Exhibition guide

Bridget Riley
Looking and Seeing, Doing and Making

10.6. – 21.8.22
From the beginning my work has been rooted in the observation of nature and the dynamics of structure and movement. I have always looked at the art of the past, not only out of love and an abiding interest but also to learn, to inform and understand my work as an abstract painter. In this, I have followed the practice of Seurat, Cézanne and Delacroix, to name only a few – and Paul Klee.

Both our visits to North Africa, Klee’s to Tunisia in 1914 and mine to Egypt several decades later, were extraordinarily revealing. It is as though the blazing canvas of the desert prompts a reaction of strong colour.

It has been a great pleasure to respond to the Zentrum Paul Klee’s invitation which has allowed me to retrace the profound effect that Egypt has had on the development of my colour work, bringing my past into the present through this exhibition.

Bridget Riley
London, May 2022
Introduction

Bridget Riley (*1931 in London) is one of the most significant artists of our time. With great precision and playful ease, she explores the dynamics of colour, form, and pictorial space. For Riley, the act of seeing and the pleasure of visual engagement with her paintings by the viewer is paramount.

Both Bridget Riley and Paul Klee drew vital artistic inspiration from their respective travels to North Africa. Riley therefore chose this parallel as the starting point for this exhibition. In 1914, Paul Klee travelled to Tunisia, where he experienced a “breakthrough into colour.” Later, when he went to Egypt in 1928, he was struck by the relationships between light and colour and the cultural landscape in the Nile Valley.

Bridget Riley visited Egypt in the winter of 1979/80. The tomb paintings in ancient places of worship, the architecture, and the abrupt contrast between desert and vegetation in the Nile Valley had a lasting impact on her. She also studied the technique of Egyptian painting, which led her to develop the so-called Egyptian palette, which consists of seven colours: turquoise, blue, red, yellow and green, black and white.

The exhibition begins with the stripe paintings of the early 1980s, which are based on the Egyptian palette, and demonstrates how this artistic turning point reverberated
in Riley’s work through the early 2000s. Diagonals enter the field of stripes, new structures arise, the pictorial space acquires depth, the colour palette expands – and a new visual language emerges.
Floorplan
Exhibition

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The exhibition begins with *Ka 6 (1980)*, a work made shortly after Riley’s trip to Egypt that demonstrates her use of the Egyptian palette. From 1980 on, Riley’s works often exhibit a simple, regular pictorial order. The effect stems solely from the interplay of colours. This body of work thus differs markedly from Riley’s earlier works. The initial work is juxtaposed with the two full-scale preparatory works (cartoons) *Ra (1980)* and *Silvered (1981)* as well as the paintings *Rose Rime (1982)* and *Cornflower (1982)*. These variations on the pictorial theme reveal the potential of using the Egyptian palette to achieve highly distinct and differentiated effects. The mural *A Bolt of Colour (2017)* was made for the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. Riley based it on a 1983 mural for the Royal Liverpool University Hospital that is no longer extant.

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The exhibition continues with works from the mid-1980s, such as *Saraband (1985)*, *Samarra (1984)*, *Shahnama (1984)*, and *Bali (1983)*. In these paintings, the Egyptian
palette still serves as the foundation. Yet there is an increasing use of warm tones, differentiated gradations, and harmonious, lively colour contrasts. The titles allude to musical and literary influences, particularly the legend of “1001 Nights.” Important to Riley are the sensory impressions and associations she makes with places such as the ancient city of Samarra on the Euphrates or the tropical Indonesian island of Bali. In works of the mid-1980s, such as Gentle Edge (1986), Temple Music (1987), Bloom (1987), and Vespertino (1988), Riley begins to fracture her vertical compositions using diagonal lines. As a result, the paintings gain increasing depth, complexity, and dynamism. Another stage in the development of Riley’s pictorial language thereby emerges.

In the late 1980s, Riley begins expanding upon the Stripe paintings to create the Rhomboid paintings, whose pictorial geometry is based on the intersection of vertical and diagonal lines. Works such as Little Ditty (1989), Into Blue (1989), November (1990), and the preliminary study for the work From Here (1994) show how Riley achieves spatial effects through colour. Through a complex interplay of colour, some hues stand out to the observer while others recede, creating a three-dimensional pictorial space. Riley’s intense engagement with the history of abstract painting,
particularly Neo-Impressionism, is also evident here. French painters like Paul Signac and George Seurat created works that hover between representation and abstraction by dissolving their motifs into countless strokes of pure colour.

The exhibition concludes with the Curve paintings, which developed out of their rectangular and diamond-shaped predecessors. Large-format works, such as *Painting with 3 Verticals* (2006), *Two Greens and Blue* (2000), *Lagoon 2* (1997), and a preliminary study true to the original *Apricot and Pink* (2001), as well as additional studies, exemplify how Riley’s pictorial language is liberated from geometric rigor and moves toward sweeping, dynamic compositions. While the fundamental geometric structure of the paintings remains, it is now almost invisible to the eye. Rhythm, movement, and the interplay of colours take precedence in these images, which evoke not only music and dance but also organic forms.
About Bridget Riley

Bridget Riley grew up in London and rural Cornwall. After the Second World War, she attended Goldsmiths College (1949–1952) and the Royal College of Art (1952–1955) in London. In keeping with art training at the time, her early work was figurative and representational.

From the late 1950s on, Riley increasingly explored European avant-garde movements – including Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, but also Constructivism, Futurism, and the thinking of Bauhaus artists like Klee or Kandinsky. Beginning in the early 1960s, she made the transition from figurative drawing and landscape painting to an abstract style of painting that emphasised the pictorial effects of basic formal elements, triggering certain perceptual effects and thereby drawing attention to vision itself.

Her breakthrough came with the group show *The Responsive Eye* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1964, in which her paintings were featured prominently. The exhibition presented the works of numerous international artists that according to the curator William Seitz were characterised by “perceptual abstraction”. Riley’s black-and-white works were regarded as part of a popular tendency often referred to as “Op Art”. However, Riley’s pictorial thinking as well as her engagement with form and composition never aimed at creating optical illusions.
Riley’s paintings became icons of an era and were commercially exploited by the fashion and entertainment industries – against the will of the artist, who sharply rejected this plagiarism and even took legal action against such misrepresentation of her work.

With great determination, Riley continued to develop her pictorial language. In the late 1960s she began to concentrate on exploring fundamental questions of colour, form, composition, and space. Apart from her growing interest in the tradition of European colour painting, she again and again emphasised the power of direct sensory experience, referring not only to the natural landscape of her home in Cornwall but also to the lasting sensations she has gathered on her many journeys around the globe.

Riley’s works are created through a complex process that involves making multiple preliminary studies and sketches for each image. With the help of a team of assistants, Riley carries them out to perfection in terms of both craftsmanship as well as design. Since the 2000s, the artist has increasingly exhibited studies of her paintings, which provide insight into her technically and artistically exacting working process.

Riley has received many prizes and honours, including the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) Prize in 1963 and the International Prize for Painting at the 1968 Venice Biennale. In 1974, she was made a Member of the Order of
the British Empire and was appointed Companion of Honour to Queen Elizabeth II in 2003. She is recipient of the Praemium Imperiale (2003) and the Rubens Prize of the City of Siegen, and holds several honorary doctorates, notably those from the universities of Oxford (1993) and Cambridge (1995).
Bridget Riley and Paul Klee

The connections between Bridget Riley and Paul Klee extend far beyond the artists’ respective travels to North Africa. Alongside many other influences, Riley’s work draws upon the ideas of Bauhaus artists like Klee and Kandinsky, and Klee’s Bauhaus teachings in particular.

Until the 1950s, art education in Great Britain was academically oriented, emphasizing figuration and the representation of the visible world. By the end of the 1950s, the “Basic Design” movement emerged in England and called for an entirely new understanding of art and art education. With a focus on an intuitive engagement with colour, form, space, and material, its starting point was abstraction.

Artists and critics such as Victor Pasmore, Herbert Read, Norbert Lynton, Maurice de Sausmarez, and Harry Thubron explored the concepts of Itten, Klee, and Kandinsky as well as Futurism and Constructivism. From the late 1950s on, they organised summer schools and set up basic design courses in London, Leeds, Newcastle and elsewhere that were modelled on the Bauhaus. Riley was instantly attracted by this new movement and briefly worked as a foundation course instructor at Loughborough School of Art herself.
The reading of Paul Klee’s talk, which he gave in 1924 on the occasion of an exhibition opening at the Kunstverein Jena and which was first published in English in 1948 under the title *On Modern Art*, made a lasting impression on Riley. Later on, she also studied Klee’s lecture notes from the Bauhaus, which were published in English in the early 1950s. In his writings, Klee meticulously examines, among other things, the pictorial functions of line, tonality and colour. The underlying assumption of Klee’s thinking is that these simple factors are the basis for all pictorial expressions and that infinitely complex works can arise from them.

In 2001, Bridget Riley co-curated a Klee exhibition with Robert Kudielka at the Hayward Gallery in London. On that occasion, Riley wrote that Klee showed her the meaning of abstraction in art: In creative matters, abstract forms should not be seen as the result of an intellectual process of abstracting from experience but rather as a starting point, holding a “potential”, as she claimed in 1983, “which will genuinely enlarge the vocabulary of art and the perception of the world around us.”
Your exhibition at the Zentrum Paul Klee shows work from the 1980s to early 2000s. This body of work relates to your visit to Egypt in the winter of 1979/80. Why did you travel to Egypt and what did you see there?

I was travelling to Tokyo for the opening of my exhibition there and my sister, Sally, suggested that I break my journey and that we spend Christmas together in Egypt as she had Egyptian friends. We invited Robert Kudielka to accompany us.

It was my first visit to Egypt and I had only a very limited knowledge of its art and mythology, most of which had been gleaned from the splendid Egyptian rooms at the British Museum, with its collection of monumental sculpture. Predictably our first visit was to the museum in Cairo where I saw more great works of Egyptian art and in particular some beautiful turquoise tiles from the tomb of Zoser, one of the earliest Egyptian pharaohs.

The next day we visited Zoser’s tomb, a ziggurat pyramid in the desert of Saqqara. This pyramid was the first stone pyramid with a square base to be built in Egypt. The turquoise tiles we had seen in the museum had been made for Zoser’s life in the Land of the Dead reminding him of the bamboo interior matting which had covered the walls of his palace. We continued to explore other tombs and sites and returned several times to the museum.
I remember very well reading about your visit to Egypt. You talked about the brilliance of the colours in the Tombs of the Nobles and the important role colour played in the life of the Ancient Egyptians. You noted particularly their use of a select number of colours.

Yes, the Ancient Egyptians had fixed their palette. They used the same colours – turquoise, blue, red, yellow, green, black and white – for over 3,000 years. Like Paul Klee I was thrilled by what I saw. The precise shades of these colours had evolved under a brilliant North African light and they seemed to embody this light and even to reflect it back from the walls of the tombs which no daylight ever reached.

*Your visit to Egypt became an unexpected journey of visual discovery and I think this exhibition is very much about how you responded through your work. It starts with a small striped painting called Ka 6. Can you tell us something about this?*

*Ka 6 is one of a series of small paintings I made after my return to England. The colours I saw on the wall paintings in Egypt form a basic palette – primary colours plus black and white with one exceptional addition – turquoise. I started work with these through studies, some of which you can see in the exhibition, to find out how they behaved in various relationships. The natural way of looking at a field of vertical stripes is to scan horizontally. Looking across the vertical stripes in *Ka 6*, the eye collects and assembles various sensations and involuntarily compares them, noting the*
intervals between them. Here, the intervals seem to me to have a processional quality – distinctly Egyptian – simultaneously separating and uniting the image. Previously, I had been using the new acrylic paints, but I felt that the Egyptian palette called for the richness of the oil-bound medium.

*That little painting seems to have given rise to many things and we see you following some of them up in the big cartoons for Ra and Silvered. Ra is the Egyptian god of the sun and this painting is certainly very strong and bright in its colouring. Did you really use the same colours for Ka 6?*

Yes, I did. In Ra I worked towards strengthening those bright colours, to bring out their inherent characteristics, the diffuseness and force of the turquoise and blues, the redness of the red, and its purple and orange tendencies. The colours in Silvered are the same as those in Ra; but my approach starts from the opposite position: particular hues are pitted one against the other and the effectiveness of this use of contrast accounts for the appearance of the softly coloured greys.

As my use of this new palette grew, so did my understanding of colour interaction – the effect that one colour has upon another when seen either close up or from a distance. The perception of these effects is reliably stable and durable.
These can also give rise to induced colour, a more elusive and fleeting sensation provoked by the scanning eye. The terms, interaction and induction for the behaviour of colour were first used by Delacroix following his visit to North Africa and they informed the practice of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Examples of these two levels of visual perception are particularly apparent in my cartoons for Silvered and Ra. My cartoons are same size works on paper in gouache – the last stage of the preparatory work leading up to the final painting.

*But these considerations of colour thoughts are not the only ones governing your stripe paintings, rhythm and metre also have a role to play, I think.*

Yes, they do. Rhythm and metre account for the spacing between the black and white stripes in Cornflower and Rose Rime and whilst that is also true for those in Ra and Silvered, they have been more carefully calculated. In thinking how to structure, relate and weave together these characteristics of colour, I remembered Stravinsky’s lecture notes on the making of music in which he discusses the principles of metre and rhythm. Over the years, I have returned many times to these lectures which I first read in the late 1950s.

*And I think the black and white stripes are thinner?*
You are quite right. I realised in the *Ka* series that they needed to be a little narrower than the coloured stripes. But I soon began to feel that I depended too much on black.

*So you sacrificed black, but you continued with your use of rhythm and metre?*

Yes, they were essential to bind the work together, as was repetition which plays against the variations inherent in rhythm.

*You have often said that your visit to Egypt was crucial for your commission for the Royal Liverpool University Hospital, too?*

Indeed it was. The hospital was a challenging project. It was during our visit to the Tombs of the Nobles in Luxor that I saw the wall paintings which offered me an architectural reference for the colour of the corridors in the Liverpool hospital. Through the colour of my wall paintings, I hoped to lift the spirits and recall life outside the hospital. Many years later I was presented with an opportunity to make a work for Donald Judd’s Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. At the time, I was fully occupied in the studio and didn’t want to change course. Richard Shiff had a good idea and suggested that perhaps the Liverpool Hospital decoration, which no longer existed, might provide a starting point for Marfa. A model of the building in Marfa was sent to me and I saw I could do something which would relate both to nature and to architecture. A desert landscape is common to Luxor
and Marfa, and I thought at the time how well the long rectangular form of the exhibition space lent itself to my memories of the wall paintings in the Tombs of the Nobles.

*May I return to the question of black, why was it so important to take it out?*

Well, when I took the black out, the picture plane became an altogether lighter and freer arena for colour. Working intimately with the interaction of colour led to further experimentation. I painted those barely perceptible fugitive colours, which, paradoxically, are anchored firmly in the use of the basic colours. It became pressing that I should try to take the eye on a more extensive journey around the painting. To start with, I had first to break the firm edge of the stripe on which I had previously depended for colour interaction. Small hatchings, the diagonal strokes which I used to fragment and soften the verticals, held promise. But which way to take them? There were many directions in which to move. To see what I was looking at, I felt I had to make it more visible. I made both the vertical stripes and the diagonal hatchings larger, and several paintings later I began to understand the nature of what I had brought into existence and could consider how to respond.

In all this, I was guided by the eye and my reflections on the thing seen. I grew accustomed to these new means and there came a time when I felt I had arrived at a point of departure. I left the square which was sufficient for *Bloom*, but for *Temple Music* the canvas took on long horizontal
proportions. Planes emerged and accompanied by large diagonals, took up positions in pictorial space, colour providing the means. *Temple Music* is supported by the mid-tone giving the painting its high percussive note which suggested the title to me.

*You have come a long way from your painting, Gentle Edge (1986). Do you think of it as a transitional painting?*

Yes, and as you can see, I went further. Re-introducing both black and white in *Vespertino*, I also strengthened the colour and continued to break up some of the long diagonals. These separate individual colour shapes went by the name of zigs in studio parlance – discrete pieces of colour which reminded me of Seurat and his use of the dot.

*In your working drawings I can see that you use these separate pieces of coloured paper to build up the structure. You place and replace them, adjusting them as the movement of the colour in the work demands. It seems to me that in this way your hand is in a direct communication with your eye in a flux and flow of decision-making.*
Yes, that is true. The diagonal direction of the zigs was very dominating and as such could be opposed, taking the colour movement in the opposite direction in *Little Song* (1989) – the zigs descend in a broad swathe of colour, held in check by the stability of the verticals. Light greens, pinks, whites and stone colours move from top left to bottom right followed by reds, oranges and purple. The verticals take up mid-tone and dark blues. *Into Blue* (1989) followed. The organisation of the colour has advanced to compositional status. The green has been divided into olive and a dark deep green and subjected to multiple interactions, appearing as a host of different shades. Its counterpart of blue similarly divided, hosts not only the greens but also rich harmonies of yellows, oranges, pinks and reds, drawn together in a mid-tone. A glitter and shine of white- and stone-coloured zigs dance across the composition taking the eye into the furthest corners before returning. In *November* (1990) modulations of the red, violet and orange scale accompanied by contrasts of deep blue, dark ochres, pale pink, light green and off-whites contribute to a strong top left corner. The colour movement descends and opens out. Light greens, blues, bright orange and turquoise circulate in sweeping arcs and curves around the canvas.

As you were talking about these paintings, I was reminded of our visits to the National Gallery in the 1980s. I had just started studying art history at Freiburg University and you were a trustee of the Gallery. We looked at Titian and Poussin among others and you pointed out to me, in Poussin’s *The Triumph of Pan*, how the
colours, blue, red, green, yellow are placed round and through the picture plane, from left to right, foreground to background, building up the composition.

Yes, this is what Cézanne so much admired in Poussin.

For me at the time, it was a revelation. You brought the past into the present and made it live for me, giving me a deeper understanding of your work. The artist’s eye is so very different from the iconographical eye.

Artists sometimes find themselves faced with pictorial concerns which emerge unbidden and demand attention. The arcs and curves of the colour movements in my work around 1990 were exerting pressure and I found myself struggling to reconcile the still latent potential in my paintings with a longing for less. The cartoon From Here bears witness to this problem. The four studies cover the different stages through which I worked whilst making paintings like November and Into Blue.

In response to this pressure, I began drawing. At first, a single curve and with it an opposing straight line. This simple opposition – the curve and the straight line – which had proved fundamental in early black and white works, served me well again and reappears as the segment in Lagoon 2.

Lagoon 2 (1997) – the painting has a title that evokes Matisse and the palette has obviously changed. It has clearly come a long way from Ka 6.
Yes, it has. Nevertheless, it is still the same in its basic ordering of colour. It has a different harmony, subtly differentiated but closely unified. It was modified through practice – the practice of colour mixing itself – of defining and refining my use of colour in picture-making. Discovering its role, its power and the terms on which colour can operate. As Delacroix wrote in one of the last entries in his journal, “the first merit of a painting is to be a feast for the eyes”\(^1\).

The preliminary drawings for *Lagoon 2* show my working the segment into the diagonal structure which supported the zigs. There are two curvilinear studies, one in pencil and the other in gouache providing a ground for working with collage pieces. There is also a same size colour test in oil for the painting, *Rêve* (not exhibited). In the cartoon for *Apricot and Pink*, the number of colours is much reduced: two paired colours – two greens, one of which is more yellow and the other more blue, as well as the apricot and pink of the title.

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The curvilinear form of *Two Greens and Blue (2000)* revives the processional spirit of *Ka6*. It also encourages a horizontal scanning. Colour interaction and induction have returned and the blues assume a violet hue.

*Painting with Verticals 3 (2006)* has size and a monumental scale. Green, light blue, orange-red, yellow and purple stake out the rhythm and metre – over and under – the colour weaves through and across the painting, moving seamlessly between background and foreground. The volume of colour has presence and declares the painting.

*It seems to me that your Egyptian palette has taken you on a considerable journey.*

Yes, through this exhibition I found myself retracing my various changes of thought and enjoying again the thrill of those insights which opened up with *Ka 6*.

**Dr Susanne Adele Kudielka is an art historian and personal curator for collectors. She has known the artist since the 1970s and currently serves as Curator at Large to the artist.**
Bridget Riley
Selected biography

1931  Bridget Riley is born in London.

1939–45  Childhood in Cornwall.

1946–48  Education at Cheltenham Ladies’ College. Her teacher, Colin Hayes, later tutor at the Royal College of Art, London, introduces her to the history of painting and encourages her to pursue her interest in art by visiting the life class at the local art school. The Van Gogh exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1947 is her first encounter with the work of a modern master.

1949–52  Studies at Goldsmiths. She devotes herself mainly to the life-drawing class of Sam Rabin, who introduces her to the principles of pictorial abstraction: the autonomous construction of a body on a flat plane.

1952–55  Studies at the Royal College of Art. She is faced with the unavoidable basic question of the modern painter: “What should I paint, and how should I paint it?”
1956–58 Starts working part-time for the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency (until 1962). In 1958 she sees the Whitechapel Art Gallery’s major Jackson Pollock exhibition, which makes a powerful impact.

1959 She takes part in Harry Thubron’s summer school in Suffolk, where she meets Maurice de Sausmarez, who becomes her friend and mentor for the next few years and who will write the first monograph on her work (1970). The older painter and art scholar encourages her interest in Futurism and Divisionism and introduces her to primary documents of modern art (Klee, Stravinsky). In the late autumn, she copies Georges Seurat’s Le Pont de Courbevoie, 1886/87, from a reproduction (Copy after “Le Pont de Courbevoie” by Seurat, 1959).

1960 The first year of her independent work. In the summer she and Maurice de Sausmarez tour Italy, admiring the architecture. At the Venice Biennale, Riley sees the major exhibition of Futurism. In the hills surrounding Siena she makes studies for Pink Landscape (1960), a key painting in her early development. In the autumn she begins to use black-and-white contrast.
1961 Riley starts to make her black-and-white paintings.

1962 Riley has her first solo exhibition at Victor Musgrave’s Gallery One in London, followed by a second exhibition also at Gallery One in 1963. She meets Peter Sedgley, a painter of her own generation, who becomes her partner during the 1960s. In the summer, they visit the plateau of Vaucluse in the south of France where she acquires a derelict farm, which in the 1970s is transformed into her new studio.

1965 The increasing recognition since her two solo exhibitions culminates in the inclusion of her work in the exhibition *The Responsive Eye* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. But her success is double-edged. Fashion-shop windows are full of imitations of her work. With the help of Barnett Newman’s lawyer, she tries to take legal action against this commercial plagiarism, only to discover that in the United States there is no copyright protection for artists. Leading New York artists, realising the implications of this, start their own independent initiative and as a result, in 1967 the first US copyright legislation is passed.
1965–67 A period of transition in which she introduces into her painting sequences of coloured greys. The Museum of Modern Art organises the exhibition *Bridget Riley: Drawings*, which tours the USA from October 1966 to March 1968. In the summer of 1967, she visits Greece. In the same year, with *Chant* (1967) and *Late Morning* (1967/68), she makes her breakthrough into colour. Along with the sculptor Phillip King, she is chosen to represent the United Kingdom at the forthcoming Venice Biennale.

1968 Wins the International Prize for Painting at the XXXIV Venice Biennale in 1968. She is the first British contemporary painter and the first woman to achieve this distinction. In the autumn of the same year, she and Peter Sedgley establish SPACE, an organisation that provides artists with low-cost studios in warehouse buildings and continues to the present day with the support of Arts Council England.

1971–73  The beginning of a period of radical artistic change. Her visits to museums and art galleries while accompanying her exhibition have made her curious about the European tradition in painting. She undertakes numerous journeys with Robert Kudielka to see Tiepolo and Riemenschneider in Würzburg and Grünewald in Colmar; she visits the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, where she is impressed by Altdorfer and Rubens, and the Prado in Madrid to see the great Spanish painters and Titian.

1974–77  Riley renovates her property in Vaucluse but does not use the newly built studio until the beginning of the 1980s. With the curve paintings, on which she works exclusively between 1974 and 1978, her work takes a lyrical turn quite at odds with prevailing taste. She concentrates on the preparation of another retrospective, and in this connection travels to Japan, with a stopover in India (where she visits the cave temples of Elephanta, Ellora and Ajanta).

1978–80  The second retrospective exhibition opens at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, and travels to the Purchase
College in New York and to Dallas, continuing to Sydney and Perth, Australia, reaching its final destination, Tokyo in January 1980. Her artistic development takes an unexpected turn in the winter of 1979/80, when she travels to Egypt. Later, after her return to London, she recalls the particular palette and begins considering its potential for her own work. Her second group of stripe paintings emerge.

1981–85

She works regularly in her studio in Vaucluse, studying the use of colour by the French painters of classical modernism. In 1981, she accepts an invitation to join the Board of the National Gallery, London for a 7 year period as a trustee. She begins to give lectures on her work and accepts a commission for the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. In 1983, her wall decorations for the hospital are completed. In the winter of 1981/82, she travels to southern India where she visits the major Hindu and Buddhist monuments. During the planning of the extension of the National Gallery, almost single-handedly, she brings about the rejection of a commercial project for the new building and clears the way for the present
Sainsbury Wing. In 1984, she gradually begins to prepare for a radical revision of her work in her Vaucluse studio, and in the spring of 1986 her painting takes a new direction.

**1986–92**

She starts moving into a new area with the breaking up of the vertical register of her paintings. In order to be able to concentrate fully on the new work, she sets up an additional studio in the East End of London. In summer 1989, the National Gallery invites Riley to select the latest in the series of *The Artist’s Eye* exhibitions. 1992 the retrospective, *Bridget Riley: Paintings 1982–1992*, opens at the Kunsthalle Nürnberg an travels to Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop, the Hayward Gallery, London, with the subtitle *According to Sensation*, and the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.


**1993–96**

Riley is made Honorary Doctor of the universities of Oxford (1993) and

1998

First large temporary wall drawing, *Composition with Circles 1* is carried out for the *White Noise* exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern in May. Riley opens up the rectangular picture format making the white wall an integral part of the field.

1999


2001–02

In collaboration with Robert Kudielka, Riley prepares a Paul Klee exhibition for the Hayward Gallery, London.

2003

Retrospective exhibition at Tate Britain. The show receives universal critical acclaim. Riley is awarded the Praemium Imperiale by the Japan Art Association for her lifetime’s achievement as a painter.
She travels to Tokyo for the official award ceremony and delivers a message of thanks on behalf of the other laureates (Mario Merz, Ken Loach, Claudio Abbado and Rem Koolhaas).

2004–05 A second retrospective exhibition travels to Australia and New Zealand (the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and the City Gallery Wellington), and in modified form to Aargauer Kunsthaus, Switzerland.

2007 She makes her first wall painting, *Arcadia 1* which is shown in Galerie Max Hetzler in Berlin, a development from her new curve paintings.

2008 First retrospective exhibition in France at the Musée d’Art moderne de la Ville de Paris.

2009 Riley receives the Award of Companionship of De Montfort University, Leicester and is awarded the Kaiserring of the town of Goslar.

2010 *Bridget Riley: Paintings and Related Work* is shown at the National Gallery, London.
2012–17 She receives the Rubens Prize of the City of Siegen and the Sikkens Prize in the Gemeentemuseum in Den Haag.

2015 The Courtauld Gallery, London presents *Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat*, showing the seminal importance of Seurat’s thinking for her own abstract work.

2016 *Bridget Riley: Paintings 1963–2015* opens in 2016 at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. The wall paintings *Cosmos* in Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, New Zealand; and *A Bolt of Colour* (recalling her decoration for the Royal Liverpool University Hospital) in the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, are installed in 2017.

2018 The Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art in Japan exhibits *Paintings from the 1960s to the Present.*

*Bridget Riley: The Complete Paintings 1946–2017* is published by Thames and Hudson and The Bridget Riley Art Foundation.
2019

Messengers, a large-scale wall painting commissioned by the Trustees of the National Gallery in London is unveiled in the Annenberg Court. The National Galleries of Scotland presents the first comprehensive exhibition of Riley’s work in the United Kingdom since the Tate retrospective in 2003. Covering seventy years, beginning with early figurative work and leading up to her latest wall paintings. In the autumn, the exhibition travels to the Hayward Gallery, London, where three wall works are added. These exhibitions had been attended by more than 160,000 visitors.

Bridget Riley: Entdecken, was Sehen sein kann, an overview of nearly sixty years of her prints, opens at the Museum im Kulturspeicher, Würzburg.

2020–21

She continues to develop the Measure for Measure series in addition to the new Intervals series introduced in 2019. A muted colour range of off-purple, off-orange, off-green in different degrees of tonality is employed in both groups of paintings. The Covid 19 pandemic upsets and restricts life around the world. Museums and art galleries remain closed and
exhibition projects have to be postponed. Riley continues working in Cornwall and London. She adds a fourth colour and pursues the introduction of a darker tone in the *Measure for Measure* series. Two further colours are added in the *Intervals* paintings making a palette of 6. Kirsty Wark’s documentary *Bridget Riley – Painting the Line* for the BBC including interviews, seldom-seen footage. The film traces Riley’s sources through her walks in Cornwall and in the work of Monet, Seurat, Cézanne and Mantegna and follows her thoughts over the decades up to the present. Publication of *Bridget Riley: Working Drawings* by Thames and Hudson and The Bridget Riley Art Foundation.

**2022**

*Bridget Riley: Perceptual Abstraction* opens at The Paul Mellon Center for British Art at Yale, encompassing two floors and covering the black and white work of the 1960’s, the exploration of the tonal scale and the development of colour to the present.

*Bridget Riley: Looking and Seeing, Doing and Making*, opens at Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern. The exhibition focuses on Riley’s visit to Egypt and the discovery of her Egyptian
palette, which parallels Paul Klee’s search for colour along the North African coast in Tunisia.

In September, a touring exhibition of Riley’s working drawings will open at the Chicago Art Institute and travel to the Hammer Museum on the west coast and then to The Morgan Library & Museum in New York.
Begleitprogramm

Sonntag, 26. Juni 2022, 11:00

Eine Reise nach Ägypten
Gespräch in der Ausstellung
mit Susanne A. Kudielka,
Curator at large von Bridget Riley, und Martin Waldmeier,
Kurator Zentrum Paul Klee

Kursprogramm

Summer School «Formen in Bewegung»
Eine Serie von künstlerischen Workshops in Anlehnung an den Bauhaus-Vorkurs und die Summer Schools der britischen «Basic Design»-Bewegung der 1950er-Jahre. Ab 18 Jahren. Mit Katja Lang, Leiterin Ateliers Creaviva

Samstag, 2. Juli 2022, 10:00 – 13:00
Thema «Ordnung und Chaos»

Samstag, 9. Juli 2022, 10:00 – 13:00
Thema «Wiederholung und Differenz»

Samstag, 23. Juli 2022, 10:00 – 13:00
Thema «Farbe und Klang»

Anmeldung bis eine Woche vor Kursbeginn über creaviva@zpk.org
Kosten: CHF 120 pro Vormittagskurs inkl. Material und Ausstellungsbesuch.

Führungen

Sonntags, 12:00
Öffentliche Führung

Dienstags, 12:30 – 13:00
Kunst am Mittag

Fremdsprachige Führungen
English: 31 July / 21 August 2022, 15:00
Français: 26 juin / 7 août 2022, 15:00
Italiano: 10 luglio 2022, 15:00
Mittwoch, 15. Juni 2022, 14:00
Einführung für Lehrpersonen
Mit Dominik Imhof, Leiter Kunstvermittlung
Zentrum Paul Klee

Donnerstag, 7. Juli 2022, 18:00
Freunde ZPK
Führung für die Mitglieder «Freunde ZPK» mit dem Kurator M. Waldmeier und Expert:innen des Hauses

Sonntag, 17. Juli 2022, 15:00
Kunstgespräch
Werkentdeckungen und Kunstgespräche mit Ramona Unterberg, Kunstvermittlerin Zentrum Paul Klee

Samstag, 6. August 2022, 13:00
Sinn-Reich
Eine alle Sinne ansprechende Führung für Gäste mit und ohne Behinderung. Mit Gebärdensprachdolmetscher:in und induktiver Höranlage

Digitale Angebote

Donnerstag, 30. Juni 2022, 17:00
Kunst und ich
Zoom-Präsentation im Dialog mit den Teilnehmer:innen rund um ein Werk der Ausstellung mit R. Unterberg

Mittwoch, 13. Juli 2022, 17:30
Kunst am Abend
Zoom-Führung live aus der Ausstellung mit D. Imhof
Angebote für Familien

Dienstag bis Freitag, 14:00 / 16:00
Samstag und Sonntag, 12:00 / 14:00 / 16:00

Offenes Atelier im Kindermuseum Creaviva
Stündige Workshops mit Verbindung zu den Ausstellungen im Zentrum Paul Klee. Für Familien mit Kindern ab 4 Jahren (bis 8 Jahre in Begleitung Erwachsener)

Sonntags, 10:15 – 11:30
Familienmorgen
In der Ausstellung und im Atelier des Kindermuseum Creaviva für die ganze Familie. Für Kinder und Jugendliche bis 16 Jahre kostenlos

Samstags, 9:30 – 11:45
11./18./25. Juni und 20. August 2022
Kinderforum – samstags im Labor
Kunst unter Gleichaltrigen mit wechselnden Themen pro Quartal. Für Kinder ab 7 Jahren

Dienstag bis Sonntag, 10:00 – 17:00
Fünfliber-Werkstatt
Frei zugängliche Werkstatt mit einfachen Anleitungen zu gestalterischen Ideen und wechselnden Themen. Für Familien mit Kindern ab 4 Jahren

Informationen zum Kursprogramm für Erwachsene: creaviva-kurse.ch
Acknowledgements

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“Looking and Seeing, Doing and Making. Bridget Riley and Susanne Adele Kudielka in conversation” © Bridget Riley and Susanne Adele Kudielka

Chapters “Introduction”, “Exhibition”, “About Bridget Riley”, “Bridget Riley and Paul Klee” © Zentrum Paul Klee
The Zentrum Paul Klee is open to all and offers inclusive events.

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Opening hours
Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 – 17:00

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