

*A Convergence of Science and Art:*

*Simpson-Middleman Paintings Featured in Boeing Advertisements from the 1950s*

**By Joseph W. Hammond**

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*By 1956, the Newark, New Jersey-based, art team of Marshall S. Simpson (1900–1958) and Roslynn E. Middleman (1929–2003) had produced a large and important series of abstract paintings that depicted various interpretations of space and the night sky. Eleven of these works were featured in employment advertisements placed over the next two years by the Boeing Airplane Company (now the Boeing Company) in Scientific American and elsewhere. Signed “Simpson-Middleman,” the paintings combined science, mathematics, and art into a single medium. Only one of the original works used by Boeing can now be located. This article tells for the first time the story of the unusual Simpson-Middleman art collaboration and the Boeing ad campaign, then documents in an illustrated checklist their paintings with related captions used in each of the seventeen Scientific American advertisements that incorporated them.*

Marshall Shoemaker Simpson was born on July 12, 1900, in Jersey City, a son of architect/engineer John T. Simpson (1870–1962) and Alice Wiles (born 1874). He was raised in Newark, and attended the Choate School followed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Unsatisfied, though, with a future in engineering, Simpson began his art career in the early 1920s after studying at the Art Students League in New York. His teachers included John Sloane, Maurice Sterne, and Guy Pene Du Bois. On October 24, 1925, Simpson married Gertrude Woodcock (1901–1979). Soon after, the young couple took off for France, where Marshall was able to pursue further art study. They returned to America on May 21, 1929, aboard the steamship *American Farmer*. The Simpsons then established residence in 1934 in Middletown,

Monmouth County, moving into a new home on Kings Highway, designed by Marshall and which included a second-floor studio. His work also began to be shown regularly at this time in Newark and New York City art galleries. By the 1940s, Simpson lectured and served as a student advisor at the Newark School of Fine & Industrial Art, a postsecondary program of the Newark public school system.<sup>1</sup>



**Marshall Simpson in a photograph taken about 1935. Author's collection.**

Roslynn Estelle Middleman was born in Philadelphia on August 22, 1929, a daughter of Frank G. Middleman (1898–1965) and Miriam Applebaum (1903–1995). The family later lived

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled with information retrieved from Ancestry.com; plus “Simpson—Artist in Abstract,” *Asbury Park Press*, February 3, 1952, 12; Cooperative Gallery, Newark, New Jersey, *Marshall Simpson: Exhibition of Paintings and Pastels*, January 12 through February 4, 1939, author's collection; and Peter Hastings Falk, ed., *Who Was Who in American Art, 1564–1975* (Madison, Connecticut: Sound View Press, 1999), v. 3, 3041 and 3043.

in Plainfield, New Jersey, where Middleman graduated from the local high school in 1947. Her classmates had voted her the young woman most likely to succeed. Middleman first attended the New Jersey College for Women in New Brunswick (later named Douglass College and now part of Rutgers University), but then became an honor student and graduate at the Newark art school where Simpson taught. Among her teachers were Wladyslaw Benda, Reuben Nakian, and Bernard Gussow. After aspiring to a medical career, Roslynn Middleman engaged for a short time in portrait painting.<sup>2</sup>



**Roslynn Middleman in a 1947 Plainfield, New Jersey, High School yearbook photograph. Courtesy Ancestry.com.**

Marshall Simpson built a generally successful reputation for traditional landscape and marine painting until the 1945 nuclear explosion at Hiroshima, in which “with terrifying impact Nature was revealed in a light which dwarfed any previously held conception.” Simpson felt that

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<sup>2</sup> Compiled with information retrieved from Ancestry.com; plus “Simpson—Artist in Abstract,” *Asbury Park Press*, February 3, 1952, 12; and Peter Hastings Falk, op. cit., v. 3, 3041 and 3043.

“the Platonic specification of what constitutes a work of art, ‘the imitation of Nature’ concept, perished in the blast and that at Hiroshima, science had opened a cosmic view of nature beyond the power of the artist to imitate.”<sup>3</sup> So after World War II, he started searching for new forms of expression that set aside realism altogether. Simpson’s last traditional art show was held from January 27 to February 8, 1947, at the Bonestell Gallery, located at 18 East 57<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City. Fourteen works on display included landscape scenes as well as seascapes.<sup>4</sup>

For the next several years, Marshall Simpson experimented with various approaches to abstraction. They varied from lines laid out in geometric forms on a solid color background (most typically blue), to elaborately applied drops of paint in a pattern that attempted to represent the nuclear explosion at Hiroshima. The latter canvases were influenced by the style of painting made famous by Jackson Pollock (1912–1956).<sup>5</sup> In fact, after World War II, New York City became a major center for abstract art in a movement called Abstract Expressionism. It was the first specifically American art movement to achieve a level of international influence that put New York at the center of the Western art world, a role formerly filled by Paris. The movement’s name derived from the combination of the emotional intensity and self-denial of the German Expressionists with the anti-figurative aesthetic of the European abstract schools such as Futurism, the Bauhaus, and Synthetic Cubism. Abstract Expressionism produced a variety of technical and aesthetic innovations valuing freedom, spontaneity, and personal expression. It can be clustered around two major tendencies: action painting and color field painting. Among those leading artists most prominent in the New York school were Pollock, Willem de Kooning (1904–

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<sup>3</sup> “Simpson-Middleman Abstract Team,” *Newark Sunday News*, September 19, 1954, W 12.

<sup>4</sup> Bonestell Gallery, New York, New York, *Marshall Simpson*, January 27 through February 8, 1947, exhibit handout and checklist, author’s collection.

<sup>5</sup> In 1980, a group of about 125 paintings and sketches by Marshall Simpson was donated to the Monmouth County Historical Association in Freehold, New Jersey, by the Friends of Marshall and Gertrude Simpson. These works, many of them experimental, surfaced in the auction of Gertrude Simpson’s estate. They form an important study collection for understanding the evolution of Simpson’s style from the early 1930s to the Simpson-Middleman abstractions of the 1950s.



1997), Arshile Gorky (1904–1998), Mark Rothko (1903–1970), and Lee Krasner (1908–1984), to name just a few.<sup>6</sup>



**The Newark School of Fine and Industrial Art moved in 1931 into this imposing new art deco–styled building, along with the secondary level Arts High School. The postsecondary program closed in 1997. Courtesy Newark Public Schools Historic Preservation Committee, Newark, New Jersey.**

The creative Simpson-Middleman partnership began about 1949 when a “chance conversation with Simpson, then a member of staff, in the school cafeteria, revealed a community of aims. Both were stirred by new vistas and possibilities in art that modern science offered. . . . A decision to join forces was made and toasted with lukewarm coffee,” Roslynn Middleman recalled in 1954 to noted New Jersey artist and art critic/columnist Michael Lenson (1903–1971).<sup>7</sup> From the start, Simpson-Middleman explored joint nonobjective class painting in a shared private studio at 65 William Street in Newark. “Their works have featured mathematical explorations and optical illusions and, from a practical approach, can be of value to architects studying visual possibilities of certain designs.”<sup>8</sup> No doubt Simpson’s engineering education at MIT, early experience as an engineer/architect before his transition to art, and his ongoing

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<sup>6</sup> “Abstract Expressionism,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abstract\\_expressionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abstract_expressionism) (retrieved April 21, 2022). This lengthy article provides an extensive bibliography.

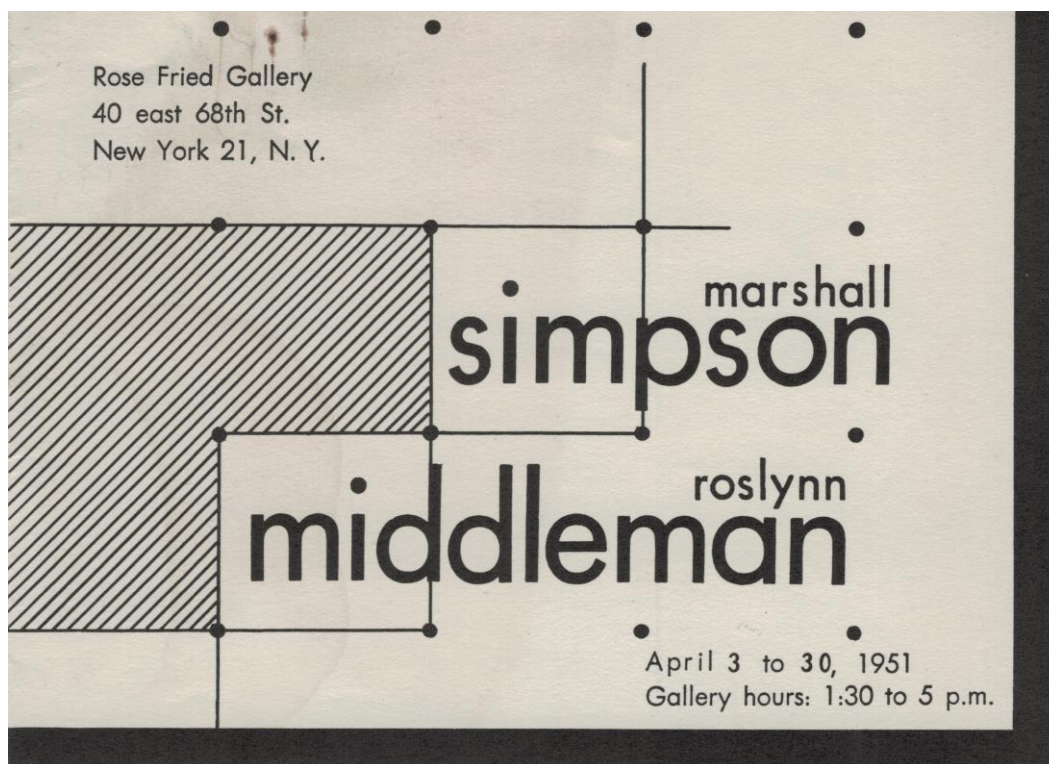
<sup>7</sup> “Simpson-Middleman Abstract Team,” *Newark Sunday News*, September 19, 1954, W 12.

<sup>8</sup> “Simpson—Artist in Abstract,” *Asbury Park Press*, February 3, 1952, 12.

mathematics lectures at the Newark art school intended for student draftsmen and technical illustrators, contributed to their emerging signature style.

Simpson-Middleman held their first major show from April 3 to April 30, 1951, at the Rose Fried Gallery, 40 East 68<sup>th</sup> Street, in New York. In an invitation mailer, the artists wrote:

Let us assume an area in which the arts and sciences overlap. This assumption is not altogether arbitrary, for there is evidence that such an area exists. The paintings shown here are the present results of explorations in this area. In the course of these explorations, the working methods of the scientist have been employed, and the resources of the artist have been used to communicate information that has been obtained.<sup>9</sup>



**Rose Fried Gallery exhibit flyer, April 1951, 4 1/2 x 6 inches. Author's collection.**

Not all critics appreciated their approach.

The paintings are untitled and without specific intent of impression to be conveyed, ranging from irregular line on flat area to something reminiscent of optical razzle-dazzles. What they have produced should prove of interest to all the workers in abstraction, although as yet the work seems to me to have more of sheer optical rather than aesthetic appeal and to be a method rather than a fruition.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Rose Fried Gallery, New York, New York, exhibit flyer, April 1951. Author's collection.

<sup>10</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping, April 2, 1951. Author's collection.

Undaunted by the criticism, works by Simpson-Middleman were then included in four prominent museum exhibits in rapid succession. A painting titled *Series 2, Number 4* won honorable mention at the twenty-first annual *New Jersey State Exhibition of Paintings, Sculpture, Prints and Drawings* held at the Montclair Art Museum in late 1951. This award was sponsored by the New Jersey Chapter of the American Artists Professional League.<sup>11</sup> Another work called *Composition*, also known as *Rhodapsis*, went on display at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City in their by-invitation-only exhibition of *Contemporary American Painting*, which opened in November of 1951.<sup>12</sup> The following year, Simpson-Middleman was represented by a painting titled *Series 2, Number 5* in the first triennial exhibit of *Work by New Jersey Artists* held at the Newark Museum. This work was purchased by the museum at the show.<sup>13</sup> Also in



**An early work by Simpson-Middleman titled *Composition, or Rhodapsis*, circa 1950, oil on masonite, 23 1/2 x 37 1/2 inches. Exhibited in New York City at the Rose Fried Gallery in April 1951, and then later that year at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Courtesy Monmouth County Historical Association, Freehold, New Jersey, gift of the Friends of Marshall and Gertrude Simpson, 1980.**

<sup>11</sup> *The (Paterson) Morning Call*, November 7, 1951, 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Asbury Park Press*, November 10, 1951, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *American Art in the Newark Museum: Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* (Newark: Newark Museum, 1981), 376.

1952, the talented art team was selected among others to design an ultramodern advertising poster for the *New York Times* that would help combat the paper's stuffy image. A group of the posters, including the one by Simpson-Middleman, was put on special display in May in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.<sup>14</sup> Inclusion in two years of artworks by Simpson-Middleman in four exhibits hosted by leading New York-area museums that promoted the work of contemporary artists gave this team credibility and visibility in the local community of abstract expressionists and collectors. Marshall Simpson and Roslynn Middleman continued to refine and enhance their novel mix of science and art until Simpson's untimely death from heart disease on November 29, 1958, at the age of 58.<sup>15</sup>

At least 33 of the sky and space works were consigned to the John Heller Gallery at 63 East 57th Street in New York City, a prestigious location between Madison and Park Avenues. In an exhibit of them held in February of 1955, a critic commented in *Art News* that:

*Simpson-Middleman* is the collaborative signature of Marshall Simpson and Roslyn [sic] Middleman, who work together on their pictures and here present new paintings done in the past two years. They are sharply linear in the definition of planes and employ a scientific precision of light in abstractions which are occasioned by sentiment and idea rather than by analysis of object or space. Thus they relate more to the Futurists than to the Cubists, though their impulse is toward stasis rather than motion. They have an intimacy not often found in this style, as if flat rectangles and triangles of clear color were drifting like birds through an interior, or as if a doorway were viewed through corrugated glass; but this is a response, not a suggestion of the work. Some have the pure, almost sterile, look of water—which is a pleasant visual experience in itself.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Press Release, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, May 28, 1952. [https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma\\_press-release\\_325848.pdf?\\_ga=2.121606600.1590546590.1650577061-1859651813.1646839080&\\_gac=1.15643332.1650577068.Cj0KCQjwgYSTBhDKARIsAB8KuksbFNz9g4nKzMiVwCR1EYaXbYKQ4mxNB7rb3WomLgYczirsDkfU\\_cwaAtfLEALw\\_wcB](https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_325848.pdf?_ga=2.121606600.1590546590.1650577061-1859651813.1646839080&_gac=1.15643332.1650577068.Cj0KCQjwgYSTBhDKARIsAB8KuksbFNz9g4nKzMiVwCR1EYaXbYKQ4mxNB7rb3WomLgYczirsDkfU_cwaAtfLEALw_wcB) (retrieved April 9, 2022) Other artists who designed *New York Times* posters that were also exhibited in May 1952 at MoMA included William Bowman, Kenneth Haak, and George Krikorian in collaboration with Paul R. Smith. Smith will figure later in this story.

<sup>15</sup> *Asbury Park Press*, November 30, 1958, 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Art News*, February 1955, 64. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_artnews\\_1955-02\\_53\\_10/page/64/mode/lup?view=theater](https://archive.org/details/sim_artnews_1955-02_53_10/page/64/mode/lup?view=theater) (retrieved April 22, 2022).



Twenty-two of the paintings went on display again at the Heller Gallery from December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957. This exhibition proved to be the culmination of the Simpson-Middleman collaborative artistic career due to the death of Marshall Simpson less than two years later. In a flyer for the show, the duo expressed their inspiration for these paintings.

The night sky is one of the most beautiful moments in nature. For us, its beauty lies not only in what we see and know about it, but also in those uncertainties in which knowledge and perception are all but lost. The paintings in this exhibition resulted from contemplation and study of that sky. All knowledge begins in perception, but all creation begins in imagination; yet actually the difference between perception and imagination is only one of degree, not one of kind. Thus, the truths that we know and the truths we create differ only in degree of certainty. Therefore, we have not hesitated to combine them, for love of truth is not to be confused with love of certainty.

Four of the paintings had been sold beforehand but remained on display. Two titled *Phantom Fleet* and *Polar Voyage* were acquired by private collectors, *Nimbus* by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and *Earth* by the Boeing Airplane Company in Seattle, Washington. Two additional works in the show had been invited for inclusion in the 25th Biennial Exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, in 1955 (*Rain*), and in the 66th Annual Exhibition at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln in 1956 (*Monoceros*).<sup>17</sup>

In an introduction to a smaller follow-on exhibit of 12 related works held in February 1957 at the Heller Gallery, Marshall Simpson and Roslynn Middleman explained that:

These paintings are not abstracted from nature, nor are they purely formal arrangements. They are invented to give form to something we have come on in our world that has excited us. We have the same kind of excitement that we imagine explorers have. Our world is one of space and motion and light, of forces and directions. It is a world of ideas, of structures and orders and relationships as well as of feeling and of concrete phenomena.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, Simpson-Middleman exhibit flyer and checklist, December 1956. Author's collection.

<sup>18</sup> John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, Simpson-Middleman exhibit flyer and checklist, February 1957. Author's collection.

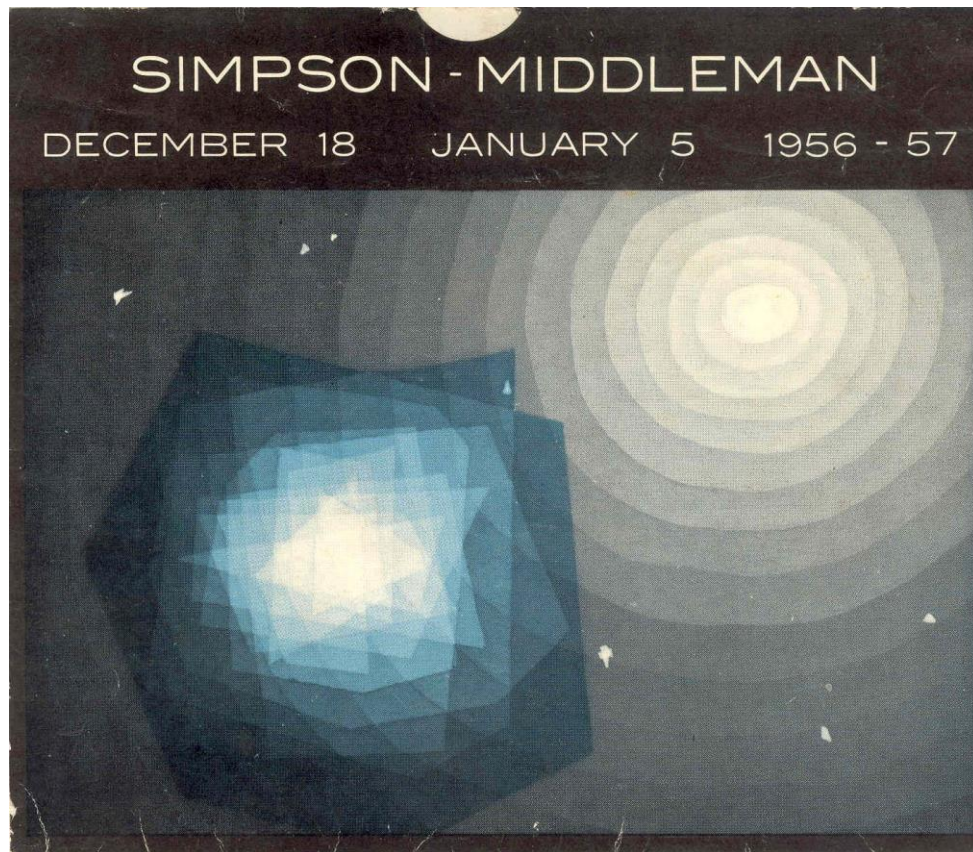
The Whitney Museum again lent *Nimbus*. Another work titled *Window*, also called *Series 2, Number 5*, was borrowed from the Newark Museum, which had, as mentioned above, purchased it in 1952 directly from Simpson-Middleman.



**Newark Sunday News, September 19, 1954. Author's collection. The caption read: "SIMPSON-MIDDLEMAN AT WORK—Marshall Simpson and Roslynn Middleman, who sign their abstract paintings 'Simpson-Middleman,' prefer a table to an easel when they collaborate on a painting in their Newark studio."**



By late 1956, the Boeing Airplane Company of Seattle, Washington, had obtained reproduction rights through the Heller Gallery to use Simpson-Middleman paintings in their *Scientific American* employment advertisements. Seventeen ads featuring 11 paintings appeared between January 1957 and January 1959. They were divided into two sequences of eleven and



**John Heller Gallery exhibit flyer and checklist, December 1956, 6 1/4 x 7 1/4 inches. Author's collection.**

six consecutive monthly ads, respectively. The first, illustrated with *Earth*, appeared in the January 1957 issue, while the second Simpson-Middleman show at the Heller Gallery continued. This work, purchased outright by Boeing, came from a complete series depicting the then nine planets. The same picture had also been used for the cover of the December 1956 Heller Gallery exhibit flyer. A slogan that read “A world of opportunity awaits you at Boeing” picked up on the imagery in the painting, as it did in most of those ads that followed. Text copy promoted Boeing

as a leading-edge employer for engineers of all types. “If the myriad problems of supersonic flight, electronic guidance and related areas of exploration excite you, you’ll find a sympathetic climate and stimulating minds to work and grow with at Boeing.”<sup>19</sup> This first ad series ran for 11 months, ending in November 1957. It should be noted that some of the Boeing recruitment ads illustrated with Simpson-Middleman paintings appeared in other technical journals and popular magazines. The journals included *Aeronautical Engineering Review*, *Aerospace Engineering*, *Aviation Week*, *Jet Propulsion*, *Journal of College Placement*, and *Missiles & Rockets*. Magazines included *The Atlantic*, *Harper’s*, and *Time*.<sup>20</sup> In some instances, text copy was changed to fit the target audience for that particular publication.<sup>21</sup>

The Boeing Company was started in 1916, when American lumber industrialist William E. Boeing founded the Aero Products Company in Seattle, Washington. In 1917, the organization was renamed the Boeing Airplane Company. A series of acquisitions in the late 1920s caused the company to rename itself again to the United Aircraft and Transport Company, which encompassed aircraft manufacturing as well as ownership of commercial airlines. A 1934 requirement that manufacturing be separated from air transportation resulted in the Boeing Airplane Company being one of three major groups created out of the dissolution, the other two being United Aircraft (later United Technologies) and United Airlines. Among the famous military aircraft produced by Boeing in the years following were the B-17 Flying Fortress of World War II, the B-29 Superfortress, and the B-52 Stratofortress heavy long-range bomber. A number of the latter remain in service after almost 70 years, albeit with extensive retrofits. Highly successful commercial aircraft included the B-707, a jetliner first introduced in 1957. It

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<sup>19</sup> *Scientific American*, January 1957, 87.

<sup>20</sup> These publications were identified using the following internet search:  
<https://archive.org/search.php?query=%22simpson-middleman%22&sin=TXT>.

<sup>21</sup> As an example, see *The Atlantic*, November 1958, 31. The text was expanded substantially over the same ad illustrated with *Forces of Nature*, which had been placed in *Scientific American* in October 1958, 143.



remained in production until 1979. The Boeing Airplane Company simplified its name in 1961 to the Boeing Company to reflect its rapid expansion into other business lines such as space and advanced weapons systems research, development, and manufacturing. Today, Boeing is one of the world's leading companies that designs, manufactures, and sells airplanes, rotorcraft, rockets, satellites, telecommunications equipment, and missiles.<sup>22</sup>

The New York advertising firm of Calkins & Holden developed the Simpson-Middleman ad campaign for Boeing. Formed in 1902 by Earnest E. Calkins (1868–1964) and Ralph Holden (1871–1926), Calkins & Holden had clients over the years that included the Lackawanna Railroad, E. R. Squibb, H. J. Heinz, Beechnut, U. S. Rubber Co., New York Stock Exchange, and Prudential, to name just a few. A Maypo cereal campaign they first created in 1956 ran into the 1960s. It was ranked in the top 100 of the twentieth century by *Advertising Age*. Calkins & Holden's success as an agency stemmed from its emphasis on design in print ads, packaging, and sales promotion materials. They were the first modern firm to set up internal art and typesetting departments. This allowed them to produce integrated advertising campaigns that incorporated high-quality copy, layout, and art. The successor firm of Fletcher Richards Calkins & Holden was acquired in 1964 by McCann Erickson, part of the Interpublic Group of advertising and public relations organizations. That merger prompted Boeing to withdraw immediately its \$2-million-a-year advertising account due to potential conflicts with other McCann Erickson clients.<sup>23</sup>

The Calkins & Holden account with Boeing was no doubt strengthened considerably by the March 1957 acquisition of a minority stock interest in Frederick E. Baker & Associates of

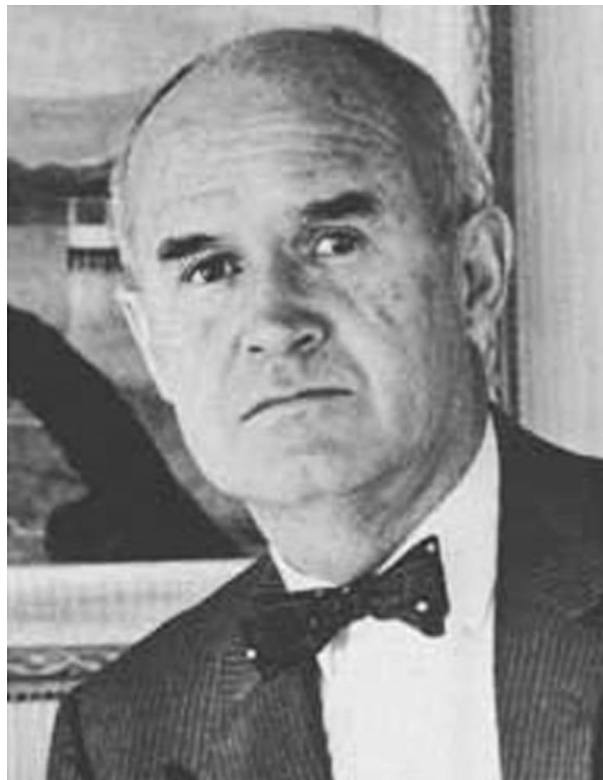
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<sup>22</sup> "Boeing," <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing> (retrieved April 21, 2022), and a very extensive and detailed Boeing History Chronology available on their corporate web site at <https://www.boeing.com/resources/boeingdotcom/history/pdf/Boeing-Chronology.pdf> (retrieved April 19, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, January 16, 1964, 57.

Seattle, an advertising and public relations agency founded in 1940. It had an existing relationship with Boeing for local ads and employee recruitment going back to 1948. Frederick E. Baker (1908–1989) became a director of Calkins & Holden. In return, the New York agency “had respected the Seattle concern’s desire for independence but had provided creative strength and help in many areas.” The two firms established a joint venture arrangement.<sup>24</sup> Baker was later acquired by N. W. Ayer.

The relationship between Calkins & Holden and Simpson-Middleman could have gotten its start as early as May of 1955. Paul R. Smith (1907–1993), then vice president and creative director of the firm, served in that month with Marshall Simpson as judges for a high school art exhibition held in Red Bank, Monmouth County.<sup>25</sup> Smith, a resident of the Red Bank area, was



**Paul R. Smith (1907–1993), vice president and creative director of Calkins & Holden. He created the Simpson-Middleman ad campaign for Boeing. Courtesy ADC Hall of Fame, New York, New York.**

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<sup>24</sup> *New York Times*, March 13, 1957, and January 16, 1964, 57; *Seattle Times*, August 15, 1989, D4.

<sup>25</sup> *Red Bank Register*, May 26, 1955, 16.

also an artist and he taught celestial navigation, a topic closely related to Simpson's interests in space and the sky. Smith joined Calkins & Holden in 1950.<sup>26</sup> His ad campaigns demonstrated skill in selling ideas, often abstract ones, and he enjoyed the job of interpreting corporations to each other as well as to the various publics they wanted to reach. Smith brought a fusion of independent vision and intellect to advertising that enhanced the role and prestige of the art director. In his last years before retiring in 1970, Smith wrote and directed a long ad campaign for the Celanese Corporation, the last of which was illustrated with a work by René Magritte (1898–1967), a Belgian surrealist artist.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the Boeing ads in *Scientific American* included a quotation from Simpson-Middleman in the captions that described the creative thought that inspired their paintings. As an example, in the first ad, *Earth* was characterized as follows:

Earth is distinguished among the planets by its oceans of water and its single moon. From these as a starting point, each in this painting has been imagined as a configuration of intersecting planes—layer upon layer of blue—until it becomes a transparent crystal, glowing in space.<sup>28</sup>

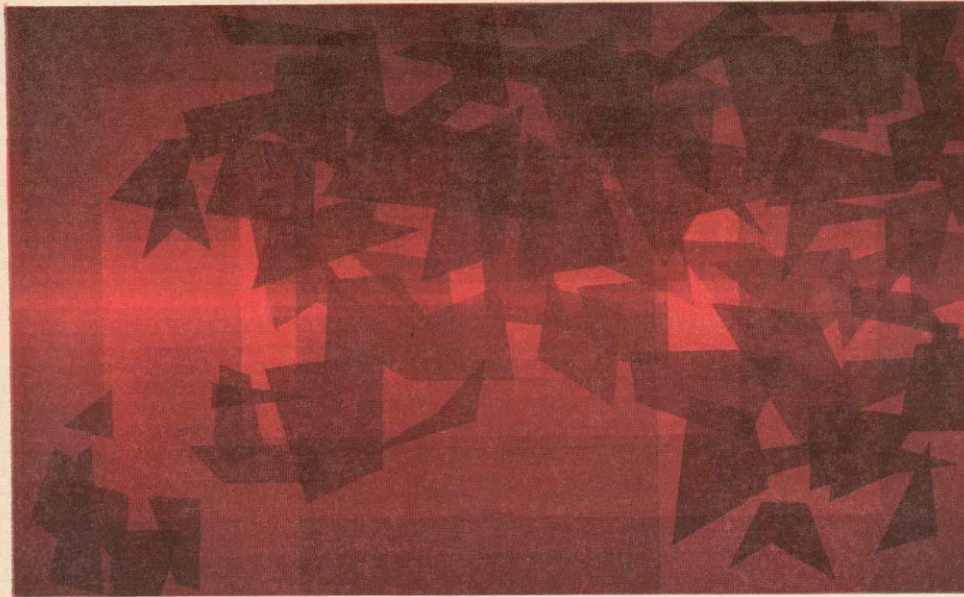
All ads followed an identical full-page layout and graphic design, although the artwork, captions, slogans, and texts varied. Cuts of the artwork, with their captions, occupied half or more of the page. The remainder incorporated large areas of white space, minimum copy, and a very clean appearance, a hallmark of Smith's advertising approach. This overall design marked a decided departure from the crowded, cluttered aesthetics of a previous Boeing employment ad campaign created by N. W. Ayer that had ended in December 1956. Comparison, however, of

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<sup>26</sup> *New York Times*, October 16, 1993, 11. Although Paul Richard Smith was born in Minnesota, the family had roots in New Jersey. He spent the years after retirement in 1970 in Bermuda, where he died. But his remains were returned to Monmouth County for interment in the yard of Christ Episcopal Church in Shrewsbury, near his first wife, Dolores Sonnen Smith (1905–1952), and older brother, Samuel Stelle Smith (1904–1989), who was a noted local historian, especially of the Revolutionary War.

<sup>27</sup> "Paul Smith," <http://adcgloball.org/hall-of-fame/paul-smith/> (retrieved April 23, 2022).

<sup>28</sup> *Scientific American*, January 1957, 87.



"ECLIPSE" a recent painting by Simpson-Middleman, gifted artistic interpreters of the physical sciences. About this new expression they write: "Eclipse" was painted as a result of watching an actual eclipse of the sun. We were particularly struck with the curious light that was both dim and glowing and the unusual pattern of the shadows on the leaves of the trees around us. We had never seen anything like it before." Painting courtesy of John Heller Gallery, Inc.

### There's engineering excitement at Boeing

If you enjoy working on exciting, limitless-future projects, you belong at Boeing. For here you can explore problems involving the development of inertial and electronic guidance systems, chemical fuel propulsion, new metals, new processes. You can gain in professional stature on such Boeing projects as the 707, America's *first* jet transport, the B-52 global jet bomber, and an entire weapons system spearheaded by the supersonic Boeing Bomarc IM-99, an advanced missile of far greater

range than any other now in use in air defense.

Boeing needs engineers of ALL categories, and physicists and mathematicians, for long-range assignments in design, research, production or service. You'll find the excitement of the future at Boeing—today.

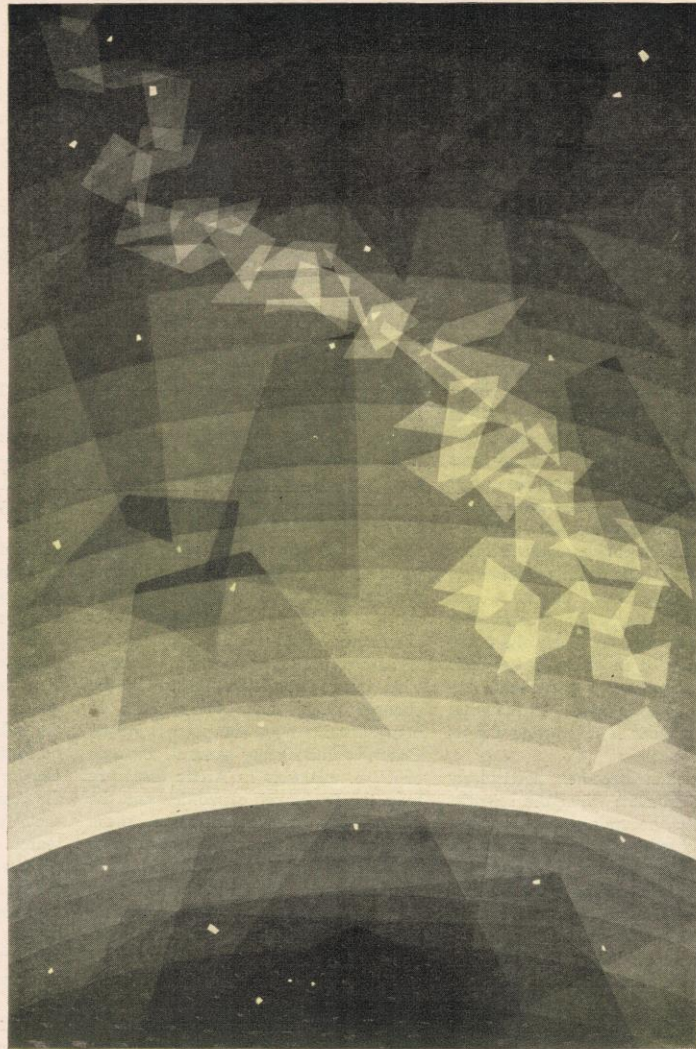
Drop a note now to: John C. Sanders, Engineering Personnel Administrator, Boeing Airplane Company, Department B-65, Seattle 24, Washington.

**BOEING**

A full-page Boeing employment advertisement from *Scientific American*, July 1957, 169, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. Author's collection. Developed by Calkins & Holden, all ads in the series followed the same general layout and graphic design, although the artwork, captions, slogans, and text varied. The original white paper stock has browned significantly over time.



"AURORA," a recent expression from the brushes of Simpson-Middleman, a team of artists who find their subjects in the world of the natural sciences. "Aurora," they explain, "is a visual statement with equivocal overtones of dawn, the Aurora itself and a hint of a Chimera." Painting courtesy of John Heller Gallery, Inc.



## You'll discover new horizons at Boeing

Through the years, the advanced work of Boeing engineers and scientists has opened new eras in civil and military aviation. A few of their pioneering accomplishments: the first 3-mile-a-minute transport, the world's first four-engine pressurized airliner, the first high-performance four-engine bomber—and the 707, America's first jet airliner. Boeing in addition has developed a defense weapon system spearheaded by the supersonic Bomarc IM-99 interceptor missile.

If new horizons interest you, you'll enjoy working at Boeing. For here you'll find engineering excitement in such advanced fields as electronic and inertial guidance, chemical fuel propulsion, guided missiles and supersonic flight of the future.

**BOEING**

Drop a note now to John C. Sanders, Engineering Personnel Administrator, Boeing Airplane Company, Department B-66, Seattle 24, Washington

Another example of a full-page Boeing employment advertisement from *Scientific American*, August 1957, 141, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. Author's collection. In this particular ad, the painting titled *Aurora* and its caption occupy more than two-thirds of the page.

the original *Nimbus* painting (also titled *Series 5-H-1, S-101-11*) at the Whitney Museum to the printed version of October 1957 demonstrates the level of image degradation that occurred in the production of the advertisements. The painting, dated 1953, achieves its visual impact by using very subtle and graduated shades of gray mathematically laid out in meticulous geometric patterns over a ground of creamy white. Calkins & Holden replaced the white with yellow in the advertisement, and turned the image 180 degrees. It also lost clarity in the printing process. *Nimbus* is the only Simpson-Middleman painting used by Boeing that can be located as of this writing.

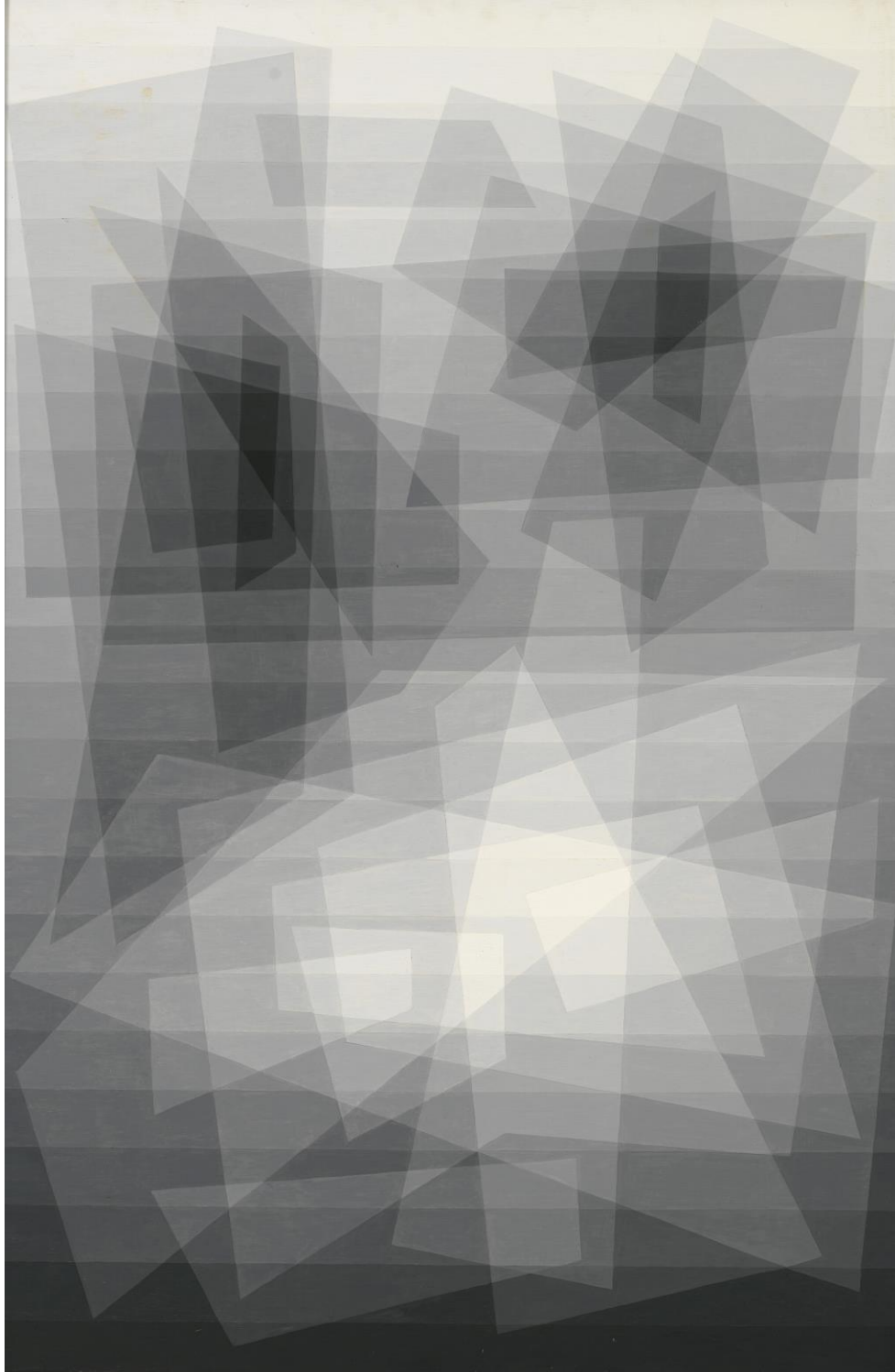
In conjunction with the rollout of the Boeing ad campaign, the Seattle Art Museum hosted an exhibit of 12 Simpson-Middleman paintings in August and September of 1957. Ten works were obtained from the John Heller Gallery, the Whitney Museum again lent *Nimbus*, and another painting came from a private collection. Press coverage noted that “drawing upon backgrounds in mathematics and engineering, the artists have attempted to present visual expressions of the scientific imagination of man.”<sup>29</sup> By then, jointly created works by Marshall Simpson and Roslynn Middleman were being shown in art galleries across the country, including at such places as the University of Wisconsin in Madison and in Los Angeles, California.<sup>30</sup>

The second Simpson-Middleman ad series for Boeing ran from August 1958 through January 1959. It featured six of their works from the earlier campaign. However, two of the paintings were given different titles, and two others were printed in alternative colors. The theme of this sequence concentrated more on Boeing’s increased involvement in space research, such as major contractors for the Minuteman and Bomarc missile programs, and development of a

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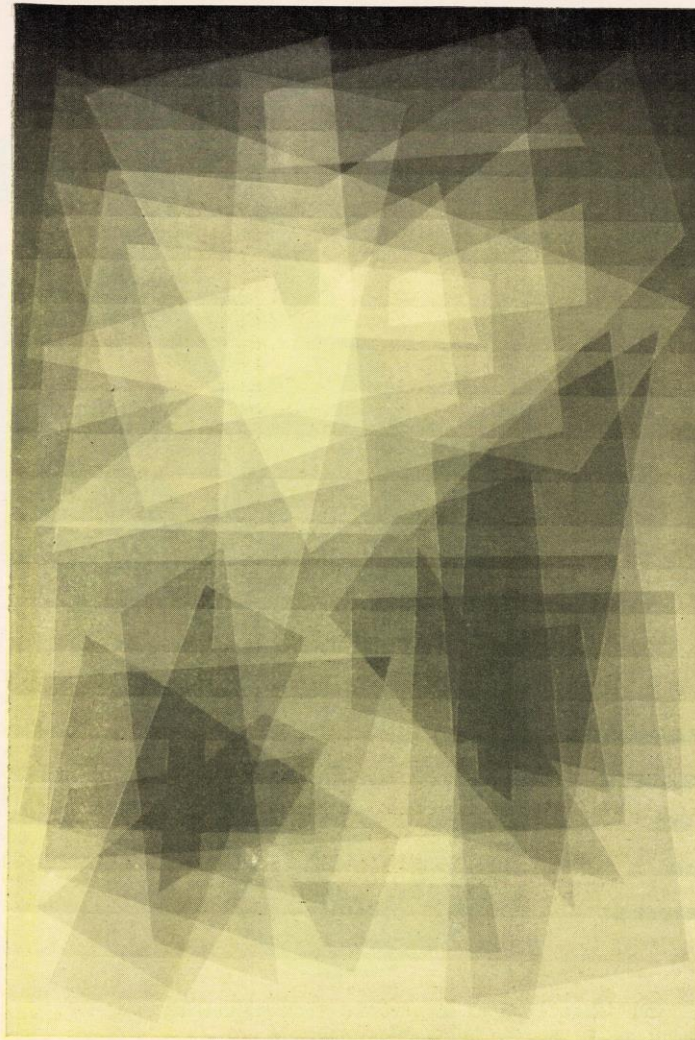
<sup>29</sup> *Seattle Daily Times*, August 16, 1957, 27.

<sup>30</sup> *The (Madison, Wisconsin) Capital Times*, July 27, 1957, 5; and *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1958, 104.



*Nimbus*, also titled *Series 5-H-1, S-101-11*, 1953, oil on masonite, 33 3/4 x 22 3/4 inches. Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery in New York City, 1956–1957, and at the Seattle Art Museum, Washington, 1957. Courtesy the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, gift of Samuel S. Goldberg, 1955. Representing filtered moonlight, this is the only Simpson-Middleman painting used in Boeing advertisements that can presently be located. It is an outstanding example of their mature technique and abstract style with subtle gradations of gray on a creamy-white ground.





"NIMBUS," a new painting by the well-known team of science-artists Simpson-Middleman. In this work, the creators have found new artistic meaning in the Moon and its reflected light. An attempt to capture the polarized nature of moonlight is made. The result, an almost half-light. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

## Work in the world of supersonic flight—at Boeing

Supersonic flight is still in its infancy, and Boeing engineers are engaged in the adventurous task of pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge in this years-ahead world. Underway at Boeing are design projects for top-secret aircraft and missiles far more advanced than any yet developed. Related explorations delve into the required properties and capabilities of materials, fuels and systems not yet in existence. You'd find working on advanced Boeing projects a true adventure—challenging, rewarding, stature-building. Boeing offers this opportunity today to scientists, and to experienced engineers in many categories.

**BOEING**

*Drop a note now, to John C. Sanders, Engineering Personnel Administrator, Boeing Airplane Company, Department B-68, Seattle 24, Washington.*

The full-page Boeing employment ad that featured *Nimbus*, owned by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, *Scientific American*, October 1957, 153, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. Author's collection. Like the ad using *Aurora*, the painting image and caption occupy over two-thirds of the page.



“Dyna-Soar” manned space vehicle capable of reentering the Earth’s atmosphere and landing normally, a precursor of the NASA space shuttle program. They sought engineers for work in:

celestial mechanics, glide vehicles, space trajectories, high speed drag and heating effects in space flight and re-entry, anti-submarine warfare techniques, gas dynamics, nuclear physics, solid propellant rocket engines, infrared techniques, anti-missile missiles, advanced electronics, and ion and plasma production and manipulation . . . Boeing’s space-age orientation, exemplified by advanced studies now underway in ballistic, orbital, lunar, interplanetary and advanced weapons systems, has already laid a foundation for continuing leadership in the future.<sup>31</sup>

The editor of the *Burlington Free Press* in Vermont quoted on the paper’s editorial page, under the headline “Outer Space or Washington,” the caption in the last Boeing ad in *Scientific American* that featured a Simpson-Middleman painting. The ad appeared in the January 1959 issue. Referring to their work titled *Space Chess* (originally called *Night Chess*), the artists described it as portraying

a chess-like game played in a segment of space on a skewed board with pieces of uncertain value against an unknown antagonist. The next move is unforeseen—it will come out of the dark—it will be history’s most fateful gambit.

The editor then commented wryly, “Sounds more like the floor of Congress.”<sup>32</sup> Setting the sarcasm aside, the use of Simpson-Middleman paintings in these two major Boeing ad campaigns advanced greatly the artists’ stated aim of combining science and art into a single medium.

Following the death of Marshall Simpson in November of 1958, John Heller continued to display Simpson-Middleman works in group shows. One such example ran from January 5 to January 24, 1959. The exhibit included:

several works each of Betts, Simpson-Middleman, Vasilieff, Magafan, Farrugio, and Giobbi. Diverse handling and aims give the show pace—for the smoothly surfaced transparent planes of dark and light in a Simpson-Middleman contrast nicely with heavily scumbled Magafans or the atmospheric subtleties of Bett’s *Morning Mists*—just as the

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<sup>31</sup> *Scientific American*, December 1958, 131.

<sup>32</sup> *Burlington (Vermont) Free Press*, December 29, 1958, 12.

positive, somewhat surreal, statement of Giobbi's *Images* makes more evident the delicacy of a Farrugio.<sup>33</sup>

This short paragraph provides a brief but suggestive comparison of the precisely laid out abstract works of Simpson-Middleman to those of some of their contemporaries also on display at the Heller Gallery. The other artists were Edward H. Betts (1920–2008), known for watercolor abstractions; Remo Michael Farrugio (1905–1981), for surreal-leaning landscapes; Edward G. Giobbi (born 1926), for nonobjective expression and collage; Ethel Currie Magafan (1916–1993), for abstract landscapes; and Nicolai Vassilieff (1892/1901–1970), for almost folk art-like naive scenes, figures and still-life works. This show offered the public a widely diverse view of late-1950s abstraction and art trends as represented by these seven artists.

Fourteen remaining paintings from the space and sky group were subsequently borrowed from John Heller for a retrospective memorial exhibit on Marshall Simpson sponsored by the Monmouth Arts Foundation and held at 147 Broad Street in Red Bank. This comprehensive display of 31 works ran from May 3 to May 20, 1961. Sixteen paintings in the show were by Simpson-Middleman, including six of the eleven that had appeared in the Boeing ads, namely *Eclipse*, *Rocket*, *Aurora*, *Arctic Stars*, *Cygnus*, and *Star Juggler*.<sup>34</sup> Newspaper coverage of the opening pointed out Simpson's many involvements in local art circles as a teacher at the Community YMCA in Red Bank, as a familiar figure at art shows sponsored by the Junior Service League in Red Bank, as an instructor for a group of local artists who formed a landscape painting class in Middletown, and as a judge for many years of work by high school students.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Art News*, January 1959, 56, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_artnews\\_1959-01\\_57\\_9/page/56/mode/lup?view=theater](https://archive.org/details/sim_artnews_1959-01_57_9/page/56/mode/lup?view=theater) (retrieved April 22, 2022).

<sup>34</sup> Monmouth Arts Gallery, *Marshall Simpson Memorial Exhibition, including Simpson-Middleman Paintings*, May 3 through May 20 [1961], checklist of works. Author's collection.

<sup>35</sup> "Exhibit Simpson Paintings," *Red Bank Register*, May 4, 1961, 13.

By uncanny happenstance, the first United States flight into space occurred on May 5, 1961, only two days after the Simpson show opened. One newspaper reporter commented:

Alan B. Shepard's historic flight gives the show coincidental spacial [sic] timeliness. Planned or not planned for this accurate timing, the exhibit retrospectively reveals the creative and inventive best of the artist once referred to affectionately as the "Dean of Monmouth County artists." Old art forms do not reflect life today but the late Mr. Simpson created new ones that do.<sup>36</sup>

When the memorial exhibit was taken down, all but two of the pictures obtained from Heller were turned over to Roslynn Middleman (Mrs. Neil Smerilson), who by then had married and moved from Plainfield to Philadelphia. The Heller Gallery closed permanently in the summer of 1961, its owner, John M. Heller, dying in an automobile accident in Searsburg, Vermont, in early 1962 at the age of 55.<sup>37</sup>

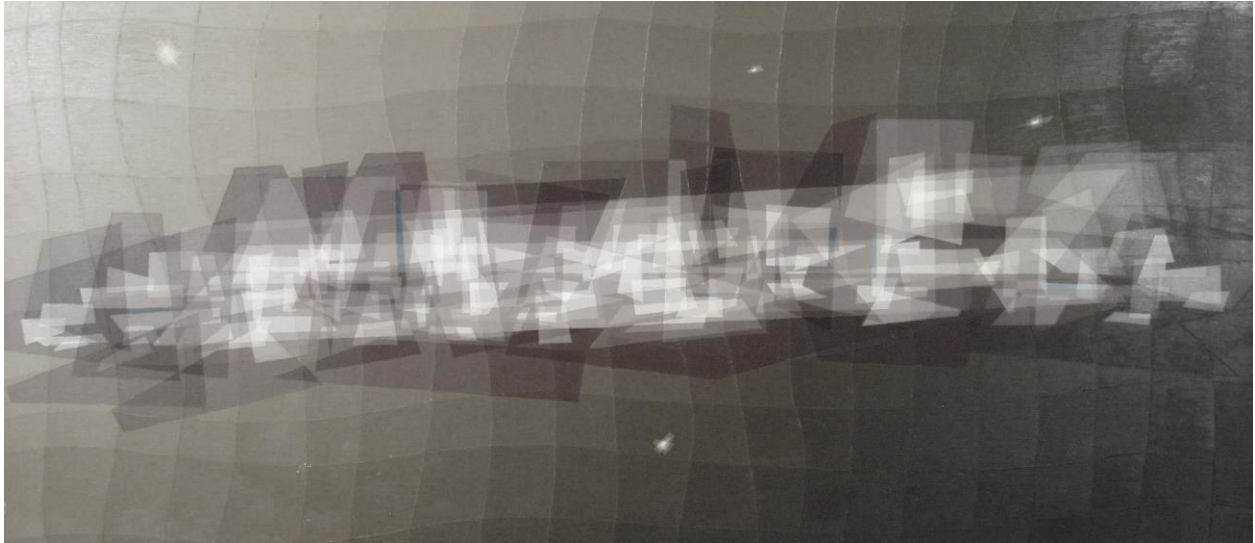
None of the works returned to Simpson's former partner have appeared since in the art marketplace to the knowledge of this writer, who has tried to locate them off and on for over 40 years. The two paintings from the Heller space and sky series retained after the show went to Gertrude Woodcock Simpson (1901–1979) of Middletown, New Jersey, Marshall's widow. One, titled *Island* but also inscribed *Llanoria* on the reverse, measures 19 by 42 inches, is meticulously executed in oil on masonite, and appears to represent a planet-like mass, or perhaps a rocket or other interstellar ship, floating in space.<sup>38</sup> The work is signed "Simpson-Middleman" in neat block letters on the reverse, and also "Marshall Simpson / Roslynn Middleman" on the reverse in their individual handwriting. After Gertrude's death in 1979, the picture fittingly

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<sup>36</sup> *Red Bank Register*, May 11, 1961, 21.

<sup>37</sup> *Rutland Daily Herald*, February 9, 1962, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Letter, John Heller Gallery to Virginia Montgomery [Hammond], April 20, 1961. Author's collection. Both titles for this work were noted in the list of loaned paintings.



***Island*, also inscribed *Llanoria* on the reverse, circa 1955, oil on masonite, 19 x 42 inches. Owned privately. Author's photo. Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, and at the Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, in May 1961. An example of the signature Simpson-Middleman mature style that they had developed by 1953.**

ended up by bequest in possession of Virginia B. Hammond of Monmouth Beach and later Little Silver. She was a fellow artist and former student of Marshall's, a close friend of Gertrude's, and the organizer of the 1961 memorial exhibition.<sup>39</sup> *Island* changed ownership again in 1996. It remains today in a private collection.

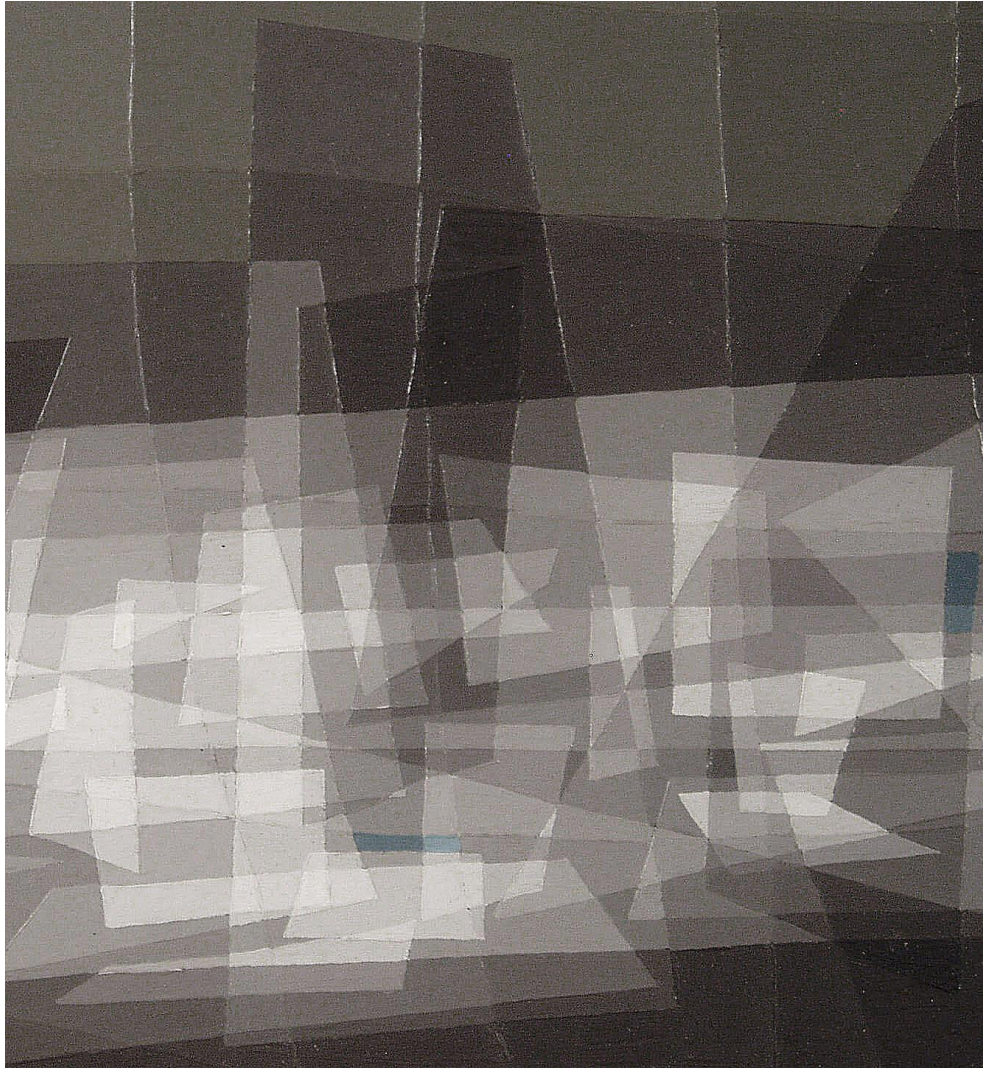
A second late work from the memorial exhibit titled *Sea Rain* was donated to the Newark Museum in 1964 by Gertrude Simpson. It bears a John Heller Gallery label, but was not part of the initial space and sky series even though the work certainly continued that theme and composition style.<sup>40</sup> Measuring 19 3/4 by 33 1/2 inches, also executed in oil on masonite, and dated 1958, *Sea Rain* was likely the last painting completed by Simpson-Middleman, as Simpson died in November of that year. It relates most closely in its imagery to *Aurora* and *Cygnus* used

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<sup>39</sup> Monmouth County, New Jersey, Surrogate's Office, file 120926, will of Gertrude W. Simpson, November 14, 1978.

<sup>40</sup> *American Art in the Newark Museum*, op. cit., 376.



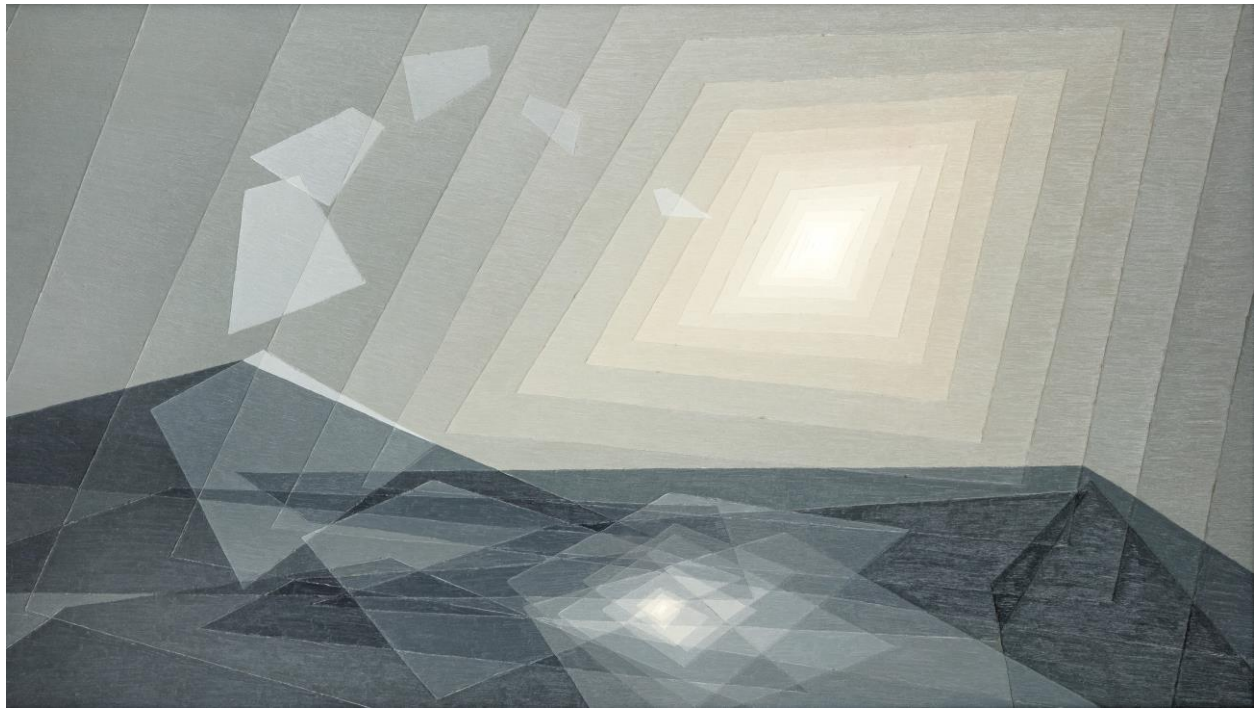


***Island* detail showing meticulous mathematical layout techniques and subtle color gradations employed by Simpson-Middleman. Author's photo.**

in the Boeing advertisements. The sun, filtering through a luminous sky, reflects off turbulent ocean waves in the foreground. Apparent cloud formations in a circular or spiral pattern connect the two. It was very appropriate for Marshall Simpson to return to a seascape theme at the end of his life, although in this instance in abstraction. It had been a popular subject captured by him often in his earlier realism days.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The 1947 show at the Bonestell Gallery put fourteen paintings on display, seven of which were seascapes, according to the exhibit handout and checklist in the author's collection cited above. The memorial exhibit of 1961 also included seven of Simpson's earlier seascapes.



***Sea Rain*, 1958, oil on masonite, 19 3/4 x 33 1/2 inches. Courtesy Newark Museum, gift of Mrs. Marshall Simpson, 1964. Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, and at the Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, in May 1961. This is likely the last painting completed by Simpson-Middleman before the death of Marshall Simpson on November 29, 1958.**

So how can the Boeing ad campaign that featured Simpson-Middleman paintings be viewed in the context of 1950s advertising? The overwhelming majority of art that appeared in consumer-oriented ads featured well-dressed women, children, families, and men cheerily posed with the products being promoted, whether it be the latest automobiles, clothing fashions, cleaning products, household appliances, or breakfast cereals. The use of fine art in such advertising was a rarity, to say the least. Non-consumer or corporate ads like the Boeing employment series gave art directors more flexibility, especially when in the hands of a creative genius like Paul Smith. But again, the use of fine art was highly limited, to judge from the advertising art of the period available for study through internet searches. Smith's avocational involvements as a serious artist in addition to his role in advertising, his knowledge of the sky through the teaching of celestial navigation, and his residence near Simpson in Monmouth

County no doubt contributed to a mutuality of interests with Simpson-Middleman. The Boeing ads gave Smith the opportunity to use abstract depictions of outer space and the sky as a means of selling the positiveness of the jet age to potential engineering employees.<sup>42</sup> Boeing bought into this approach, even to the point of purchasing one of the Simpson-Middleman paintings for their corporate art collection.<sup>43</sup>

Abstract art had been slow to achieve popular acceptance. But gradually, beginning in the late 1940s, it evolved from ridicule as not really being art, to something that was commonplace, acceptable, and in some ways consumerist. One American cultural historian has even characterized abstraction by the late 1950s as a weapon of the Cold War.

At this time, a wave of articles swept the mass magazines in which abstract art was portrayed as a great American asset in the cultural Cold War. Reports on exhibitions abroad described American abstraction as the leading international style and a symbol of freedom throughout the world. Articles about abstract artists depicted them as American heroes, icons of free thinking, originality, and individualism. American abstraction was presented as the embodiment of the American values that were thought necessary to triumph over Communism, while Soviet realism was portrayed as backward and unoriginal. Yet letters to the editors reveal that readers were still not convinced of the value of abstract art.<sup>44</sup>

If one accepts this theory, then the Boeing advertisements certainly fall in line with the author's assertion that abstract art became a propaganda tool of the Cold War, especially given the company's rapid expansion into advanced weapons and space research and development.

During the 1940s and 1950s, depictions of space were largely the realm of artists who illustrated science-fiction stories and comic books. Fantastic images typically featured imaginary monsters, spaceships such as flying saucers, and humanoid aliens, as well as rockets that looked

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<sup>42</sup> "Paul Smith," op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Efforts in 2007 to locate *Earth* at the Boeing Company were not successful.

<sup>44</sup> Christine Bianco, *Modern Art for Middle America: American Abstraction in Mass Magazines, 1946–1960*, <http://christinebianco.com/dissertation.html> (retrieved April 24, 2022). This is an abstract of Bianco's dissertation, which can be accessed at: [https://www.academia.edu/21726964/Modern\\_Art\\_for\\_Middle\\_America\\_American\\_Abstraction\\_in\\_Mass\\_Magazines\\_1946\\_1960](https://www.academia.edu/21726964/Modern_Art_for_Middle_America_American_Abstraction_in_Mass_Magazines_1946_1960).

like the V-2 guided ballistic missile developed by Germany during World War II.<sup>45</sup> Simpson-Middleman appear to have been quite unusual in using abstraction exclusively to give visual form to their numerous personal interpretations of space and the sky. Another leading professional artist who engaged in illustrating flight, the atmosphere, and space was Chesley Bonestell (1888–1986). He began working with these subjects in 1943, and continued with them right up until his death at the age of 98. Coincidentally (or perhaps not), Bonestell was also the owner of the art gallery in New York City that hosted Marshall Simpson's last realism show in 1947. But unlike Simpson-Middleman, Bonestell worked in a realistic style, or in the case of his depictions of distant planet surfaces, something that might be called conjectural realism in the days before robotic space probes began sending back actual images. Bonestell's artwork became immensely popular. It remains so today.<sup>46</sup> Other major artists in the early days of space art who produced realistic if conjectural images of space subjects were Robert A. Smith (1927–2008), Lucien Rudaux (1874–1947), David A. Hardy (born 1936), and Ludek Pesek (1919–1999). They became actively involved in visualizing space exploration proposals with input from astronomers and from experts in the infant rocketry field, both anxious to spread their ideas to a wider audience.<sup>47</sup> Renowned modern masters also occasionally produced works that depicted interpretations of outer space, in the particular instances that follow in abstraction like Simpson-Middleman. Such artists included Pablo Picasso (*Constellations*, 1924), Wassily Kandinsky

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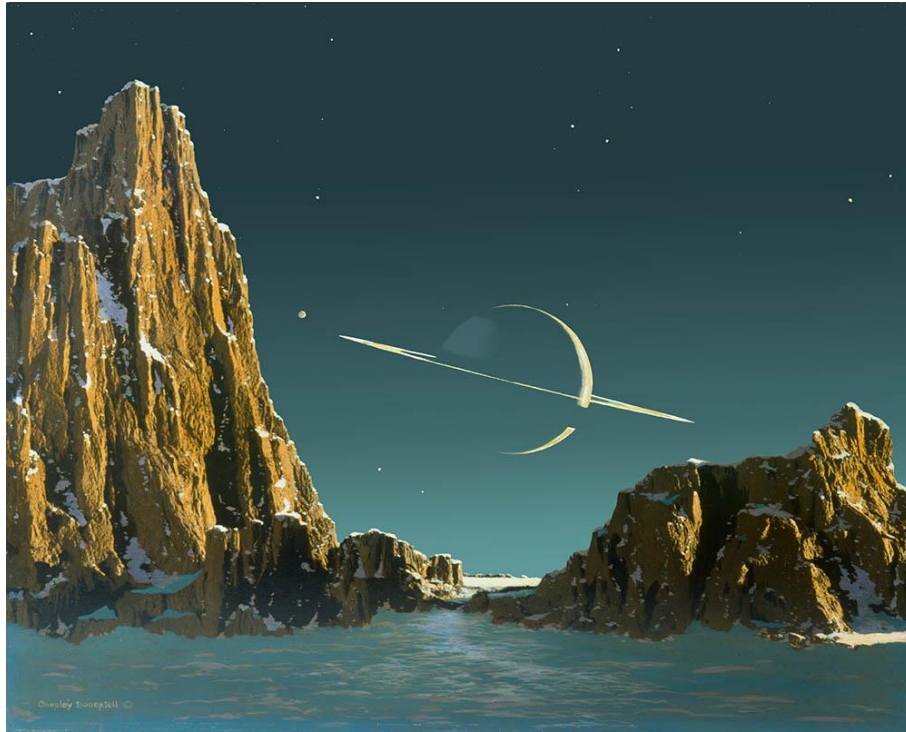
<sup>45</sup> "Space Art," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space\\_art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_art) (retrieved April 24, 2022).

<sup>46</sup> "Chesley Bonestell: an American pioneer of Space Art," <http://www.bonestellgallery.com/> (retrieved April 23, 2022), and "Meet Chesley Bonestell, the most important space artist you've probably never heard of," <https://astronomy.com/news/2019/03/meet-chesley-bonestell-the-most-important-space-artist-youve-probably-never-heard-of> (retrieved April 23, 2022).

<sup>47</sup> "Space Art," op. cit.



(*Several Circles*, 1926), Alexander Calder (*A Universe*, 1934), Joan Miró (*Constellation: Toward the Rainbow*, 1941), and Georgia O'Keefe (*Starlight Night*, 1963).<sup>48</sup>



**Chesley Bonestell (1888–1986), *Saturn as seen from Titan*, 1944, oil on canvas. Courtesy Bonestell.org. A realistic-looking but conjectural depiction of how Saturn might appear from its largest moon.**

To conclude, the night sky and space series of abstract paintings by Marshall Simpson and Roslynn Middleman represented the high point of their unusual nine-year collaborative venture. No other gallery exhibit or publication alliance gave them more visibility within the art community and public at large. According to noted American art historian William H. Gerdts Jr. (1929–2020), in comparison to other abstractionists, their artistic vision took “a different direction in the exploration of spatial, dynamic, and psychological meanings of inter-related abstract geometric forms. . . .”<sup>49</sup> Michael Lenson summarized their work succinctly: “Undeniably

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<sup>48</sup> *Ten Modern Masters Who Elevated ‘Space Art’ to Astronomical Heights*, Artspace, October 3, 2017, [https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art\\_101/book\\_report/ten-depictions-of-the-cosmos-by-modern-masters-55022](https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/book_report/ten-depictions-of-the-cosmos-by-modern-masters-55022) (retrieved April 24, 2022).

<sup>49</sup> William H. Gerdts Jr., *Painting and Sculpture in New Jersey* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), 245.

. . . the Simpson-Middleman canvases, in their subtlety of design, the ability to achieve a formal tension with incredible gradations of gray and their skill in transposing a naturalistic impulse into their personal cosmology, have intrigued critics and the public. . . .”<sup>50</sup> As of this writing, only three of the thirty-three or more paintings consigned to the John Heller Gallery can be located, namely *Nimbus*, *Island*, and *Sea Rain*. Their visual impact when viewed in person is profound. But at least the Boeing *Scientific American* advertisements preserved for posterity the imperfect, grainy, randomly colored images of an important, individualistic convergence of science, mathematics, and abstract art from the 1950s.

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<sup>50</sup> “Simpson-Middleman Abstract Team,” *Newark Sunday News*, op. cit.

A chronologically arranged, illustrated checklist with provenance, exhibition history, original published captions, and marketing slogans follows of Simpson-Middleman paintings used in Boeing advertisements placed in *Scientific American*:

**Painting Title & Dimensions If Known:**

**Issue Date & Page of Ad:**

***Earth***

**January 1957, 87**

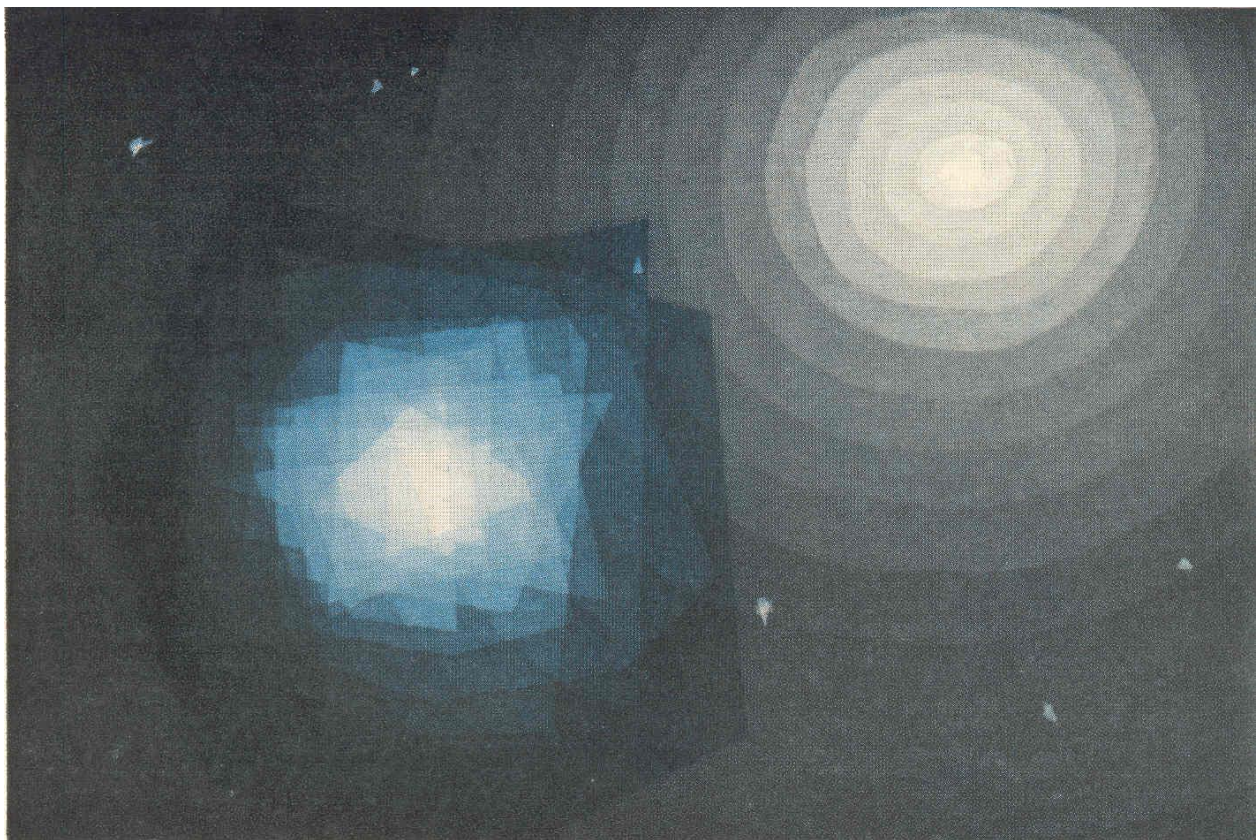
Acquired by the Boeing Airplane Company

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957, lent by the Boeing Airplane Company

Used on the cover of the John Heller Gallery exhibit flyer, December 1956

Ad Slogan: “A world of opportunity awaits you at Boeing”

“**EARTH,**” one of a series of paintings of the planets by Simpson-Middleman, painters who have been finding their subject matter in science. To quote them: “Earth is distinguished among the planets by its oceans of water and its single moon. From these as a starting point, each in this painting has been imagined as a configuration of intersecting planes—layer upon layer of blue—until it becomes a transparent crystal, glowing in space.”





**Rocket** (red printed version), 16 by 25 inches

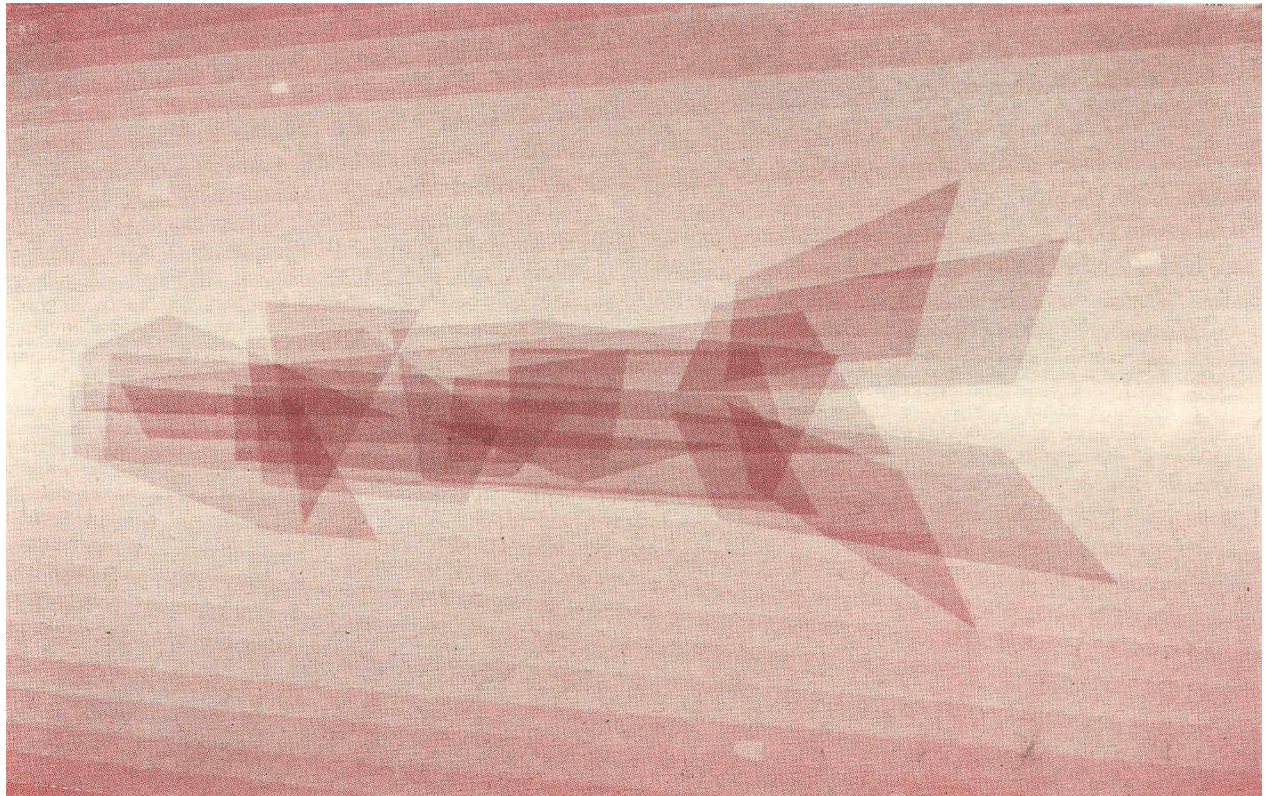
**February 1957, 157**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "Invitation to sky-high adventure"

**"ROCKET,"** one of a series of paintings by Simpson-Middleman, a team of artists with the rare ability to translate scientific fact into creative imagery. Here, the rocket's blast and its guiding beam are thought of as a single stream of light through the center. Darks and lights of definite shape in a weak visual vector field are relied on to suggest the dynamics caused by the acts of the servo-mechanisms in making their adjustments.





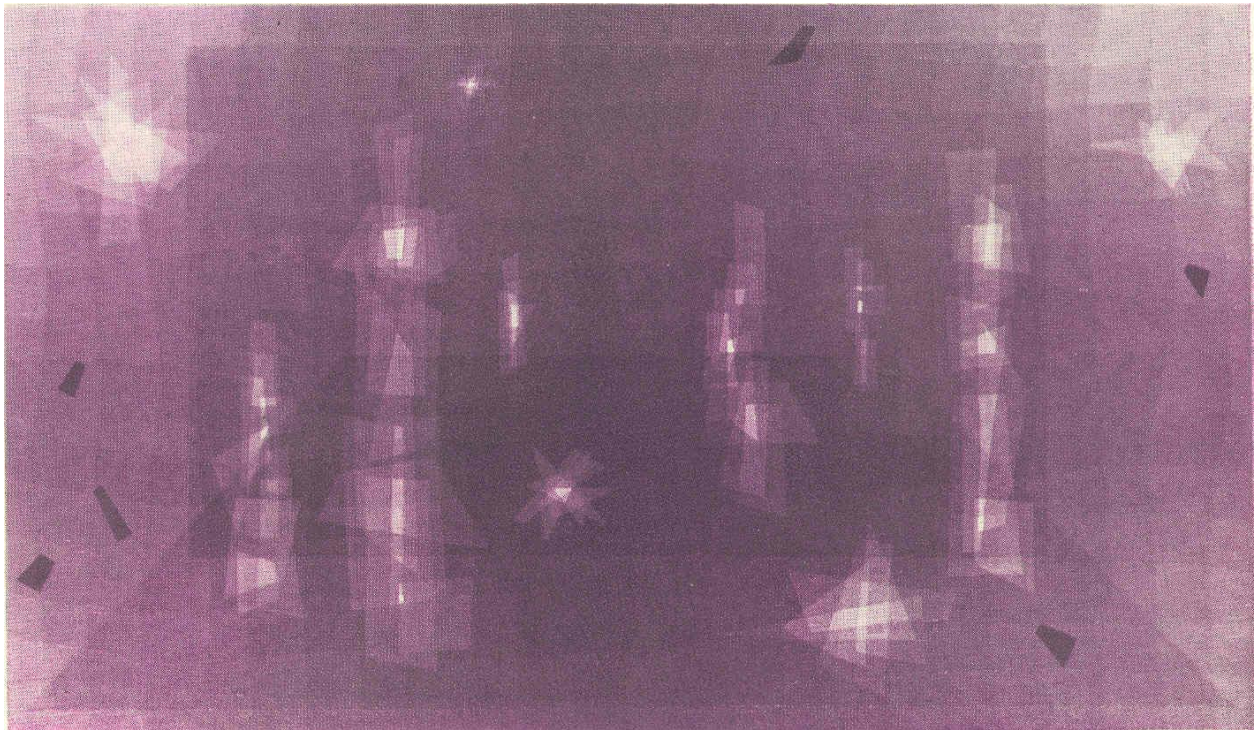
***Night Chess***

**March 1957, 168**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957

Ad slogan: “High stakes are yours to win at Boeing”

“**NIGHT CHESS,**” a painting by Simpson-Middleman, a doubly gifted team of artists with a scientist’s penetrating insight. They portray here “a chess-like game played in a segment of space on a skewed board with pieces of uncertain value against an unknown antagonist. The next move is unforeseen—it will come out of the dark—it will be history’s fateful gambit.”





*Arctic Stars*, 24 by 36 inches

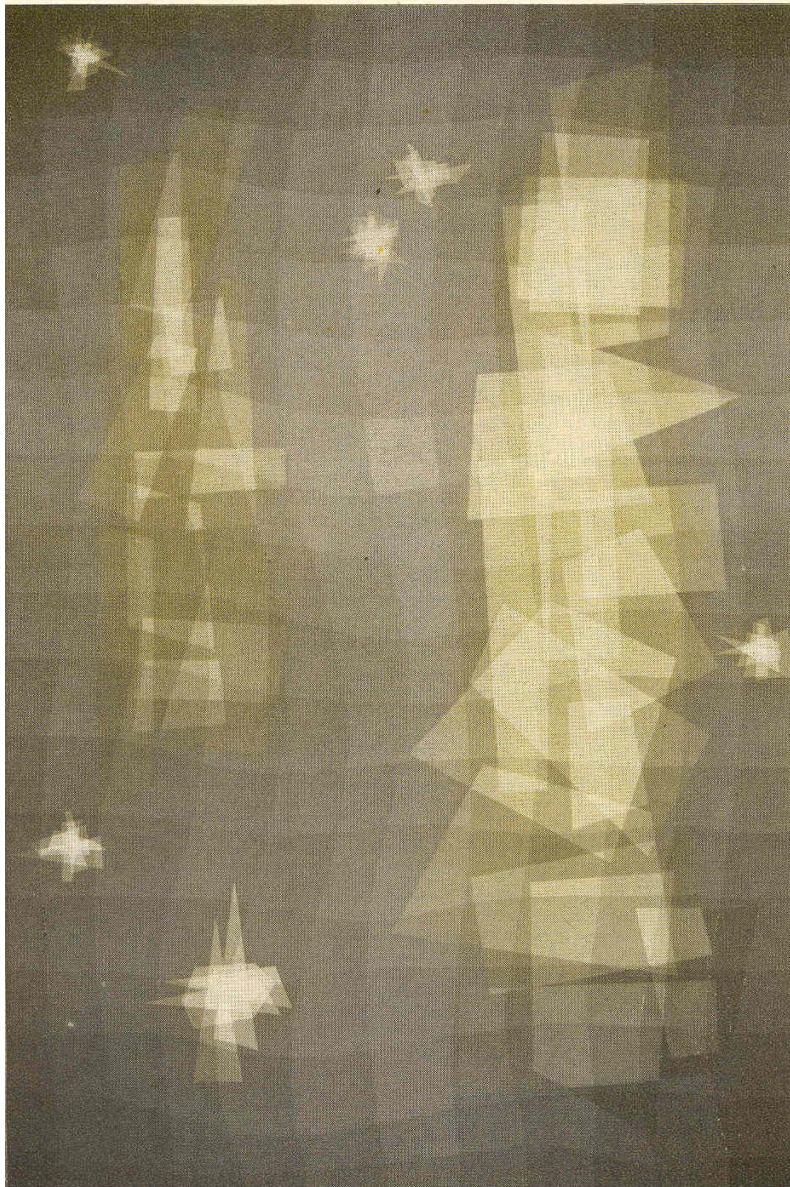
**April 1957, 191**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "Explore frontiers of the future at Boeing"

**"ARCTIC STARS,"** latest in a series of paintings by Simpson-Middleman, painters of the meaning of science. They describe this interpretation as "an expression of entropy in the cosmos. Starlight, clear and cold, contrasts with the warm color of autumn leaves. Behind both, the undulating field of the celestial wall."





***Star Juggler***, 36 by 24 inches

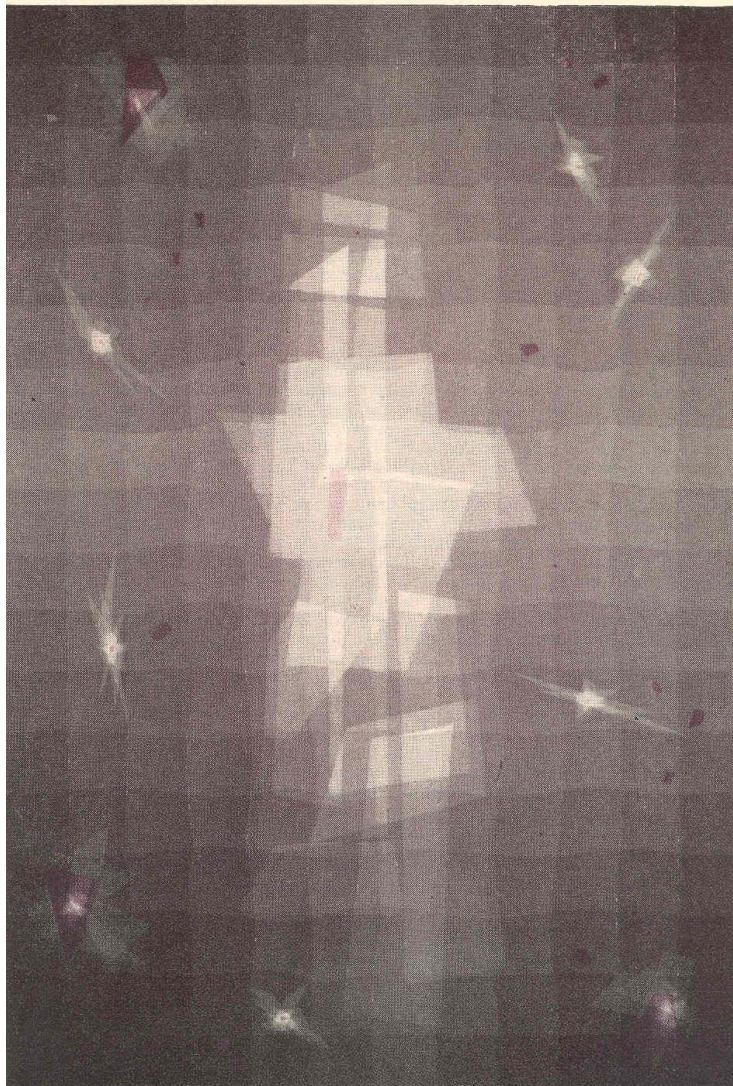
**May 1957, 155**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "You'll find an extraordinary future at Boeing"

**"STAR JUGGLER,"** a new interpretation by Simpson-Middleman, painters of the meaning of science. "We began to portray a sun as a stationary nucleus of a cosmic atomic system," recounts this imaginative team of artists, "but as the work progressed, there emerged a sense of movement, a suggestion of a sun swinging planets through space until they approached the stars in brilliance."





***Cygnus***, 24 by 36 inches

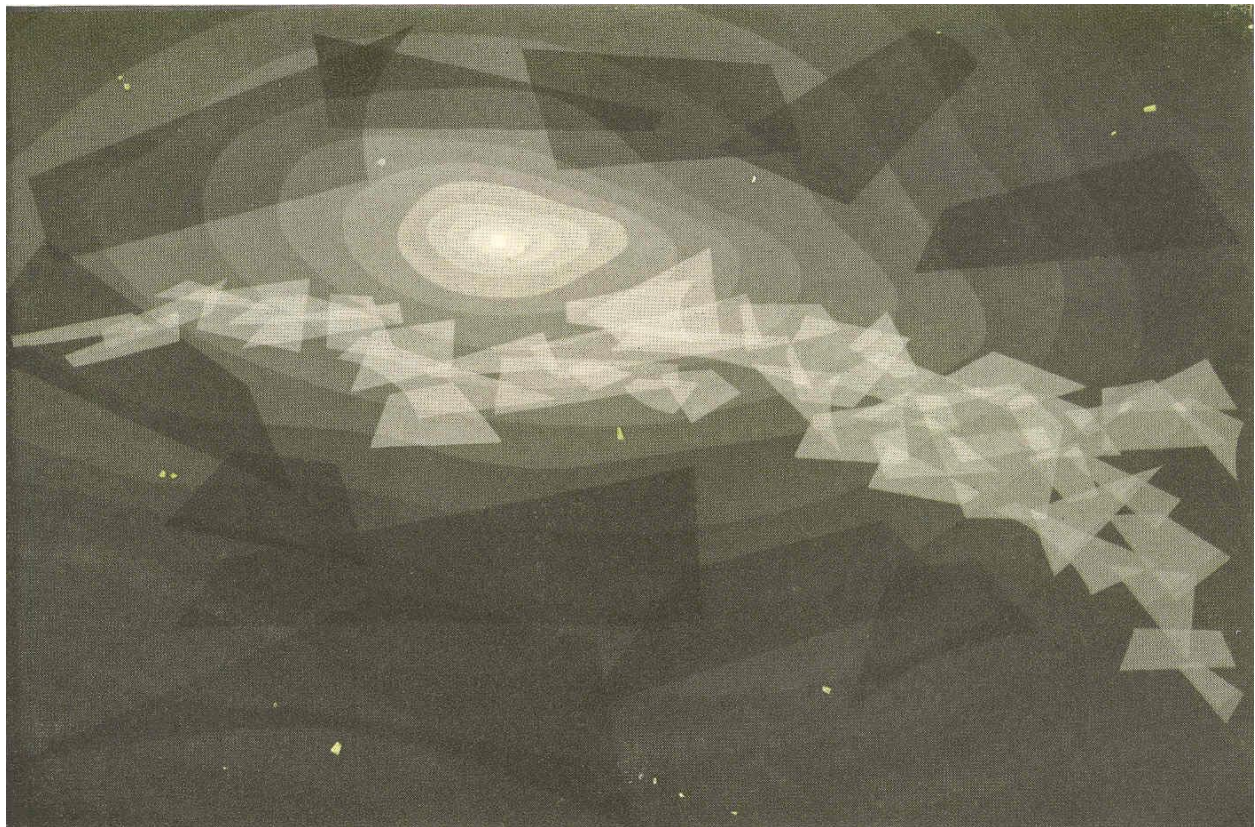
**June 1957, 149**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "You'll find an interesting future at Boeing"

**"CYGNUS,"** another inspiration by Simpson-Middleman, painters of the meaning of science. "Knowledge of the Universe," say these artist-scientists, "is not a matter of man's sight, but of his imagination's vision. Our eyes show us Cygnus. But creations of our genius, such as the radio-telescope, reveal unexplored, unexplained sources of energy that man may someday master. They lie amidst and even beyond those mysterious, drifting clouds of cosmic matter, lit by the stars they do not even obscure."





***Eclipse***, 22 by 36 inches

**July 1957, 169**

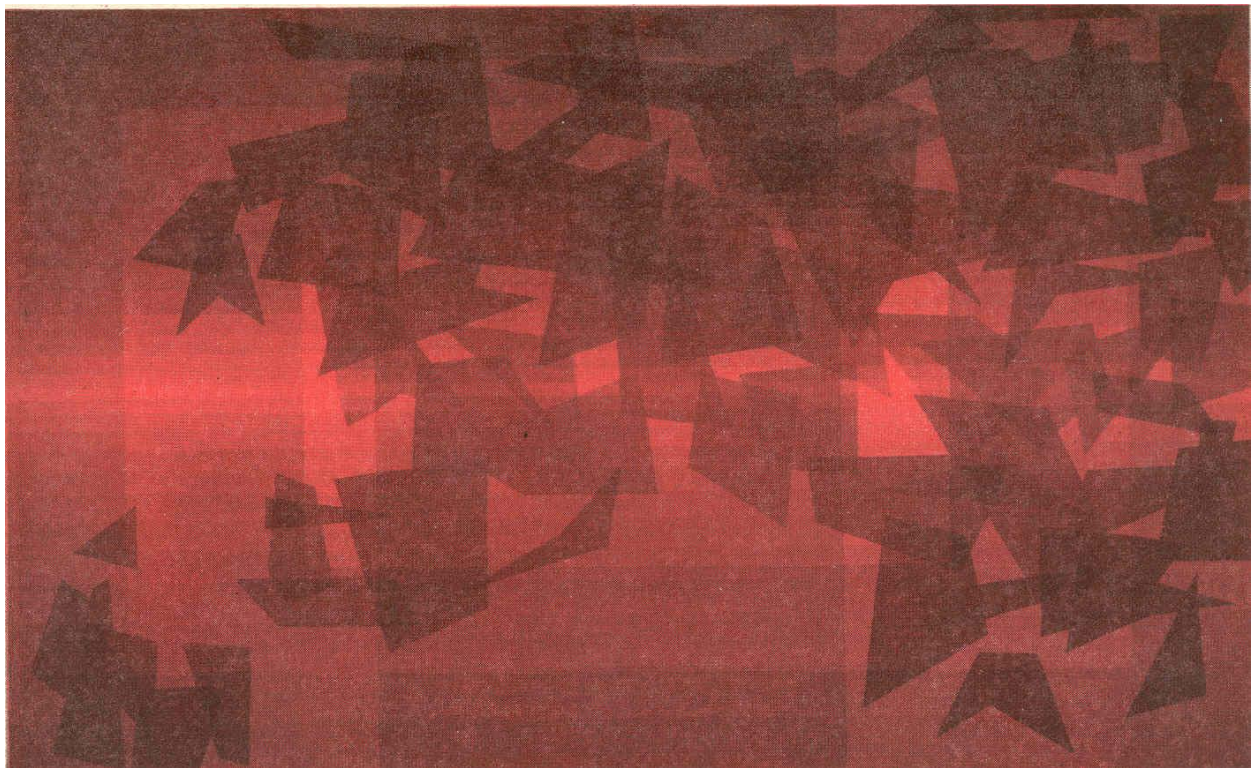
Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, February 1 through February 19, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Used on the cover of the John Heller Gallery exhibit flyer, February 1957

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "There's engineering excitement at Boeing"

**"ECLIPSE,"** a recent painting by Simpson-Middleman, gifted artistic interpreters of the physical sciences. About this new expression they write: "'Eclipse' was painted as a result of watching an actual eclipse of the sun. We were particularly struck with the curious light that was both dim and glowing and the unusual pattern of the shadows on the leaves of the trees around us. We had never seen anything like it before."





***Aurora***, 36 by 24 inches

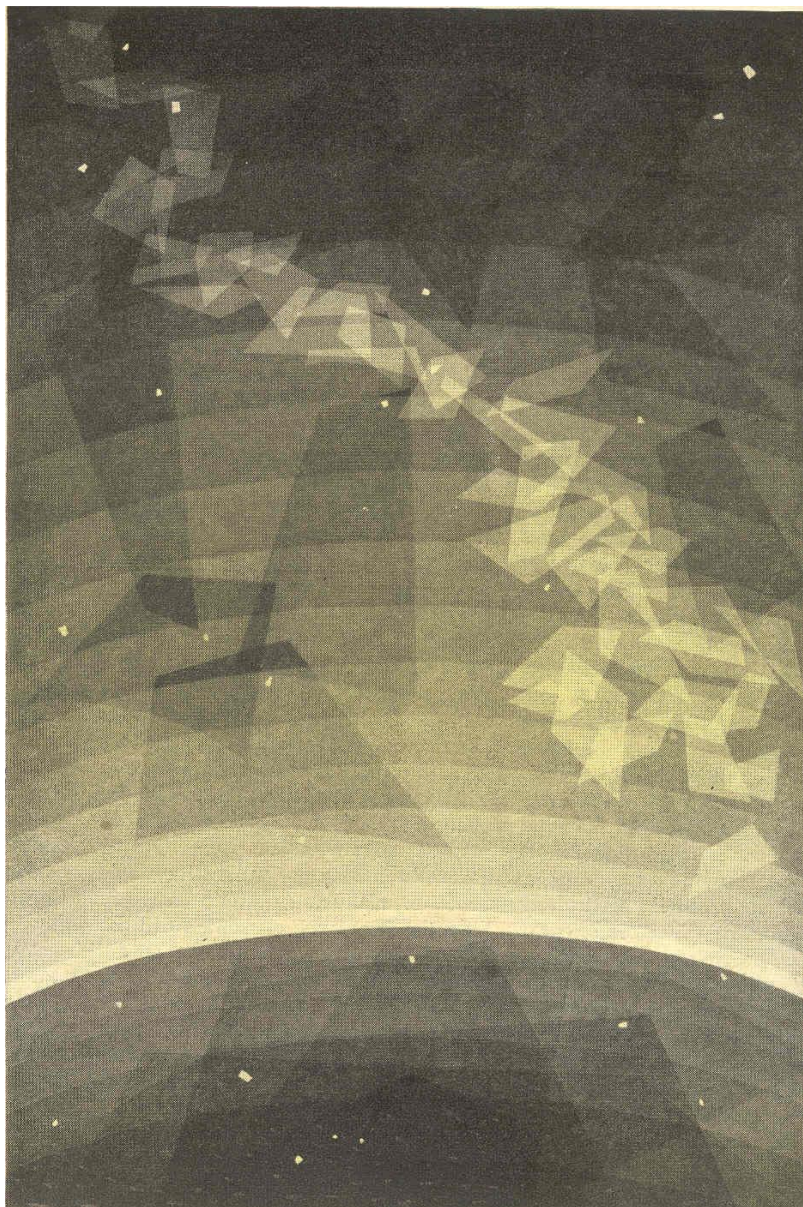
**August 1957, 141**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "You'll discover new horizons at Boeing"

**"AURORA,"** a recent expression from the brushes of Simpson-Middleman, a team of artists who find their subjects in the world of the natural sciences. "Aurora," they explain, "is a visual statement with equivocal overtones of dawn, the Aurora itself, and a hint of Chimera."



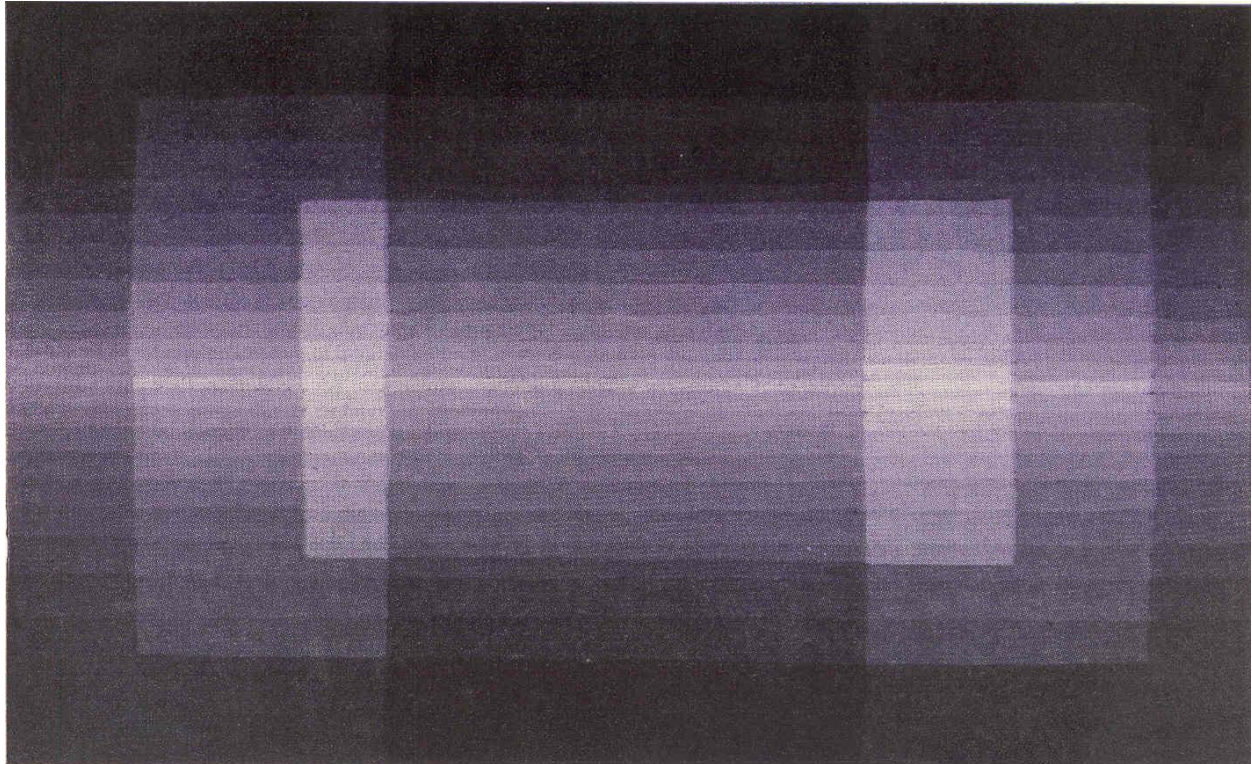


***Study for Eclipse***

**September 1957, 245**

Ad slogan: “Find the design of your future—at Boeing”

“**STUDY FOR ECLIPSE,**” a preliminary development by the creative team of Simpson-Middleman, artists whose work is a penetrating expression of the forces and phenomena of the natural sciences. This painting is one of the steps—ground structure—in which the ultimate action will take place.



*Nimbus*, 34 by 23 inches

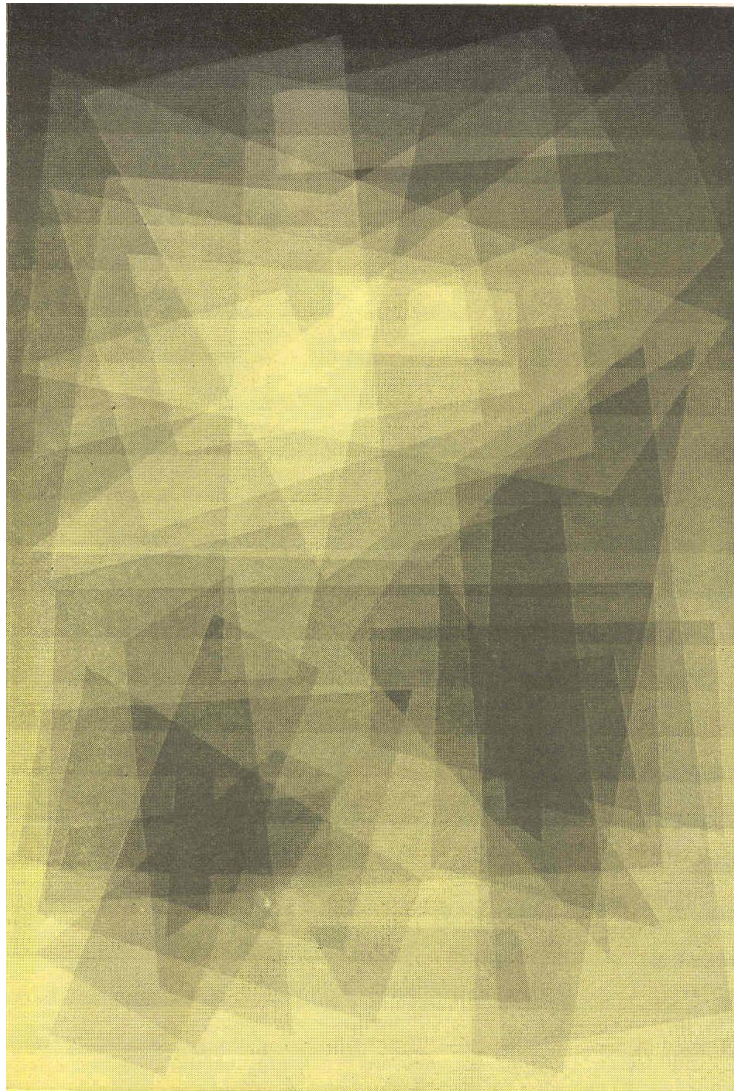
**October 1957, 153**

Acquired by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, gift of Samuel S. Goldberg, 1955

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, from December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; John Heller Gallery from February 1 through February 19, 1957; Seattle Art Museum, Washington, August 15 through September 22, 1957, lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art

Ad slogan: “Work in the world of supersonic flight—at Boeing”

“**NIMBUS**,” a new painting by the well-known team of science-artists Simpson-Middleman. In this work, the creators have found new artistic meaning in the Moon and its reflected light. An attempt to capture the polarized nature of moonlight is made. The results, an almost half-light. Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.



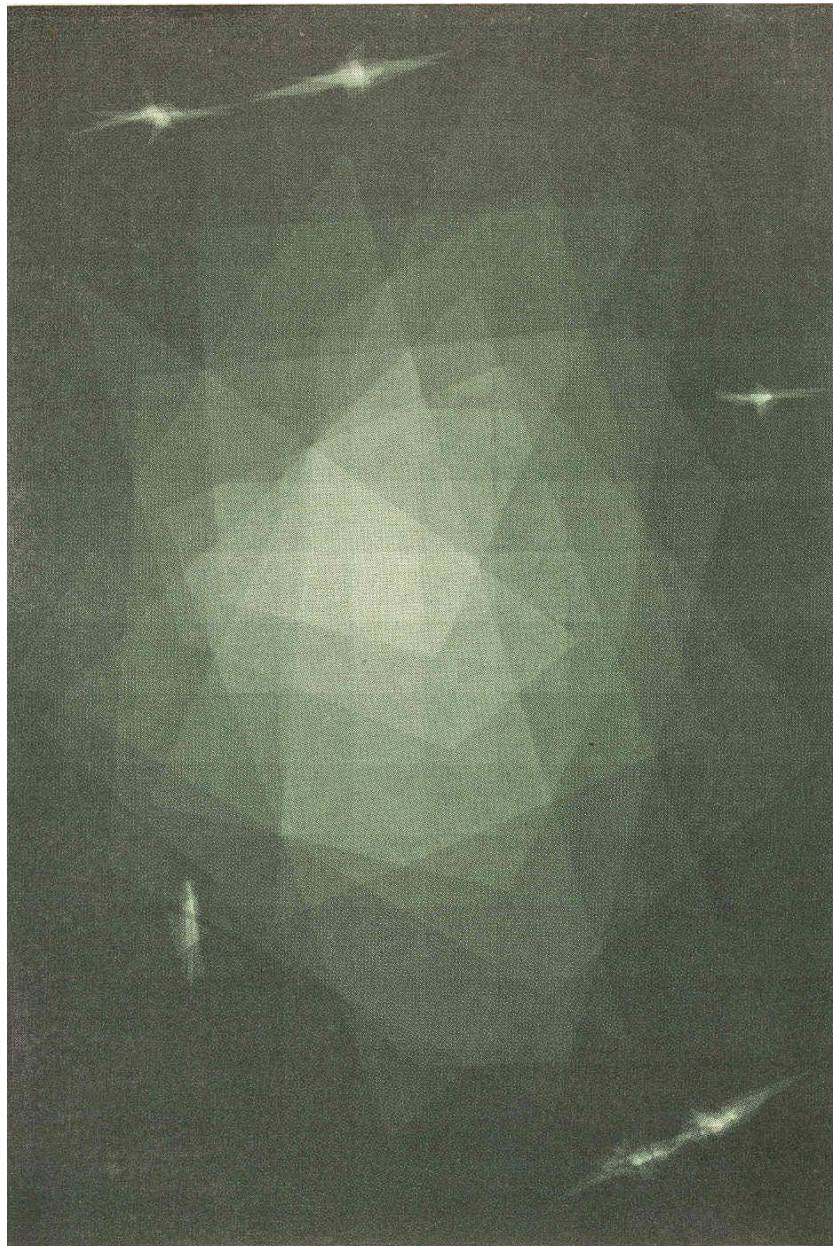


***Forces of Nature*** (green printed version)

**November 1957, 145**

Ad slogan: “Explore the secrets of nature—at Boeing”

“**FORCES OF NATURE,**” another in a collection of paintings by Simpson-Middleman, two talented artists who find in the natural sciences the subject matter for their contemporary expressions.





***Rocket*** (blue printed version), 16 by 25 inches

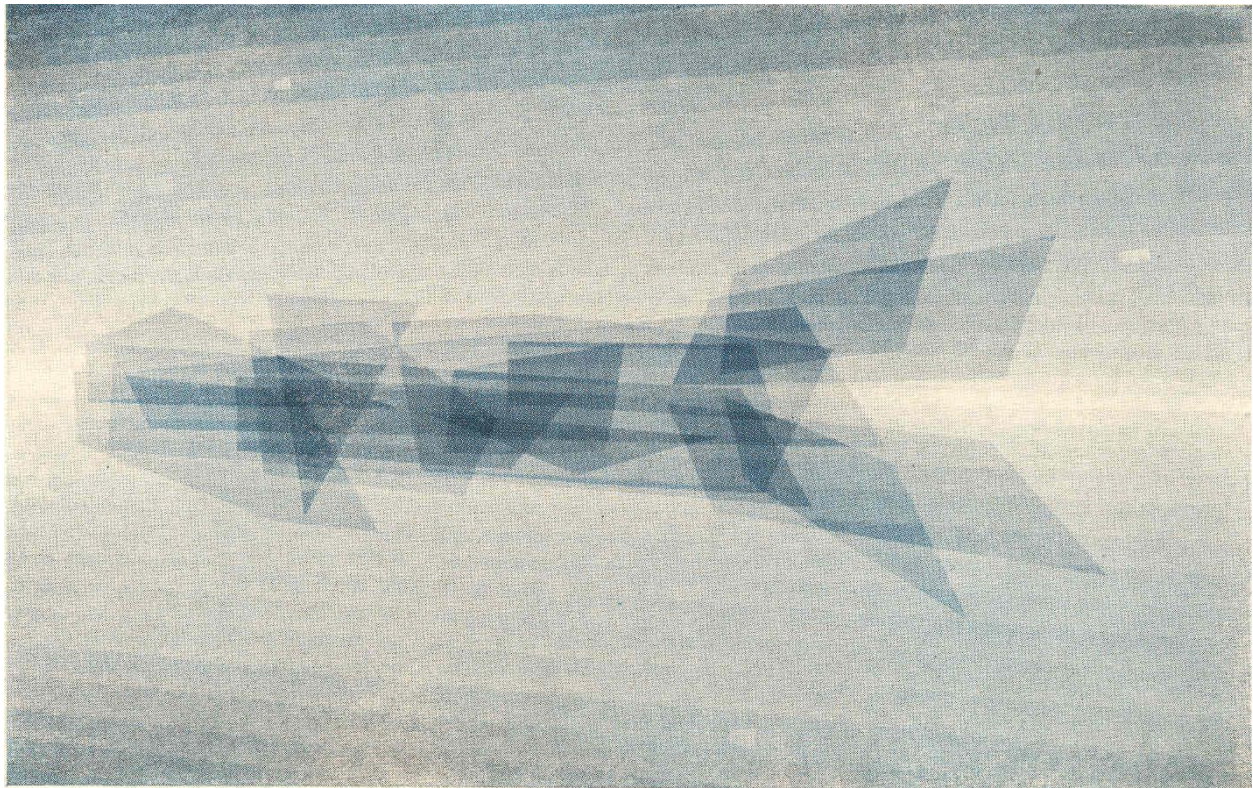
**August 1958, 113**

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: “man in space”

“**ROCKET**,” one of a series of paintings by Simpson-Middleman, a team of artists with the rare ability to translate scientific fact into creative imagery. Here, the rocket’s blast and its guiding beam are thought of as a single stream of light through the center. Darks and lights of definite shape in a weak visual vector field are relied on to suggest the dynamics caused by the acts of the servo-mechanisms in making their adjustments.





*Cygnus*, 24 by 36 inches

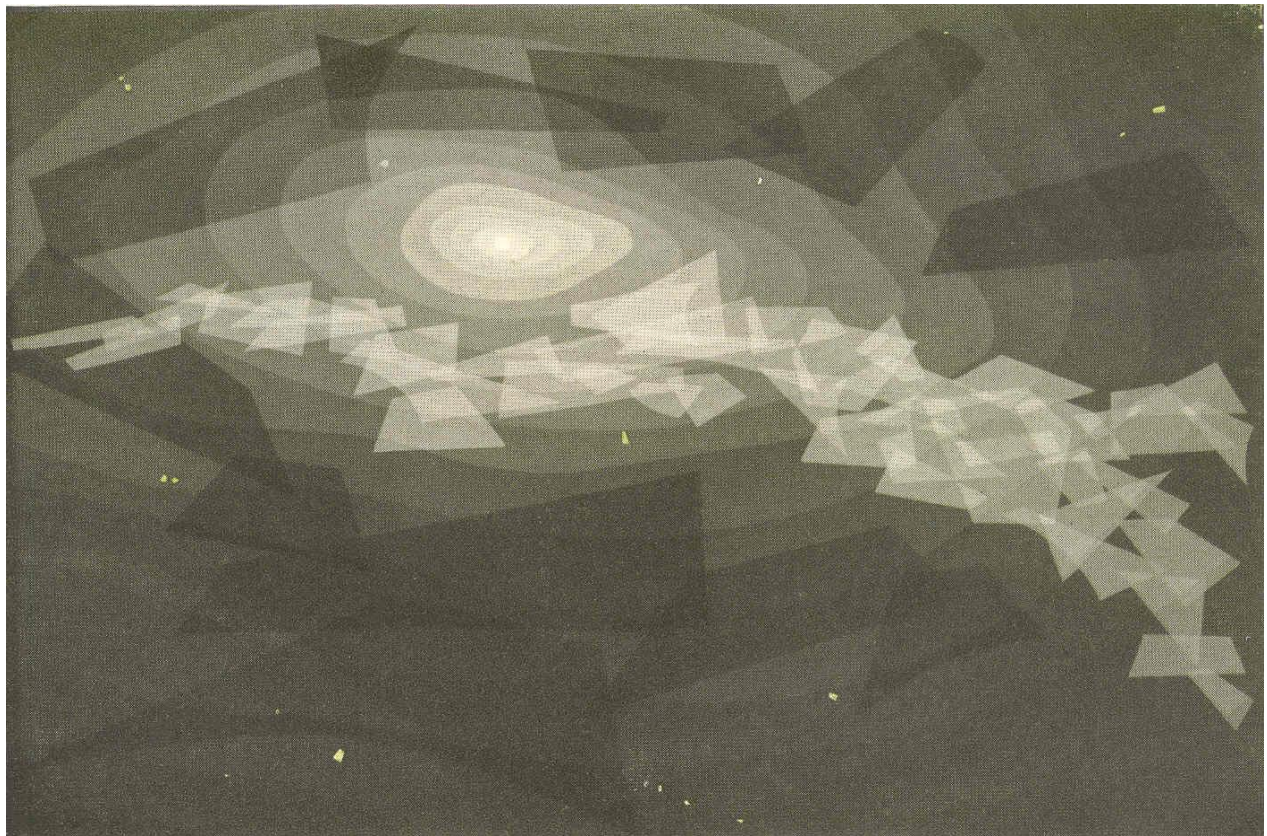
September 1958, 112

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "Space-age research at Boeing"

"**CYGNUS**," another inspiration by Simpson-Middleman, painters of the meaning of science. "Knowledge of the Universe," say these artist-scientists, "is not a matter of man's sight, but of his imagination's vision. Our eyes show us Cygnus. But creations of our genius, such as the radio-telescope, reveal unexplored, unexplained sources of energy that man may someday master. They lie amidst and even beyond those mysterious, drifting clouds of cosmic matter, lit by the stars they do not even obscure."



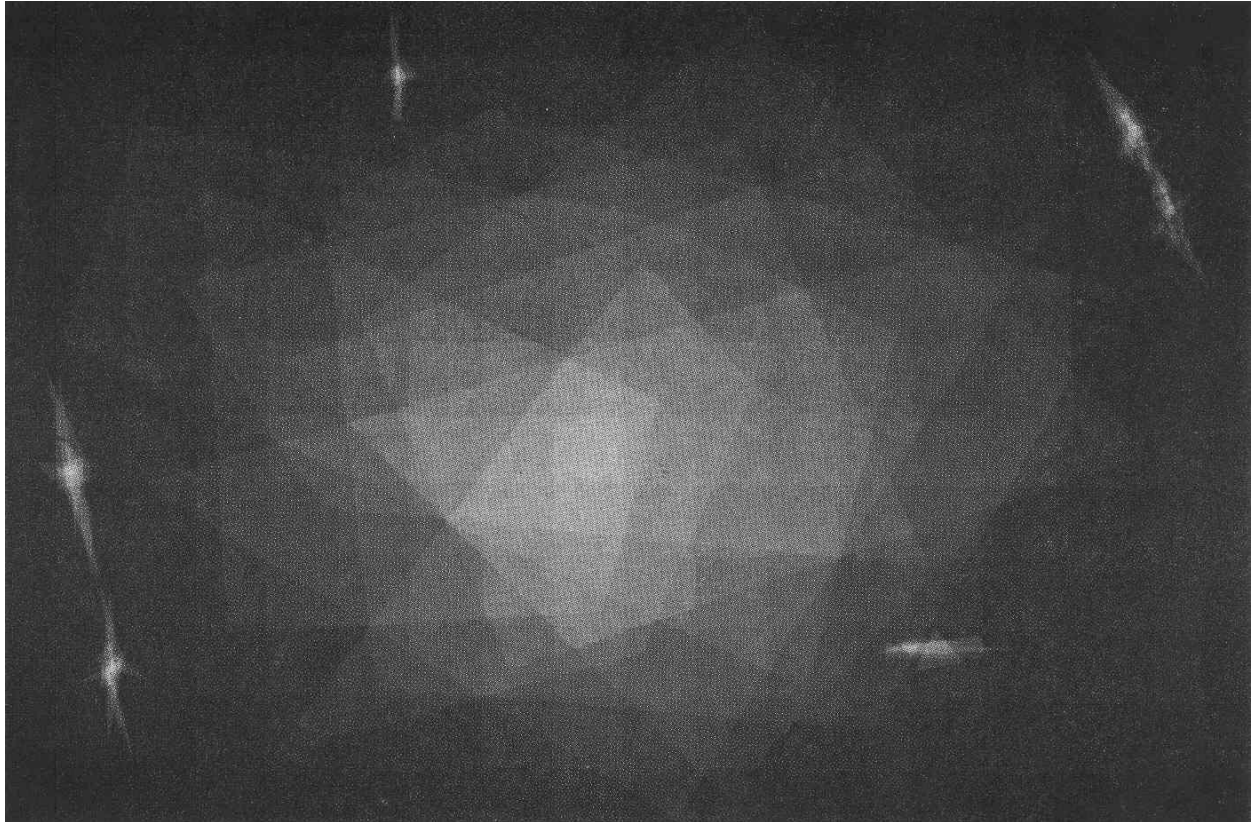
***Forces of Nature*** (black printed version)

**October 1958, 143**

Rotated 45 degrees to the left from the green printed version of November 1957

Ad slogan: “Conquest of Space”

**“FORCES OF NATURE,”** another in a collection of paintings by Simpson-Middleman, two talented artists who find in the natural sciences the subject matter for their contemporary expressions.





***Eclipse***, 22 by 36 inches

**November 1958, 167**

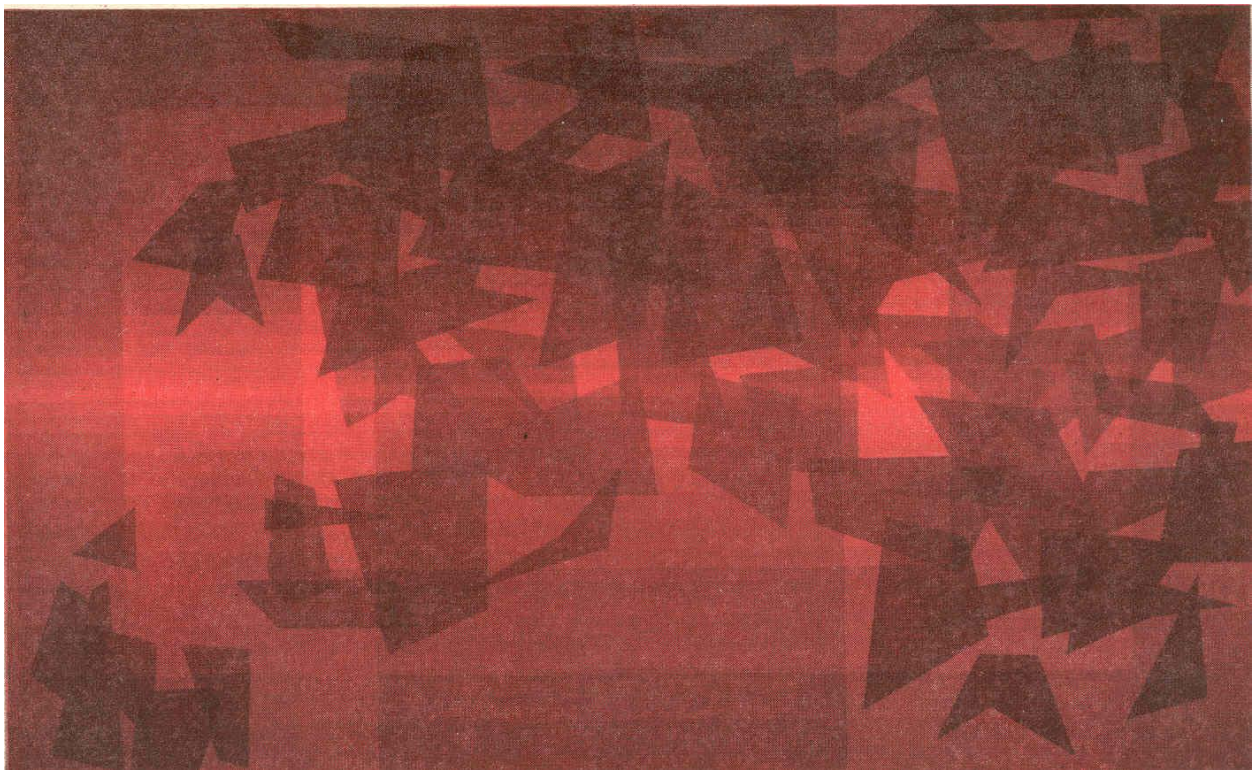
Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957; John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, February 1 through February 19, 1957; Monmouth Arts Gallery, Red Bank, New Jersey, May 3 through May 20, 1961

Used on the cover of the John Heller Gallery exhibit flyer, February 1957

Returned to Roslynn Middleman Smerilson after May 20, 1961

Ad slogan: "Space projects at Boeing"

**"ECLIPSE,"** a recent painting by Simpson-Middleman, gifted artistic interpreters of the physical sciences. About this new expression they write: "'Eclipse' was painted as a result of watching an actual eclipse of the sun. We were particularly struck with the curious light that was both dim and glowing and the unusual pattern of the shadows on the leaves of the trees around us. We had never seen anything like it before."





***Earth in Space*****December 1958, 139**

Same work as *Earth*, January 1957, 87. Title altered apparently to emphasize space research at Boeing

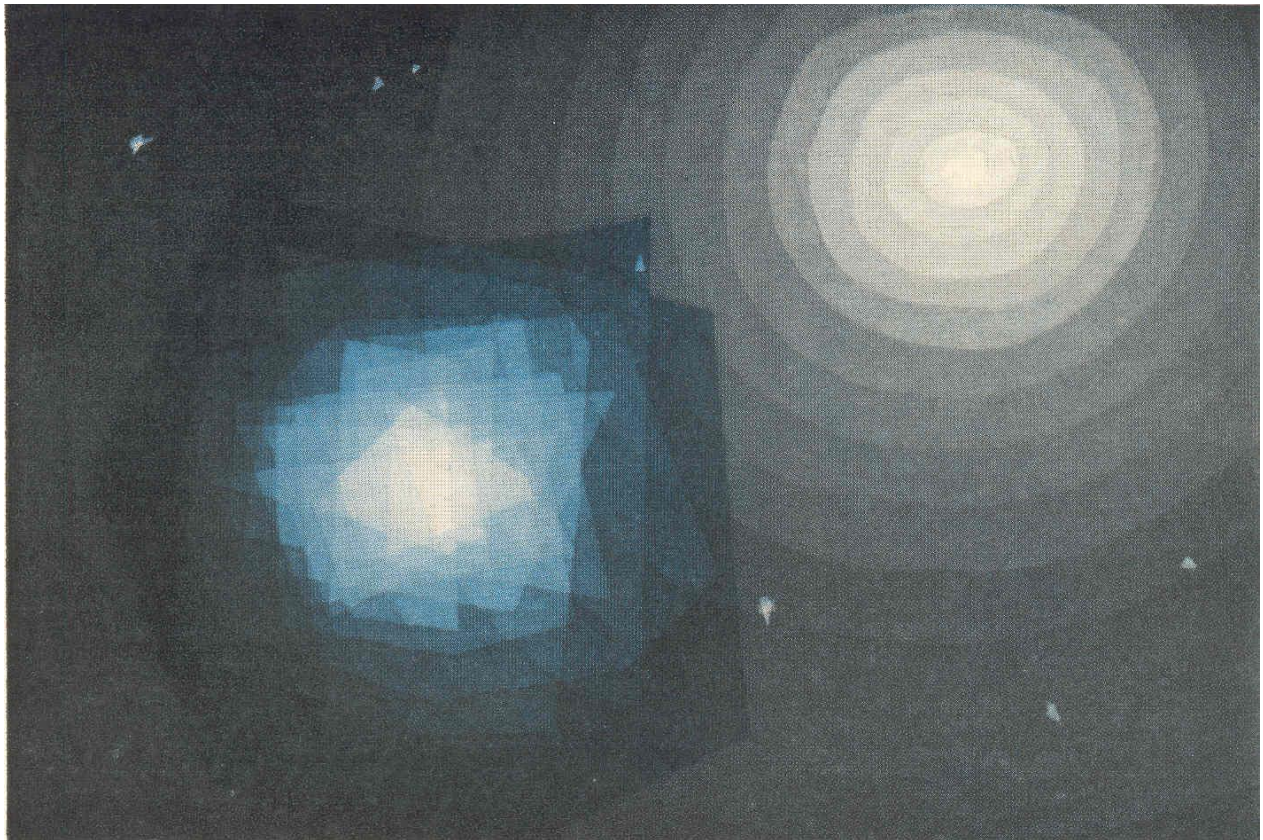
Acquired by the Boeing Airplane Company

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957, lent by the Boeing Airplane Company

Used on the cover of the John Heller Gallery exhibit flyer, December 1956

Ad slogan: "Space power"

"**EARTH IN SPACE,**" one of a series of paintings of the planets by Simpson-Middleman, painters who have been finding their subject matter in science. To quote them: "Earth is distinguished among the planets by its oceans of water and its single moon. From these as a starting point, each in this painting has been imagined as a configuration of intersecting planes—layer upon layer of blue—until it becomes a transparent crystal, glowing in space."





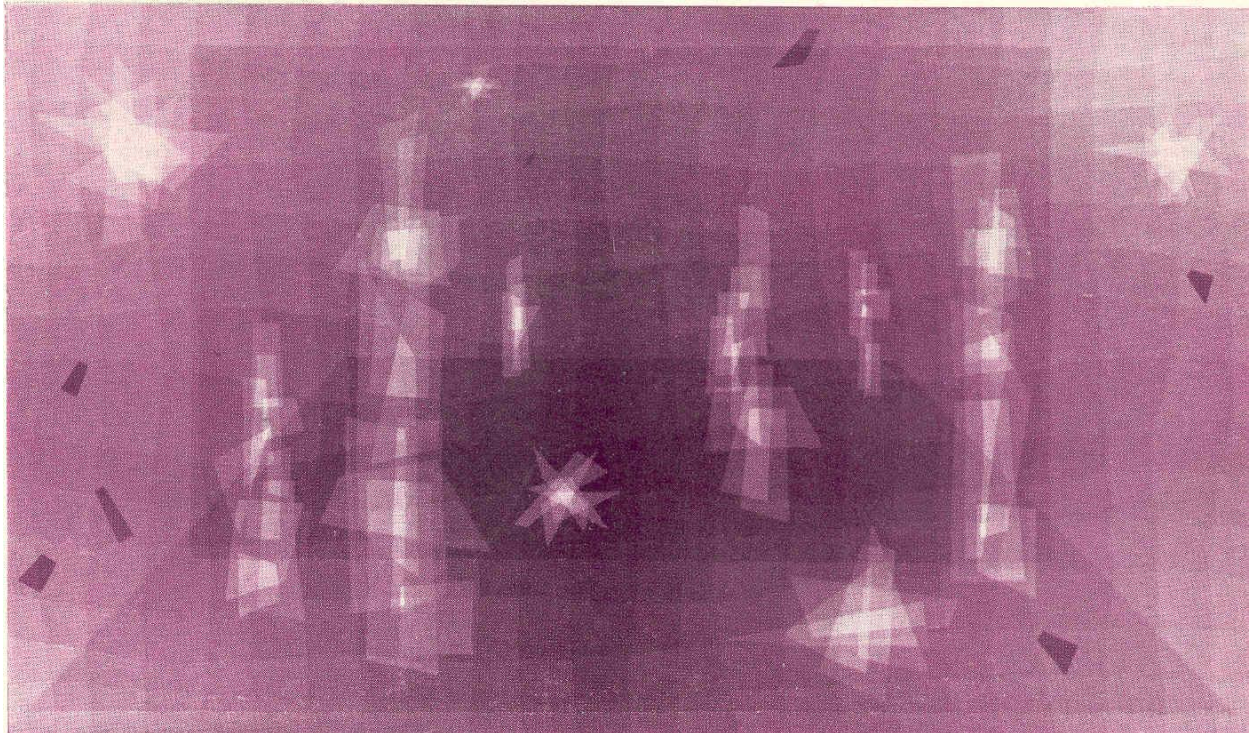
***Space Chess*****January 1959, 131**

Same work as *Night Chess*, March 1957, 168. Title altered apparently to emphasize space research at Boeing

Exhibited at the John Heller Gallery, New York, New York, December 18, 1956, through January 5, 1957

Ad slogan: "Space-age openings at Boeing"

**"SPACE CHESS,"** a painting by Simpson-Middleman, a doubly gifted team of artists with a scientist's penetrating insight. They portray here "a chess-like game played in a segment of space on a skewed board with pieces of uncertain value against an unknown antagonist. The next move is unforeseen—it will come out of the dark—it will be history's fateful gambit."



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Note: The author would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the late Virginia B. Hammond of Little Silver, New Jersey, in the preparation of this article. Mrs. Hammond (1914–2013, and no relation to the author) very kindly turned over to him her long-standing research accumulation on Marshall Simpson and Roslynn Middleman. The file contained newspaper clippings, exhibit flyers and checklists, photographs, correspondence, original artwork in the form of hand-painted Christmas cards, clipped Boeing ads with annotations on some, documentation on the Simpson memorial exhibit of 1961, which she organized, and handwritten notes.

Thanks are also extended to Andrea Ko, associate registrar of the Newark Museum, for her assistance in obtaining a professional digital image of *Sea Rain*, which required new photography. Diana Edkins, of Art Resource Inc. in New York, also assisted in providing the image of *Nimbus* from the Whitney Museum of American Art.

*Joseph W. Hammond writes on New Jersey history topics from his retirement home in northern New Hampshire. His interests include decorative and fine arts, architecture, and social history. A resident of Freehold for more than 40 years, he has in the past served the Monmouth County Historical Association as director, consulting archivist, curator of museum collections, and director of collections. Hammond holds a BA in American history and civilization from Boston University, and an MA in history museum studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program of the State University of New York, College at Oneonta. He can be reached by email at [jwhammond@aol.com](mailto:jwhammond@aol.com).*