prize
of Painting (Grand Prix National de la Peinture)
in 1981.

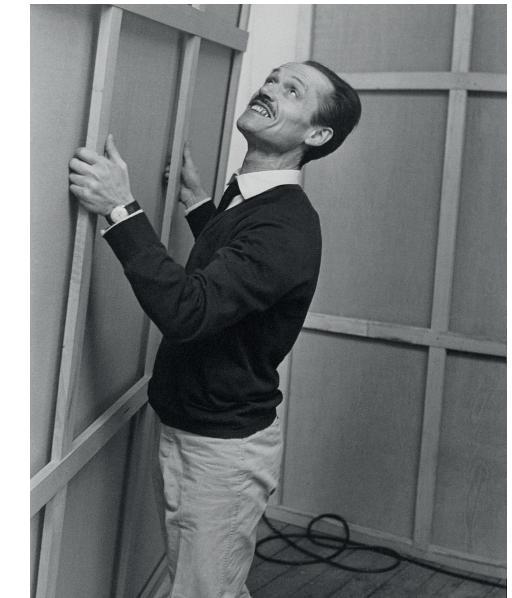


Photo. AF de Gamboa

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