

## London 2009

### Slide 1:

(music plays)

Embassy of the United States

London · UK

### Slide 2:

Brice Marden: "The ultimate aim of painting is not decorative beauty but truth. What is truth? It must not be confused with formal resemblance. Indeed, formal resemblance only reaches the appearance of things whereas the function of truth is to capture their essence."

### Slide 3:

Conversations with American Artists:

Brice Marden

1: Brice Marden's "Untitled No. 3"

### Slide 4:

Susman: The ambassador and I are really great lovers of passionate about art and are art collectors ourselves and so as soon as he was appointed we had this idea of filling beautiful Winfield, historic Winfield House with great American modern and contemporary paintings. We went to work immediately, I got together with Art in Embassy and worked with them, but also called friends that I had that were museum directors or art collectors and the first thing I grabbed, Brice, was your painting. And I have wondered, ever since it went up, what would Brice Marden think if he saw it in this room. (laughs) And I've got you! I've got you, so I have to start there.

Marden: Certainly wasn't expecting this. It was sort of one of the first really completed one of this group of paintings which is like the first group after really making a big change in my work. And you know I was just really concerned about getting the painting finished. You know what I mean? It's just, you're working on this project and you don't know whether it's going to work at all. And this was the first one and it really sort of gets you a little bit by surprise. You're working on it and you walk in the studio one day and you go, oh, it's finished.

Susman: Yeah, fantastic. And that's how it happens?

Marden: Yeah. Well, that's how it happened with this one.

Susman: It's quite a change from those earlier works.

Marden: Oh yeah, those monochromatic—

Susman: Monochromatic paintings that were so elegant, so endlessly beautiful. The panels, the diptychs, the triptychs.

Marden: Well, I just kind of stopped doing them. You start out as sort of a radical but you stay around long enough, you know, you become quite conservative. And there's also the thing where you have to keep watching out that what at one point was a kind of discovery can turn into a cliché, your own cliché. So there's always—

Susman: Interesting. So this here, this was—

Marden: What gave birth to this kind of—yeah.

Susman: I understand that with some of your new paintings that you're once again doing some of the panels but in a new way.

Marden: I hit a certain point, you know. It wasn't a crisis. It was, um, my brother died and rather unexpected and so suddenly this whole thing of mortality comes in. You think, oh what are you doing, you're just. So I figured, buckle down and really work harder because there's a lot I want to get done before that happens to me. And then there were like these weird little projects and I'm thinking I can you know I can do whatever I want, there's always, that's one of the reasons you become an artist because nobody tells you what to do, you just do it. I'm doing a little bit more of that, have a lot of funny little projects. And some of them, I've gone back to drawings I started but never finished you know 20 years ago, trying to finish them up. But now I can do whatever I want to do, so that's what I'm doing.  
(music plays)

**Slide 5:**

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

**Slide 6:**

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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>