



Nabil Nahas

RECENT PAINTINGS

20 MAY - JULY 30 2016

SALEH BARAKAT GALLERY

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Nabil Nahas

LANDMARKS

For many years to come this day, Friday May 20th 2016, shall be remembered by connoisseurs of this city and by art historians of the newly emerging East as a determining moment when the will and faith of one young Lebanese decided that Beirut, the jewel of the Mediterranean, was worth swimming against the turbulent currents of his time. Concurrently, an internationally recognized Lebanese born artist came to consider it worthy of premiering his most recent creations, after a long and successful presence in Western galleries and museums, in Beirut.

For Nabil Nahas, this day is built on more than fifty years of study and hard work, preciously guarding and nourishing his Eastern aesthetic genes with all that the West had to offer in philosophy, art history, cultural and scientific advances. His artistic trajectory started with the geometrics that were on display in Beirut in 1973, when he returned from Yale University to hold an exhibition at Galerie Centre d'Art founded by Brigitte Schehadé in Ain-el-Mraiseh.

Two years later, the lights were turned off in that city.

Saleh Barakat was six years old, when Nahas showed his work in Beirut in 1973. He grew up to graduate with an MBA from the American University of Beirut. His education in business, along with his insatiable cultural interests and intellectual curiosity, drove him to bring Beirut back to the map of the art world at a time when the city was still in the last throws of the civil war. He opened Agial Gallery in May 1991, when electric cut offs, occasional bomb explosion, and a general lack of security still marked the neighborhood. From the start, Agial blew new life into the art scene in Beirut, and indeed the neighboring Arab cities, and has continued to do so for a quarter of a century now.

With the effervescent art scene in Beirut today and the growing roster of Agial's artists, expanding to a bigger space more capable of accommodating contemporary art and artists was part of a logical evolution and the new

Saleh Barakat Gallery was born. Acquired a few years ago, the space of this new gallery is located in the same neighborhood of Ras Beirut, one of the city's traditional residential zones that has survived the civil war, and is marked today by a delicate balance of business and buzzing intellectual life, including three top universities. The location is known to Beirutis as the old Cinema Clemenceau, which was the first cinema "d'Art et Essai" in the Middle East, showing films by Tarkovsky, Antonioni, Fellini, Bergman, and Gavras. In 1994, it was converted into the famous Madina Theatre by actress Nidal Achkar to present some of the most acclaimed theatre works and cultural festivals of that period, such as Ayloul and Ashkal Alwan's Home Works. The vision of architect Makram Kadi has made possible this transformation from a dimmed performance venue into a multi functional sky lit prime art gallery fulfilling all the requirements of exhibition, management, and storage.

The choice of the inaugural exhibition presented itself. As Nabil Nahas was finishing a new body of work, he found himself slowly reinventing a personal vocabulary spanning his entire oeuvre. His famous cedars started to coexist with his deconstructed geometry of the seventies, optical concerns, illusionism, and the evocative fractals in their different forms, as with the spirals and ribbons that transformed into luminous beams. The cedar tree, the majestic symbol of Lebanon's perennity, started to coexist with time, space, parallel worlds, and the universe in a sense of a new unknown, yet to be defined dimension.

Waddah Faris

Beirut, May 2016

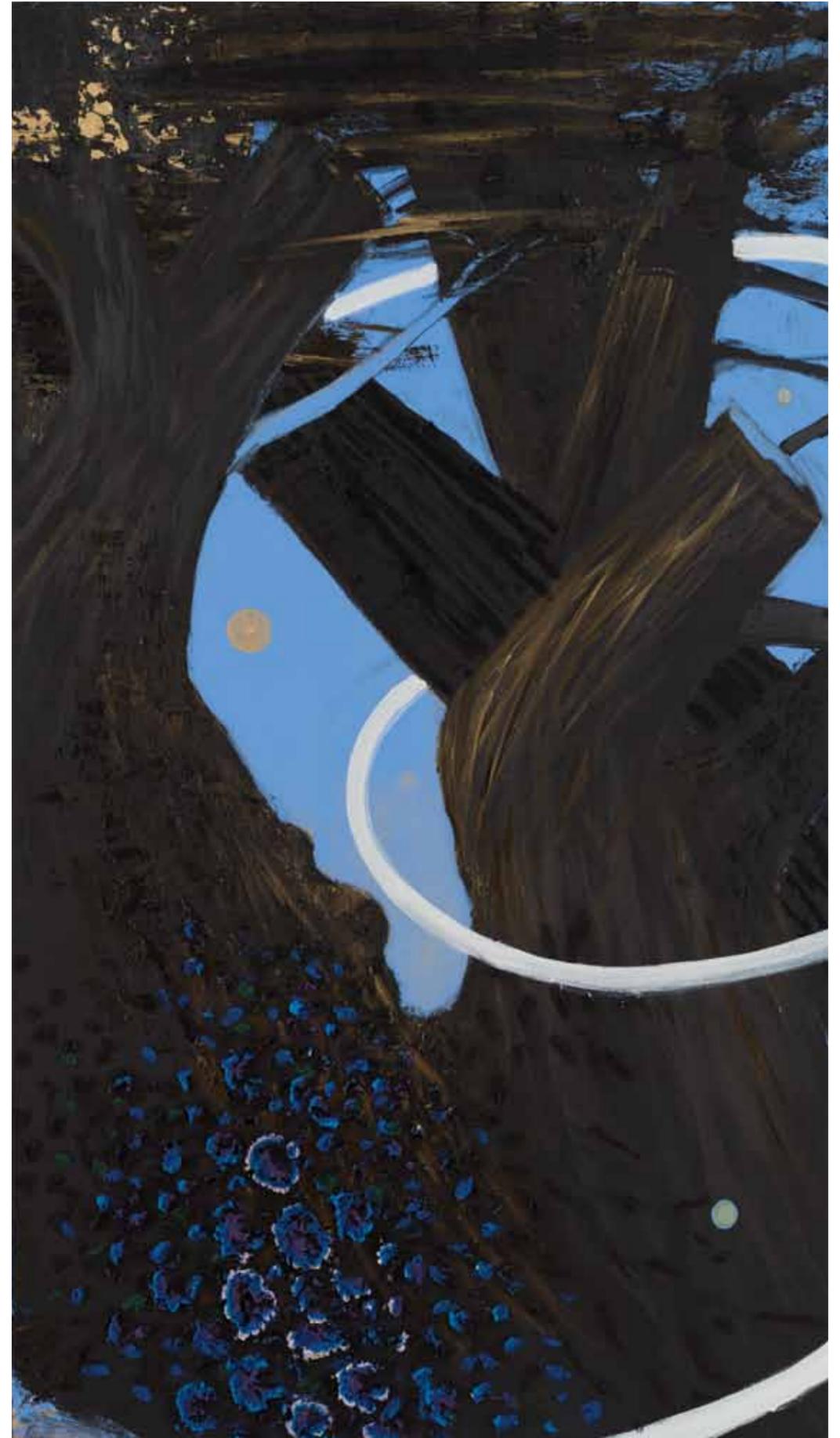


UNTITLED, 2015. Acrylic on canvas 7 x 9 feet / 213 x 274 cm.



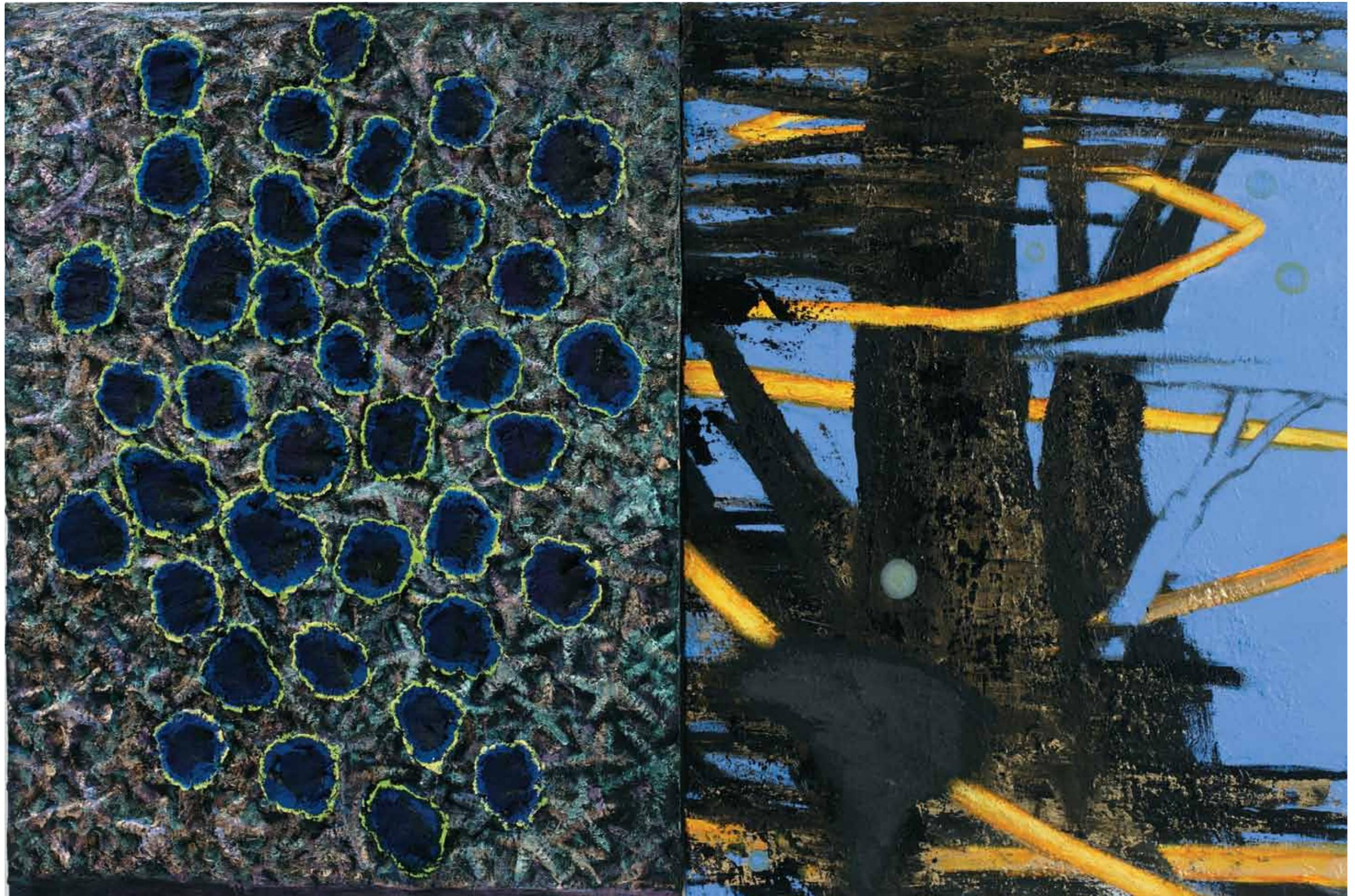
UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas 5 x 9 feet / 152 x 274 cm.

UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas 7 x 4 feet / 213 x 122 cm.





UNTITLED, 2015. Acrylic on canvas 5 x 4 feet / 152 x 122 cm.



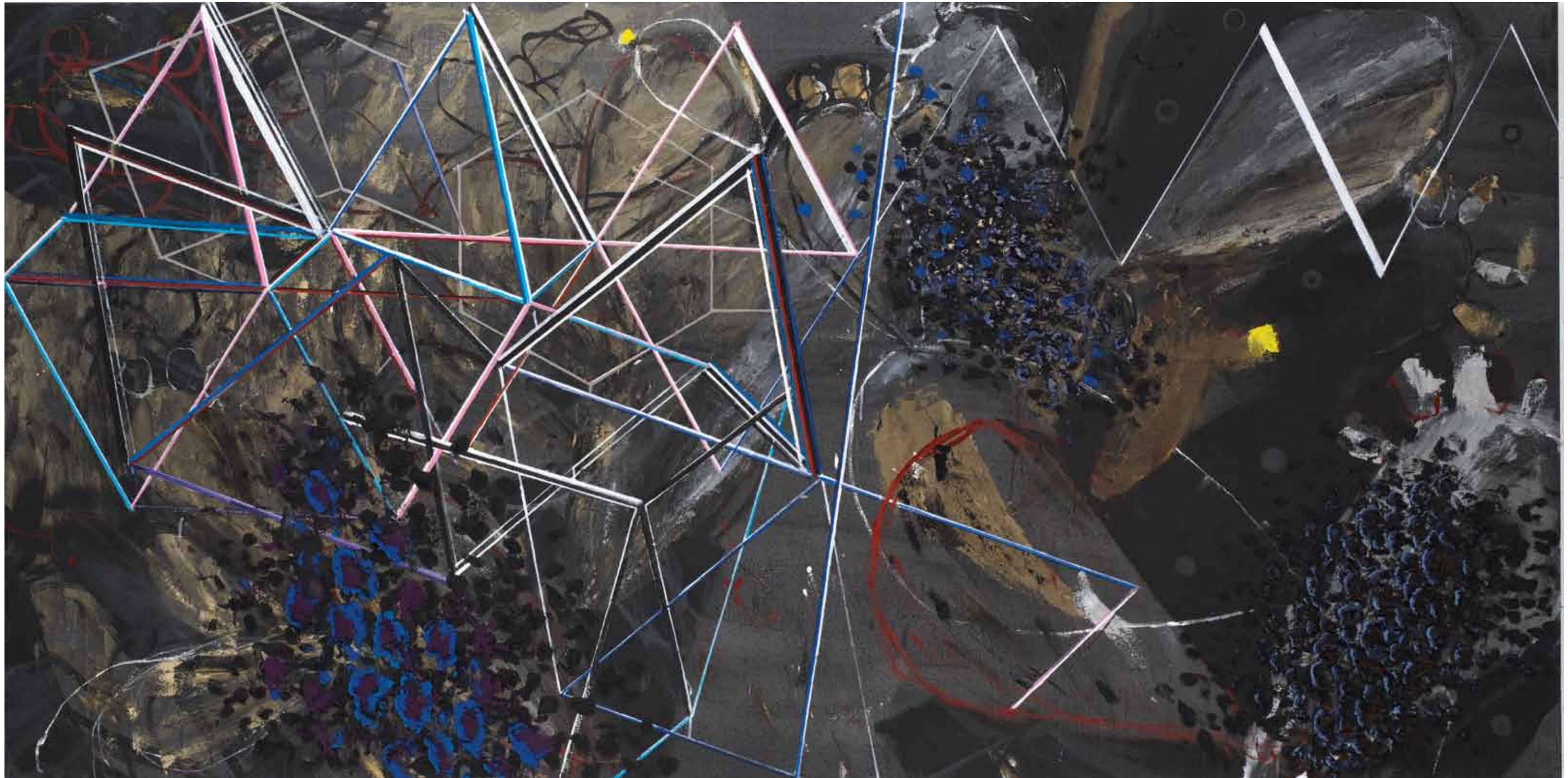
UNTITLED, 2015. Acrylic on canvas. 4 x 6 feet, diptych, each panel 4 x 3 feet / 122 x 91 cm.



UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas 9 x 7 feet / 274 x 213 cm.



UNTITLED, 2015. Acrylic on canvas. 7 x 9 feet / 213 x 274 cm.



UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas, 5 x 10 feet / 152 x 305 cm.

UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas. 5 x 4 feet / 152 x 122 cm.





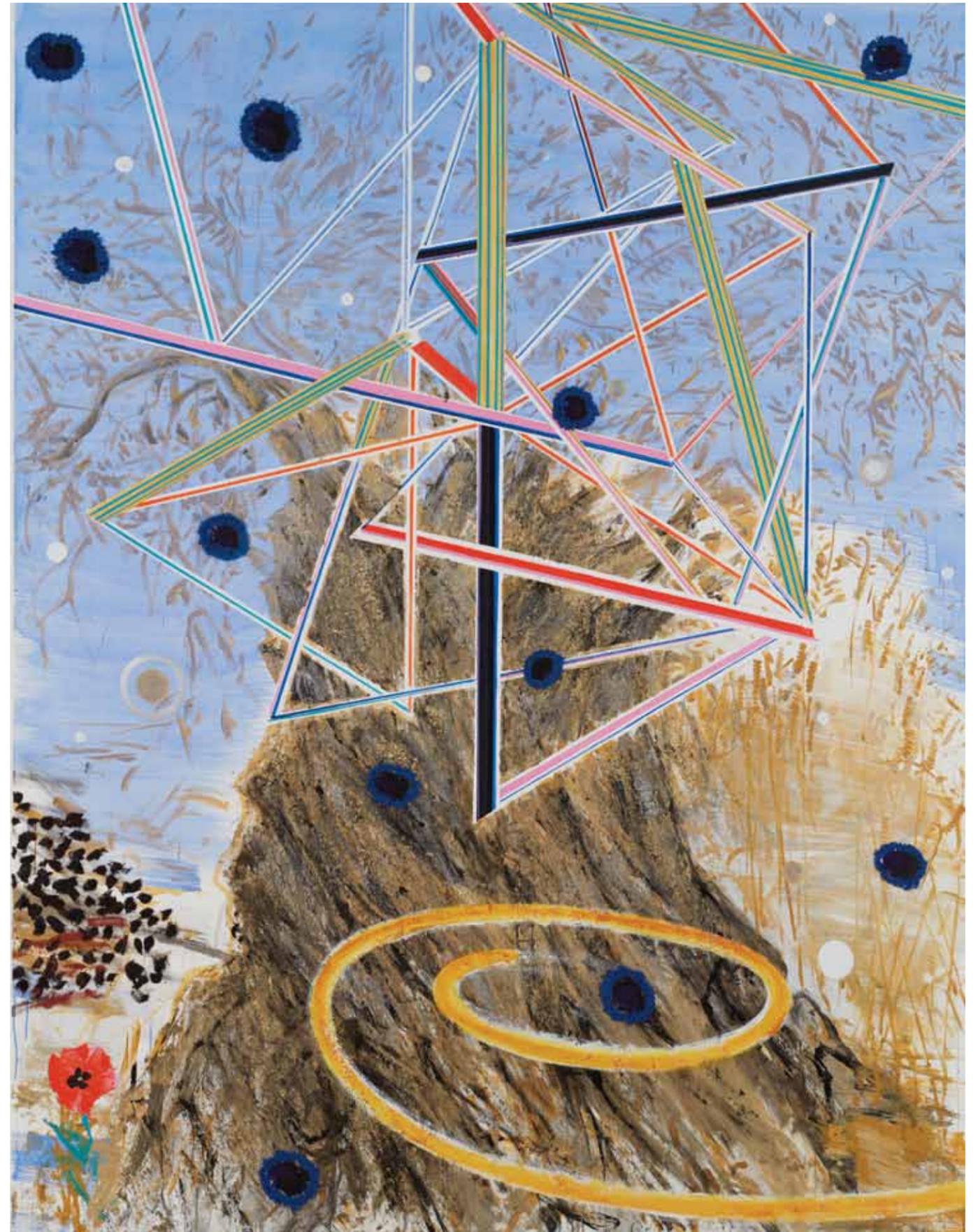
UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas. 5 x 4 feet / 152 x 122 cm.



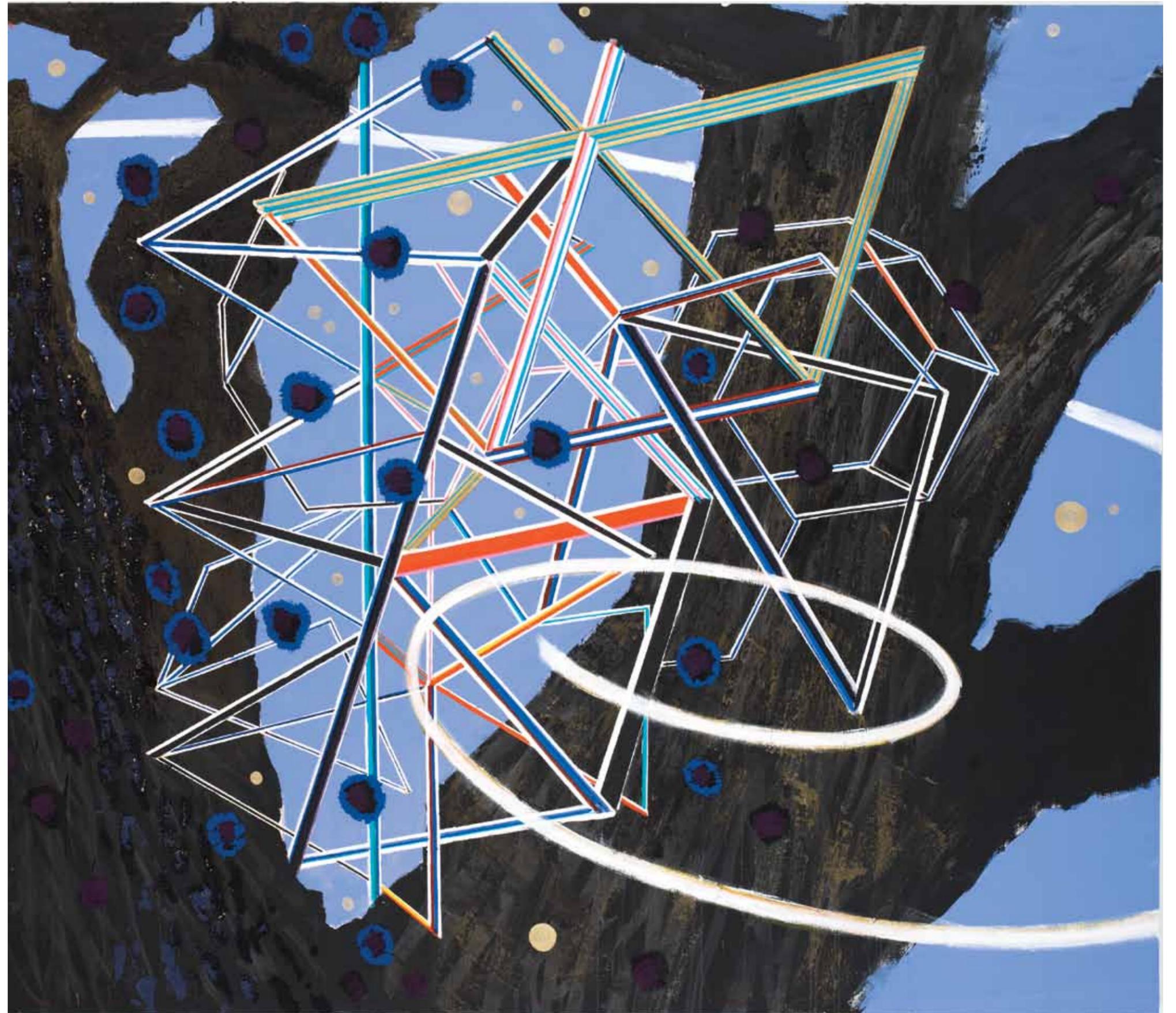
UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas. 5 x 4 feet / 152 x 122 cm.



UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas. 5 x 4 feet / 152 x 122 cm.



UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas, 9 x 7 feet / 274 x 213 cm.



UNTITLED, 2016. Acrylic on canvas. 7 x 9 feet / 213 x 274 cm.

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