

FS Colour Series: Mellow Yellow Inspired by Agnes Martinâ??s Golden Glow

Description



Friendship, 1963

The great American minimalist painter Agnes Martin made her name with epic canvases washed with ghostly, trembling bands of pale pastel colour that speak of memory, love, and her intimate experiences in nature. Pale golden shades of yellow like Mellow Yellow made their way into her striped bands of shimmering colour, invoking the golden glow of the sun expanding across the horizon, or the mellow, sandy hues of the earth in New Mexico, where she settled in her later life.

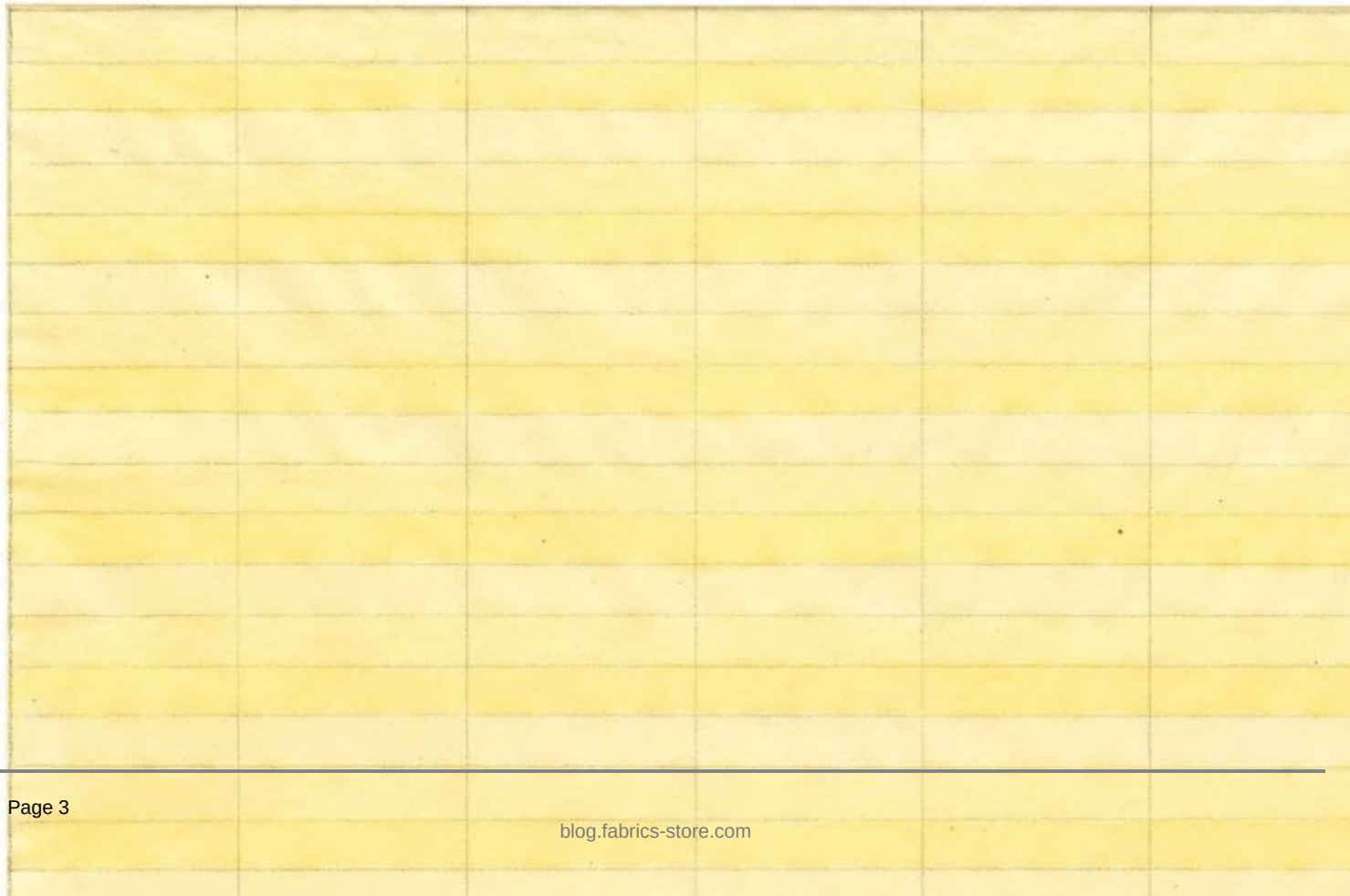
Martinâ??s path towards Minimalist abstraction was long and winding; born in Canada, she trained in art education in New York and New Mexico, before embarking on a series of abstract artworks featuring biomorphic forms and painterly backgrounds. Little of her earliest work survives today â?? after embarking on a series of grid-based drawings and paintings during the 1950s she subsequently destroyed much of her art made before this time. This move highlighted how significant to her the shift towards geometric abstraction was.



FS Mellow Yellow Midweight Signature Finish Linen

Friendship, 1963, was made with gold leaf and oil on canvas, and marks a pivotal moment of development in her artistic career. Made while she was living on the semi-derelict artistsâ?? commune lofts on Coenties Slip in New York, she covered the entire surface of a 6-foot canvas with shimmering gold leaf, before carefully scratching a grid format onto its surface. Martin thereby translated a pure colour field of gold into an animated, agitated surface that trembles with hand-drawn lines, inserting into it a fragile, ephemeral architectural construction that seems to mirror the stacked buildings of New York.

As alluded to in the title, its glowing gold colour became a symbol for her of the comforting warmth associated with friendship. While the yellows she later worked with were paler, and more subtle, she continued to explore the ways in which it could convey emotions related to memory, joy, and love, looking inwards for the meaning and subject matter in her art. â??When I think of art,â?• she wrote, â??I think of beauty. Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not in the eye it is in the mind.â?•



Untitled, 1977

After taking a 7-year hiatus from making art to travel throughout the US and settle for a spell in New Mexico, Martin found herself living in Galisteo. She began making art again in earnest, exploring softer colours, wider bands, and intersecting, closely-related shades of colour that seem to emanate an internal aura of light. In the small watercolour painting *Untitled,* 1977, Martin paints an ever-so-slightly shifting palette of yellow and gold hues that seem to drift in and out of the light, with darker bands spreading out horizontally to suggest grounding forces at play. She wrote of ambient works like this one, â??Paint registers less as a colour on a canvas than a tone in the air.â?•

In 1992, Martin moved to a retirement community in Toas, located at the base of Taos Mountain. By now her art had become more simplified, with wider, horizontal bands of colour jostling on top of one another. *With my Back to the World,* 1997 is a series of six paintings Martin made which relate to her oft-quoted phrase, â??I paint with my back to the world,â?• reflecting her belief that art should be held separate from the complications of the outside world. In this particular work Martin stacks fresh, pastel hued bands of blue, peach, and pale yellow, invoking the candy stripes of a summerâ??s day. The golden yellow bands seem to emanate ambient sunlight from within, inviting us to enter and enjoy her world of easy, tranquil escapism.

CATEGORY

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