

The background is a complex abstract painting. It features a dense network of overlapping lines and shapes. The color palette is dominated by deep blues, vibrant yellows, and earthy oranges. There are also areas of white and black. The lines vary in thickness and direction, creating a sense of movement and depth. Some lines are straight and sharp, while others are more fluid and gestural. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and intricate detail.

FINDLAY GALLERIES

THREE CENTURIES IN ART

Gordon Onslow Ford

(1912 - 2003)

10.



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Gordon Onslow Ford

FOUNDER OF THE LUCID ART MOVEMENT

10.

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Gordon Onslow Ford in his studio on the ferryboat *Vallejo* in Sausalito, California, 1955

British-born American painter **Gordon Onslow Ford** (1912-2003) was an important bridge between the Parisian Surrealist and Abstract Expressionist movements, exploring interests in spontaneous creation and metaphysical ideas like the collective unconscious.

After serving in the Royal Navy, Onslow Ford departed for Paris and worked briefly with André Lhote and Fernand Léger. Roberto Matta introduced him to André Breton, Max Ernst, and other Parisian Surrealists. During this period, Onslow Ford abandoned the pictorial images of his early work and embraced psychic automatism.

In 1941, he lectured on Surrealism at the New School for Social Research in New York. Audience members included Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko. In the same year, he traveled to Mexico and lived among the Tarascan Indians until 1947. “Resigning” from Surrealism in 1943, his spontaneous gestures expanded first into more studied, map-like compositions. These eventually resolved into simple geometries that led him to an awareness of line, circle, and dot as the root forms of the universe.

Returning to San Francisco, Onslow Ford exhibited in two shows at the San Francisco Museum of Art. A solo show in 1949 was followed by his inclusion in the landmark *Dynaton* exhibition in 1951. In the following decades, his paintings were acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, Solomon Guggenheim Museum, Tate Gallery, Whitney Museum, and several other important institutions.

Over the course of his long career, Onslow Ford’s work evolved from the earthly into the cosmic. The outer becomes inner, as the constellations self-manifest in the shared consciousness, stopping briefly to mark the canvases of Gordon Onslow Ford.



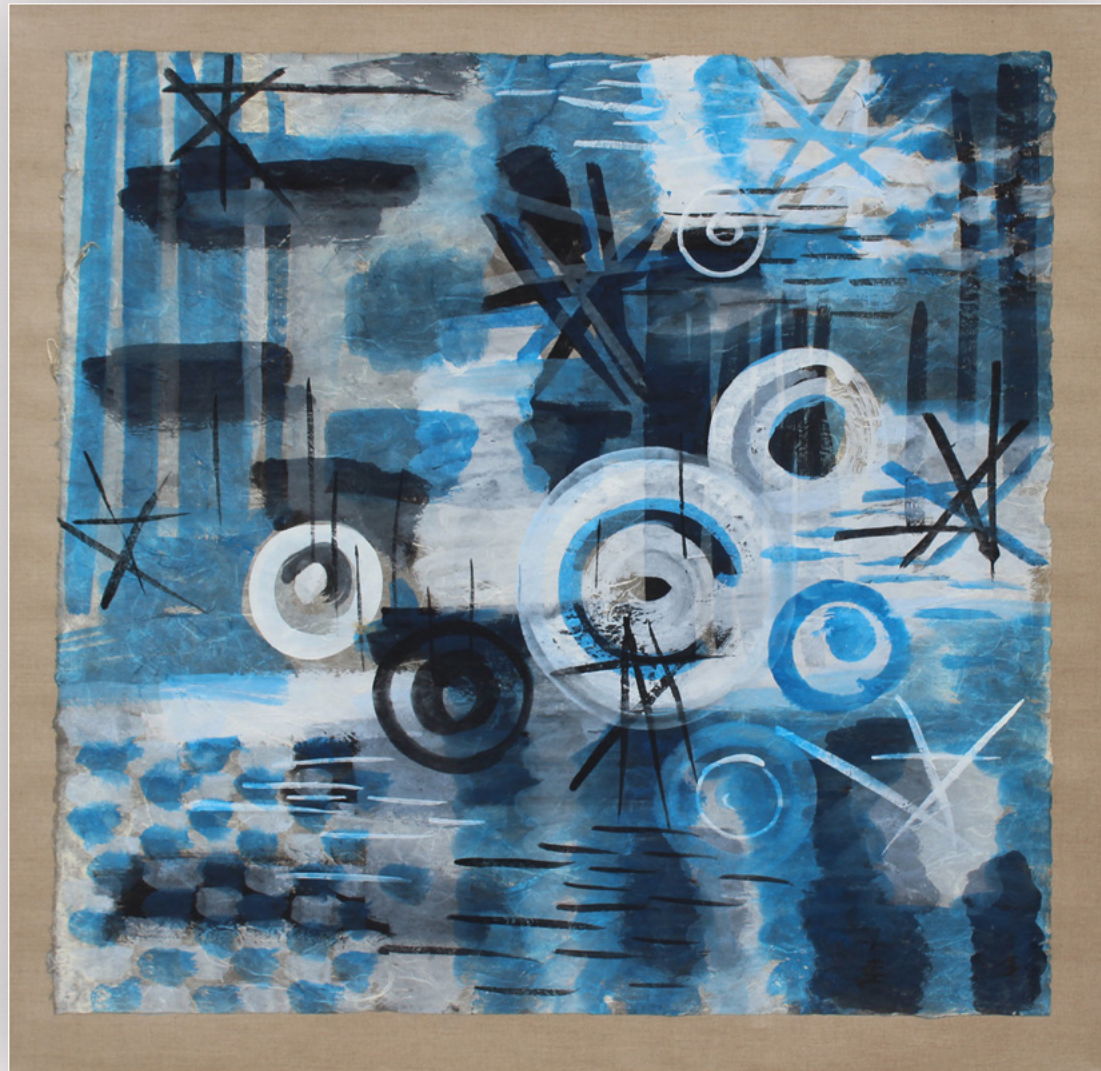
*Honey Bee Space*, 1989  
acrylic on canvas mounted on canvas  
44 1/8 x 58 in.  
FG© 140197



*Eco Echo*, 1996 | acrylic on paper mounted on canvas  
56 1/2 x 36 1/2 in. | FG© 140188



*Cultivate*, 1988 | acrylic on canvas | 63 7/8 x 40 1/4 in. | FG© 140187



*Water World*, 1956 | casein on mulberry mounted on linen  
35 3/4 x 36 3/4 in. | FG© 140203



*Voyager in Space*, 1975 | acrylic on paper mounted on canvas  
46 x 39 3/4 in. | FG© 140185

Painting in the instant is the direct manifestation of the unknown through the painter as an instrument.

While painting in the instant, there is no pre-image in mind. It is not known what will appear until it is down.

Painting in the instant is seeing what the paint makes, as it makes it. The painting grows bit by bit, each bit leading to the next.

The painter disappears in the instant, and reappears in the painting.

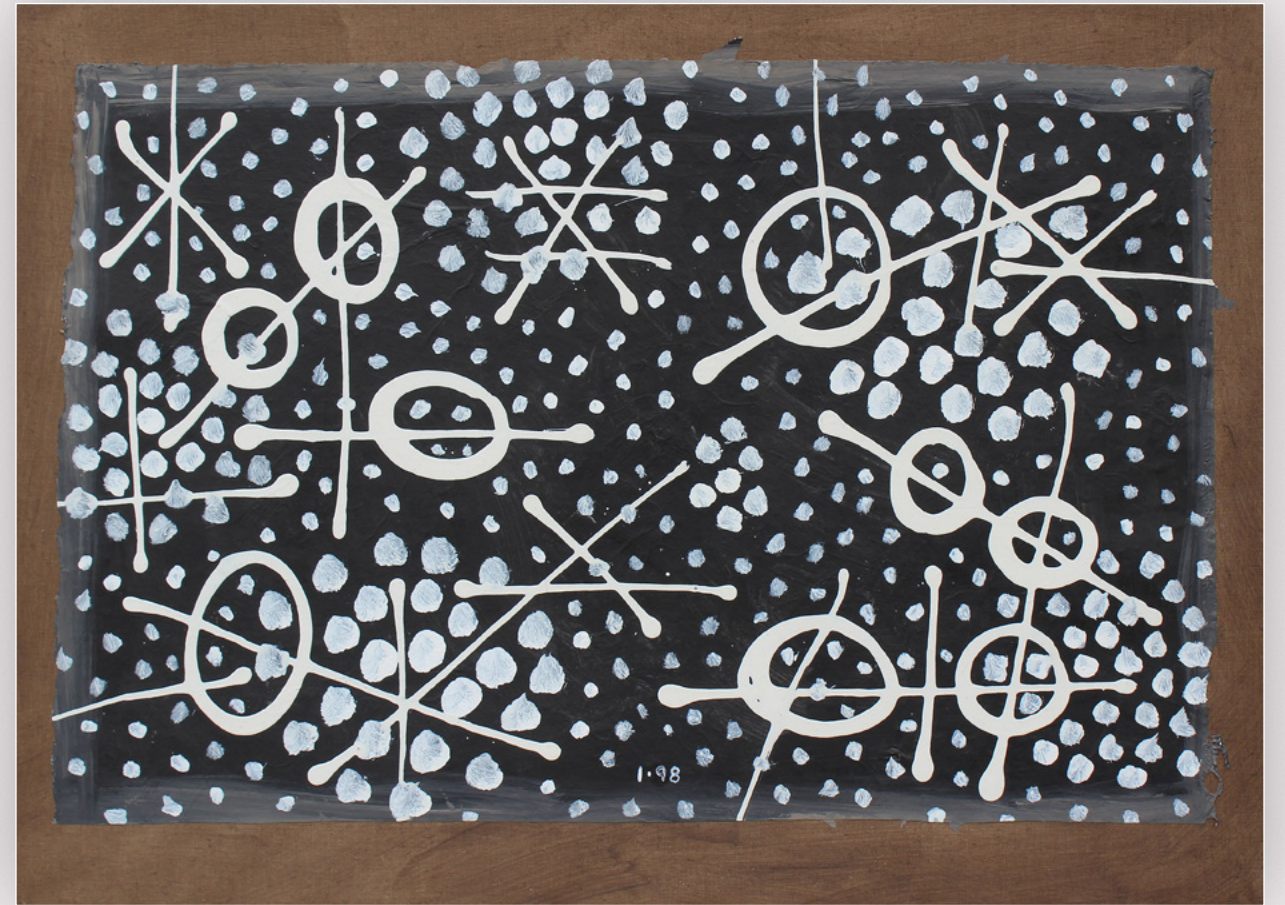
Gordon Onslow Ford,  
*Painting in the Instant*, 1964

*Heaven is Earth*, 1997  
acrylic on paper mounted on canvas  
50 x 37 1/2 in.  
FG© 140196





*Swarm of Hearts*, c.1950 | casein on mulberry paper mounted on canvas  
38 5/8 x 28 1/4 in. | FG© 140195



*Once*, 1998 | acrylic on paper mounted on canvas | 28 1/8 x 40 1/8 in. | FG© 140192



Draw as a blindman sees

Gordon Onslow Ford, *Insights*, 1991



*Grass Leap*, 1955 | casein on mulberry paper mounted canvas  
24 3/4 x 39 7/8 in. | FG© 140190



*Star and Being*, 2002 | acrylic on paper mounted on linen  
25 1/2 x 45 1/2 in. | FG© 140194



*In Inlanders*, 1966 | acrylic on paper mounted on canvas  
25 1/2 x 38 1/2 in. | FG© 140198



*In The Light*, 2002 | acrylic mounted on canvas  
38 1/4 x 21 7/8 in. | FG© 140199



*Space In Bloom*, 1966 | acrylic on board | 61 1/4 x 43 1/4 in. | FG© 140193



*Untitled (1013)*, c.1950 | casein on mulberry paper mounted on canvas | 36 x 71 in. | FG© 140183



*Moon Growers*, 1951 | gouache on paper | 18 x 24 3/4 in. | FG© 140200



*Voyagers*, 1976 | acrylic on mulberry paper | 24 1/2 x 36 in. | FG© 140202

## The Function of Art

Works of art serve as reference points for profound communication. They stimulate exchange of experience and attitudes towards the mysteries. It is a function of art to overcome the dead-weight of inertia.

Every man is at heart a special artist. Works of art radiate courage from one artist to another. One work of art can generate the power to form others. Even if for only an hour a day, the practice of an art, be it building, cooking, the discovery of a painting or the creation of a garden, would be entirely beneficial. Every art-practice presupposes relaxation of tensions. All activities could become an art again, as they must have been when man was in harmony with nature in the golden age — every footstep an adventure.

It is a function of art to bring wonder into the world.



*Untitled (1939-090)*, 1939 | watercolor on paper | 12 1/2 x 19 1/2 in. | FG© 207000



I would like my paintings to refresh  
like deep sleep. Gordon Onslow Ford, *Insights*, 1991



*Abstraction in Yellow*, 1964 | casein on paper mounted on cardboard  
22 1/4 x 30 in. | FG© 140186

## CHRONOLOGY

Born 1912, Wendover, England	2012	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford: Centennial Celebration</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA <i>Action and Chance: A New Look at Drip</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA <i>Image to Gesture 1945-1969: California Postwar Abstraction</i> , David Findlay Jr. Gallery, New York, NY <i>Gordon Onslow Ford: Centennial Celebration</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA	2000	<i>Made in California</i> , Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford</i> , Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, University of Santiago, Santiago, Chile (retrospective)
<b>Education</b>					
1933 Graduated, Royal Naval College, Greenwich, England			1999	<i>The Surrealists in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School</i> , Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford</i> , Chilem Galeria Municipal, Valparaiso, Chile, Pinacoteca Municipal, Concepcion, Chile (retrospective)
1930-1943 Self-taught painter and member of the Surrealist group in Paris, London, and New York	2011	<i>Surrealism: New Worlds</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA	1998	<i>Wegbereiter des Abstrakten Expressionismus in Amerika</i> , Gordon Onslow Ford, Lee Mullican, Wolfgang Paalen, Kunstverein Arnberg, Nurnberg, Germany <i>The Surrealist Vision: Europe and the Americas</i> , The Bruce Museum, Greenwich, CT <i>Mirando en lo Profundo</i> , Fundacion Eugenio Granell, Santiago de Compostela, Spain (retrospective)	1994 <i>Gordon Onslow Ford, Drawings and Works on Paper</i> , Museum Bochum, Bochum, Germany
1997 Awarded honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from John F. Kennedy University, Berkeley, California	2009	<i>The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989</i> , Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY			1993 <i>Gordon Onslow Ford, The World of Line Circle Dot</i> , Pavilion at the Botanical Garden, Munich, Germany <i>Gordon Onslow Ford</i> , Galerie Brochier, Munich, Germany <i>Lateinamerika und der Surrealismus</i> , Museum Bochum, Bochum, Germany
<b>Selected Group and Solo Exhibitions</b>					
2022 <i>Surrealism Beyond Borders</i> , Tate Modern, London, England	2006	<i>Threshold of a New Art - Artwork of the 1950's, A Selection from the Lucid Art Foundation Collection</i> , California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA	1997	<i>Surrealism and American Art 1932-1949</i> , Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL <i>The Thirties in Europe</i> , Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France <i>Through the Light</i> , John F. Kennedy University, Berkeley, CA Aspekte Imaginativer Kunst, Museum Bochum, Bochum, Germany	1992 <i>Dynaton Before and Beyond</i> , Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA
2018 <i>Dimensionism: Modern Art in the Age of Einstein</i> , Berkeley Museum of Art, CA <i>Hello World. Revising a Collection</i> , Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin	2005	<i>The Great Spaces of the Mind: Paintings from the 1990's and 2000's</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA			1991 <i>Andre Breton et le Surrealisme</i> , Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte; Renia Sofia, Madrid, Spain
2017 <i>Surrealist Drawings on Paper</i> , Galerie 1900–2000, Paris, France <i>Los Modernos. Dialogues France/Mexico</i> , Musée de Beaux-Arts de Lyon, France	2004	<i>Voyagers in Space: Paintings from the 1970's and 1980's</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA	1996	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford: Werke 1938-1995</i> , Kunstlerforum Bonn, Bonn, Germany <i>The Quest of the Inner-Worlds: Paintings by Gordon Onslow Ford</i> , John F. Kennedy University, Berkeley, CA	1990 <i>Pursuit of the Marvelous</i> , Stanley William Hayter, Charles Howard, Gordon Onslow Ford, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA <i>Anxious Visions: Surrealist Art</i> , University Art Museum, Berkeley, CA <i>El Surealismo Entre Viejo y Nuevo Mundo</i> , Centro Allantico de Arte Moderno, Cabildo Insular de Gran Carnaria (Canary Islands)
2016 <i>Paint the Revolution: Mexican Modernism, 1910–1950</i> , Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA	2003	<i>Exploring the Open Mind: Paintings from the 1950's and 1960's</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA <i>Matta/Onslow Ford: A Vision Shared</i> , Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco, CA Braunstein Quay Gallery, San Francisco, CA	1995	<i>Fifteen Profiles: Distinguished California Modernists</i> , Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, CA <i>Pacific Dreams: Surrealism and Fantasy in California Art 1934-1957</i> , The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA; Utah University, Logan, UT; UCLA at The Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA	
2014 <i>Restless Universe: Inner Thought/Outer Space</i> , David Findlay Jr. Gallery, New York, NY <i>Gordon Onslow Ford: Space Elements</i> , David Findlay Jr. Gallery, New York, NY	2001	<i>Made in U.S.A., L'art americain, 1908-1943</i> , Musee des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux, France and other venues <i>Vital Forms: American Art in the Atomic Age</i> , The Brooklyn Museum, New York and other venues			1989 <i>I Surrealisti</i> , Pallazzo Reale, Milan, Italy
2013 <i>Farewell to Surrealism: The Dyn Circle in Mexico</i> , Getty Research Institute, Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA.					1987 <i>Visions of Inner Space</i> , University of California at Los Angeles; New Delhi, India
					1986 <i>Minotaure</i> , Musee Rath, Geneva, Switzerland; Musee d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris, France

1986	<i>Moderns in Mind</i> , Artists Space, New York <i>The Interpretive Link</i> , Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY <i>The Spiritual in Art</i> , Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Chicago; Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, The Netherlands <i>La Planete Affolee, Surréalisme, Dispersion et Influences, 1938-1947</i> , Centre de la Vielle Charité, Marseilles, France	1966	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford</i> , California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA			
1985	Galerie Samy Kinge, Paris, France	1964	<i>Retrospective Exhibition of Drawings and Watercolors</i> , San Francisco Museum of Art, CA			
1984	<i>Artistic Collaboration in the Twentieth Century</i> , Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.	1962	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford, 1951-1962</i> , M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, CA			
1982	<i>L 'Echange Surrealiste</i> , Grand Palais, Paris, France <i>Peinture Surrealiste en Angleterre 1930-1960</i> , Galeries 1900-2000, Paris, France	1959	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford &amp; Richard Bowman</i> , San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA	<b>Awards</b>	<b>Publications</b>	
1977	<i>Retrospective Exhibition (1931-77)</i> , Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA <i>Surrealitat-Bildrealitat 1924-1974</i> , Staalich Kunsthalle, Baden Baden, Switzerland <i>California: 5 Footnotes to Modern Art History, Dynaton Revisited</i> , Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA <i>Surrealism and American Art 1931-1947</i> , Rutgers University Art Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ	1956	<i>Alexander Rabow Galleries</i> , San Francisco, CA (with numerous exhibitions at the Rose Rabow Galleries thereafter)	1997	Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, John F. Kennedy University, Orinda, CA	
1971	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford, A Partial Retrospective</i> , The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Columbia, Canada	1951	<i>Dynaton</i> , San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA	1995	Selected as the best International exhibition of the year, Santiago, Chile	
1970	<i>Gordon Onslow Ford, Large Paintings</i> , San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA	1948	<i>Retrospective Exhibition</i> , San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA			
1968	<i>Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage</i> , The Museum of Modern Art, NY, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, The Art Institute of Chicago, IL	1946	Karl Nierendorf Gallery, New York, NY	<b>Selected Public Collections</b>	1999	<i>Once Upon a Time</i> , ( 1999) Lucid Art Foundation, Inverness, CA
		1940	The New School for Social Research, New York, NY Zwemmer Gallery, London, England	Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA Fort Lauderdale Museum, FL Laguna Museum of Art, Laguna Beach, CA Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, CA Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Logan, UT Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL Oakland Museum, CA San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY Tate Gallery, London, England University of California, Davis, CA University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY	1993	<i>Ecomorphology</i> , (1993) Bishop Pine Press, Inverness, CA
		1939	Salon des Independant, Paris, France		1991	<i>Insights</i> . (1991) Lapis Press, Emeryville, CA
					1983	<i>Yves Tanguy and Automatism</i> , ( 1983) Bishop Pine Press, Inverness, CA
					1978	<i>Creation</i> , (1978) Galerie Schreiner AG, Basel, Switzerland
					1964	<i>Painting in the Instant</i> , ( 1964) Thames and Hudson, London
					1948	<i>Toward a New Subject in Painting</i> , (1948) San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA



# FINDLAY GALLERIES

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