



1977

Acrylic on canvas

72 x 71 15/16 inches (182.9 x 182.7 cm)

EDNA ANDRADE

American, born 1917

LOOKING QUESTIONS

How many small, glowing starlike shapes do you see?

What colors do you see? What does this combination of colors make you think of?

Look for curving shapes. What do they remind you of?

Can you see any curving lines? (Be sure to look very carefully!)

What kind of movement do you see? Where is it going?

Imagine standing in front of this painting, approximately six feet by six feet in size. How would you feel?

NIGHT SEA

The artist Edna Andrade is inspired by nature, perhaps because she grew up in Portsmouth, Virginia, near the seacoast. After attending the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and working as an **architectural draftsman**, Andrade began to paint **geometric abstractions** like *Night Sea*. While making this painting, she remembered swimming with her young friends in the Chesapeake Bay on a beautiful summer night in which there was a lot of phosphorescence, a glowing light emitted by tiny sea creatures in the dark: “As we splashed around in the waves we got these little sparkles all over us, and in a way that was one of the most wonderful experiences visual and **tactile**, and everything else that I could ever imagine.”

Andrade first worked out the design for *Night Sea* in pen-and-ink drawings. Then she used a Mylar **template** to create the painting in **acrylic**. Twenty-five small stars appear to glow, sending out slender rays of pink and green light in a precise, geometric **pattern**. The tip of each ray touches the tip of another, creating **luminescent** fans that flow into each other like waves suspended in blue-black space. The waves seem to be moving toward the top, the bottom, and the sides of the canvas simultaneously. Because this painting is large—approximately six by six feet—we feel enveloped in a dark world **illuminated** only by the small, evenly spaced stars, fans, and waves. Although all the lines in this painting are perfectly straight, their special arrangement creates the **illusion** of repeating, curving shapes. The dark background becomes flat ribbons or roads, bending and twisting gracefully in space.