

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONDRIAN'S DIAMOND-SHAPED PAINTINGS

AND DRAWINGS GO ON VIEW JULY 15

WASHINGTON, D. C. June 20, 1979. A small scholarly exhibition of the diamond-shaped paintings and drawings of pioneer abstract painter Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) has been organized by the National Gallery with the selection and catalogue provided by the Gallery's curator of twentieth-century art, E. A. Carmean, Jr. It will go on view July 15 in the East Building.

Mondrian: The Diamond Compositions is the second in a series of scholarly exhibitions devoted to various aspects of the Gallery's collection. The first, Berenson and the Connoisseurship of Italian Painting, opened earlier this year and will be on view through September 3.

The Mondrian show will include eight diamond paintings (from sixteen known paintings) and eight working drawings. The selection concentrates on his mature works from 1921 until his death.

His great last painting, the diamond Victory Boogie-Woogie, which was in his studio at his death will be lent by Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine.

Famous for his compositions of black lines and red, yellow, blue, white and gray planes, Mondrian worked at first in the manner

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of impressionism and other late-nineteenth and early twentieth century styles.

He discovered analytical cubism and absorbed this difficult style of Picasso and Braque into his own work when he left his native Holland for Paris in 1911.

He returned to The Netherlands in 1914, where he remained through World War I. The geometric, pure color style that evolved during this period led to his first diamond in 1918. Each diamond is a square turned 45 degrees.

The drawings will be presented didactically, showing the artist's invention of the format, his studio procedures, and a charting of the production of Victory Boogie-Woogie. Documentary material, photographs and notebook pages will also be included.

An accompanying catalogue will be fully illustrated and carry an extended essay on the diamond paintings and drawings by Mr. Carmean, a catalogue raisonné of the diamonds by Mr. Carmean and Trinkett Clark, also of the Gallery's twentieth-century department, and joint art historical and laboratory studies by Mr. Carmean and William R. Leisher of the Gallery's conservation department on the Gallery's Diamond Painting in Red, Yellow and Blue, and Composition with Blue lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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