

For immediate release

## BRIDGET RILEY

November 5 – December 19, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, November 5, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with art historian Richard Shiff: 10 AM



*Reflection 2, 1994*  
Oil on linen  
65 x 90 inches (165 x 228.4 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present the gallery's first exhibition with Bridget Riley in New York. On view across 525 and 533 West 19th Street, this will be her first show in the city since 2007, and the only New York presentation since *Bridget Riley: Reconnaissance* at the Dia Center for the Arts in 2000 to feature new and older works. The exhibition marks fifty years since Riley's participation in *The Responsive Eye* at The Museum of Modern Art, the highly influential group show which led to instant, international recognition for the young British painter. Last year, David Zwirner hosted her inaugural show at the London gallery, which was a major survey of her stripe paintings from 1961 to 2014.

One of the most significant living artists, Riley's work has radically explored the active role of perception in art, using the interrelationship between line and color to convey movement and light within the pictorial field. From the early 1960s, the artist has employed elementary shapes—such as circles, stripes, and curves—to create visual experiences that actively engage the viewer, testing the limits of each element at various stages throughout her career.

This exhibition includes paintings and works on paper spanning almost thirty-five years of Riley's practice. It takes its chronological point of departure in vertical stripe works from the early 1980s featuring her "Egyptian palette" inspired by the artist's trip to Egypt in late 1979, which unlike previous combinations of color was organized according to plastic (and not rational) principles. These asymmetrical compositions anticipated the ensuing diagonal grid paintings that Riley began in 1986. Featuring rhomboid shapes that break up the picture plane, these in turn became the foundation for her curved paintings in the late 1990s.

Vertical, curvilinear shapes prevailed in the past decade and also characterize her wall painting *Rajasthan* (2012), a composition of intersecting forms in green, gray, orange, and red whose presentation here marks its first display outside of Europe. The exhibition culminates with Riley's most recent stripe works as well as a new series of black-and-white paintings that explore concavity and convexity of the line, all shown here for the first time. The return to painting in black and white, which she had abandoned in the mid-1960s in order to explore the properties of color, was directly inspired by Riley's 1962 painting *Tremor*, and here appears in the current context of five decades of work. As the art historian Éric de Chasseay notes, these new compositions "not only enter into a dialogue with the 1960s works, but take stock of every painting experience Riley has created during a long career. [She once] remarked: 'I had to work through the black-and-white paintings before I could even begin to think about possibilities of color.' The 2014–2015 paintings stem from the reverse: a working through the color paintings has enabled her to come to a new series of black-and-white works."<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by David Zwirner Books featuring an essay by the art historian Richard Shiff and biographical notes compiled by Robert Kudielka, one of her foremost critics.

**Bridget Riley** was born in 1931 in London, where she attended Goldsmiths College from 1949 to 1952 and the Royal College of Art from 1952 to 1955.

Currently on view at The Courtauld Gallery in London is *Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat*, which highlights Riley's profound engagement throughout her career with French Post-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat (through January 17, 2016). In 2016, the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague will host *Bridget Riley – The Curve Paintings 1961–2014*, a solo exhibition of over thirty paintings and studies focusing on the artist's recurrent use of curves from the past fifty years. The show was organized by De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill on Sea, England, where it was first presented in 2015.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Bridget Riley* (2014–2015), which displayed the artist's large-scale sculpture *Continuum* alongside three paintings at The Art Institute of Chicago, making it her first presentation at an American museum in over a decade. *Bridget Riley: Paintings and Related Work* (2010–2011) was on view at the Sunley Room at the National Gallery, London and featured recent paintings by the artist alongside Old Master and Impressionist works. Also in London in 2010, the National Portrait Gallery presented *Bridget Riley: From Life*, an exhibition of Riley's little-known sketches drawn from life. Other recent international museum shows include *Bridget Riley: Flashback*, which first went on view at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool in 2009; *Bridget Riley: Rétrospective* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in Paris in 2008; *Bridget Riley: Paintings and Drawings 1961–2004* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 2004–2005; *Bridget Riley: New Work* at the Museum Haus Esters and Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, Germany in 2002; and *Bridget Riley: Reconnaissance* at the Dia Center for the Arts, New York from 2000–2001.

Riley's visual vocabulary is complemented by her numerous books and essays in which she explores concepts pertaining to her own practice as well as the works of several other artists. Riley has also co-curated exhibitions on Paul Klee (Hayward Gallery, 2002) and Piet Mondrian (Tate Gallery, 1996).

In 1968, Riley won the International Prize for Painting at the Venice Biennale. In 1974, she was made a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) and in 1999, appointed the Companion of Honour. In 2003, the artist was awarded the Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo. She received the Kaiser Ring of the City of Goslar, Germany in 2009 and the Rubens Prize of the City of Siegen, Germany in 2012.

Work by the artist is represented in museum collections worldwide, including The Art Institute of Chicago; Dia Art Foundation, New York; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Kunstmuseum Bern; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Tate Gallery, London. Riley lives and works in London.

<sup>1</sup> Éric de Chasse, "Unbound Certainties," in *Bridget Riley*. Exh. cat. (Berlin and Paris: Galerie Max Hetzler and Holzwarth Publications, 2015), pp. 29–30.

**For all press inquiries and to RSVP to the November 5 press preview, contact**

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**Richard Shiff** will lead a walkthrough of the exhibition on November 5. Shiff is the Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art at The University of Texas at Austin, where he directs the Center for the Study of Modernism. His publications include *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism* (1984), *Critical Terms for Art History* (co-edited, 1996; second edition, 2003), *Barnett Newman: A Catalogue Raisonné* (co-authored, 2004), *Between Sense and de Kooning* (2011), and *Ellsworth Kelly: New York Drawings 1954–1962* (2014), among others. For books published by David Zwirner, Shiff has contributed essays to *Dan Flavin: Series and Progressions* (2010), *Donald Judd* (2011), and *Bridget Riley: The Stripe Paintings 1961–2014*. He will also be writing for a forthcoming publication accompanying the exhibition *Early Mondrian: Painting 1900–05*, opening at David Zwirner in London in November.