Brice Marden, *Moss Sutra with the Seasons*, 2010-2015



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1 Close Looking and Principles of Design

- What do you see as you approach and walk around the artwork?
- What do you think is happening? What details make you say that?
- What questions do you have about the artist's choices, materials, scale, or the meaning of the work? What are you curious to learn more about?

*Consider using terms like **line, form, scale, balance,** and **negative space.***

2 Learn More About the Artist:

- Brice Marden was born in 1938 in Bronxville, New York. He studied at Boston University and Yale University and was influenced by artists such as Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns, and Mark Rothko.
- Marden became well known in the 1960s for his simple, single-color paintings made with oil paint and beeswax, as well as for exploring color, light, and movement.
- Later in his career, trips to Greece and an interest in Chinese calligraphy inspired him to create paintings with more flowing lines and energetic forms.
- Throughout his career, Marden explored how color, light, materials, and brushstrokes could create emotional and sensory experiences for viewers.

About the Artwork:

- *Moss Sutra with the Seasons* (2010–2015) is a large painting made up of five panels.
- The smaller panels represent a different season. The colors move from yellow for spring on the far left to black for winter on the far right, which follow the progression of the seasons from spring to winter.
- Flowing lines move across the panels, creating a sense of energy, rhythm, and movement. Marden called these lines “glyphs.” Marden began by making ink drawings with sticks and twigs he found outdoors. He then used those drawings as the basis for the painted lines on the canvas.
- The title and central panel were inspired by a decorative Chinese sutra, or sacred text, that Marden adapted as a starting point for the composition.
- Marden described the work simply: “*Basically, it’s about moss in different seasons.*”
- Through color, light, and movement, Marden translated his experience of the changing seasons into paint.

Glenstone Connection:

- This work was commissioned by Glenstone and was also the only commissioned artwork Marden accepted during his career. The artwork has a strong connection to Glenstone’s landscape.
- Marden visited Glenstone many times over several years while developing the painting. During these visits, he observed how everything changed throughout the seasons.
- He carefully selected the color and order of each panel based on those experiences, making it a reflection of Glenstone’s natural environment.



Brice Marden in 2014 at Glenstone. Photo: Mirabelle Marden



Marden in his studio with *Moss Sutra with the Seasons.*



Detail of center panel.

3 Reflect

Worldview and Social Impact

- Why might an artist spend years observing a landscape before completing an artwork?
- What details become more noticeable when you view the sculpture from different distance?
- How does the artwork communicate ideas about change, growth, and the passage of time?

This invites discussion of empathy, interpretation, and perception.

Details and Material

Examine the art closely.

- Why do you think Marden began with drawings made from sticks and twigs?
- What details do you notice when comparing one seasonal panel to another?
- How do the colors help you identify or imagine the different seasons?

*Introduce words like **calligraphy, ephemeral, commissioned, rhythm and movement.***

Reflect

After moving through the sculpture, reflect:

- I feel... (emotion or reaction)
- I think... (insight or idea sparked)
- I am... (state of being or identity)

Connect art to personal meaning, mindfulness, and self.

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Photo: Ron Amstutz

Accessibility Note: This room has two benches for visitors to sit and view the work.