ART INSTITUTE EXHIBITION OF BRIDGET RILEY WORKS IS FIRST
IN AN AMERICAN MUSEUM IN 15 YEARS
Op Art Artist’s Only Sculpture Will Be Displayed in the U.S. for the First Time

The Art Institute of Chicago is pleased to be the first American museum in nearly 15 years to present a solo exhibition of the work of British Op Art artist Bridget Riley. The exhibition, which will run from November 11, 2014, through March 8, 2015, will feature the Art Institute’s own Ascending and Descending Hero, an important early black-and-white painting, alongside Continuum, the artist’s only sculptural work, and two of her “stripe” paintings.

Riley, born in 1931, uses an abstract pictorial language built upon simple shapes that trigger complex sensations. Her early black-and-white works from the 1960s are characterized by the repetition, contrast, reversal, and interaction of formal elements such as stripes, triangles, and squares. While her works are abstract, Riley draws upon her experience of the natural world as well as the compositions and use of color throughout art history, from Old Master painters to Cézanne, Seurat, Matisse, and Mondrian. In Riley’s words, “More than anything else I want my paintings to exist on their own terms. That is to say they must stealthily engage and disarm you.”

Riley came to international prominence in the 1960s as a leading proponent of Op Art. Her earliest critical recognition came in the spring of 1962 with her first solo show at Gallery One in London. She went on to receive international attention in 1965 when she exhibited alongside Victor Vasarely and others in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York called “The Responsive Eye.” One of Riley’s paintings was featured on the exhibition catalogue cover. Since then she has continued to pursue an independent and inventive way of painting.
“We are thrilled to present Riley's innovative and rigorously accomplished work, both through the lens of our own collection and through the loan of rarely seen, closely related pieces,” said James Rondeau, Dittmer Chair and Curator of the Department of Contemporary Art at the Art Institute. “Bridget has been at the forefront of advanced conversations in painting since she began in the 1950s, and she continues to create stunning, visually stimulating images that pulse with energy and extraordinary visual intelligence.”

One of the highlights of the Art Institute exhibition is Riley’s only sculpture, *Continuum* (1962/2005), which has never been seen in the U.S. The immersive, spiral-shaped sculpture is closely linked visually to her painting in the museum’s collection, *Ascending and Descending Hero* (1963/65). The exhibit also includes two of Riley’s “stripe” paintings, the early black-and-white *Horizontal Vibration* (1961) and the recent color diptych *Red Modulation (Yellow and Orange)* (2013-14).

This exhibition is generously supported by Meredith Bluhm-Wolf and William Wolf.

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