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| Washington Colour Painters |
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| Washington Colour Painters were a group of non-objective, post-painterly abstractionists working in Washington, D.C., in the late 1960s, who believed that the formal property of colour was fundamental to modern art. In June 1965, the Washington Gallery of Modern Art mounted *Washington Colour Painters*, a travelling exhibition showcasing the artwork of Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Gene Davis, Thomas Downing, Howard Mehring and Paul Reed. Subsequently the term ‘Washington Colour School’ or simply ‘Washington school’ has come to characterise this style of highly chromatic, large-scale painting made by soak-staining or striping pigment onto un-primed canvas. Noland has noted that such a school never existed for the earliest Washingtonian abstractionists such as Louis and himself; rather, the term refers to students of these artists, who coined it in the later 1960s. Other notable artists associated with the movement include Sam Gilliam, Mary Pinchot Meyer and Hilda Thorpe.  In 1953, Louis and Noland visited Helen Frankenthaler’s studio in New York City and saw her iconic *Mountains and Sea* (1952), a monumental painting, made by saturating areas of unprepared canvas with oil paint heavily diluted with turpentine. Upon returning to Washington, Louis and Noland experimented with Frankenthaler’s so-called ‘soak-staining’ technique, working with viscous, fast-drying acrylic paints instead of oils. |
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| Further reading:  (Tebow, Cohen and Lawrence)  (de Lima Greene, Wilkin and Noland)  (Greenberg)  (Morris, Cavagnaro and Grove) |