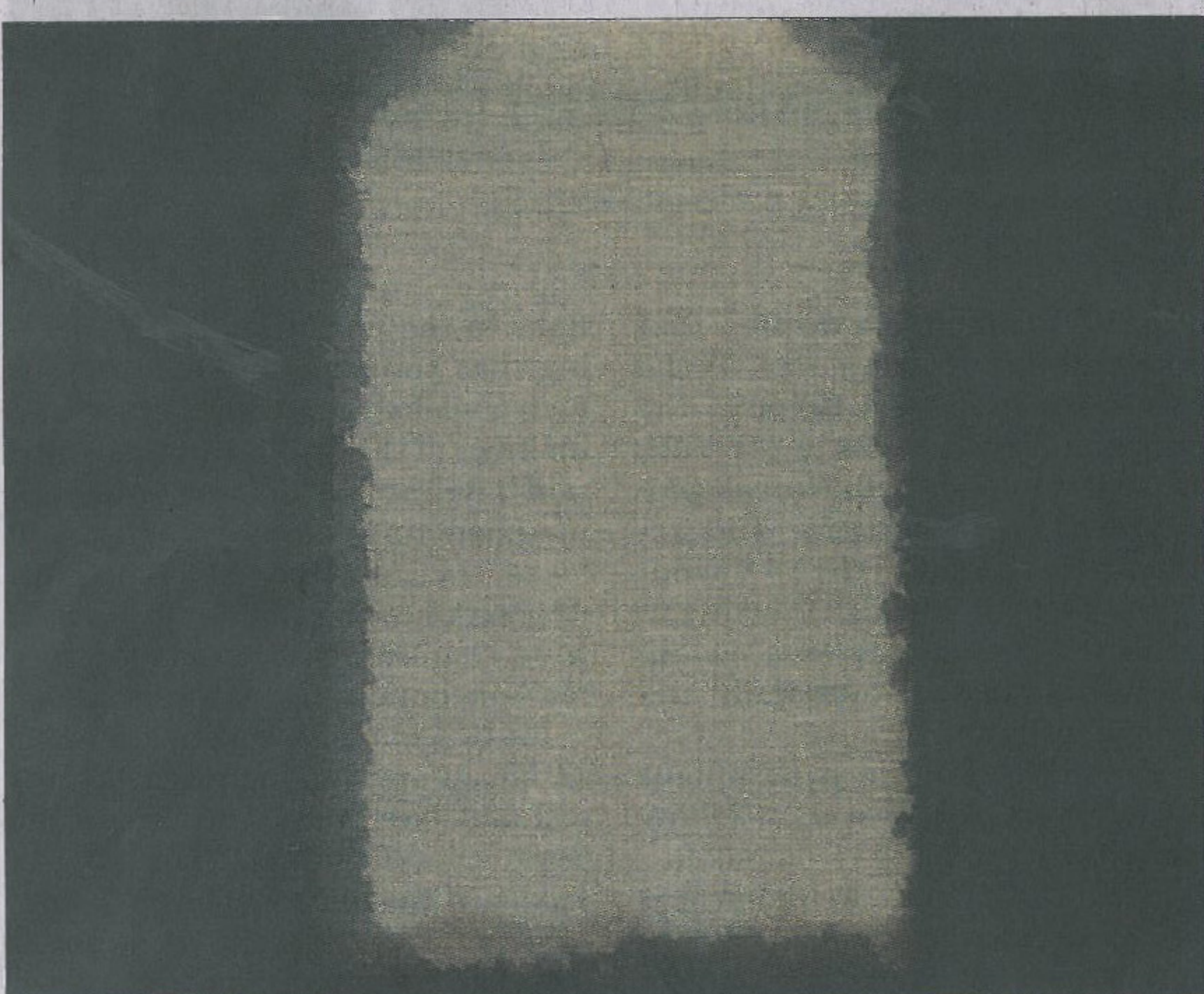
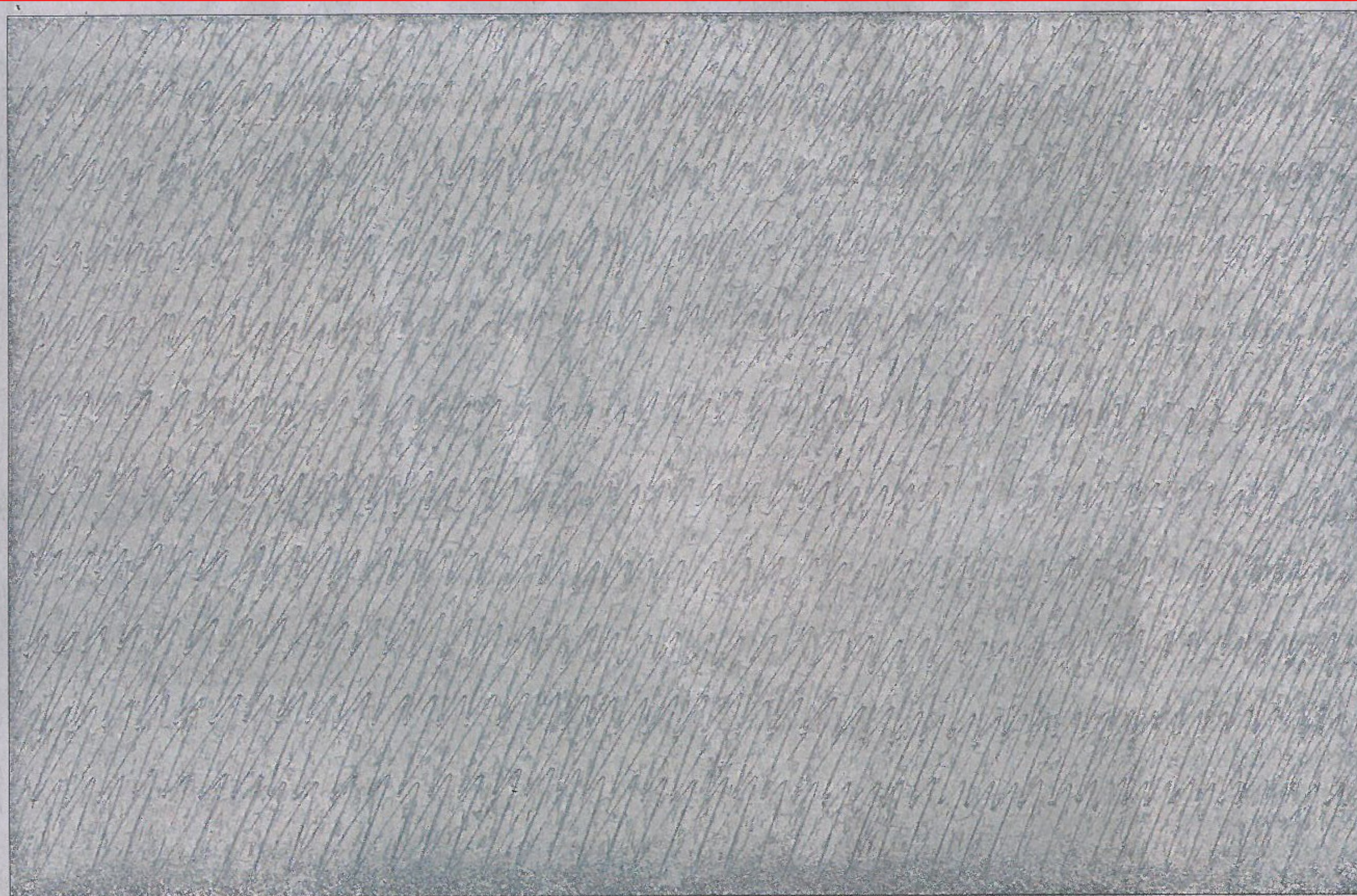
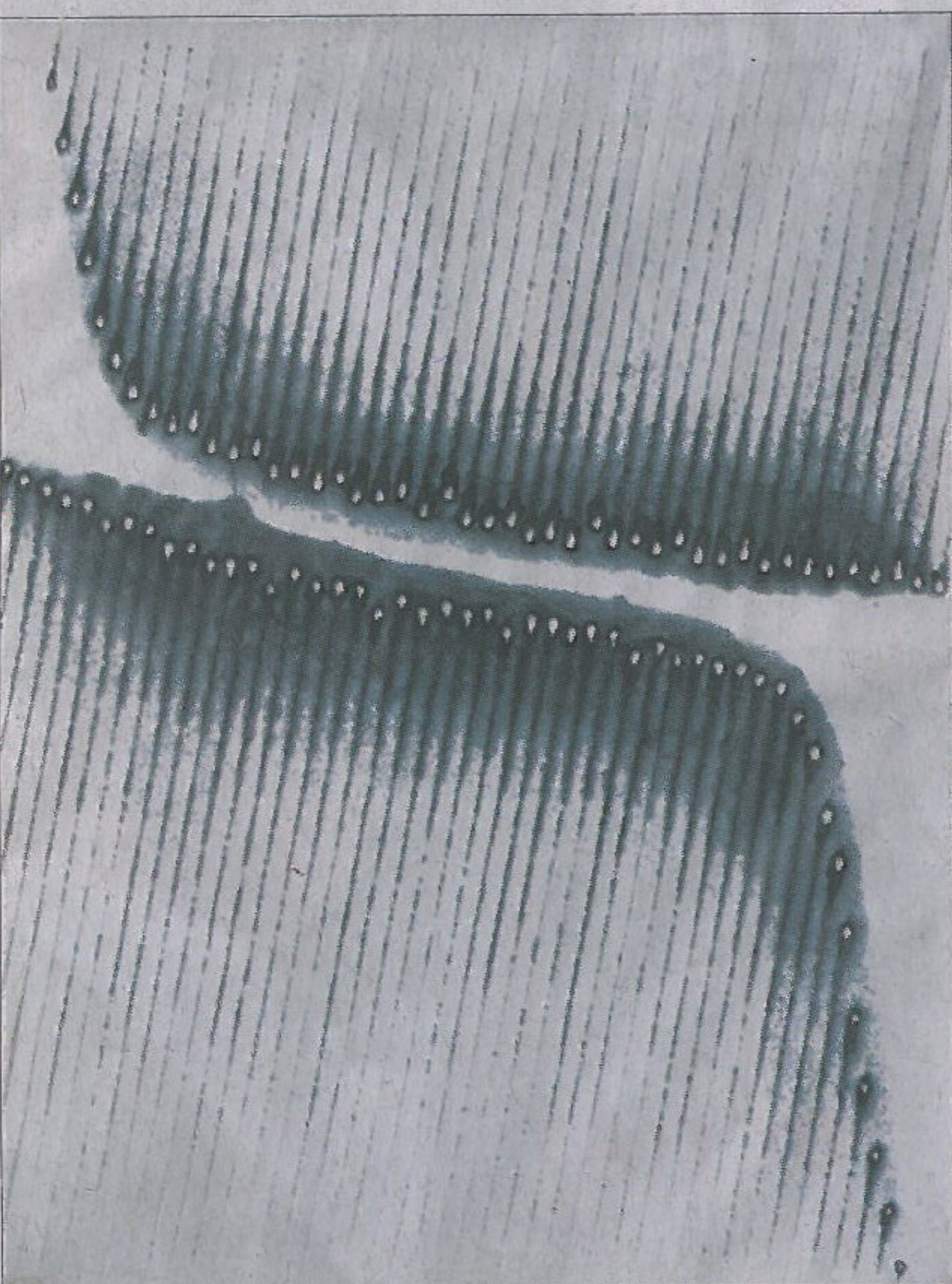


Kwon Young-woo's "Untitled," far left, is part of Gallery Hyundai's ongoing "Korean Abstract Painting" show. Park Seo-Bo's "Ecriture No.89-79-82-83," left, will be exhibited in Venice as part of the "Daesaekhwa" exhibition sponsored by Kukje Gallery during the Venice Biennale, which starts in early May.

Provided by
the galleries



Abstract paintings make splash at auctions



Yun Hyong-Keun's "Umber Blue" (1979), above, and Yoo Young-kuk's "Work" (1966), right, are among Korean abstract paintings that fetched high prices in spring sales by K Auction and Seoul Auction.

Provided by the auction houses

BY MOON SO-YOUNG

The move to shed more light on abstract Korean paintings such as *dansaekhwa* — abstract paintings filled with minimal color and unusual textures — is winning positive responses in the local and overseas markets.

Works by Park Seo-bo and Chung Sang-hwa were sold at prices multiple times higher than their previous records at auctions during the Modern and Contemporary Asian Art Evening Sale by Sotheby's Hong Kong on April 4.

The two artists are among the leading figures in the *dansaekhwa* movement.

Park's "Ecriture No. 9-75" sold

for 4.64 million Hong Kong dollars (\$598,500) — three times higher than the upper estimate. Chung's two "Untitled" paintings were sold together for 4.88 million Hong Kong dollars, double the high end of the estimate.

In a press release, the auction house said the results were an extension of "the momentum we saw for Contemporary Korean and Japanese artists during our groundbreaking selling exhibition last month."

In March, the auction house held an exhibition titled "Avant Garde Asia" featuring paintings by Korean and Japanese abstract artists from the 1960s to the post-millennium.

"Renowned for a distinctly Ko-

rean whiteness, these artists also infused their art with calligraphic elegance," according to the auction house's website.

Dansaekhwa and other Korean abstract paintings also were favorites of art collectors in sales last month in Seoul and Hong Kong by leading Korean auction houses.

Seoul-based K Auction held a successful first sale in Hong Kong on March 15. The hammer fell for 89 percent of the pieces put up for bidding, thanks to the popularity of *dansaekhwa*.

"All the *dansaekhwa* paintings were sold," auctioneer Son Yee-chun said in a press release. "The *dansaekhwa* boom seems to be spilling

over to other countries."

Among works sold at prices much higher than forecast was Yun Hyong-keun's 1979 oil on linen painting "Umber Blue." It went for 103.7 million won, three times the upper end of its estimate.

First-generation abstract painters from Korea, such as Kim Whanki (1913-74) and Yoo Young-kuk (1916-2002), who precede *dansaekhwa* painters, also are popular.

Kim's painting "3-II-70 #143" topped the Hong Kong sale by K auction, fetching 883.3 million won.

Yoo's 1966 oil painting "Work" was sold at the highest price among local modern art in the March 9 sale in Seoul by Seoul Auction. It fetched

430 million won.

Korean galleries are busy promoting *dansaekhwa* further through exhibitions. Gallery Hyundai in central Seoul is holding the group show "Korean Abstract Painting" through April 22, presenting 60 pieces by 18 artists such as Kim, Yoo, Park and Chung, as well as lesser-known artists like Kwon Young-woo.

Kukje Gallery, which has led the promotion of *dansaekhwa*, will sponsor a large show of the paintings at Palazzo Contarini Polignac in Venice from May 7 to Aug. 16 during the 56th Venice Biennale. Six leading *dansaekhwa* artists will participate in the exhibition.

moon.soyoung@joongang.co.kr