

NEW WORK BY AGNES MARTIN ON VIEW AT MUSEUM

On a Clear Day, a suite of 30 serigraphs published this year by Parasol Press, offers Agnes Martin's first work since 1967. They will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from May 14 through August 28 in an exhibition directed by Riva Castleman, Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books. Agnes Martin calls these silkscreens On a Clear Day to emphasize her intent to clarify the formal structure of her work through the more perfect uniformity of the printed line.

Ten years after her first solo exhibition in 1957 Agnes Martin retired, and no new works appeared from her self-imposed exile in New Mexico for six years. "She returned to her profession," Riva Castleman explains in the exhibition wall label, "partly to resolve a critical attitude that had arisen toward her paintings and drawings which she believed obscured her original intentions. She has sought to replace, by means of mechanical application, the illusionary and irregular drawing that detracted from the perfection she sought in her compositions." Choosing 30 drawings from more than 300 that she executed in 1972, the artist had the Domberger silkscreen workshop in Stuttgart cut the stencils to their exact measurements without attempting to duplicate her autographic line.

The square surfaces of the prints, filled with grids and parallels, go a step beyond Agnes Martin's square, gridded canvas shown in the adjoining collection gallery. The subtle variations of pencil line over the textured surface of the painting contrast with the precise, mechanically rendered monochromatic lines which give the prints a more detached, uniform appearance. Within this series several sequences are easily identifiable by changes in the basic structure of the lines. Each sequence consists of a system of lines, horizontal and/or vertical, that expands or contracts in a quotient that is determined by personal rather than mathematical considerations.

"The grids viewed together are a study of scale; the immediately perceptible intervals

(more)

compound to indicate a sense of the illimitable scale of infinity," says Riva Castleman. "On a Clear Day, created out of the solitude in which Martin lives 'the inner experiences of mind,' conveys the perfect measure of nature's eternal rhythm."

Agnes Martin, born 61 years ago in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, for the past 41 years has lived in the United States -- in New York, Oregon and New Mexico.

The 30 silkscreen prints are a recent gift to the Museum from the artist and Parasol Press.

The New York State Council on the Arts supports a portion of The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition program.

Additional information available from Linda Gordon, Associate Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Phone: (212) 956 - 2648.