

FRESTONIAN GALLERY

VISION AND THE VISIONARY (II)

LUKE ELWES / BRIDGET RILEY



Private View – Wednesday 25th January, 6-8pm
Exhibition dates – 26th January – 25th February 2023

Scan code to view exhibition works

For the inaugural exhibition of its 2023 programme Frestonian Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of works on paper by **Bridget Riley** and **Luke Elwes**. This exhibition is a continuation & development of the exhibition of the same name at the **Myung-Won Folk House Museum in Seoul, South Korea**, which ran from October to November in 2022, and which juxtaposed Elwes' and Riley's work with sculpture by Korean artist Vakki and digital art by Canadian-Korean artist Sammy Lee.

The Myung-Won exhibition, curated by Stephanie Kim and Kate Lee, saw a cross-section of Riley's works on paper in gouache and print spanning from 1966-2020 shown opposite and alongside a contemporary selection of works from Elwes' ongoing 'Landermere' series – a body of work that has itself spanned some 15 years – an extraordinary exploration into the qualities of light and atmosphere in a single place (Landermere Wharf in Essex) redolent of Monet's engagement with the landscape at Giverny in the late 19th and early 20th Century.

Riley and Elwes were, and are, both heavily influenced by the deconstructive & colour-theory elements of the 19th & 20th Century European Impressionist tradition, whilst having each developed entirely distinct modern / post-modern practices. In keeping with their forebears refined methodologies, their works each follow self-imposed restrictions of expression, yet find infinite variation within them. Riley's early influence by the Impressionists and Pointillists – in particular Georges Seurat and Paul Cézanne – is reflected in her approach to reconstructing and reimagining the natural world in planes of pure colour and line. Her hard-edge form of abstraction is in many ways the opposite to Elwes' more flowing, expressive and organic painting practice. Just as Riley eliminates all possible chance in the realisation of the final work, Elwes revels in it – allowing the very water that he is depicting to act as a medium in itself and shape the final expression of his densely layered and evocative works.

Works such as Riley's 'Coloured Greys 2 & 3' (1972), 'Dominance Red, Green and Blue' (1977) and 'Places for Change' (2009) each freeze in a single crisp moment the wave form, whilst the optical effect of the closely aligned linear planes of colour give the sensation of movement across the surface of the off-white paper grounds. Whereas Riley's works give us lateral momentum, Elwes' works provide dimensional depth – drawing the viewer into considering each square foot, indeed each square inch of the work with increasing scrutiny as the various layers of gouache, crayon, pigment and ink reveal themselves in turn. In the work of Elwes and Riley we are thus asked to consider again and again what constitutes a form, a movement and, ultimately, the nature of 'landscape' itself.

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Artist Biographies

Luke Elwes was born in 1961 and lives and works in London. His early years were spent in Iran, where the light and space of the mountains and desert were a formative influence. He studied at Camberwell school of Art (UAL) and holds undergraduate and research degrees from Bristol University and Birkbeck, University of London.

His work has been exhibited worldwide, with recent institutional exhibitions including the Museo della Grafica, Palazzo Lanfranchi (Italy) + Fondazione Bottari Lattes (Italy), Young Museum and Estorick Collection (UK) and the Albers Foundation (USA). His work is held in numerous public and corporate collections including: The Bayer Collection; Christie's Contemporary Art Collection; National Trust Foundation for Art; Imperial College, University of London; Merrill Lynch Collection; Coopers & Lybrand; N M Rothschild; Deutsche Hypo Bank London; Hoares Bank Collection; Société Générale, London; Electra Collection; Europa Collection, London & the Freshfields Collection. Most recently, from August-October 2022 he has undertaken the Artist Fellowship at Ballingren Arts Foundation (Ireland). Since 2019, Elwes has been represented by Frestonian Gallery London.

Bridget Riley was born in 1931 in London, where she lives and works. She studied at Goldsmiths' College and then the Royal College of Art, graduating in 1955. While her early paintings were executed in an Impressionistic style, she soon evolved toward an interest in the Pointillism of Georges Seurat and his theories of light and colour. As her practice matured, Riley began to experiment more boldly with optical phenomena, and by the early '60s, she was creating clean-lined geometric patterned paintings in the style for which she is now most widely known. Her first solo show, held in 1962 at London's Gallery One, was met with great acclaim; the following year, she was included in the New Generation exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery. In 1965, Riley made her US debut with a sold-out show at Richard Feigen Gallery. That same year, she participated in the legendary group show *The Responsive Eye*, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Riley has been recognized with numerous awards and distinctions throughout her career. In 1968, she represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale, where she became the first woman to win the International Prize for Painting. She was awarded Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1974 and Companion of Honour in 1999, and holds honorary doctorates from the University of Ulster, Oxford University, Cambridge University, De Montfort University and the University of Exeter. Her paintings are collected by institutions worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York; National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; Tate Gallery in London; and Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. Riley currently lives and works between London, Cornwall and Vaucluse, France. Riley is represented by David Zwirner Gallery (New York, Paris, Hong Kong & London) and Galerie Max Hetzler (Berlin, Paris & London). Her work has been exhibited at Frestonian Gallery, London, regularly since 2019.

For further information on the exhibition please contact gallery@frestoniangallery.com