

Matsumi Kanemitsu
(1922 - 1992)

Born to Japanese parents in Ogden, Utah in 1922. Kanemitsu was raised in a suburb of Hiroshima, Japan, until he was eighteen. He came alone to the United States in 1940 to pursue a higher education and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941, giving up his dual citizenship. However, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he was arrested and sent to a series of army detention camps. In the post-war years Kanemitsu moved to the East Coast, first studying sculpture with Karl Metzler in Baltimore before moving to New York. In New York, he attended the Art Students League under the instruction of teachers such as Harry Sternberg and Yasuo Kuniyoshi. Kuniyoshi, and later Ad Reinhardt, were influential mentors. In 1961 he earned a Ford Foundation grant to work at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles and readily translated the techniques of *sumi* painting into lithography. He taught at the Chouinard Art School from 1965 to 1970 and at the Otis Art Institute from 1971 to 1983, both in Los Angeles.

Kanemitsu was proficient in four separate mediums: *sumi* (Japanese ink drawing), watercolor, lithography, and painting on canvas. He painted with acrylics and used a complex technique that involved brushing, staining, pouring, and glazing to achieve abstract imagery that often reflected landscapes and the forces of nature. He worked all of his life with Japanese *sumi* ink and brushes, maintaining that the dramatic effects of color painting could also be achieved in black and white and the gradations between them. *Y.H.*