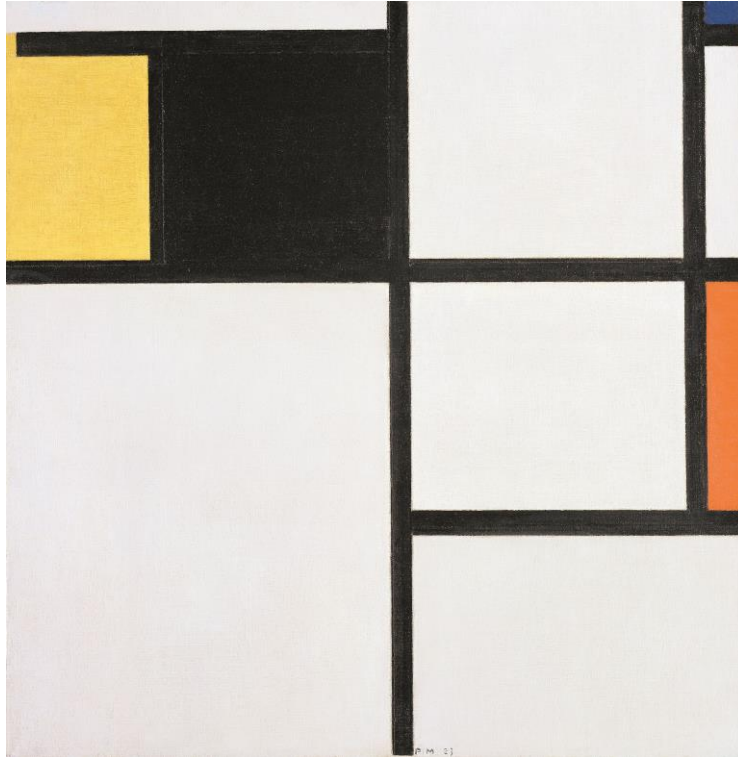


CHRISTIE'S

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ABOUT THE LINE

The Power of the Line in 20th and 21st Century Art



Piet Mondrian

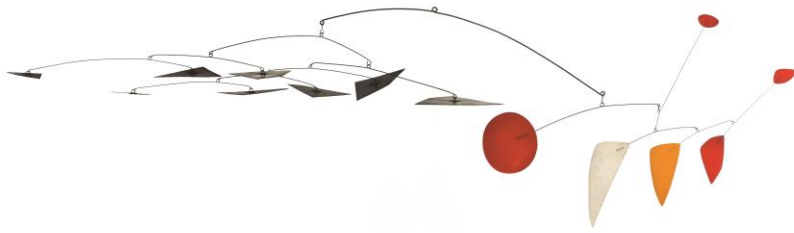
Tableau, with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red, and Gray (1923)

Oil on canvas, 21¼ x 21in. (54 x 53.5cm.)

Courtesy Museu José Berardo, Lisbon.

London – This season Christie's will present 'About the Line', a major exhibition that explores the power of the line in the 20th and 21st century, featuring artists including Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning, Barbara Hepworth, Jasper Johns, Wassily Kandinsky, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Henri Matisse, Julie Mehretu, Piet Mondrian, Pablo Picasso, Bridget Riley, Park Seo-Bo and Cy Twombly. 'About the Line' demonstrates how the line is central to the development and character of the art of the 20th and 21st centuries – able to challenge, blur and break the boundaries between the real and the abstract, the conceptual and the imaginary. The exhibition traces the line from the pioneering moments of Cubism through to Minimalism and Constructivism and culminates with work by some of the most celebrated contemporary artists working today. A highlight of Christie's Frieze Week programme, 'About the Line' will take place from 28 September to 24 November at Christie's, 103 New Bond Street.

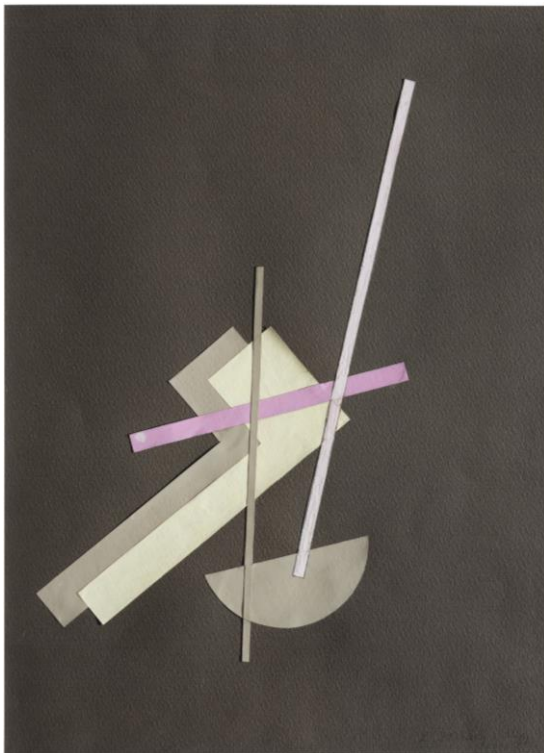
Cristian Albu, Director Senior Specialist Post War and Contemporary Art, Christie's "The aim of this exhibition is to bring together the very best of 20th and 21st century masterpieces where line in its beauty and simplicity sits at the very heart of their creation. From the rigid and reductive line of Mondrian to the Baroque of Twombly, from the spiritual triptych of De Kooning to calm and subtle shifts in tone of Agnes



Alexander Calder
Untitled (1967)
 hanging mobile – painted sheet metal and wire
 27 x 73 x 40in. (68.6 x 185.4 x 101.6cm.)

Yellow, Black, Blue, Red, and Gray (1923), reduces nature to a series of horizontal and vertical lines and is powered by a belief that these structures articulate reality in its purest, most truthful form. This conception of the line can also be found in the work of Alexander Calder's, such as *Untitled* (1967), whose visit to the Dutch artist's studio inspired his ground-breaking kinetic mobiles.

International Minimalist and Constructivist practices also feature strongly with the work of Agnes Martin, Jo Baer and Robert Mangold juxtaposed with those of British artists including Bob Law, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson. Law's *Nothing To Be Afraid Of V 22.8.69*, (1969) uses the barest of means - laundry marker on duck canvas - to exert a physical presence and intensity that is entirely out of proportion to its scale, insistently demanding the viewer's fullest attention.



László Moholy-Nagy
Composition (1922)
 Collage, pencil and gouache on paper
 25 1/2 x 20 1/2in. (64.7 x 52cm.)

Martin, the exhibition extends the definition of the line beyond our immediate understanding. We are very grateful to all those who have collaborated and lent works for the exhibition, from Tate Modern, London, to Museu José Berardo, Lisbon, from the Foundation Hubert Looser, Zurich, to Klewan Collection, Germany and to all the extraordinary private collectors who have shared our passion for this project."

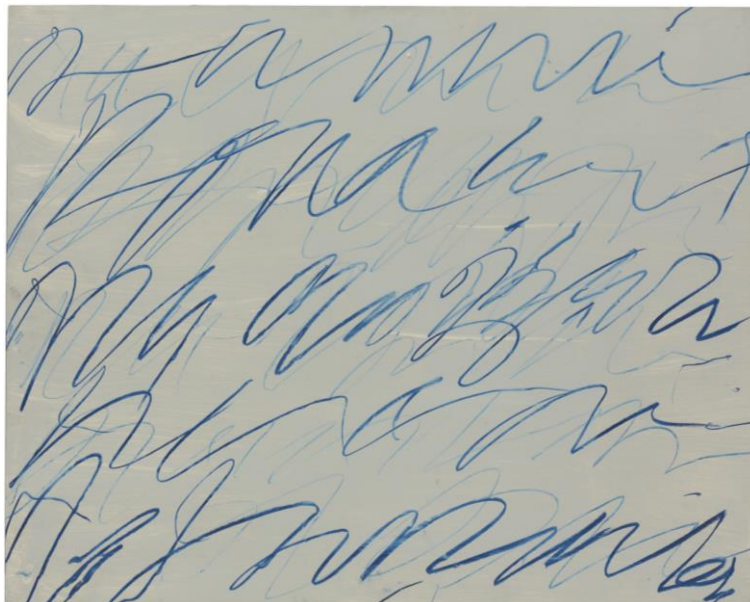
The exhibition opens with Piet Mondrian and Pablo Picasso, mapping Picasso's use of the line as a conceptual device in his metal-cut-out portrait of *Sylvette* (1954), which fuses painting, sculpture and even a sense of architecture to extend into the real space of the viewer. Mondrian's so-called 'Neo-Plastic' approach to painting, typified by *Tableau, with*

Another major focus of the exhibition is the work of Bridget Riley, whose ability to elicit such a wide range of startling physical sensations by using simple lines is universally acclaimed. From high-contrast black-and-white contours to polychromatic bands, her lines are skilfully manipulated so that they appear to come alive. The exhibition will feature seven paintings from each decade of her career including some of the most iconic of Riley's works, such as *Untitled (Diagonal Curve)* (1966) rendered in her signature monochrome palette.

Abstract Expressionism's mastery of the line is attested to by Willem de Kooning's exultant celebration of the open-ended possibility of painting. Originally commissioned for the Lutheran church of St. Peter's at Lexington Avenue and 54th street, New York, de Kooning's *Triptych (Untitled V, Untitled II, Untitled IV)*, (1985) is a monumental composition in the sinuous, windblown ribbons of colour that define Willem de Kooning's masterful late style. Interweaving strands of red, yellow and blue course across its three vast white panels in lucid, liquid motion, conjuring a sense of spiritual elation that

reflects not only the meditative environment for which the work was conceived, but also de Kooning's own newfound energy and happiness in the late years of his life.

Twombly's loose, looping, linear scrawl of the late 1960s and the early 1970s (as in *Untitled* of 1970 and *Untitled* of 1971), explore the mysterious essence of line as it functions in pictorial art. In these works Twombly took a single horizontal line looping in on itself as it progresses across and down the picture plane in the manner of handwriting and overlaid it upon itself to the point where the singular becomes many and then, ultimately, one collective, planar entity. Here, a single graphic line becomes also a single, multiform field of graphic energy. It is these works by Twombly that herald many of the interconnected, lattices, nets and webs of simultaneous multiform unity and disorder that today characterise so much of the art of drawing in our age of online connectivity and the mass-media-information highway.



Cy Twombly
Untitled, (1970)
Oil and wax crayon on paper, 27 1/2 x 34 1/2 in. (70 x 87 cm.)
© Cy Twombly Foundation

Some of these interconnective and multidisciplinary tendencies can be seen to underpin the erasures, corrections and blurrings in Christopher Wool's work, the deliberately anti-aesthetic, anti-style and multi-linear approach often adopted by Albert Oehlen and the mass layering of graphic imagery to be found in Julie Mehretu's convoluted blueprints of meta-geographic and architectonic form. Mehretu's pictures, like those of her contemporary Matthew Ritchie, invoke a dynamic sense of line as information and articulate images suggestive of an innate and integrated connection between the forces of order and chaos. For these artists, like Twombly, Marden and Klee before them, line and drawing stand as perhaps our most powerful form of intuitive intelligence, with which to wander, in our ever-widening search for a deeper understanding of the world around us.

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