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*Nets*, 1997

Acrylic on canvas

16 1/8 by 12 5/8 inches (41 x 32 cm)



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Signed, titled and dated "Yayoi Kusama nets 1997" on verso

Provenance: Private collection, Japan  
New Art Est-Ouest Auctions, Tokyo, Modern, *Post-war & Contemporary Art*, November 26, 2017, lot 359  
Private collection, Europe  
Private collection

This work is accompanied by a registration card issued by the Yayoi Kusama Studio, no. 3170

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## Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929)

### *Nets, 1997*

“My nets grew beyond myself and beyond the canvases I was covering with them...  
They began to cover the walls, the ceiling, and finally the whole universe.”

- Yayoi Kusama



Yayoi Kusama's *Nets, 1997* forms part of the artist's most acclaimed and longest-running series, *Infinity Nets*, which she began after moving to New York in 1958. The series is instantly recognizable through Kusama's repeated curved brushstrokes, semicircular patterns, and dichromatic palettes that mark a shift from the singular abstract biomorphic forms of her youth to a more obsessive, exacting style which would come to define her oeuvre.

Kusama struggled with visions of infinitely oscillating, kaleidoscopic patterns throughout her childhood in Japan, as she relates: “I was always standing at the center of the obsession, over the passionate accretion and repetition inside of me” (Yayoi Kusama quoted in Laura Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, London, 2000, p. 103). It was not until she arrived in the United States, however, that Kusama found the means of channeling her psychosomatic visions and tendencies into the paintings that would begin the iconic *Infinity Nets* series. Working with a focus that was both obsessive and meditative, Kusama would move her brush across the canvas with precise, minute flicks of the wrist, carefully weaving the complex skein of overlapping loops to create an undulating pattern that calls to mind the simultaneously mesmerizing and terrifying glimpse of infinity one experiences before a seemingly endless expanse of shimmering water.

Although she took on the all-over compositional modus of the Abstract Expressionist painters, Kusama developed visual semantics that privileged the concept of infinity,

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ultimately defying categorization, or affiliation to any specific artistic movement. Kusama explains her works as follows: "without beginning, end, or center. The entire canvas would be occupied by [a] monochromatic net. This endless repetition caused a kind of dizzy, empty, hypnotic feeling" (Yayoi Kusama, London 2000, p. 103). The present work consists of an intricate lattice of shapes forming a net that extends beyond the picture plane to suggest an infinite abyss. Rendered in green brushstrokes over a yellow background, *Nets* presents a shallow surface of geometric, intertwining arcs.

A mesmeric corpus produced across a period of over fifty years, the *Infinity Nets* serve as the cornerstone of Kusama's artistic practice and the foundation of her painterly and sculptural output, inhabiting a psychological realm nestled between the premeditation of grand artistic concept and the automatism of surrealism.

Similar paintings can be found in museums around the world including *Infinity Nets Yellow*, 1960, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and *Infinity Nets (OQ-12)*, 2000, The Städel Museum, Frankfurt.



Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Nets Yellow*, 1960, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC



Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Nets (OQ-12)*, 2000, The Städel Museum, Frankfurt