

ANTONIETTA GRASSI
THE ARMORY SHOW 2025

PATRICK MIKHAIL PRESENTS ANTONIETTA GRASSI AT THE ARMORY SHOW 2025 NEW YORK

Marking Time: Honouring the Legacies of Agnes Martin, Alma Thomas, and the Gee's Bend Quilters

For The Armory Show 2025 in New York, Antonietta Grassi has created works paying homage to a group of women artists who have come from or have had strong ties to the American south and who have been important inspirations for her. Drawing on and honouring the legacies of Agnes Martin, Alma Thomas, and the Gee's Bend quilters, Grassi is interested in how these artists mark time through works that blend modernist abstraction with references to textile and craft traditions.

From Agnes Martin, Grassi inherits a commitment to structure, repetition, and subtle emotion through the use of delicate tonal shifts and fine line work to create meditative, contemplative surfaces. Thomas's influence is felt in Grassi's rhythmic use of pattern and color, channeling energy and movement within a restrained, grid-based framework. Thomas's cellular patterns find a visual echo in Grassi's repetitive motifs and blocky geometries, though Grassi's repetitions are less tied to nature and more to textile grids, motherboards, and coding systems.

Perhaps most profoundly, Grassi connects with and honours the legacy of the Gee's Bend quilters through her references to textiles, imperfect geometry, and the elevation of craft as a vehicle for memory and meaning. Grassi considers the Gee's Bend quilts as important as any other works in the modernist canon of abstraction. She highlights the woven, patched, and layered nature of quilts while referencing coding systems. Unlike the mathematical precision of weaving, Grassi's painting process is intuitive and responsive to her environment, much like the quilters.

In conversation with these pioneering women artists, Grassi has also honoured the contributions of women such as Grace Hopper and Ada Lovelace, whose innovative work in coding laid the foundations for the digital systems that inspire Grassi's own engagement with the intersection of technology and craft.

In honouring these artists, Grassi seeks to blur the boundaries between abstraction and narrative, technology and tradition—creating a body of work that speaks to both our contemporary digital culture yet is deeply rooted in feminist and craft-based histories. Through this synthesis, she articulates her own way of marking time: a layered, rhythmic language that holds memory, gesture, and technology in quiet conversation with these seminal women artists.



ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | STACCATO (AFTER ALMA) | OIL, ACRYLIC AND INK
ON LINEN | 80 X 84 X 2 INCHES | 2025



ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | MEASURING TIME (AFTER AGNES) | OIL, ACRYLIC
AND INK ON CANVAS | 60 X 60 X 2 INCHES | 2025

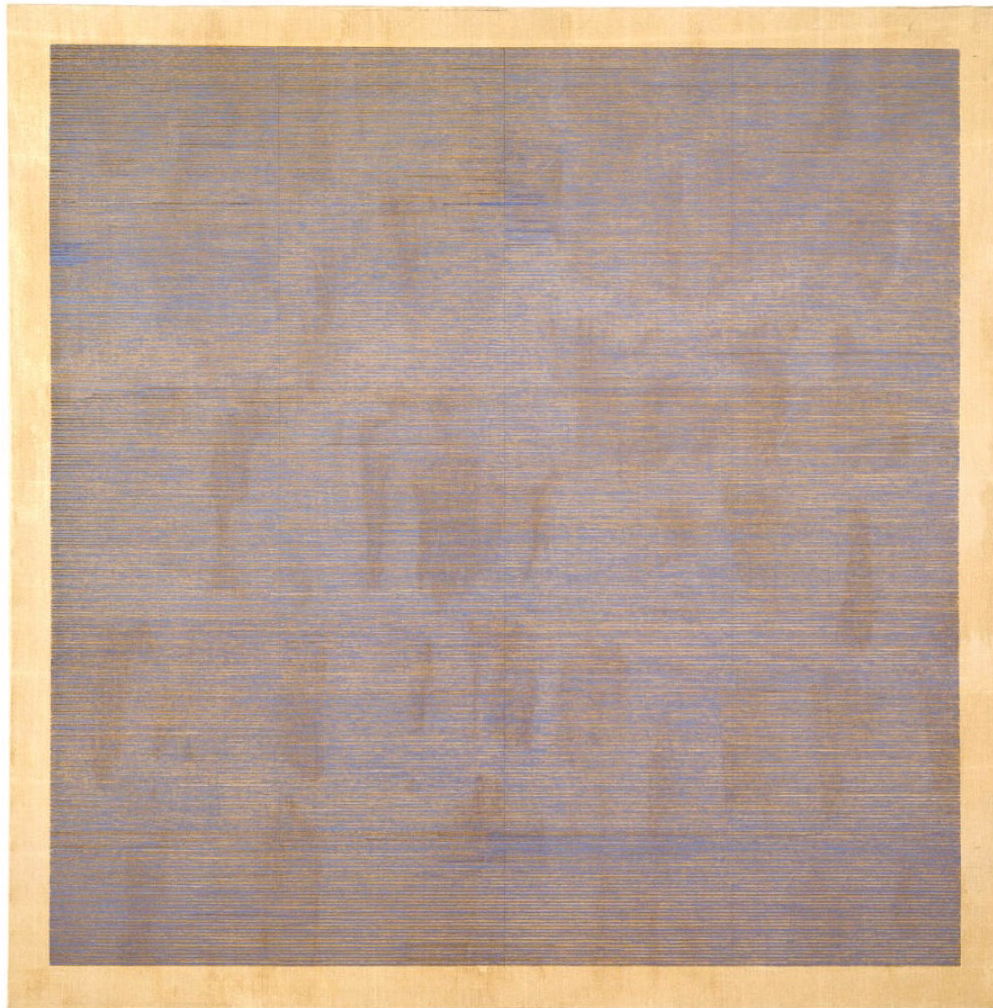


ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | SOFT EDGE (AFTER AGNES) | OIL, ACRYLIC AND
INK ON LINEN | 50 X 46 INCHES | 2025

AGNES MARTIN

Agnes Martin (1912-2004) was a Canadian-born American painter celebrated for her serene, minimalist compositions of delicate grids, subtle hand drawn lines, and a muted color palette. After moving to the United States, she spent significant periods in the American Southwest, particularly in New Mexico. Often associated with both Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, her work sought to evoke states of quiet contemplation and transcendence, drawing on influences from Zen Buddhism and the natural world. Martin's paintings are known for their meditative precision, restraint, and the spiritual potential of abstraction.

Martin has been a long-standing source of inspiration throughout Grassi's practice. Like Martin, Grassi often uses geometry, repetition, and a finely tuned sense of color to create rhythmic, meditative compositions. While Grassi works with more saturated hues and references the grid found in textile structures and technology, she shares Martin's pursuit of the poetic possibilities of line, form and balance through the meditative process of repetition.





ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | PETTWAY'S PASSAGE (AFTER LORETTA PETTWAY,
GEE'S BEND) | OIL, ACRYLIC AND INK ON LINEN | 72 X 30 X 2 INCHES | 2025

GEE'S BEND QUILTERS

The Gee's Bend quilters are a group of African American women from the community of Gee's Bend, Alabama, whose quilt-making tradition dates to the mid-19th century. The residents of Gee's Bend, are direct descendants of the enslaved people who worked the cotton plantation established in 1816 by Joseph Gee. Rooted in the American South, their work is celebrated for its bold improvisation, inventive use of geometry, and vibrant color combinations, often created from repurposed fabric. While deeply functional in origin, these quilts are now recognized as powerful works of modern art, embodying resilience, cultural memory, and a uniquely expressive visual language that bridges craft and fine art. Grassi's considers the Gee's Bend quilters as significant contributors to the modernist cannon and shares with them an interest in geometry, pattern, and color. Their work serving as a meaningful and ongoing source of inspiration for her. Like the quilters, Grassi weaves together structure and improvisation, allowing color, shape, and rhythm to guide the composition. While her paintings reference technology and textiles through a more minimal and abstract lens, they echo the Gee's Bend tradition in their celebration of hand-made process, layered history, and the deep narratives that can be carried through pattern and form.

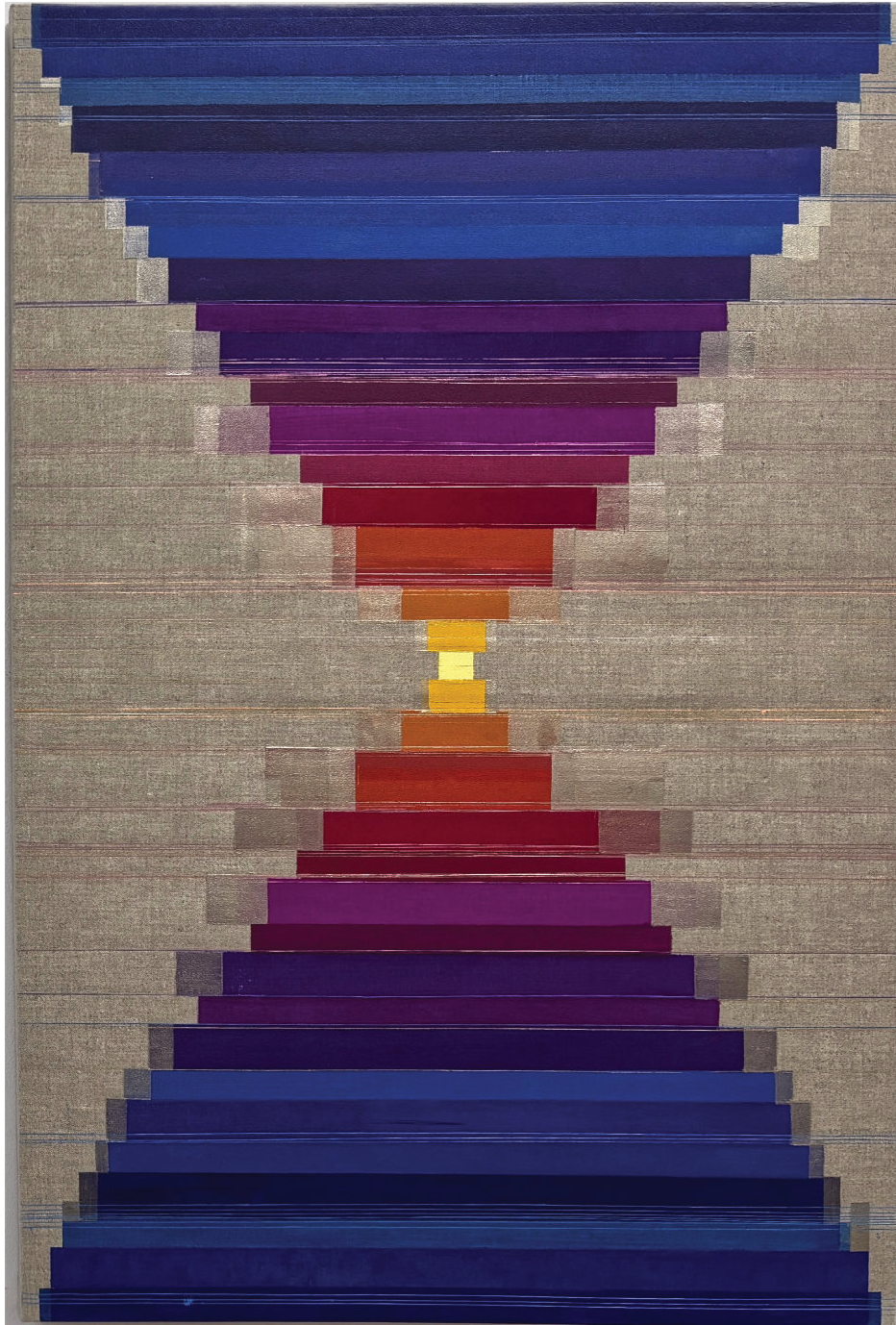




ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | ALGORITHMIC PULSE (AFTER ALMA) | ACRYLIC AND
INK ON LINEN ON BIRCH CUBE | 60 X 6 X 6 INCHES | 2025



ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | COURTHOUSE STEPS No.1 (AFTER ALMA) | OIL,
ACRYLIC AND INK ON LINEN | 36 X 24 X 2 INCHES | 2025



ANTONIETTA GRASSI | AN HOMAGE TO AGNES, ALMA AND THE GEE'S
BEND QUILTERS | COURTHOUSE STEPS No.2 (AFTER ALMA) | OIL,
ACRYLIC AND INK ON LINEN | 36 X 24 X 2 INCHES | 2025/6

ALMA THOMAS

Alma Thomas (1891-1978) was an African American painter best known for her vibrant and rhythmic abstractions. Based in Washington, D.C., for much of her career, she was deeply connected to the American South through her upbringing in Columbus, Georgia, which shaped her sense of color, light, and pattern. Associated with the Washington Color School, Thomas developed a distinctive style that combined rigorous abstraction that was musical in its energy. Her work explored the expressive possibilities of color and form, creating paintings that radiate joy, movement, and a celebration of life and nature.

Thomas's embrace of color as an important vehicle for emotion and meaning in her abstract paintings has served as a significant source of inspiration for Grassi. Like Thomas, Grassi uses abstraction to explore rhythm, repetition, and the interplay of structure and spontaneity. While Grassi's works incorporate textile references, layered surfaces, and subtler tones, she shares Thomas's commitment to the expressive power of color and the way it can evoke both personal resonance and universal connection.





Staccato (After Agnes)

In this work, Grassi pays homage to Agnes Martin by creating rhythm through a meditative process of repetition. She adopts a more restrained color palette than is typical in her practice, reflecting Martin's subtlety and restraint in the use of color. The composition draws from both textiles and musical rhythm, highlighting Martin's influence with Grassi's own sensibility.



Measuring Time (After Agnes)

Measuring five feet square—a format Agnes Martin often returned to in her later years—this work incorporates the "hovering frame" motif that recurs throughout Martin's paintings and works on paper. Inspired by Martin's luminous washes of delicate color, Grassi layers multiple veils of paint to soften the saturation of her hues to evoke subtle tonal shifts. Each hand-drawn line is built through a patient, meditative process that recalls Martin's devotion to repetition and stillness, while grounding the work in Grassi's own tactile and material sensibility. In doing so, she honors Martin's legacy of restraint and rhythm, while continuing her own exploration of measuring time through painting.



Soft Edge (After Agnes)

Working on unstretched linen, Grassi explores what she calls "textile-like paintings." Here, the square format echoes that of the work *Measuring Time (After Agnes)*, both in size and structure. The two works were conceived in dialogue with one another, often placed side by side in her studio.



Pettway's Passage (After Loretta Pettway)

This work honours the quilters of Gee's Bend, particularly the bricklayer (or courthouse steps) pattern that appears in many of Loretta Pettway's quilts. Grassi approaches the composition intuitively, beginning with a general sense of where the edges will fall without fully planning them out. This method allows for a spontaneous flow, with adjustments and "mending" taking place after the rough structure is laid down. These visible "fixes" become integral traces of the making process. Like the Gee's Bend quilters, Grassi embraces spontaneity and as a result irregularities, allowing them to animate the work.



Algorithmic Pulse (After Alma)

In this piece, she reflects on Alma Thomas's bold investigations with shifting compositions using long bands of puzzle-like patterns while also echoing the vibrant, rhythmic pulse that defines Thomas's legacy. Grassi expands into three dimensions, while maintaining her familiar process of repetition. Horizontal lines generate a sense of rhythm, interrupted and balanced by vertical totemic forms she calls "zips." Since 2022, Grassi has explored these shapes as metaphors for compressed file-paintings distilled into narrower fields.



Courthouse Steps I and II (After Alma Thomas)

In this pair of works, also structured in the bricklayer pattern, Grassi turns to the vibrant legacy of Alma Thomas. She incorporates gradations of color reminiscent of Thomas's paintings, using shifts in hue to create a sense of movement and light. Through this approach, Grassi translates the textile-inspired geometry of the quilts into a painterly dialogue with Thomas's chromatic brilliance.