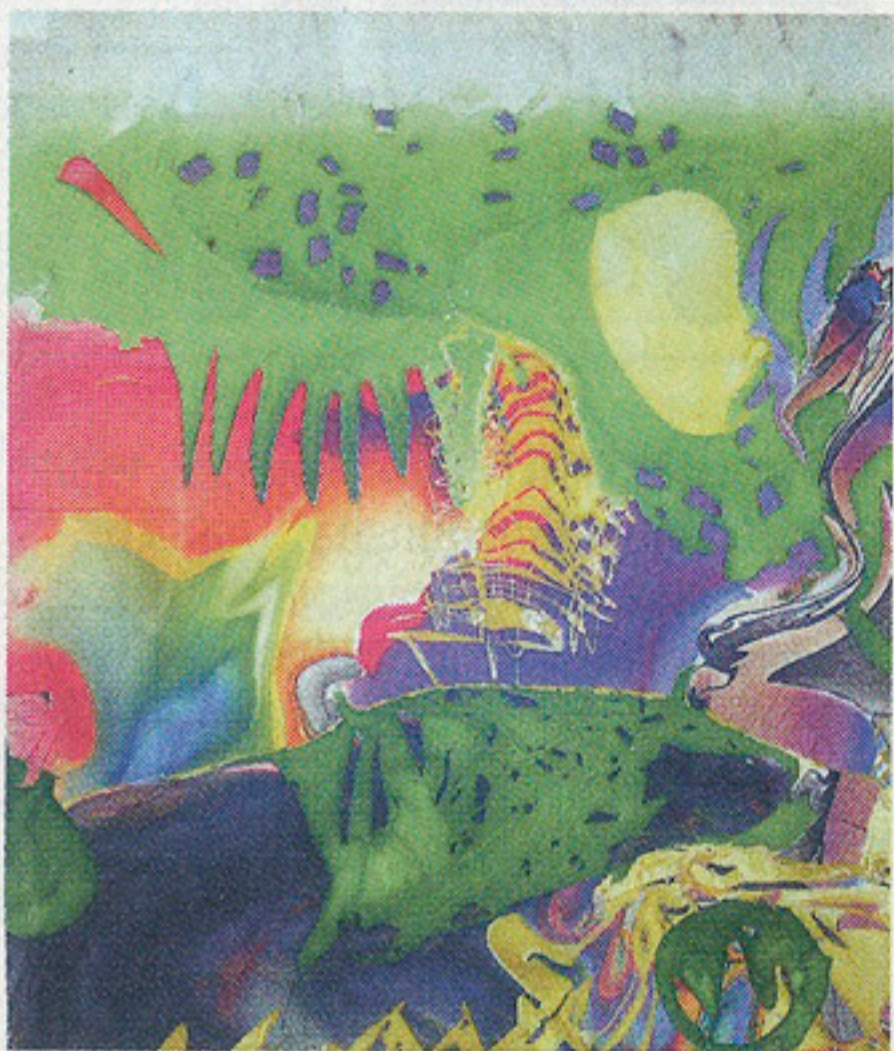


## André Thomkins



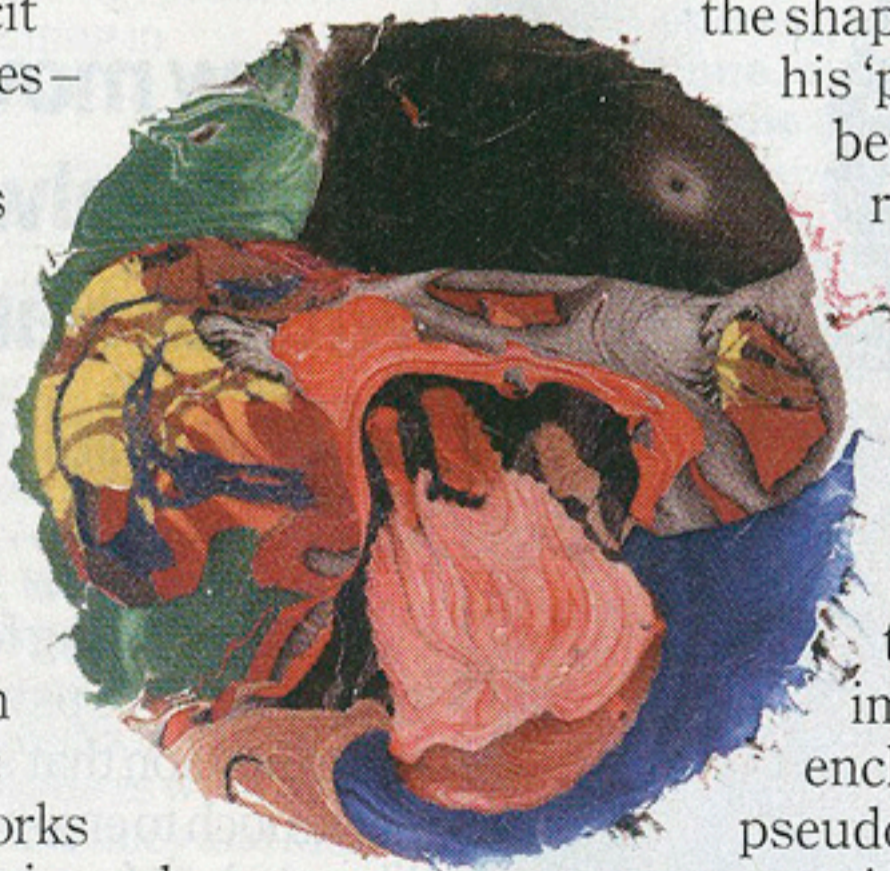
Untitled 'Lackskins' on paper, 1959-64



### Hauser & Wirth

Mayfair to Sloane Square

André Thomkins's works on paper will, I'll warrant, elicit unexpected responses – even from those naturally suspicious of pretty pictures. His large-scale painterly vistas induce, through the oddest of associative means, the sort of micro-macro shifts that can undermine aesthetic prejudices. These works are, at distance, just visceral enough to bring to mind De Kooning's fleshy daubings and Pollock's hi-colour splatters, yet fit more easily under the rather naff technical heading of marbling.



The late Swiss artist (1930-1985) experimented with music and sculpture but is best known for developing a lacquer-on-water technique, manipulating this incongruous mix of fluids into images and pulling them off on to sheets of paper. Even the puke-stringiest or most bathroom-pastel coloured of the 'lackskins' shown here breaks down at improbable compositional junctures into *National Geographic* topographies and histological strata. Alongside these sedately psychedelic '60s 'scapes, Dalí-surreal monochromatic astronauts and crude, early 1980s portraits serve to remind that the further off the figurative path Thomkins strayed, the more interesting the views became.

It is sensible that Hauser & Wirth should choose to show some archive footage of the artist at work, given the shape-shifting nature of his 'painting' practice between abstract and representational concerns. Thomkins was refreshingly humble, though, about his simple discovery of a mere technique and it's impossible not to be enchanted by (the pseudo-scientific presentation of) his influence over paint and water. Between shakily recorded moments the stiffly Germanic man with a process-based plan appears something like a magician. *Rebecca Geldard*