

GAGOSIAN



BRICE MARDEN

It reminds me of something, and I don't know what it is.

Opening reception: Saturday, November 9, 6–8pm
November 9–December 21, 2019
980 Madison Avenue, New York

Brice Marden's studio, Tivoli, New York, 2019. Artwork © 2019 Brice Marden/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Rob McKeever

November 5, 2019

Painting is still a question of color and matter coming together and how pigment has to behave in a certain way.

—Brice Marden

Gagosian is pleased to present new paintings and drawings by Brice Marden.

These works continue Marden's *Letter* series, in which networks of calligraphic lines and strokes weave through fields of color and tone. Marden begins these paintings by filling the canvas with script-like glyphs, working in columns from top to bottom, right to left. He then links these initial markings through a network of lines, creating webs and threads across the surface of the canvas. As he paints in layers, Marden scrapes away at excess paint on the surface of the canvas, diffusing his

lines and allowing a complex play of color, weight, and distance to develop in the pictorial space as he works the canvas deeper into abstraction.

Six paintings, each measuring six feet tall by ten feet wide, were made in Tivoli—the location of Marden’s upstate New York home and studio—where the seasonal changes of the surrounding Northeastern landscape and light frequently influence his use of color. Marden’s body of work has had ties to calligraphic, script-like markings throughout his career, notably in the late 1980s with his *Cold Mountain Studies*. More recently, the *Letter* paintings were initially inspired by a poem by Huang Tingjian, a Chinese calligrapher, painter, and poet of the Song dynasty. In these new works, however, Marden experiments with whites, greens, oranges, and vibrant yellows—shades that have until now rarely occurred in his palette. In each of these large-scale paintings, Marden leaves a panel of blank color on either side of the canvas, guiding the viewer’s eye to the interlocking lines at its square center.

Four vertical ink-on-paper works are also on view. Made predominantly in dark purples, greens, and reds, the colored lines of Marden’s overmarkings sit at varying depths—the bright, light-colored markings in yellow and green often contrasting dramatically with the dark backgrounds.

Five smaller paintings, each measuring three by five feet, were made at Marden’s studio on the Caribbean island of Nevis. Their rectangular, light-grey backgrounds form a field for the central square of action in the paintings. In two new paintings, gridded dots, rather than curved lines, are rendered in dark blotches of color—a pattern familiar from Marden’s workbook drawings. For more than a decade, Marden carried a workbook with him, as he developed a series of abstract drawings based on a geometric or gridded background. Earlier this year, all of the drawings from this workbook were exhibited for the first time at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent in Marrakech, Morocco, and then at Gagosian Paris. In these new paintings, gridded dots again become the basis for interwoven smudges and lines.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with a text by John Elderfield. A facsimile of Marden’s original workbook, published by Gagosian in 2019, is available in the Gagosian Shop.

Brice Marden was born in 1938 in Bronxville, New York, and lives and works in New York. Collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Philadelphia Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Saint Louis Art Museum; Tate, London; Kunstmuseum Basel; Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Ottawa; and Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Exhibitions include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1975); *Paintings, Drawings, Etchings 1975–80*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1981, traveled to Whitechapel Art Gallery, London); *Cold Mountain*, Dia Center for the Arts, New York (1991, traveled to Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Menil Collection, Houston; and Städtisches Kunstmuseum, Bonn, Germany); *A Retrospective of Paintings and Drawings*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2006–07, traveled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin); and *Morocco*, Musée Yves Saint Laurent, Marrakech, Morocco (2019).

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