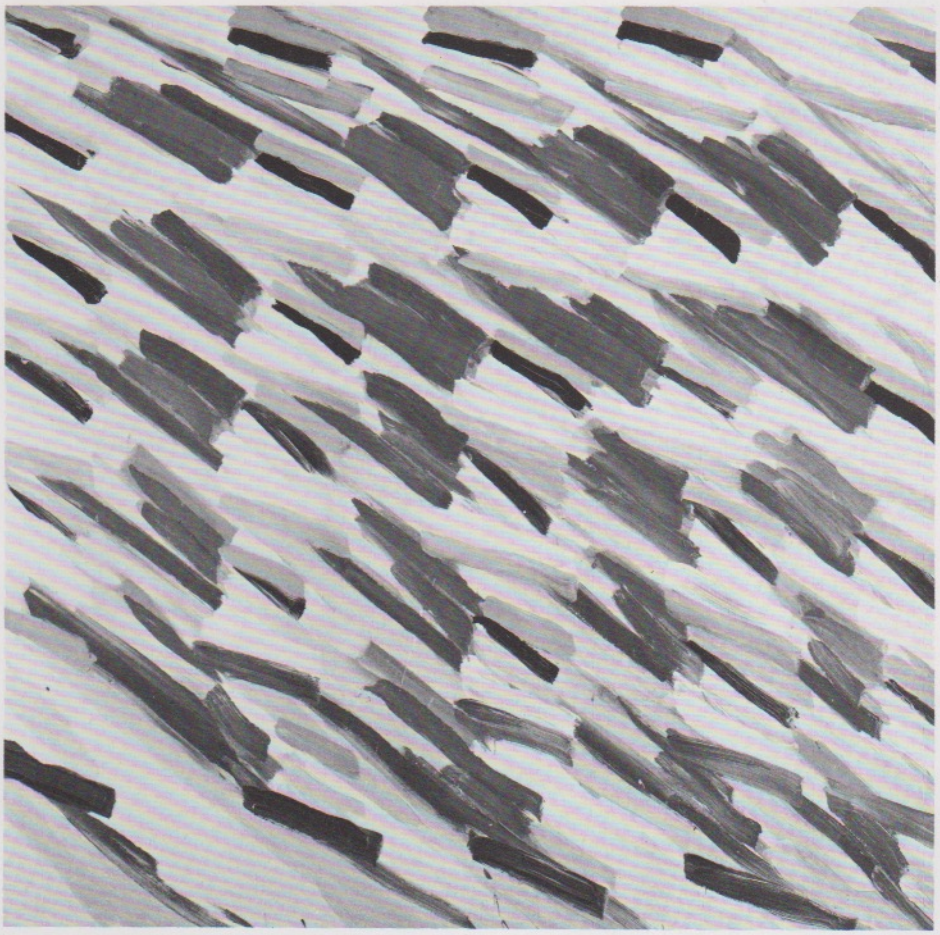
American Art Since 1945

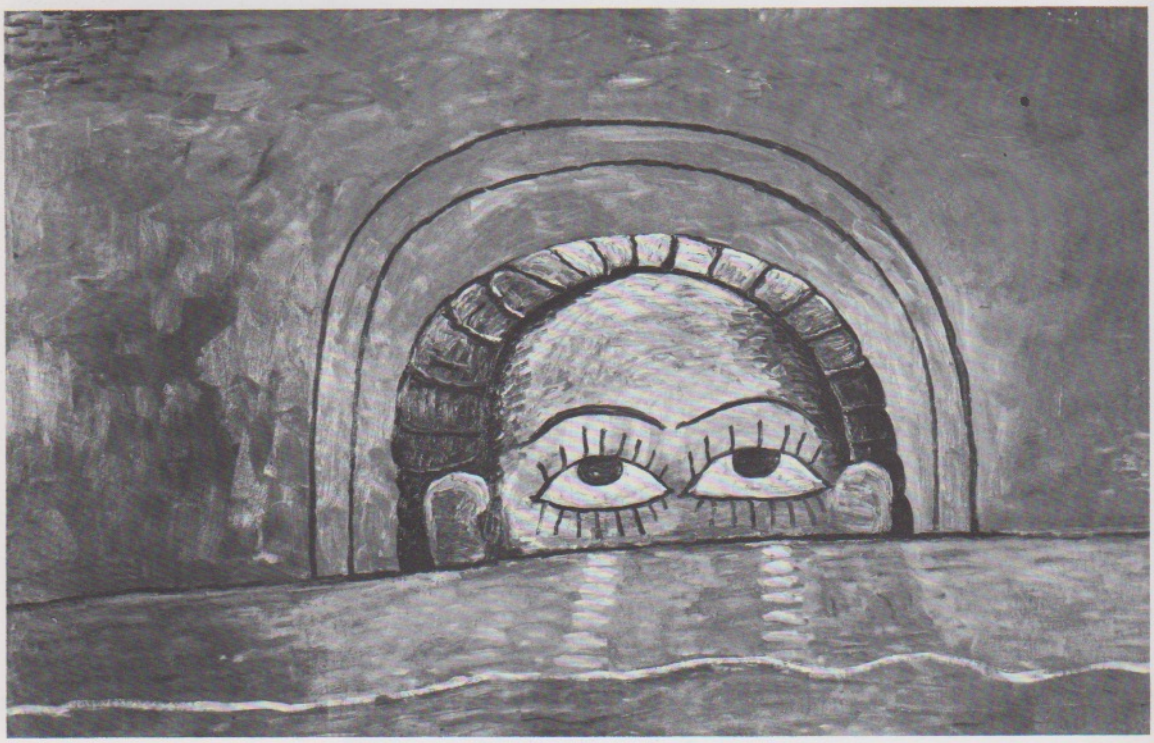
Dore Ashton



102 POWER BOOTHE *The Gift* 1980

Others whose bold statements indicated their sense of freedom from stylistic strictures during the '70s were Deborah Remington, whose willingness to experiment with symmetry and symbolism that suggested the hard, artificial artifacts of modern life enabled her to develop a powerfully idiosyncratic style; Harvey Quaytman, whose experiments with shaped canvas and heavily encrusted surfaces gave way to an incisive condensation of pictorial events in the purist tradition; Paul Rotterdam, whose works of the '70s moved into austere tonalities, measured out and sometimes bounded by inserted elements; and Power Boothe, whose delicate studies of light through grid-like

lattices gradually changed into fully chromatic, highly charged and complex canvases that emphasized the sensuous, expressive potentials of oil painting.

Those watching how painting re-emerged in the '70s were startled by several seemingly radical shifts of position among better-known artists. Certainly the work of Philip Guston came upon the art world like a tornado, laying waste many comfortable assumptions. His opening sally occurred in 1970 when he exhibited the fruits of the nightmarish events of 1968: a group of savage indictments of violence, phrased in the quasi-satirical style that led so many commentators to recall his early beginnings as a caricaturist. As he continued with a long series of commentaries on everything from the corruption of the art world to the memory of the Holocaust, critics were forced to come to terms with his paintings and a few were able to see that Guston had brought together his abiding preoccupations, ranging from painterly construction to ethics, in a resounding, often theatrical statement.

103 PHILIP GUSTON *Source* 1976