

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
September 1993

PROJECTS: MOIRA DRYER

September 30 - November 16, 1993
Press Viewing: September 30, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

The Museum of Modern Art's next **PROJECTS** exhibition, on view from September 30 through November 16, is devoted to the work of American artist Moira Dryer (1957-1992). Organized by Robert Storr, curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, **PROJECTS: MOIRA DRYER** commemorates Dryer's brief but significant career with approximately twelve works from the last seven years of her life.

Dryer's richly hued and often unconventionally designed paintings and assemblages are thinly painted with saturated washes and color-bursts. In the works, which are sometimes cut into odd shapes or mounted to project from the wall, components of classic modernism -- for example, the target imagery of Jasper Johns and Kenneth Noland, the stripes of Bridget Riley or Frank Stella, drips and stains recalling the conventions of Abstract Expressionism and Color Field painting -- are combined in a variety of unusual and often ironic ways. She once said, "An artist who is versed in history, and most are so educated, cannot approach their work in a way that eliminates their education." Rather than avoid codified styles, Dryer mixed them in ways that liberated them from their set formal or historical associations.

In some of the works that project toward the viewer, such as *Sentence*, Dryer painted on the back, so that color is reflected onto the wall behind the work, creating a diffuse aura around it. In other works, such as *Pop*, Dryer placed cantilevered shelves or boxes under the main painted unit. Around 1989, some of her paintings began to feature arcing, striated designs, some of

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which were based on blowups of her own fingerprints. By 1990, her increasingly expansive panels featured perforations, grommets, rubber stoppers, and elaborate jigsawed arabesques like the curved slits in the face of a cello.

Born in Canada in 1957, Moira Dryer came to New York in the late 1970s. She attended the School of Visual Arts, where she studied with Elizabeth Murray, and graduated with a BFA in 1980. Dryer exhibited in group shows and was briefly a studio assistant for Julian Schnabel. She later made props for Mabou Mines and other downtown theater companies. In 1985 she fully committed herself to her own painting. Moira Dryer died in 1992.

PROJECTS, a series of exhibitions devoted to the work of contemporary artists, is made possible by generous grants from the Lannan Foundation, The Bohen Foundation, and the Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art. The next exhibition in the series is **PROJECTS: PIPPIN LUCAS** (December 23, 1993 - February 8, 1994).

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