

ART

Romare Bearden

From 1958 to 1962, this revered African-American painter put his vibrant representations of black culture and community on hold in order to experiment with geometric and geological surfaces. Among the magnetic highlights of the DC Moore gallery's online selection of these abstractions are "River Mist," made from torn pieces of canvas as variegated as slabs of labradorite and punctuated with flashes of orange, and "With Blue," in which a glacial shape of pale, drippy pigment rests on a saturated azure background. There are also examples of Bearden's later work, made after he returned, energized by the civil-rights movement, to his previous subject matter. The mixed-media painting "Feast," from 1969, is a lyrically deconstructed Last Supper that incorporates photographs of African masks; its striated structure resembles weathered bands of sediment. The piece indicates that the artist's abstract period was not a detour but a bridge to a new era of improvisation.

—*Johanna Fateman*