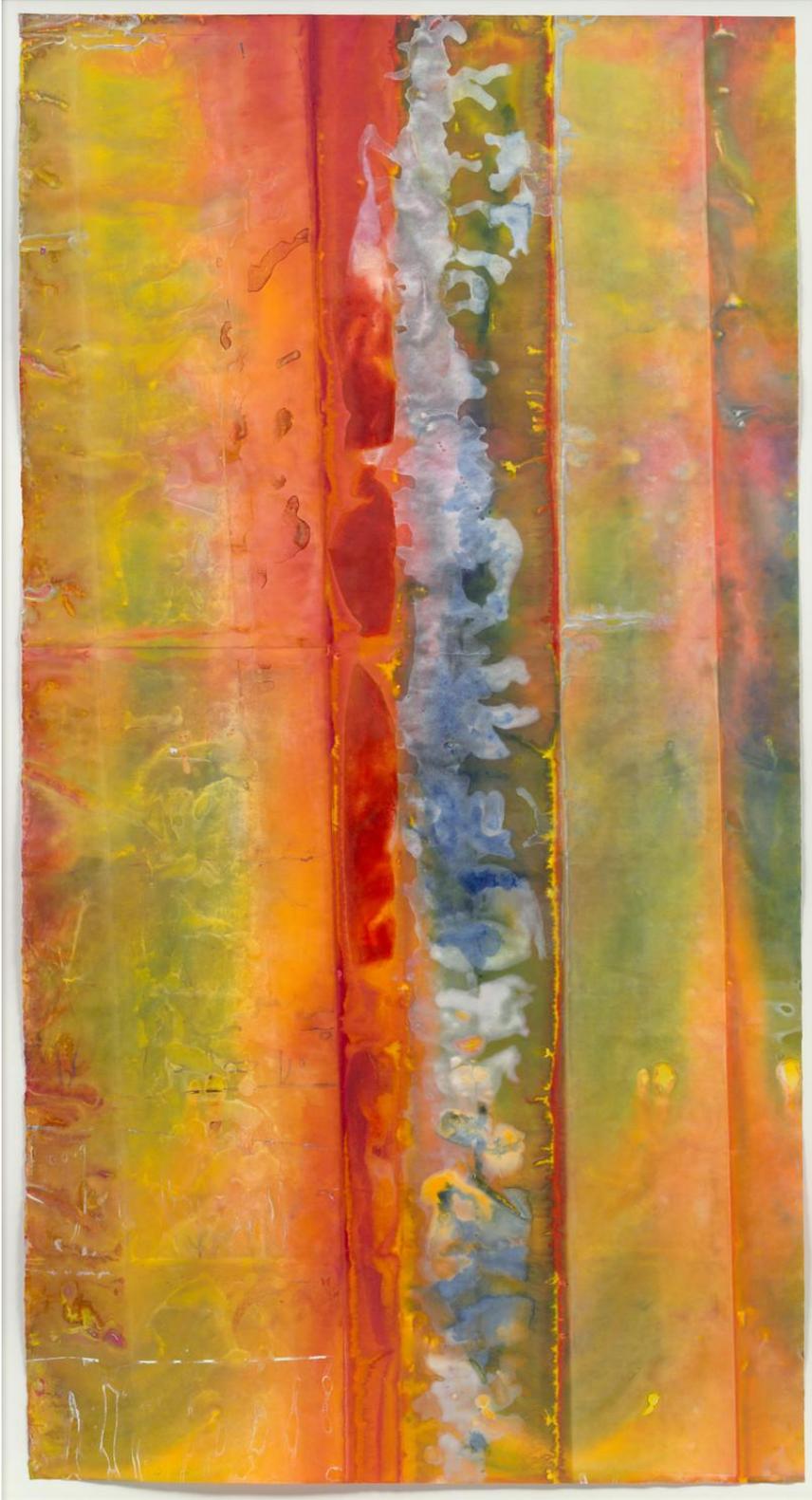


Mondays with MoMA



MoMA

Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. What colors do you notice?
2. What do you notice about how the colors are put together, blended, and combined?

Step 2 Learn more

Sam Gilliam is an abstract artist who has worked from the 1950s up to the present. While he was in art school, one of his mentors suggested working with watercolors as a way to help him give up control in his painting and allow more freedom. Gilliam created watercolor paintings by staining paper with vibrant colors and then folding the paper to allow the colors to blend in unexpected ways. Gilliam has said of working with watercolors, “You go with the flow. ... The real thing is not to have control of what happens, just to set it into motion.”

See more of Sam Gilliam’s work here:
www.moma.org/artists/2161.

Step 3 Activity: Create an abstract watercolor painting

Materials: watercolor paints (or other paints that have been diluted), watercolor paper or bristol board, paintbrush or sponge, water

1. Gather your supplies and have them ready—you will need to work quickly! Using your paintbrush, apply clean water to your paper, thoroughly wetting the entire surface (you may have to go over it twice).
2. Using a very wet brush to pick up a lot of paint, create loose but vibrant washes. You can fill big areas of color and make various shapes and splatters.
3. While the paint is still wet, make a couple of folds in your paper and press down firmly. One to three folds is all you need, since folding too many times will make the colors muddy. But don’t worry too much about the final results—the goal is to experiment and see what happens.
4. Unfold the paper to see how the folds created various effects.
5. Repeat the process with a new sheet of paper using different colors and folding the paper in different ways.

Step 4 Share!

Share your artwork with a friend or classmate. Or you can email a photo of your watercolor painting to us at MoMA:
schoolprograms@moma.org.



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Image: Sam Gilliam. Untitled. 2019. Watercolor on paper. Promised gift of Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman. © Sam Gilliam / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

