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Agnes Martin's abstract works adhere to no catalogue of rules but appear instead as contemplative, intuitive signs. Her "floating abstractions," in which lines and free bands of color emerge almost imperceptibly, can be reproduced only with difficulty. Her writings, on the other hand--although certainly not intended as programmatic statements--offer valuable clarity regarding her own works and poetic insight about art in general. Since its original publication in 1991, this volume of Martin's writings has been a fundamental document for libraries of artists, collectors, and critics. Rather than identifying herself with her Minimalist peers, Martin has aligned herself with the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, and Chinese, asserting that "the function of art work is . . . the renewal of memories of moments of perfection." In combination with illustrations of her works, these texts--including lectures, stories recorded by critic Ann Wilson, passages ostensibly arranged in associative sequences, and "fragmentary ideas"--form an eloquent artist's statement by the creator of "silent paintings."

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