

**UNPRECEDENTED EXHIBITION OF BRICE MARDEN'S WORKS
PREMIERES AT MoMA IN OCTOBER**

**Two New Monumental Works On View for the First Time along with Paintings
and Drawings from All Phases of the Artist's Career**

Brice Marden: A Retrospective of Paintings and Drawings

October 29, 2006–January 15, 2007

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery on the sixth floor

The Paul J. Sachs Drawings Galleries on the third floor

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 11, 2006— *Brice Marden: A Retrospective of Paintings and*

Drawings is an unprecedented gathering of the artist's work and the first overview of the entirety of his career, which spans more than 40 years. With 56 paintings and more than 50 drawings, the exhibition is organized chronologically, beginning with works from the 1960s and ending with two new monumental paintings exhibited for the first time. The gradual, deliberate evolution of the artist's work becomes evident throughout the exhibition, as does his constant exploration of light, color, and surface. The work of the first 20 years of his career, characterized by luminous monochrome panels that first won the artist acclaim, will now be seen in balance with the work of the last 20 years, including the Cold Mountain group, which solidified Marden's reputation as one of the most important abstract artists of his generation. *Brice Marden: A Retrospective of Paintings and Drawings*, on view at MoMA from October 29, 2006, to January 15, 2007, is organized by Gary Garrels, Senior Curator, UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. The exhibition will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (February 23 to May 13, 2007), and with paintings only to the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany (June 12 to October 7, 2007).

"Marden's work is deeply influenced by the places he has lived and worked, the people in his life, the cultures in which he has immersed himself, not the least of them the art of the past, both ancient and recent," says Mr. Garrels. "From his sharp syntheses and distillations of his experiences, an art is made that in turn gives viewers an incisive means to reflect more deeply on their own perceptions, knowledge, and experience."

For the MoMA presentation, all 56 paintings, including three oil-on-marble works, will be on view in The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery on the sixth floor, along with 8 drawings interspersed in key galleries. Drawing has often been Marden's method of working through problems before attempting a painting dealing with the same issues. The rest of the drawings in the exhibition will be on view in The Paul J. Sachs Drawings Galleries on the third floor. These drawings will be arranged into three groupings: the grid, the plane, and the gesture. Marden has said that drawing is "an intimate medium. . . . A painting is about refinement of image. And

drawing isn't. Drawing is not refinement. I don't think drawing is less than painting. . . . I find that painting doesn't have the fluidity that drawing has. And that's always, to me, the battle, to get fluidity into the painting."

Brice Marden was born in 1938 in Bronxville, New York. Early in his childhood, Marden's best friend's father, a painter, encouraged Marden in his art studies, and in his early teens, Marden visited museums in New York City. As an undergraduate at Boston University's School of Fine and Applied Art (1958 to 1961), Marden had thorough and traditional training, including classes in drawing, printmaking, design, lettering, and the study of anatomy and perspective. While in school, Marden painted portraits and still lifes that reveal the influence of work by Paul Cézanne and the early work Henri Matisse. On his own, he visited galleries and museums in Boston and New York. At Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, Edouard Manet's *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian* (1867), which, coincidentally, can be seen on the third floor of MoMA beginning November 5 in the exhibition *Manet and the Execution of Maximilian*, was a particular favorite of Marden's because of Manet's use of color.

After graduating from Boston University, he attended the Yale University School of Architecture and Design. At Yale, Marden stopped making figurative paintings and began to paint abstractions only, inspired by Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline. By the end of his first year at Yale, Marden began to organize paintings and drawings around a four-part grid, and the exhibition begins with examples of these works. By 1963, these grids had evolved into two flanking planes of gray.

In the fall of 1963, Marden moved to New York City. He found a job as a part-time guard at The Jewish Museum, where in the winter of 1964, the first retrospective of the work of Jasper Johns was presented. This exhibition provided an important stimulus for Marden.

Marden traveled to Paris for the spring and summer of 1964. He would make charcoal-and-graphite drawings in which the work's surface divides into an overall grid. He was exposed to the work of painter Jean Fautrier, and he became interested in the paintings of Alberto Giacometti for their space, gray palette, and linear strokes. Marden returned to New York City later that year and in his own paintings of this period the surfaces thicken and become more homogenous. Individual brushstrokes give way to a more uniform skin of paint achieved with a knife. He also started to make one-panel monochrome paintings, exemplified by *Return 1* (1964–65), citing Giacometti as a direct influence of these works.

In 1966, Marden completed *Wax I*, his first painting made with a blend of oil paint, turpentine, and beeswax. This mixture reduces the oil's shine and increases the tactility of the surface. Marden kept the mixture on a hot plate, mixing it constantly and initially using a refrigerator door as a palette. Brushing on the hot mixture, he smoothed it with a spatula and a knife, building layers of the medium to create a dense surface that both absorbs and reflects light. Some of his one-panel monochromes, such as *Nebraska* (1966), incorporate an inch-wide strip at the bottom of the canvas below which he did not paint; instead he allowed drips from the surface

above to accumulate there, pointing out the process used to make the painting and reminding viewers of the nature of the canvas as a physical object.

Marden had his first solo exhibition at the Bykert Gallery in New York in November of 1966. The works included in the Bykert exhibition fully encapsulate the lessons and experience of the prior eight years. Some of those works can be seen in MoMA's retrospective, including *Nebraska*, *The Dylan Painting* (1966), and *Nico* (1966). "These paintings have a maturity and confidence as well as a sense of grandeur and ambition, without any hint of hesitancy or tentativeness," says Mr. Garrels. "These prodigious works stand as fundamental touchstones for the time. Marden was now fully launched as a painter to be reckoned with." Shortly after the Bykert Gallery exhibition, Marden created the two-panel painting *For Helen* (1967), which is dedicated to Helen Harrington, whom Marden married in 1968.

In 1971, Marden and Helen visited Hydra, a Greek island in the Aegean Sea. The qualities of a place and its light strongly figure into Marden's work, and allusions to the Mediterranean landscape can be seen in Marden's work through the early 1980s—his colors became brighter, surfaces became lusher, and canvases bigger and bolder. Both the myths of the Greek gods and of early Christianity made appearances in his works, as seen in *Grove Addenda III* (1973–74). Nature, the seasons, and sunlight all influenced such works as the painting *The Seasons* (1974–75) and the drawing *Inside Outside* (1977).

In 1972, he began the Grove Group series (1972–76), which conveys his impressions of Greek olive groves. Three of the five paintings in the series (*Grove Group I* [1972–73], *Grove Group II* [1972–73], and *Grove Group IV* [1972/1976–77]) and eight of the Grove Group Drawings (*Grove Group 1–5* [1972], *Grove Addenda II* [1973], *Grove Addenda (Delphi)*, [1973], and *Grove Addenda III* [1973–74]) are included in the exhibition. The paintings are all six feet by nine feet and run from one to three panels. Within a seemingly narrow range of blue grays and blue-green grays, Marden achieves remarkable variations of color, light, and scale. The post-and-lintel architecture of Hydra can also be seen in his art, specifically in the composition and structure of his work from the late 1970s, early 1980s, and into the 1990s, as seen in the painting *Thira* (1979–80).

Throughout this period, Marden reconsidered the development of abstract painting in New York. Marden saw the 1971 Barnett Newman retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art and was inspired by Newman's series of four large works titled *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue* (1966–70). Three years later, Marden would begin his own series of works dealing with red, yellow, and blue, including the paintings *Fourth Figure (Red Yellow Blue)* (1973–74) and *Red Yellow Blue II* (1974).

The late 1970s through the mid-1980s was a period of transition for Marden. Among the important developments was Marden's abandonment of the use of wax in 1981 because of the fragility of the surfaces of his paintings. He developed a new technique using terpeneol, a further distillation of turpentine, to produce a pigment that dries to a flat surface. Marden also began to

question his own work's potential for development. He said that he "could go on making 'Brice Marden paintings' and suffer that silent creative death. . . . You get to this point where you just have to make a decision to change things."

Marden's personal life continued to influence his art, including the birth of his two daughters, Mirabelle and Melia. In 1983, he and his family traveled to Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India, which marked the beginning of his interest in Asian culture, art, and landscape. These influences would profoundly affect his work over the next two decades. In 1984, Marden visited the exhibition *Masters of Japanese Calligraphy, 8th–9th Century* at the Asia Society and the Japan House Gallery in New York. He immersed himself in the study of calligraphy, and this art form would soon become a predominant influence in his work, as seen in the acclaimed Cold Mountain group, which was inspired by the writing of the ninth-century Chinese poet Cold Mountain (Han Shan). This series of numerous drawings, three suites of etchings, and six monumental paintings, made between 1988 and 1991, was first shown at Dia Center for the Arts in New York in 1991. Three Cold Mountain paintings (*Cold Mountain 2*, *Cold Mountain 5 (Open)*, and *Cold Mountain 6 (Bridge)*, all dated 1989–91) and four related drawings (*Cold Mountain Addendum 1* [1991–92], *Cold Mountain Addendum 2* [1990–92], *Han Shan Goes to the Tropics* [1991], and *Rain* [1991]) are on view in the exhibition.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Marden melded his Greek and Asian influences with New York School abstract painting in a seamless synthesis to create a series of works entitled *The Muses*. In one of the works, *The Muses* (1991–93), he not only incorporated Greek and Asian motifs but also drew on memories of his father and inspiration from his daughters to create one of his most monumental and important works. In it he conjoins past and present, and culture and family, in a unity of aspects of his life and work across decades.

Over the last 15 years, the Mardens have acquired two rural properties—one in Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania, and one in Tivoli, near the Hudson River in upstate New York. In Eagles Mere, another set of influences began to take hold—softer rural light, the colors of the landscape, and animal life—which can be seen in *Bear Print* (1997/98–2000). In Tivoli, Marden returns to the landscape and memories of the Hudson from his youth.

In 2000 in the Tivoli studio, Marden embarked on two of the most ambitious paintings of his career. On view for the first time in this retrospective, *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Second Version* and *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Third Version* are both 24 feet long, and they both comprise six panels that explore the spectrum of six colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. The works allude to Marden's interest in Greek compositions as well as Chinese hand scrolls. The works' titles are rich with meaning: the word "propitious" can be defined as "favorable," and the garden is an ancient motif for constant change, growth, and renewal. Marden has used the phrase "plane image" for decades, often saying that his work is a synthesis of the plane and the image.

SPONSORSHIP:

The exhibition is sponsored by Lehman Brothers.

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PUBLICATION:

The accompanying publication, *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective*, features an introduction by Mr. Garrels on the issues, development, and historical place of Marden's work, as well as scholarly essays by Richard Shiff, Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art, The University of Texas at Austin; Brenda Richardson, independent scholar and former Deputy Director and Curator at The Baltimore Museum of Art; and Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Associate Director of Conservation and Research at The Whitney Museum of American Art and Founding Director of the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art at Harvard University Art Museums. The publication's essays focus on the artist's work and influences throughout his career and on his materials and processes. The book also contains an interview with the artist by Michael Duffy, Paintings Conservator at MoMA. With a color plate section, comprehensive chronology, exhibition history, and bibliography, this monograph is the most complete book to date on Marden's career. The book is published by The Museum of Modern Art and is sold in the MoMA Stores. It is available to the trade through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson outside the United States and Canada. Price: \$65.00. See separate press release for more information.

PROGRAMS:

On Wednesday, November 1, at 6:00 p.m., Brice Marden and Gary Garrels discuss the artist's work and exhibition. On Monday, November 13, at 6:00 p.m., artists Francesco Clemente, Luc Tuymans, and Christopher Wool discuss the impact of Brice Marden's work through individual presentations and a conversation moderated by Gary Garrels. On Monday, December 4, at 6:00 p.m., Richard Shiff, Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art, The University of Texas at Austin; John Yau, poet and author of *Paradiso Diaspora* (2006), *Borrowed Love Poems* (2002), and *Brice Marden: Drawings and Paintings 1964-2002*, among others; and Jean-Pierre Criqui, art historian, critic, and editor of *Les Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne* of the Centre Pompidou, discuss the influence of geography and culture on Marden's work through individual presentations and a discussion moderated by Mr. Garrels. Brown Bag Lunch Lectures are also scheduled on Monday, October 30, and Thursday, November 2. See separate press release for details about the programs.

MoMA AUDIO:

A free MoMA Audio program features Brice Marden and Gary Garrels discussing Marden's paintings and drawings from 1960s to the present. Art historian Richard Shiff punctuates this exchange with a discussion of Marden's drawings. This program, along with all other MoMA Audio programs, is accessible on one listening device. It is also available for download on www.moma.org/audio and on the free MoMA Audio podcast on iTunes after the exhibition opens to the public. MoMA Audio is available free of charge courtesy of Bloomberg.

TRAVEL:

The exhibition will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (February 23 to May 13, 2007), and with paintings only to the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany (June 12 to October 7, 2007).

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Press Contact: Daniela Stigh, 212/708-9747 or daniela_stigh@moma.org
Meg Blackburn, 212/708-9757 or meg_blackburn@moma.org

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www.moma.org/press. Please call for username and password.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)

Film Admission: Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.
\$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.
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