

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

MARILYN LERNER

WALKING BACKWARD RUNNING FORWARD

SEPTEMBER 4 – OCTOBER 5, 2018

Opening Friday, September 7 from 6-8 PM

PRESS RELEASE

Marilyn Lerner's solo exhibition, *Walking Backward Running Forward*, places 5 paintings from the late 1980s alongside 9 new works, not so as to emphasize dramatic metamorphosis but rather to draw attention to studied continuity. Lerner's body of hard-edged abstract geometric paintings represents a rigorous and persistent investigation into the mechanics and resonances of geometry, a visual language with near-universal significance. The exhibition is bookended by 2 white circular paintings, one completed in 1989 and the other nearly 30 years later.

Lerner paints with oil on wooden panels, sometimes shaped, laying out a compositional scaffolding of geometric tessellations. Circles, squares, and ovals are frequent subjects. Each area is filled with a single skin of paint. In the late 80s, Lerner used modeling paste to build up certain areas into low relief. The newer works are smoother, slicker, though brushstrokes are still apparent. Sidestepping academic color theory, Lerner applies color intuitively, with an eye toward perceptual relationships and those between the part and the whole. The resulting surface is both harmonious and off-kilter.

Lerner has been working within the genre of geometric abstraction for nearly 5 decades. Trained as a printmaker, she took up sculpture after completing her education, working largely with salvaged laminated woods. Though Lerner soon began to gain notice for her work as a sculptor, exhibiting in the 1970 Sculpture Annual at the Whitney Museum of American Art, she chose instead to follow her burgeoning interest in color to painting, and abandoned making sculpture in 1971.

Though Lerner's work came into its maturity at a time when geometric abstraction in painting was having a moment du jour in New York and beyond, her paintings have consistently defied and outlasted trend, bearing a certain idiosyncrasy of color and composition that sets her apart from her peers. Her ongoing work, decades later, demonstrates a concentrated and self-guided practice, a singularity of vision and a quiet self-assurance using repeated form and challenging color that give her work a loquacious complexity with endless variation.

Marilyn Lerner (USA, b. 1942 in Milwaukee, WI) received her BS from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, WI, and her MFA from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. Lerner has held solo exhibitions at galleries and institutions including CUE Art Foundation, New York, NY (2016); Butler Gallery, Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny, Ireland (2014); Robert Morrison Gallery, New York, NY (1992); John Good Gallery, New York, NY (1989, 1987); Kornblee Gallery, New York, NY (1976); and Zabriskie Gallery, New York, NY (1969). Her work has been exhibited in group shows at venues including the Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey; the Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, Staten Island, NY; Madison Art Center, Madison, WI; PS1, New York, NY; the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, among others. She currently lives and works in New York, NY.