



Marden, 1976
Photograph: Robert Mappelthorpe

“I think [art is] one of the last things left in our society where you have to be perfectly honest and it's hard work. I don't care whether it's appreciated or on what terms it's appreciated, the fact that it's there and some people can appreciate it. That is really good,” Marden explained in a 1972 [oral history](#) with the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. “I don't think that anybody is going to come and stand in front of my painting and have some revelation...You look at it and it's a contemplative object and I always really just have to mean something, do something, be something.”

“The drawing technically comes out of a melding of materials. The paper is an integral part of the drawing, the wax is integral. Everything is a real part of the drawing...that refers back to the objectness,” Marden reflected in [an interview from 1976](#) about his [beeswax drawings](#).

Over 100 drawings and paintings filled [the galleries of MoMA](#) for a traveling retrospective of forty years of Marden's work in 2006. Listen to Marden describe the pieces on view in an [audio playlist](#).

[The Brooklyn Rail](#) spoke with Marden in 2006 about process, influences, new work, and what he refers to as “the romance of color,” as he prepared for the retrospective. “Sometimes it can be just there and it becomes so much its own self and own thing, that it becomes magnificent and powerful...you are forced by color, by paint, to make it your way and it becomes yours and you become it...And also it becomes this thing that is nowhere else except in painting.”

[Kunstmuseum Basel](#) presented its collection of Marden's works on paper in 2007, centered around the artist's designs for the windows of Basel Cathedral – created between 1980-85 but never executed.

The National Gallery of Art joined Marden for [a tour and conversation in his studio in 2009](#)

Marden's daughter, gallerist and photographer Mirabelle, [interviewed her father in 2015](#) in a freewheeling discussion about the influence of other artsits, nature, music, dance, and travel. “One of the great things about art is it isn't worth anything. It's absolutely free,” Marden reflected. “It's going to get made no matter what. People are going to make it whether they're scraping in the mud, drawing on the walls, whatever. It has to get made; it's something about human expression.”

The Menil Collection debuted [Think of Them as Spaces: Brice Marden's Drawings](#) in 2020. Curator Kelly Montana spoke with Marden about the development of his process and practice in [an intimate gallery talk](#). “I have this idea about the [picture] plane and the image, and that's what painting is...I am interested in the magic that occurs between the plane and the image. I used to vociferously object to situations that violated [the plane], now that I'm older...somewhere in between these too things is where I want to be.”



Marden, 2016 Photograph: Simon Watson

Brice Marden (American, 1938-2023)

To May Madness, 1972

Oil and wax on canvas, 2 parts

Private Collection; L2021:184.10

American painter Brice Marden became known for his minimalist, rectangular, monochromatic panels in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1971, the artist traveled to the Greek island of Hydra with his wife, artist Helen Marden (b. 1941). **To May Madness** is from this era of Marden's oeuvre, inspired by the soft aqua tones of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding foliage. The characteristic diptych features a saturated expanse of olive and navy hues that reflect the light conditions and color of Greek landscapes. The Mardens purchased a home in Hydra in 1973, where they return every summer to paint.

On view May 4 – August 7, 2022





Brice Marden (American, 1938-2023)
Nevis Night Drawing 3. 2018
Kremer ink on Arches paper

Ivan and Genevieve Reitman; L2020:95.1

On view September 2 – December 6, 2020