

EXHIBITION UPDATE

22 January 2016

CHANCE, ORDER, CHANGE
Abstract Paintings 1939 – 89
11 February – 8 May 2016

Media View: Wednesday 10 February, 11am – 1pm
Curator's Introductory Tour: 12 noon

Josef Albers, Victor Pasmore, Ad Reinhardt, Bridget Riley: some of the 20th century's most influential artists feature in this exciting exhibition of works exploring abstract art during a crucial period in its development.

The centrepiece of the Barber Institute's spring programme, *Chance, Order, Change* takes its title from a series of works by the British artist Kenneth Martin, and features paintings from a private collection, never seen before together in public.

Abstraction emerged in European art in the second decade of the 20th century during a white-hot period of experimentation and stylistic development. Underpinned by strands of 19th-century philosophy, combined with optical and colour theories, it attracted artists such as Kandinsky, Kupka, Mondrian and Malevich, who embarked on a new approach to painting where formal elements – colour, line, form and texture – became paramount. Conventional, figurative representation of the external world was eliminated, as painting itself became the subject.

Chance, Order, Change features a selection of works that typify abstract painting at its purest and most rigorous. It includes the striking Constructivism – or Geometric Abstraction – of the pioneering Bauhaus designer and teacher Josef Albers, instrumental in exporting abstract art to the United States in the 1930s. The US Colour Field Painters are represented by Ad Reinhardt, alongside postwar British converts to Geometric Abstraction, Victor Pasmore and Kenneth Martin – from whose series of geometric paintings based on dice-generated random number sequences the exhibition title is drawn. The display also includes the Op Art of Bridget Riley, whose work is often influenced by industrial materials and techniques, and the rigorously spare paintings of Alan Charlton and Robert Ryman.

The exhibition is accompanied by a full programme of public lectures, gallery talks and tours, and practical art and writing workshops for all ages.

Works featured in the exhibition:

- Josef Albers (1888-1976), *Construction in Red-Black-Blue*, 1939. *
- Josef Albers, *Study for Affectionate*, 1954. *
- Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square: Red Tetrachord*, 1962.
- Alan Charlton (b. 1948), *Ten Part Line Painting*, 1984. *
- Kenneth Martin (1905 – 1984), *Chance, Order, Change 26, History Painting*, 1983. *

- Victor Pasmore (1908-1998), *Abstract in Various Colours – 7 in All*, 1950. *
- Victor Pasmore, *Line and Space No.21*, 1964. *
- Ad Reinhardt (1913 – 1967), *Abstract Painting*, 1957. *
- Bridget Riley (b.1931), *Study no.1 for 'Studio International' Cover*, 1971. *
- Bridget Riley, *Orphean Elegy 7*, 1979. *
- Robert Ryman (b. 1930), *Courier*, 1982. *
- Sean Scully (b. 1945), *Red Painting*, 1989. *

* Image available for media use

- *Images of a selection of works from the exhibition can be viewed at <http://barber.org.uk/chance>.*
- *For further information or images, to notify us of your intention to attend the media view or to visit at another time/date to review the exhibition, or to arrange an interview with the exhibition curator, Robert Wenley, contact the Barber Institute's Communications and Marketing Manager, Andrew Davies, on 0121 414 2946 or 07769 958114 or andrewdavies@barber.org.uk.*

LISTINGS INFORMATION

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