

Kenneth Noland

Stripes/Plaids/Shapes

25 January – 25 February, 2023

5 Hanover Square

London

Opening Reception: Tuesday 24 January, 6-8pm



Kenneth Noland, *Reappearance*, 1981, acrylic on canvas, 251.5 × 44.5 cm
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London—Pace Gallery is pleased to share details of a forthcoming solo exhibition of the American abstract painter Kenneth Noland. *Stripes/Plaids/Shapes*, the opening show of 2023, will survey canvases from a significant period in the artist's remarkable career. Marking Noland's first solo presentation in London for more than two decades, this exhibition will chart the development of his iconic Stripe paintings of the late 1960s through to his Shape canvases in the early 1980s.

A founding member of the Washington Color School – which included figures such as Sam Gilliam, Morris Louis, and Alma Thomas – Noland was instrumental in creating the language of post-war abstraction in the US. His experimental approach to form, material, and colour gave rise to radical works that redefined the notion of painting. Between 1946 and 1948, Noland studied at the Black Mountain College in his native North Carolina where he was exposed to the ideas of seminal figures such as Josef Albers and John Cage and developed an early interest in the expressive potential of colour and chance. His mature style would come to render colour a resonant force and built a visual language that included Circles, Chevrons, as well as the series on view in this current exhibition.

Kenneth Noland: Stripes/Plaids/Shapes begins with early examples of the artist's striped works from the late 1960s, such as *Early Flight* (1969) or *Via Mojave* (1968), both of which stretch horizontally across several meters to expand beyond the viewer's peripheral vision and evoke the feel of a vast, enveloping landscape. Noland would use an array of techniques to apply the bands of colour in specific proportions, including staining the raw canvas or using a traditional paint roller, to create textural variation. In choosing acrylic paint, which cannot be reworked as easily as oil, Noland embraced the risk factor, quipping that he was a 'one-shot painter'. Regardless of the technique used, Noland's painting practice intentionally removed traces of the artist's hand in order to focus attention on the materiality of the works, while also allowing for chance reactions where the bands of paint meet. Following his poured circle paintings of the late 1950s, Noland's paintings of the 1960s were in radical opposition to the gestural, painterly canvases of Abstract Expressionism which had dominated the American art scene of the mid-20th century.

At the turn of the 1970s, Noland began including vertical stripes over his horizontal bands. The resulting works, titled Plaid paintings, draw parallels to the paintings of Piet Mondrian, an early influence on Noland via his Black Mountain teacher Ilya Bolotowsky, a well-documented proponent of De Stijl art theory. However, unlike Mondrian, Noland's lines retained the soft blur of stained canvas, creating a quasi-alchemical effect as the colours overlap and knit together. In *Interface* (1973), striking lines of warm yellow, orange, green, red, and sky blue interweave across the diamond shaped canvas, inviting viewers to closely examine the interaction of colour, form, and mark.

In the ensuing years, Noland continued his experimentation by turning his attention to the canvas support itself. By creating shaped paintings that took unusual, asymmetrical forms, Noland emphasized the objecthood of the painting. In *Glean* (1977) and *Field of Green* (1978), the picture plane is stained with earth-toned hues of green while borders of brightly coloured stripes are positioned opposite one another, creating a spatial tension in the composition. These works, with their large expanses of a single colour, have a textural richness resulting from the paint's interaction with the raw canvas and the artist's distinct and often uneven application.

Kenneth Noland (b. 1924, Asheville, North Carolina; d. 2010, Port Clyde, Maine), a key figure in the development of postwar abstract art, studied under Ilya Bolotowsky at Black Mountain College from 1946 to 1948, developing an early interest in the emotional effects and expressive potential of color and geometric form. A commitment to line and color can be traced throughout his oeuvre—one essential to the development of Color-field painting—beginning with his Circle paintings and extending through a visual language that includes chevrons, diamonds, stripes, plaid patterns, and shaped canvases. Often adhering to a compositional format, he would work methodically within a series to explore color, material, and method—a working process that generated successive forms.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

The gallery has also spearheaded explorations into the intersection of art and technology through its new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists cultivating advanced studio practices. As part of its commitment to technologically engaged artists within and beyond its program, Pace launched a hub for its web3 activity, Pace Verso, in November 2021.

Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide, including a European foothold in London and Geneva, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace's long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which operated from 2016 to 2022. Pace's engagement with Silicon Valley's technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. Pace's satellite exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach present continued programming on a seasonal basis.



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