

London 2009

Slide 1:

(music plays)

Embassy of the United States

London · UK

Slide 2:

Brice Marden: "Pictures must be miraculous" Mark Rothko.

Slide 3:

Conversations with American Artists:

Brice Marden

2: Mark Rothko's "Orange and Tan"

Slide 4:

Marjorie Susman: All right, so here we have a marvelous Mark Rothko. What intrigues you about his work?

Marden: In Rothkos, the painter is unafraid of talking about the spiritual, the mystical, and so on. I have a lot of ideas about ... they're just incredibly beautiful paintings. You know, and...

Susman: They truly are.

Marden: I was just in Greece and every night we sat and watched the sunset and every night all this stuff would happen. And in certain places we'd go, we'd look over at the Rothko part because some part always seemed to be some variation from a Rothko painting—

Susman: Of this, of these colors—

Marden: Yeah. And I gave a talk to the Rothko chapel last year. The thing I came to realize in working on it is how in control he was of you know what he was making. Looking about it, thinking about it, doing all this research, looking at all the paintings he was doing at that time, what he went on to—there was no doubt in my mind that he knew exactly what he was doing and that he knew he had really nailed it.

Susman: The fact that he always wanted his paintings hung with nobody else's work, didn't he, and white like gallery with only his paintings almost like it was a shrine almost like it was you know kind of a religious like he wanted it to be a religious experience looking at his paintings. I wonder what he would think if he saw it here.

(both laugh)

Marden: Well, one of the things he said, they asked him, what is your preferred viewing distance, and he said seven inches. So he would and you see lots of photographs of him standing really close, looking at his paintings. And so if you, so every time I get a chance, you know with a Rothko, I go and look at it from seven inches and it becomes this—

Susman: You're absorbed into it. You are, you are.

Marden: Yeah. And it makes this sort of kind of it makes this sense of beyond being a picture and I'm and the abstract expressionists were very involved with that whole idea of not being pictorial, blah blah blah, but, you know, it really works.

Susman: Seven inches.

Marden: Okay.

Susman: It's been fun to live with them, I must say. And to share them, to have them in a house not in a museum.

Marden: He was a real a real great painter.

(music plays)

Slide 5:

(music plays)

Brice Marden inaugurated the "American Artist Lecture Series" at London's Tate Modern Museum, May 14, 2012.

Slide 6:

(music plays)

The Lecture Series is a collaboration between U.S. Embassy London, the Tate Modern, and the Department of State's Office of ART in Embassies (AIE), in celebration of AIE's 50 years of international cultural exchange.

Slide 7:

<http://london.usembassy.gov>