

This is a repository copy of *Riley in Cairo: British Art and Egypt in the 1980s*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/191362/>

Version: Published Version

Article:

Johns, Richard Paul orcid.org/0000-0003-0082-5419 (2022) *Riley in Cairo: British Art and Egypt in the 1980s*. *Art History*. pp. 650-672. ISSN: 1467-8365

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8365.12656>

Reuse

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND) licence. This licence only allows you to download this work and share it with others as long as you credit the authors, but you can't change the article in any way or use it commercially. More information and the full terms of the licence here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



Riley in Cairo: British Art and Egypt in the 1980s

Richard Johns

In the early 1980s, Bridget Riley produced an extended series of vertical stripe paintings distinguished by the use of the same four or five colours – brick red, yellow ochre, blue, turquoise, and occasionally green – together with black and white. The earliest works in the series, a group of eight relatively small canvases titled *Ka* 1-8 (see, for example, plate 1) and a large painting more than two metres high, *Ra*, marked a subtle but significant change in the artist's practice. Though clearly related to the black-and-white compositions that had propelled Riley to international fame in the early 1960s, as well as to the coloured stripes, spots and twisted curves of the late 1960s and 1970s, the new paintings moved away from the systematic grammar of repetition and reversal that characterized her previous work, towards a more intuitive approach whereby regular bands of colour were arranged through an extended process of trial and error into complex, rhythmical formations. A recently published catalogue raisonné identifies more than eighty such paintings made between 1980 and 1985, with only a gradual variation in the range of hues across the series.¹

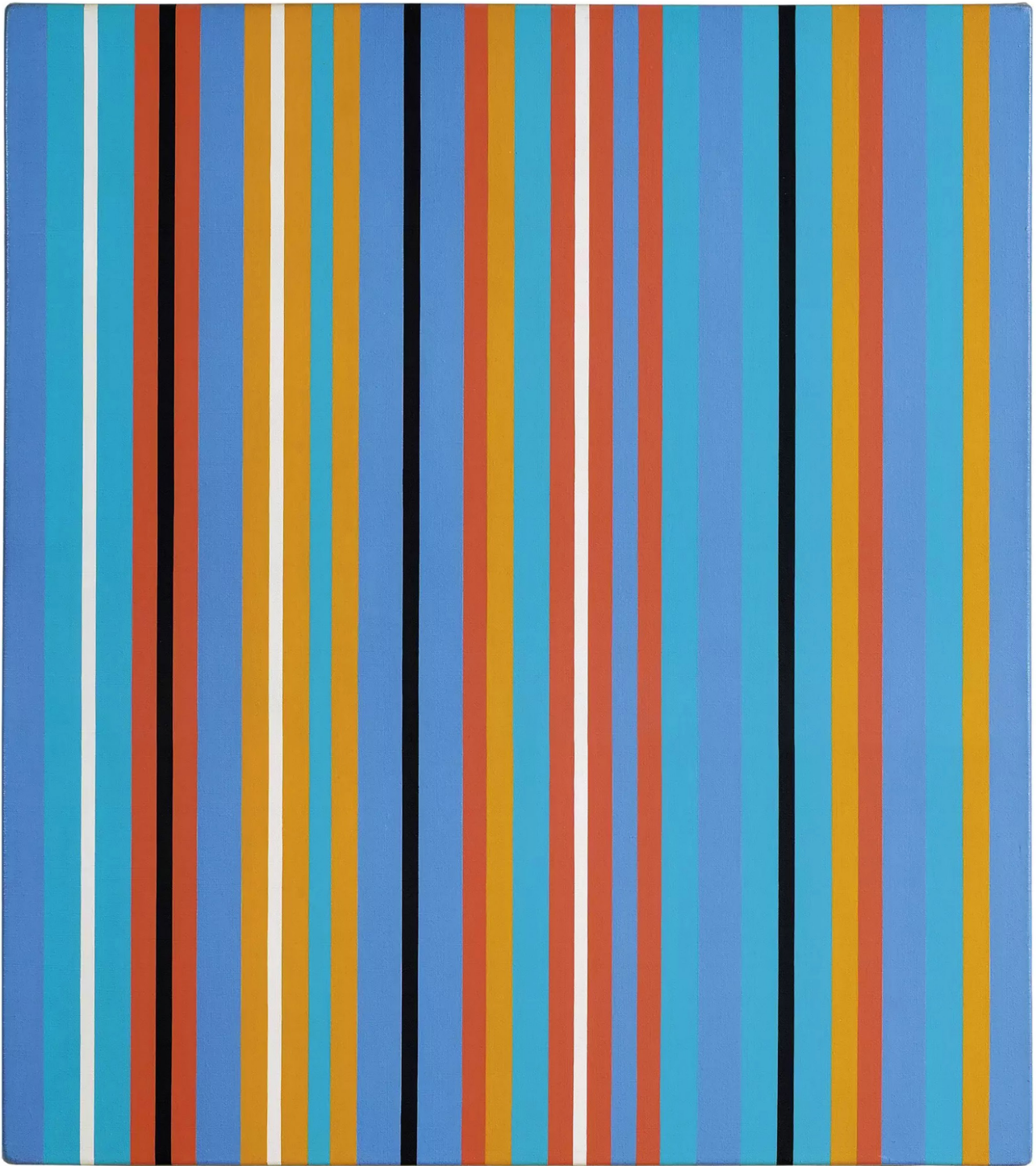
When the *Ka* group was shown at the Rowan Gallery in London in 1981, the new stripe paintings were associated with a visit to Egypt that Riley had made during the winter of 1979–80, en route to Japan for the final leg of a British Council touring retrospective at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo.² More specifically, the artist went on to explain how the new paintings had been inspired by the verdant landscape of the Nile Delta and surrounding desert, and by the continuity of colours she encountered in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and again in the painted tombs of the later pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings, and in the workers' tombs at Deir el-Medina. On her return to London, the recent memory of these sights gave rise to the five studio colours that became known to the artist and her circle as the 'Egyptian palette'.³ This essay reconsiders Riley's touristic experience of Egypt and the subsequent display and reception of her stripe paintings within a longer visual history of encounter and exchange between Britain and the Middle East. It examines the claims made by British art on and for Egypt, and in doing so situates Riley's work at a crossroads between colonial and post-colonial ways of seeing.

Each painting in the series is the result of several months' work, typically involving multiple gouache studies, collage, and the production of a full-size cartoon, before the final version was executed by the artist's assistants (as always in Riley's studio). The new series also marked a return to oil as the medium of choice for the final stage in this process, after more than a decade of working with acrylic.⁴ The results of this sustained creative labour visibly play out across the painted surface as a seemingly tireless dance of colour and colour chords, quickened by the relative narrowness of the stripes. Riley

Detail from Edward Lear, *View from Luxor*, c. 1854 (plate 6).

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs Licence, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made. The use and distribution of any images contained in this article is not permitted by this licence.

DOI:
10.1111/1467-8365.12656
Art History | ISSN 0141-6790
45 | 3 | June 2022 | pages
650-672



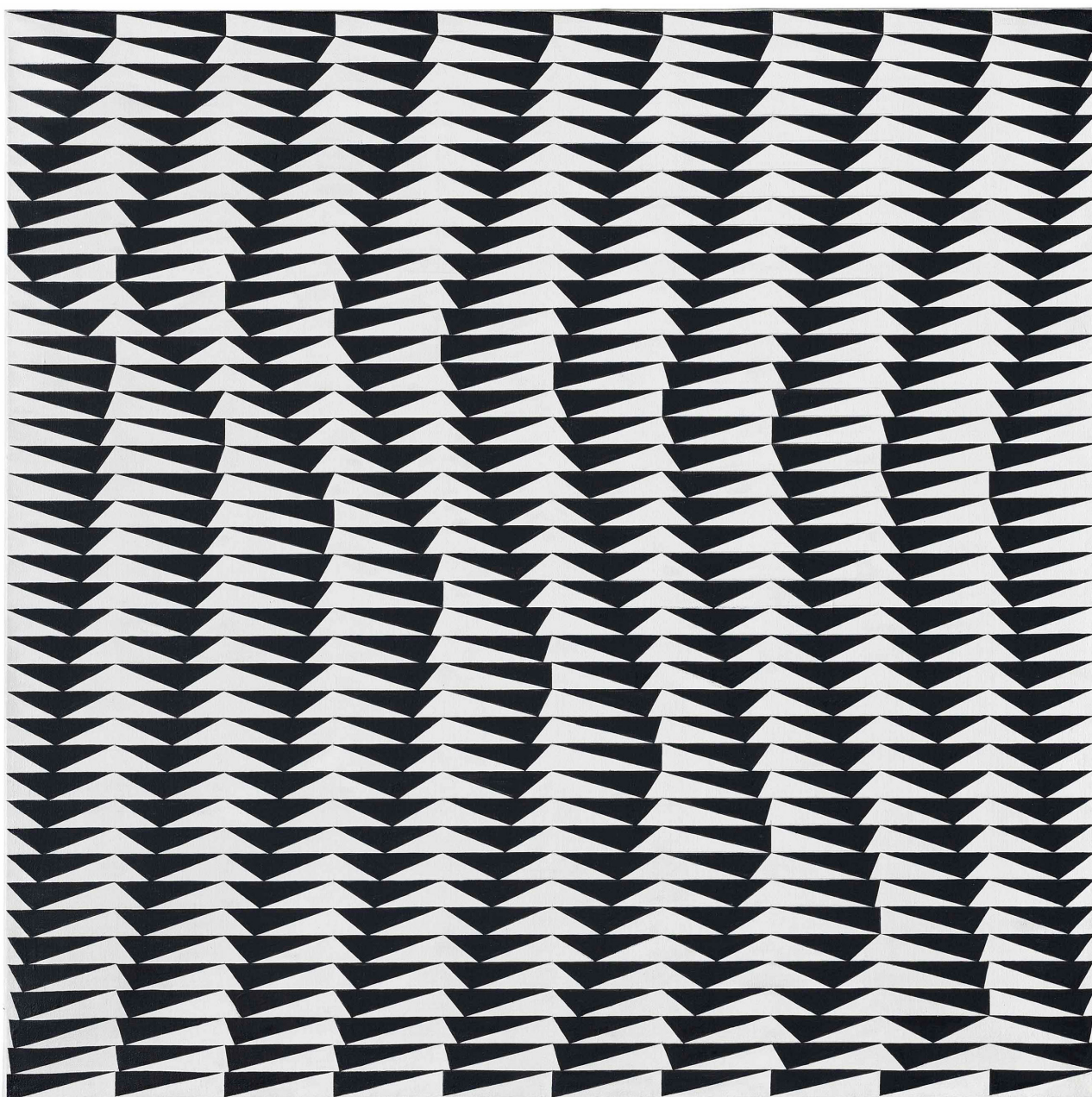
1 Bridget Riley, *Ka 4*, 1980.
Oil on canvas, 76.2 × 67.3 cm.
Private collection. © Bridget Riley.

offered a compelling explanation of this visual or perceptual restlessness in an article commissioned by *Vogue* magazine in 1984:

Vision can be arrested, tripped up or pulled back in order to float free again. It encounters reflections, echoes and fugitive flickers which when traced evaporate. One moment there will be nothing to look at and the next second the canvas suddenly seems to refill, to be crowded with visual events. More than anything else I want my paintings to exist in their own terms. That is to say they must stealthily engage and disarm you.⁵

Riley's ability to disarm and disorientate in ways that are either thrilling or nauseating, depending on the viewer's constitution, has dominated the critical reception of her work since the brief but spectacular efflorescence of op art (a label Riley has always resisted) around the time of the Museum of Modern Art's *Responsive Eye* exhibition in 1965.⁶ For proponents of the new international optical abstraction, including William Seitz, curator of the MoMA show, Riley's black-and-white designs exemplified a progressive convergence of science and art that had been presaged in the perceptual psychology of Rudolf Arnheim and Anton Ehrenzweig.⁷ For others, the unrelenting dynamism of Riley's early work – registered in kinetic titles such as *Shift* (1963; plate 2), *Turn* and *Hesitate* (both 1964) – was quickly dismissed as a kind of visual torment, a surface trick at odds with the more cerebral version of post-painterly abstraction championed by Clement Greenberg and his followers.⁸

2 Bridget Riley, *Shift*, 1963.
Synthetic emulsion on
board, 76.2 × 76.2 cm. Private
collection. © Bridget Riley.



The contested visuality (and potential violence) of Riley's black-and-white paintings has been characterized by the art historian Pamela Lee as an 'Eye/Body problem' – a phrase Lee uses to correlate the peculiar phenomenology of the artist's early work with the cultural politics of post-war consumer society.⁹ Briefly put, the embodied reception of Riley's painting in the mid-1960s (exemplified in contrasting ways by the appropriation of her designs by the world of fashion, and by repeated claims that the same designs, when encountered on a gallery wall, rendered audiences physically sick and incapable of critical thought) was symptomatic of the quickening tempo and controlling technologies of late twentieth-century capitalism and its attendant desires and anxieties.¹⁰ My focus here is somewhat different, but I want to hold on to the notion that Riley's stripe paintings of the early 1980s represent a historically specific 'problem' of sorts – a problem that can be framed in relation to a longer visual history of British imperialism and (post-)colonial diplomacy, and which plays out through the intense visuality of the painted surface.

On a rudimentary level, the story of Riley's Egyptian palette represents the bringing together of two distinct visual orders: on the one hand the stripe, pre-coded as an archetypal motif of North Atlantic abstraction; and on the other, an affective colour scheme remembered from a touristic encounter with the material culture and mythology of an ancient North African civilization.¹¹ The resulting tension, observable through the constant 'trip and pull' of the picture plane, may be expressed schematically as follows:

modern	ancient
British	Egyptian
form	colour

A central aim of this essay is to explore the imposing dynamism of Riley's Egyptian palette as a visible example of what Aruna D'Souza identifies as the 'frictions that arise from cross-cultural, transnational, and networked encounters over time and space'.¹² The sections that follow position Riley's stripe paintings in a sequence of very different (and perhaps unlikely) pictorial associations, each chosen to tease out ways in which the artist's work connects with and resonates within a longer culture of encounter between Britain and Egypt that has been both creative and coercive. Prompted by the overarching theme of this special issue of *Art History*, and by the editors' invitation to look (and think) in the spaces between the national and the global, the visual pairings around which this essay works seek not to resolve the inherent tension of Riley's stripe paintings, but to observe in their 'reflections, echoes and fugitive flickers' the residual colonial associations and implications of British art.

In pursuing this line, it might reasonably be said that I am taking the idea of the Egyptian palette more literally than was ever intended by the artist. Riley has never presumed to represent Egypt. On the contrary, her stripe paintings are consistent with a career-long exploration of abstract visual phenomena – the products of a disciplined studio practice, which in the artist's own words 'exist in their own terms'. Moreover, in stark contrast to the critical turbulence of the 1960s, the popular and professional reception of Riley's later paintings has been notably uncontroversial. Today, more than ever, the canonical status of Riley's work seems assured. Exemplary stripe paintings from the early 1980s are displayed in national and regional museums throughout the UK, and in high-profile public and private collections around the world. Meanwhile, the story of the artist's encounter with the vividly preserved colours of Egypt's painted

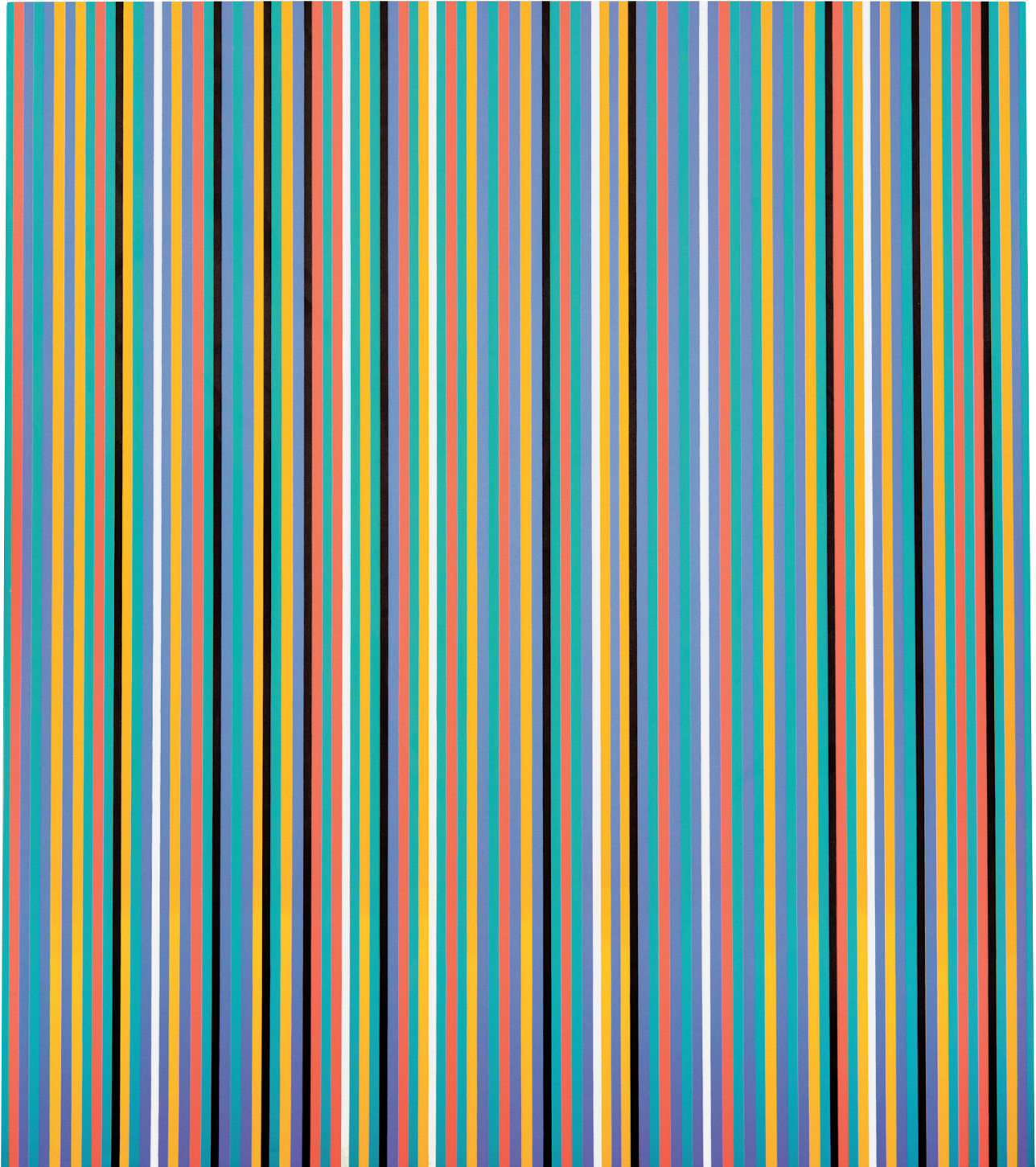
tombs, invoked each time a work from this period is exhibited, sold, or otherwise brought into view, has become emblematic of the global aspirations of the British art establishment in the late twentieth century.¹³ And yet, it is precisely the lack of critical jeopardy around the Egyptian palette – the apparent ease with which the culture of another time and place has been abstracted and absorbed into the everyday language and practices of modern British art – that warrants our attention.

Though never officially a part of the British empire, Egypt was under effective colonial control for seventy years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁴ Decades of European speculation and imperial rivalry in the region culminated in 1882 with the British naval bombardment of Alexandria and the beginning of a long military occupation. Egypt was nominally declared an independent kingdom in 1922, but the British government retained control over key aspects of the country's economy and infrastructure, and maintained a dominant military presence for another thirty years. Egyptian resistance to colonial capitalism and to the ongoing occupation of the Suez Canal Zone led, in 1952, to the Free Officers revolution, and the rise to world prominence of Gamal Abdel Nasser as leader of a new socialist republic.¹⁵ Nasser's policy of Arab nationalism – exemplified by the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in 1956 – provoked a late convulsion of European imperialism as Britain, in a secret alliance with France and Israel, invaded Egypt for a second time. The incursion failed as the old colonial interests behind the Tripartite Aggression, or Suez Crisis, were quickly overshadowed by the greater urgencies of the Cold War, forcing the invading armies into a humiliating retreat. Diplomatic and cultural relations between Britain and Egypt resumed gradually during the 1960s, opening the door to a new era of popular tourism and ever-closer economic connections in the decades that followed.¹⁶ This wide historical arc, spanning a century and more of colonial control and resistance, provides a broad chronological and geographical frame for the three separate but intersecting sections that follow.

Luxor

Where the first stripe paintings, the *Ka* series and *Ra*, invoke in their titles the ancient and mythical origins of Riley's Egyptian palette, others register the artist's experience of Egypt in more topographical ways. *Luxor* (plate 3), acquired by Glasgow Museums in 1991, takes its title from the final destination of Riley's visit, where over several days she explored the painted tombs and temples of the Theban necropolis. Riley's experience of the place was framed by the opulent surroundings of the historic Winter Palace hotel. It was, she later recalled, a luxurious visit, marked by 'cool fresh mornings filled with brilliant light, the silk smooth surface of the Nile, seemingly undisturbed, and each day seeing the tomb paintings, with their pure and beautiful colours'.¹⁷

In making the journey upriver from Cairo to Luxor, Riley followed a path well trodden by an earlier generation of British artists whose archaeological eye for detail and imaginative use of colour fostered an enduring European vision of Egypt as a land of richly hued antiquity. Early orientalist impressions of the Nile valley were formed in the high-end lithographs of David Roberts's monumental *Egypt and Nubia* series of the 1840s, based on watercolours made the decade before; and in Owen Jones's influential designs for the Egyptian Court of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, later codified in the abstract symmetries of *The Grammar of Ornament* (see, for example, plate 4).¹⁸ Roberts's lavish production established what Madeline Boden in a study of another artist-traveller, Frederic Leighton, has called a 'visual itinerary for travel through Egypt', charting a picturesque route from the port city Alexandria to the great rock temples at Abu Simbel.¹⁹



3 Bridget Riley, *Luxor*, 1982. Oil on canvas, 223.5 × 197.5 cm. Glasgow Museums. © Bridget Riley.

The artistic and archaeological mapping of the Nile valley by nineteenth-century British artists coincided with the first popular travel guides to the region and the beginnings of a thriving culture of elite winter tourism, and with the gradual but persistent encroachment of European capital.²⁰ Few Victorian artists were more deeply invested in the idea and imagery of Egypt than Edward Lear. A tireless traveller, Lear made the first of several visits in the winter of 1848–49, a year after the publication of John Gardner Wilkinson’s influential *Handbook for Travellers in Egypt*, followed over the next twenty years by two extended journeys up the Nile. Lear’s standard practice while

travelling was to make annotated pencil sketches of his chosen subject, often several in quick succession to trace the changing patterns of the early morning or evening light.²¹ A view across the Nile towards the Theban Hills (plate 5), one of several drawings made during a ten-day stopover in Luxor and Karnak in February 1854, is a good example of the embellished field sketches that informed the picturesque watercolours and large oil paintings that Lear produced in abundance from his studio. As well as recording the location, date and time of day, Lear typically marked up his drawings with simple colour notes – ‘yellow’, ‘pale salmon’, ‘palest blue’, and so on – which he later overlaid



4 Francis Bedford after Owen Jones, *Egyptian No. 3*, lithograph from *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856.

with ink and washes of translucent colour.²² When he worked up *Luxor* as one of a series of Egyptian views for Queen Victoria (plate 6), Lear infused the scene with colour. He also simplified the composition. While the contours of the landscape remain more or less unaltered from one version to the next, Lear reduced the vital signs of contemporary Egyptian life (outlined so vividly in the initial drawing) to a handful of figures and a single camel, rendered as spots of colour in the middle distance.

Lear's *Luxor* captures Egypt on the cusp of colonial abstraction. The large building on the right is one of several pot-lined pigeon towers that stood on and around the half-buried, half-forgotten temple complex that formed the nucleus of the modern Arab village. When European Egyptologists excavated the courtyards and colonnades of the temple in the 1880s, the villagers who lived among the ancient ruins were relocated, and the mudbrick towers, sheepfolds and other signs of contemporary habitation were swept from the site.²³ A few years later, the ground immediately to the south of the temple – from where Lear had sketched the scene – was incorporated into the gardens of the new Winter Palace hotel.

Built at the turn of the twentieth century by a British and French consortium that included Thomas Cook & Son, the Winter Palace quickly became synonymous with the European experience of Upper Egypt.²⁴ It reached new heights of fame after the First World War, when it was used as a base by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon during their excavations in the Valley of the Kings. In November 1922, the hotel became the centre of international media attention when Carter announced the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. The Winter Palace has been renowned ever since as a luxury staging post for princes and politicians, amateur Egyptologists and well-heeled artists. Agatha Christie stayed at the hotel in the 1930s, during a trip that inspired *Death on the Nile* (the film adaptation of Christie's novel, starring Peter Ustinov as Hercule Poirot, was released in 1978, shortly before Riley's visit). Years later, the actor and author Alan Bennett observed the daily custom of tea on the hotel terrace before watching the sun

5 Edward Lear, *Luxor, 5pm 17 February 1854*, 1854. Pencil, pen and brown ink with watercolour, 33 × 50.8 cm. Private collection.



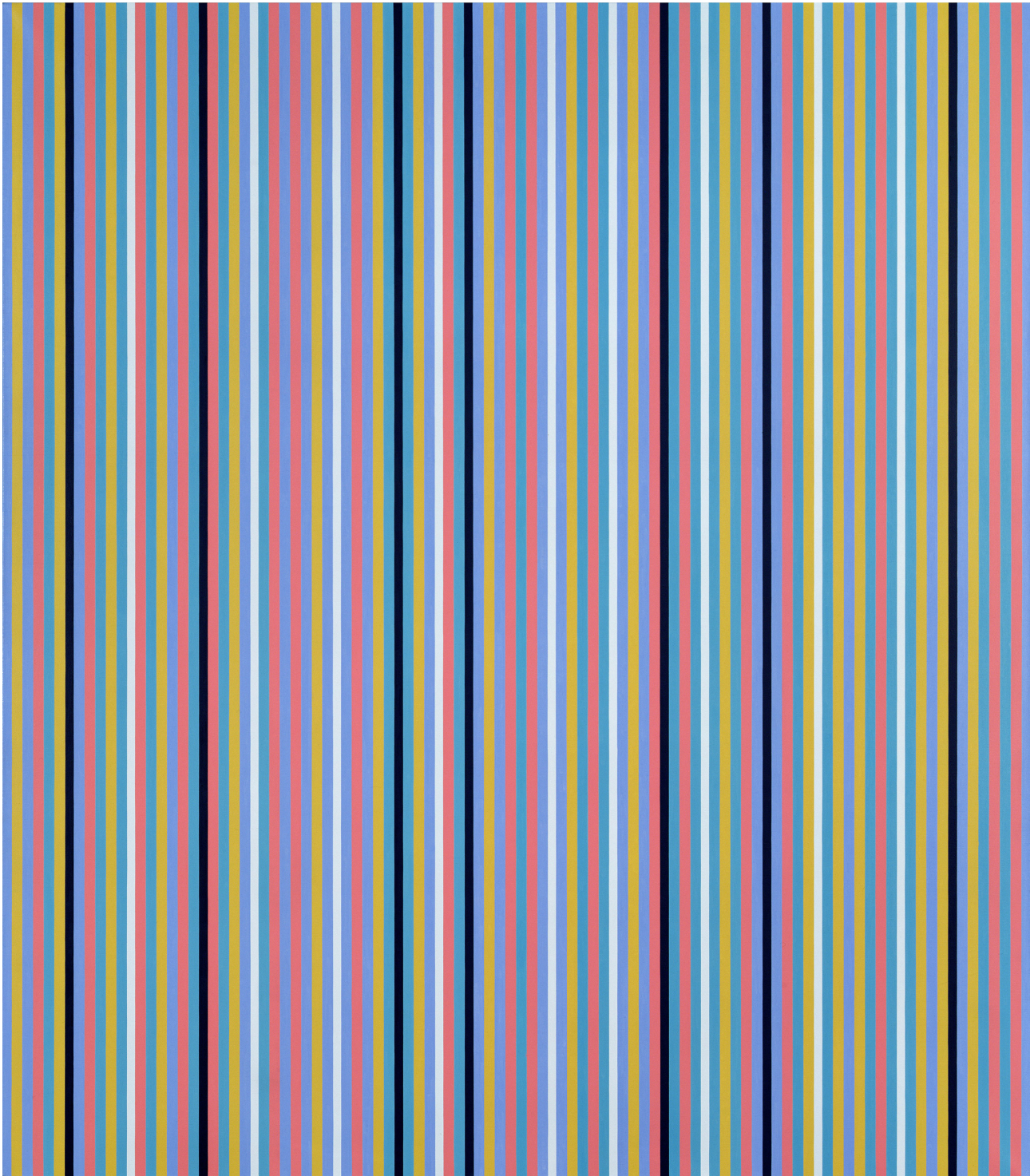


6 Edward Lear, *View from Luxor*, c. 1854. Watercolour, 16.7 × 26 cm. Royal Collection Trust. Photo: © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

set over the Nile – the same sunset witnessed by Lear a century before, now ‘captured by dozens of tourists with film cameras who wait as if for the passage of royalty’.²⁵ When Riley’s dealer, Alex Gregory-Hood, suggested *Winter Palace* as the title for a new painting in 1981 (plate 7), the artist agreed, recognizing immediately how her own memories of Luxor had been shaped by the experience and rituals of modern travel. ‘It was just right,’ she later recalled, ‘suggesting something cool, something luxurious, something man-made, fabricated, and of course the colours I had seen in Egypt!’²⁶

If the early chromatic abstractions of Lear and other nineteenth-century artist-travellers identify the Egyptian palette as a recurring trope of British orientalist art, the comings and goings at the Winter Palace prompt us to look at Riley’s stripe paintings as the creative manifestation of a more recent vision of Egypt, framed by the architectural and archaeological legacy of European colonialism. Certainly, by the time of Riley’s visit, the British tourist gaze was more exclusively focused than in Lear’s day on an Egypt of the pharaohs: a land of pyramids, painted tombs and mummies, mediated by Sunday supplement features, colour television and cinema, and popular museum displays.²⁷

The most spectacular demonstration, and focus, of an enduring fascination with the land of the pharaohs in the decade leading up to Riley’s visit was the *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibition at the British Museum in 1972. Seven years in the making, and involving the loan of some of Egypt’s most prized ancient artefacts, the exhibition remains by far the most popular in the museum’s history, attracting 1.7 m visitors over an extended nine-month run.²⁸ It represented a significant milestone in the re-establishment of diplomatic and cultural relations between Egypt and Britain after the Suez Crisis, a process formally inscribed in a cultural convention agreed in Cairo in 1965.²⁹ As such, the exhibition served a high-level diplomatic function, through which competing visions of Egypt, past and present, found a common expression



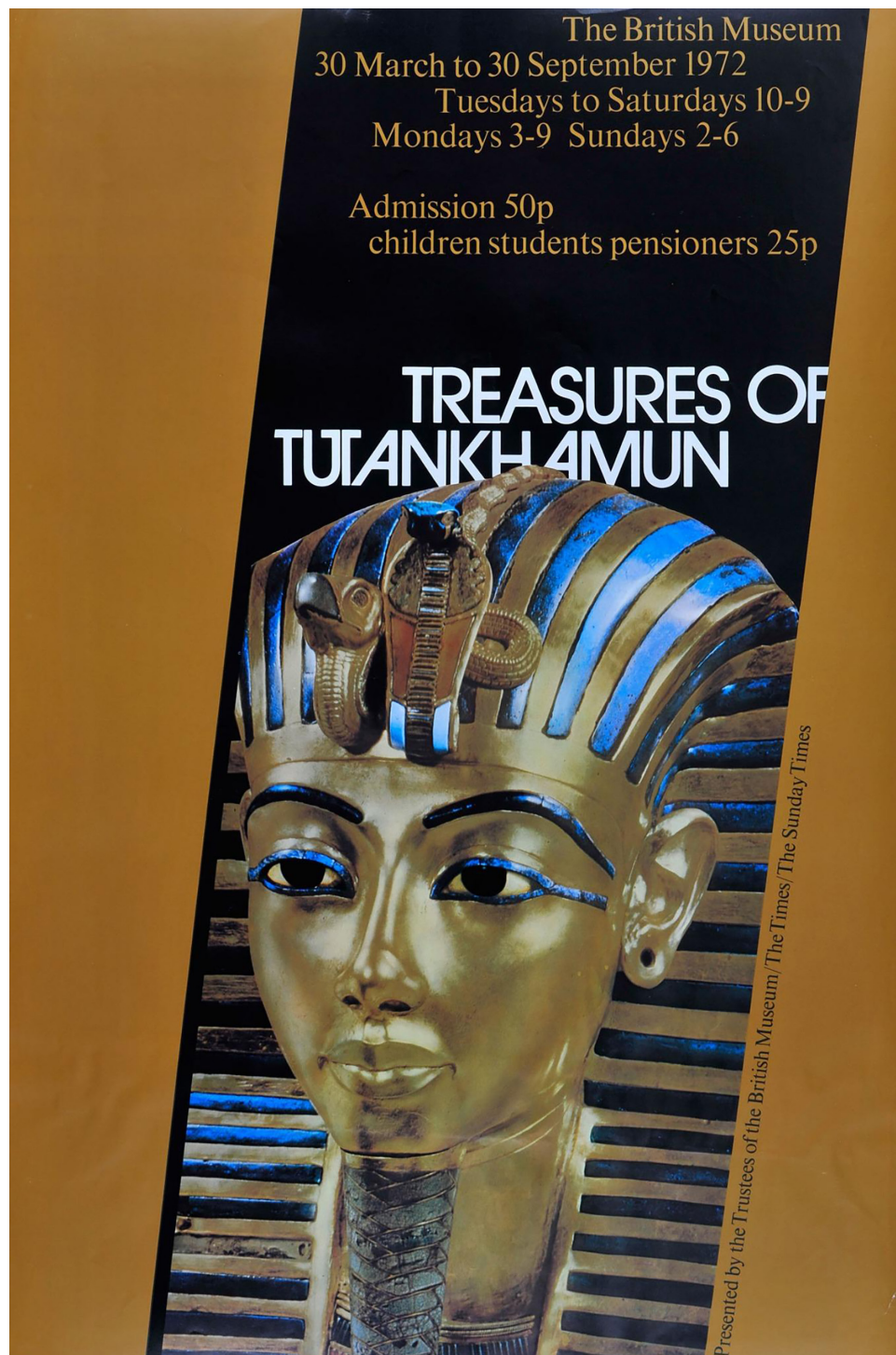
7 Bridget Riley, *Winter Palace*, 1981. Oil on canvas, 212.1 × 183.5 cm. Leeds Museums and Galleries. © Bridget Riley.

in the enigmatic gaze and blue and gold stripes of 'King Tut's' iconic death mask (see plate 8).³⁰

For the Egyptian government, the *Treasures* exhibition was a powerful assertion of cultural sovereignty by a modern Arab republic reclaiming its archaeological past from the colonial legacy of European Egyptologists.³¹ Crucially, in this respect, all proceeds from the London exhibition contributed to the relocation of the temples at Philae, one of several archaeological sites flooded following the completion of the Aswan High Dam and the creation of Lake Nasser. Accordingly, the international display

of Tutankhamun's mask and other prized artefacts served, indirectly, as a powerful assertion of Egyptian modernity amid the shifting alliances of the Cold War. After its unprecedented success in London, *Treasures of Tutankhamun* spent the rest of the decade touring museums in the Soviet Union, the United States and West Germany.

The complex symbolism of the exhibition at its later venues has been explored in detail by Melani McAlister and Mario Schulze, who separately show how the exhibition's stated aim of promoting cross-cultural relations was sidelined by a far-reaching 'Egypt-themed commodity culture'.³² For visitors to the British Museum (and other



8 *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, British Museum exhibition poster, 1972. Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

venues in the West), the uncovering and removal of Tutankhamun's burial relics was staged as a colonial-style adventure, inspired by the relationship between Carter and Lord Carnarvon, the intrepid Egyptologist and his eccentric aristocratic patron. After enduring heroically long queues, modern audiences re-enacted Carter's fabled discovery. Primed by extracts from Carter's own account, and by Harry Burton's influential photographic record, visitors ventured deeper into the story with each exhibit before finally coming face to face with Tutankhamun's golden funerary mask, reproductions of which could be taken home in the form of myriad Tut-inspired souvenirs.³³

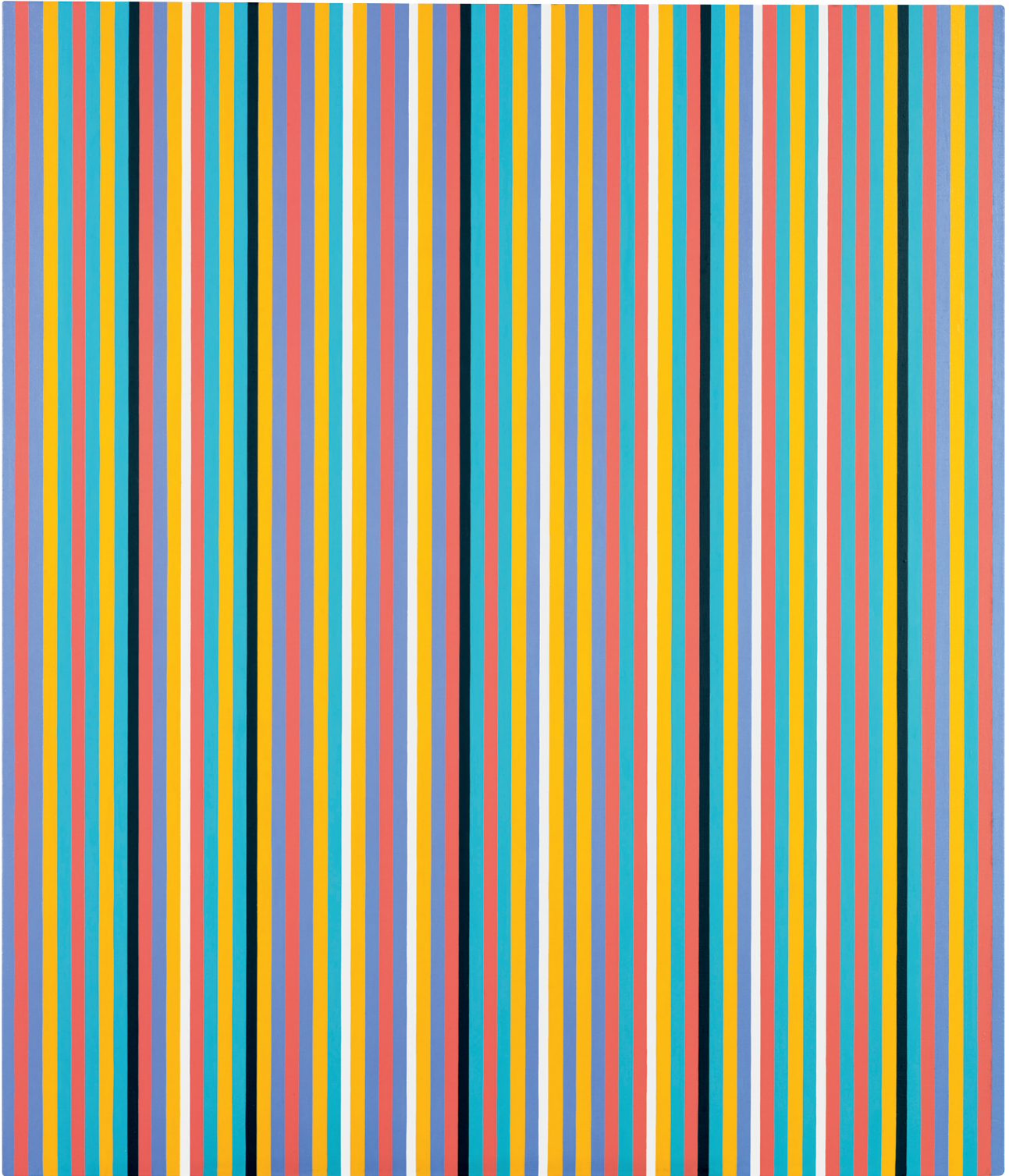
The story of Riley's Egyptian palette has been effective because it has been told many times before: in the colourful excursions of Victorian artists; with tea on the terrace of the Winter Palace; in Poirot's adventures on the Nile; through Tutankhamun at the British Museum. To invoke the memory of Egypt in the name of British art in the early 1980s was to call on something from all of these things.

Reflection

In 1998, Riley's Egyptian palette returned to its nominal source when the UK Government Art Collection acquired *Reflection* (plate 9) for display in the British Ambassador's residence in Cairo. The Government Art Collection (GAC) has operated under different names and Whitehall departments for more than a century, and in something like its current guise since the late 1940s. Operating today under the aegis of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the GAC is promoted as an important arm of British 'soft power', a loosely defined though now ubiquitous term used to describe the efforts of a country to win economic favour and political influence through the powers of persuasion and cultural attraction.³⁴ It exists principally to bring curatorial oversight to a large and globally dispersed collection of paintings, works on paper and sculpture on long-term display in British embassies and other official buildings around the world, and to acquire or commission new works that represent British art, history and culture in ways deemed compatible with the UK government's strategic and diplomatic goals.³⁵

The Ambassador's residence in Cairo is an imposing neoclassical building, fairly typical of British overseas architecture of the late nineteenth century.³⁶ Built under the colonial vision of Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer, the residence was the administrative centre of British control in Egypt for almost sixty years. Deserted during the Suez Crisis, it reopened in the early 1960s as the British embassy to the then United Arab Republic. Today, the building and the artworks displayed inside represent a live and layered history of more than a century of British presence in Egypt. Riley's painting hangs in the main reception room, a stately 1890s interior, above a fine Persian carpet.

Reflection was one of several works of contemporary art acquired for the Cairo residence in the 1990s, each in keeping with the GAC's preference for works that can be placed with a particular embassy or high commission building, either because they are thought to have a story to tell about the country concerned, or because they are perceived to relate in some way to the history of Britain's relationship with that country and its people. Other works bound for Cairo around the same time include *Mud on the Nile* (acquired in 1993), one of a long-running series of Egypt-themed abstract paintings by Howard Hodgkin; and Stephen Cox's *Tribute to Sir John Soane* (1997), a single-form conical sculpture carved from imperial porphyry, a rare stone found only in the Eastern Desert and highly prized in the Roman and Byzantine worlds. Soane, an avid collector of antiquities in the early nineteenth century, is said to have inspired the term 'Egyptomania'. In 1998, the GAC also commissioned *Cairo Painting*, a large canvas by David Austen comprising various superimposed vessel forms painted with muted



9 Bridget Riley, *Reflection*, 1982. Oil on canvas, 160.6 × 132.2 cm. UK Government Art Collection. © Bridget Riley.

colours, suggested by objects the artist had seen in the Egyptian collection of the British Museum.³⁷

The curatorial turn towards contemporary art in the 1990s marked a significant departure from the portraits and orientalist views that had accrued at the Ambassador's residence in Cairo in the century or so following its construction. Besides the obligatory royal portraits, early pictures include an informal likeness of Lord Cromer, the first British colonial administrator in Egypt, copied from an original painting by

John Singer Sargent. Acquired in 1928, it still hangs in Cromer's former study alongside Cecil Jameson's painting of his successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, and a somewhat stiffer portrait by John Collier of Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener (plate 10).

Collier's head-and-shoulder likeness is actually an artist's copy, cropped from a full-length portrait painted for the United Service Club in London and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1911, shortly before Kitchener returned to Egypt as Consul-General after a decade commanding the British imperial army in South Africa and India.³⁸ Unusually for a formal military portrait, Kitchener wears a heavy greatcoat (the winter workwear of military command) over a ceremonial uniform decorated with striped ribbons and regalia that register a life of imperial service. In the full-length version, he stands beneath a storm-blackened sky on a mountain pass in the North-West Frontier Province of British-occupied India (Pakistan after 1947), followed at a distance by a single Sikh cavalry soldier. In the portrait's truncated form, clear of landscape or local detail, Kitchener's penetrating blue eyes and beetroot complexion embody a military imperialist vision that could be deployed to any climate in any corner of the empire. The Cairo painting was given to the residence in 1927 by Frederick Eckstein, chairman



10 John Collier, *Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener*, 1910–20. Oil on canvas, 72.5 × 56 cm. UK Government Art Collection.

of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, a British company established at the turn of the century to develop cotton-growing in the region. It is one of three known versions of the portrait in this format. Another was acquired by the Oriental Club in Marylebone, London, in 1916 (the year of Kitchener's death); a third entered the collection of Johannesburg Art Gallery around the same time.³⁹ In these respective settings, as in its many other pictorial forms, Kitchener's arresting presence is still quietly implicated in a form of colonial nostalgia.

In 1955, the Ministry of Works (as predecessor to the GAC) purchased four watercolour views of the Nile Valley by Edward Lear, dating from the artist's travels through Egypt in the 1850s and 1860s. The timing of the acquisition and intended destination of the works gave Lear's nineteenth-century orientalism a new significance. Three years after the 1952 revolution had signalled an end to British control in the region, Lear's vision of a timeless, acquiescent landscape became imbued with a longing for a lost colonial future.⁴⁰ Other works consigned to the Cairo residence over the next three decades followed a consistent pattern, picturing diplomacy by invoking an imagined heyday of British interest and power in Egypt. They include a pair of early twentieth-century Nile scenes painted in the manner of Lear by Augustus Lamplough; a small group of lithographs from David Roberts's *Egypt and Nubia*; and a watercolour by William Simpson depicting the construction of the Suez Canal, one of a series of sketches commissioned by the *Illustrated London News* to mark the opening of Egypt's second great waterway in 1869.⁴¹

As a visually arresting painting by one of Britain's most celebrated living artists, and with the story of Riley's Egyptian journey to cement its local relevance, *Reflection* made a strikingly modern addition to an eclectic display of colonial portraits, orientalist landscapes and other more recent abstractions that chart more than a century of military occupation and retreat, Cold War entrenchment, and neoliberal diplomacy. The task for the GAC's curators, faced with such a visually diverse array of British art, was summarized by the collection's former director Wendy Baron in 1998, the year *Reflection* was acquired for the Ambassador's residence in Cairo. 'The challenge', Baron explained, 'is to use the settings offered by government buildings to integrate old and new, to engage the spectator in a visual dialogue.'⁴² Thus framed, by the rubric of soft power and by the Office of Works classicism of the embassy building, Riley's Egyptian palette is assigned a symbolic governmental role: as a conversation piece – a lubricant for diplomatic encounters – chosen to project an image of Britain as a dynamic and cosmopolitan exporter of modern culture, but at the same time to integrate with the past.

What kind of visual dialogue is initiated when, for example, the 'trip and pull' of *Reflection* meets the imperious gaze of Lord Kitchener – a man once described by an admiring journalist as 'the Sudan machine' for the brutal efficiency with which he suppressed a Mahdist uprising in the 1890s?⁴³ What is the reflection? When encountered in close proximity as part of a diplomatic circuit through the embassy compound, Riley's stripes and Collier's portrait find a symbolic equivalence that transcends the obvious formal differences between the two paintings. As mutually affirming expressions of visual power and control, both works of art define and find meaning within a scopic regime (and colonial temporal framework) that has consistently defined Egypt as a yielding object of western desire.

More immediately, the GAC's sustained and specific investment in the British embassy in Cairo during the 1990s registered the renewed importance of Egypt as a strategic ally in the Middle East following the participation of both countries in the US-led coalition during the 1991 Gulf War. In doing so, it reflected the embassy's primary role of promoting British commercial interests in the region during a decade of significant economic liberalization – a role it has pursued with notable success.

Today, British-based capital accounts for around half of all foreign direct investment in Egypt, more than at any time since the 1950s, mostly relating to the production of oil and natural gas.⁴⁴ It is within this context of neocolonial investment and environmental exploitation that *Reflection* currently hangs and has meaning. British stakes in Egypt's natural resources reached a new high in 2015 with the announcement of BP's \$12bn West Nile Delta 'mega project', an offshore gas development scheme that gives the London-based company significant control over Egypt's energy supply for a generation.⁴⁵

Occasionally, the sightlines of patronage and influence become apparent in unexpected ways. In January 2011, amid the political instability of the revolution in Egypt, *Reflection* and a few other high-value works from the embassy in Cairo were flown to London for safekeeping. Later the same year, Riley's painting was included in *At Work*, the first public exhibition of works from the GAC, at the Whitechapel Gallery. As well as signalling the GAC's ongoing efforts to make its holdings accessible to a wider public, the exhibition also offered a rare insight into the role and reception of British art at the deepest levels of government. Works for the show were chosen by politicians, senior civil servants and other public figures who had encountered the collection in the course of their duties. *Reflection* was included as the selection of John Sawers, a former ambassador to Egypt, and at the time chief of the Secret Intelligence Service.⁴⁶ In 2015, a few months after the announcement of the West Nile Delta deal, Sawers joined the board of BP as an adviser on geopolitical matters.

Colour Moves

In 1984, Riley's Egyptian palette became the subject of a touring Arts Council exhibition, *Working with Colour*, for which a handful of recent stripe paintings were selected alongside a dozen or so preparatory studies, including a large cartoon for the painting *Ra*. In preparation for the exhibition, the photographer Bill Warhurst produced a series of portraits that document the laboratory-like precision of Riley's London studio.⁴⁷ Warhurst's evocative photographs capture the artist at work, surrounded by stripes, swatches and paint pots, absorbed in the process. In the image chosen for the cover of the accompanying catalogue (plate 11), Riley decants a bowl of freshly prepared yellow gouache. A large table in front is covered with various studies, representing different stages of work; behind, a recently completed painting is propped against a wall. Uppermost among the loosely arranged papers is a red and green design for *Colour Moves*, a ballet inspired by and performed against a sequence of backcloths created by the artist for Ballet Rambert in 1983.⁴⁸ Here, Riley is the performer as the raw materials of the studio are transformed through a process of controlled improvisation into the compelling 'trip and pull' of each completed work – an alchemy made visible in Warhurst's portrait by the steady flow of yellow ochre from mixing bowl to jar to finished painting.

In an essay written for the same exhibition, the art critic Robert Cumming explained the creative origins of Riley's Egyptian palette, relating how the artist and her travelling companions had set themselves apart from modern Egypt during their three-week visit, as if their journey had been through time, as well as across continents.

Contemporary life in Egypt is strongly Middle Eastern in spirit and seemed to Bridget Riley even more remote than that of Ancient Egypt. For the entire duration of her visit she and her friends were steeped in the distant past and had no contact with any other works of art. This, she feels, was another unique aspect of her visit to Egypt and such curious isolation in a dead culture had the effect of bringing it to life. It was as though personalities in the Ancient civilisation gradually emerged and became their companions.⁴⁹

The *Working with Colour* exhibition thus presented Riley's recent stripe paintings as a particular kind of abstraction, through which the material culture of an ancient civilization is creatively reimagined as modern British art. What seems most pressing about Cumming's retelling of Riley's visit to Egypt, however, is not the artist's memorable encounter with the past, but those encounters that are not seen, or not remembered. The contrast between Riley's communion with the art of the pharaohs and the perceived remoteness of contemporary Egyptian life – including, perhaps most striking of all, the purposeful exclusion of any other works of art – is presented as a



11 Bridget Riley in her West London studio, 1983. Photo: Bill Warhurst/Bridget Riley Archive.

defining characteristic of the British artist's experience of the Middle East. On seeing the tomb paintings in Luxor, Cumming continued, 'Riley felt as though a veil had been lifted'.

If Riley had made contact with Cairo's flourishing contemporary art world in the late 1970s, she would very likely have encountered the work of Inji Efflatoun, one of twentieth-century Egypt's most celebrated artists. Efflatoun was born in 1924 to a wealthy French-speaking family among Cairo's cosmopolitan elite.⁵⁰ A pioneer feminist and lifelong communist, her ideas on painting and liberation politics developed in tandem, initially through her association with the Egypt-based radical surrealist group Art and Liberty, with whom she exhibited in 1942. In the later 1940s and 1950s, having abandoned surrealism, Efflatoun's art and politics engaged more directly with the exigencies of military occupation and popular resistance.⁵¹ She produced paintings that commemorate the victims of colonial violence, or which celebrate the life and customs of Egypt's *fellahin*, in whose rural labours she envisioned a continuity between the new Arab republic and her country's distant past.⁵² In this, Efflatoun's work is representative of a generation of modern Egyptian painters whose careers coincided with the final stages of British occupation, and whose creative energy in the years that followed was harnessed, to a greater or lesser degree, towards an art of the new Arab republic.⁵³

In 1959, Efflatoun was imprisoned during Nasser's suppression of the Egyptian Communist Party, although she found ways to continue painting (mostly portraits of fellow prisoners) and looked back on her incarceration as a period of unexpected creativity.⁵⁴ Following her release in 1963, Efflatoun's commitment to a socialist Arab republic was undiminished. She was one of several artists to document the construction of the Aswan High Dam, a defining project of Nasser's new Egypt; and she continued to represent the agrarian landscape as a site of political struggle, especially in paintings that foreground the experiences of women.⁵⁵ *L'Or Blanc* (plate 12), one of the first paintings Efflatoun completed following her release from prison, reimagines the repetitive, back-breaking work of the cotton harvest as a progressive dance of loosely painted reds, yellows and blues across a pointillist field of white and green. Created in the context of revolutionary land reform, *L'Or Blanc* belongs to an extended series of paintings that register the productivity of modern Egypt's textile industry – in the cotton fields, in the dye-works and at the looms of the Nile valley – typically rendered with a heightened palette, a perceptual shift the artist later attributed to being 'dazzled by the outside world' after four years in prison.⁵⁶ Colour, often dazzling, remained a tool of resistance and solidarity in Efflatoun's work until her death in 1989.

Bringing Efflatoun's richly figurative canvases into view alongside Riley's resolutely abstract designs requires an art-historical sleight of hand. Despite their parallel success, the public trajectory of the two artists has remained entirely separate – save for a brief convergence in 1968, when each represented their respective country at the 34th Venice Biennale (an institution that exists in the inchoate space between the national and the global). On that occasion, Efflatoun exhibited various harvest subjects and other scenes of contemporary Egyptian life; Riley presented some of her first works in colour and was awarded the international prize for painting.⁵⁷ During the 1970s, both artists continued to receive institutional patronage and popular critical acclaim, although their careers were kept apart, geographically and ideologically, by the cultural politics of the Cold War. Where Riley's work toured prestigious museum venues from Dallas to Tokyo under the aegis of the British Council, Efflatoun's work was displayed in solo exhibitions in East Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow and other cultural centres of the eastern bloc, as well as New Delhi.



12 Inji Efflatoun, *L'Or Blanc*, 1963. Oil on canvas, 66.5 × 79.5 cm. Private collection. © Safarkhan Art Gallery/Estate of Inji Efflatoun – Hassan Galal El Din.

While it would be possible to follow a thread – an optical fibre – linking the work of both artists with the materials and techniques of French post-impressionism (especially the paintings of Georges Seurat, often cited by Riley as a starting point), my purpose in bringing them onto the same page is not to suggest a formal comparison, at least not in the first instance.⁵⁸ Nor is it to identify the work of either artist as more (or less) authentic than the other. It is simply to ask what we might learn of one from looking at the other, and thereby to challenge a narrative that insists on the ‘curious isolation’ of British art. What I have in mind comes close to the contrapuntal perspective suggested by Edward Said, as well as to other forms of looking back articulated by Zeynep Çelik, Mary Roberts, Aruna D’Souza and others, that seek to bring into view that which is systematically occluded, marginalized or repressed.⁵⁹ The possibilities and limits of such extended reading weave through Said’s writing, most comprehensively in *Culture and Imperialism* and (most pertinently for my present purposes) its section on *Aida*, Verdi’s ‘Egyptian’ opera.⁶⁰ As a heuristic for reading the cultural archive against the grain, a contrapuntal mode is necessarily suggestive not prescriptive, and only more so when brought to bear on non-figurative art (not something Said ever proposed). It is attentive to the worldliness of culture – its complex and often contradictory affiliations to time, place and ideology – and sceptical

of the presumed inviolability of categories such as 'British art' and 'global'. Moreover, while it seeks to render difference and contradiction visible, reading contrapuntally aims not merely to be antagonistic or antithetical, but to be creative in its search for 'intertwined and overlapping histories'.⁶¹ With friction comes the possibility of new connections and commonalities. New questions emerge.

If pairing Riley's paintings with the landscapes of Edward Lear, or with John Collier's *Kitchener*, foregrounds the ways in which the artist's Egyptian palette has been implicated in an essentializing, abstracting British vision of Egypt rooted in the nineteenth century, Efflatoun's work prompts us to look at the same attributes



13 Inji Efflatoun, *Textile Weaver in Akhmim*, 1971. Oil on canvas, 97 × 67 cm. Egyptian Museum of Modern Art, Cairo. © Safarkhan Art Gallery/Estate of Inji Efflatoun – Hassan Galal El Din. Photo: Nadia Radwan.

differently – to consider a common language, if only partially understood, of colour, movement, repetition and, occasionally, stripes. In *Textile Weaver in Akhmim* (plate 13), Efflatoun presents a solitary weaver, seated at a loom as a painter sits before an easel. The colour-work of both – weaver and painter – meets on the painting's surface as blue bands of loosely bunched warp threads are formed through the coordinated, rhythmic movement of brush and shuttle into taut, brightly coloured stripes. Opening Riley's stripes to the counterpoint of modern Egyptian art challenges the critical hegemony that has defined, and confined, the reception of the artist's work since the early 1980s. In doing so, it suggests the potential for a radical rereading of the 'reflections, echoes and fugitive flickers' of Riley's stripes not as an affirmation of a British neocolonial vision of Egypt, but as a disturbance within it. At the very least, bringing Efflatoun and Riley together as contemporaries pushes at the limits of the national boundaries that have kept the two artists apart and prompts questions that are rarely asked of Riley's work – about the productive potential and politics of colour, about the complex affiliations of artistic labour, and about the sometimes subtle but persistent ways in which British art engages with the world.

Notes

I am grateful to the editors for their encouragement and guidance, and to the anonymous readers for their constructive comments. Thank you also to colleagues and friends at the 'British Art and the Global' conference at UC Berkeley, and at the University of York art history seminar, for responding to an earlier version of this essay; to Sam Bibby, Madeline Boden, James Finch, Ashley Gallant, Melissa Nisbett, Laura Popoviciu, Nadia Radwan, and the Bridget Riley Archive. A special thank you to Emily Mann.

- 1 Robert Kudielka, Alexandra Tommasini, and Natalia Naish, *Bridget Riley: The Complete Paintings*, 5 vols, London, 2018, esp. vol. 2.
- 2 Edward Lucie-Smith, 'The World of Bridget Riley', *Illustrated London News*, 27 June 1981, 65–67.
- 3 Robert Cumming, 'Colour and Light: The Visit to Egypt', in *Working with Colour: Recent Paintings and Studies by Bridget Riley*, exh. cat., Arts Council (multiple venues), London, 1984, unpaginated. Riley recounted her visit to Egypt in more detail in a lecture for the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1984, later published as 'A Visit to Egypt and the Decoration for the Royal Liverpool Hospital', in *The Eye's Mind: Bridget Riley Collected Writings 1965–2009*, ed. Robert Kudielka, London, 2009, 128–135. See also, for example, Paul Moorhouse, 'A Dialogue with Sensation', in *Bridget Riley*, exh. cat., Tate Britain, London, 2003, esp. 22–23.
- 4 Kudielka, Tommasini, and Naish, *Bridget Riley*, vol. 2, esp. 522–523.
- 5 Bridget Riley, 'The Pleasures of Sight', in *Working with Colour*, unpaginated. An abridged version of the essay first appeared as 'On Swimming through a Diamond' in the British edition of *Vogue*, March 1984, 292–293.
- 6 Riley's unease with the terminology of op art was motivated, in part, by the sensationalism aroused by the *Responsive Eye* exhibition. She later remarked: 'I feel sometimes a slight awkwardness in having to use the term "Op art" because it smacks of a sort of gimmicky selling slogan of purely temporary significance.' See 'Bridget Riley and Maurice de Sausmarez, a Conversation', *Art International*, 11: 4, April 1967, 37–41, reprinted in *The Eye's Mind*, 74–87.
- 7 William C. Seitz, *The Responsive Eye*, exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1965; Anton Ehrenzweig, 'Bridget Riley's Pictorial Space', *Art International*, 9: 1, February 1965.
- 8 See, for example, 'Something to Blink At', *Time*, 1 May 1964, 75; and Rosalind Krauss, 'Afterthoughts on Op', *Art International*, 9: 5, June 1965, 75–76. Riley issued an impassioned response to what she regarded as the 'misunderstandings and mistaken assumptions' of the New York art world in 'Perception is the Medium', *Art News*, 64: 6, October 1965, 32–33, reprinted in *The Eye's Mind*, 89–90.
- 9 Pamela M. Lee, 'Bridget Riley's Eye/Body Problem', *October*, 98, Fall 2001, 26–46.
- 10 Lee, 'Bridget Riley's Eye/Body Problem', esp. 39–46. Frances Follin also explores the corporeal impact of Riley's early work in *Embodied Visions: Bridget Riley, Op Art and the Sixties*, London, 2004, esp. 171–194. See also Jo Applin, 'Mobile Subjects: Abstraction, the Body and Science in the Work of Bridget Riley and Liliane Lijn', *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, 83: 2, 2014, 96–109.
- 11 Among the more prominent artists who committed wholeheartedly to stripe painting in the mid-1960s were the Washington-based painter Gene Davis, and Guido Molinari from Montreal, both of whom were included alongside Riley in the *Responsive Eye* exhibition.
- 12 Aruna D'Souza, 'Introduction', in *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn*, ed. Jill H. Casid and Aruna D'Souza, Williamstown, 2014, xx.
- 13 Kudielka, Tommasini, and Naish, *Bridget Riley*, vol. 2. See, for example, *Achaean* (1981), Tate, London; and *Cool Edge* (1982), private collection. For several years, *Cool Edge* greeted first-class passengers to the British Airways lounge at Heathrow airport. It was sold by the airline in 2020 for £1.9 m (Sotheby's, 28 July 2020, lot 3).
- 14 For an overview of Egypt's modern history see Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A History of Egypt from the Arab Conquest to the Present*, Cambridge, 2007 (second edition); also, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882–1954*, London, 1988.
- 15 Marsot, *A History of Egypt*, 127–155.
- 16 Marsot, *A History of Egypt*, 156–177.
- 17 'Something to Look At: In Conversation with Alex Farquharson' (1995), in Riley, *The Eye's Mind*, 150–157.
- 18 David Roberts, *Egypt and Nubia*, 3 vols, London, 1846–49.
- 19 Madeline Boden, *A Relief from Classicism: Frederic Leighton in the Near East, 1857–1895*, PhD thesis, University of York, 2019, 90–126 (esp. 110). See also Briony Llewellyn, 'The Victorian Vision of Egypt', in *The Inspiration of Egypt*, ed. Patrick Connor, Croydon, 1983, 115–119.
- 20 The nineteenth-century origins and legacy of European tourism in Egypt are well documented. See, for example, Waleed Hazbun, 'The East as Exhibit: Thomas Cook & Son and the Origins of the International Tourism Industry in Egypt', in *The Business of Tourism: Place, Faith, and History*, ed. Philip Scranton and Janet F. Davidson, Philadelphia, 2007, 3–33; and F. Robert Hunter, 'Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868–1914', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40: 5, September 2004, 28–54.

- 21 On Lear's travels through Egypt, see Jenny Gaschke, *Edward Lear: Egyptian Sketches*, London, 2009, esp. 5–23. Matthew Hargraves discusses Lear's use of annotation in *Great British Watercolors from the Paul Mellon Collection at the Yale Center for British Art*, New Haven and London, 2007, 188–191.
- 22 Lear made another sketch an hour later, taking in the buried ruins of Luxor temple from the river bank (Bonhams, London, 16 September 2009, lot 122).
- 23 Amelia B. Edwards, 'Excavation of the Great Temple of Luxor, Upper Egypt', *Illustrated London News*, 18 July 1885, 67, 70.
- 24 Andrew Humphreys, *Grand Hotels of Egypt in the Golden Age of Travel*, Cairo, 2012, esp. 188–199.
- 25 Alan Bennett, 'Where was I in 1987?' (15 January 1987), *London Review of Books*, 9: 22, 10 December 1987, www.lrb.co.uk.
- 26 'Something to Look At', in Riley, *The Eye's Mind*, 150.
- 27 See, for example, Sam Serafy, 'Egypt in Hollywood: Pharaohs of the Fifties', and Okasha El Daly, 'What do Tourists Learn of Egypt?', both in *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, ed. Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice, London, 2017 (2003), 77–86 and 139–150.
- 28 Asaad A. Zaki, 'Tutankhamun Exhibition at the British Museum in 1972: A Historical Perspective', *Journal of Tourism Theory and Research*, 3: 2, 2017, 79–88.
- 29 Cultural Convention between the Government of the United Kingdom [...] and the Government of the United Arab Republic, Cairo, 26 September, 1965 (ratified October 1968). The agreement promoted 'the exchange of art objects and the encouragement of scientific exhibitions' as well as 'the exchange of dramatic, musical and dance groups, and other artists'.
- 30 Mario Schulze discusses the exhibition as diplomatic event in 'Tutankhamun in West Germany, 1980–81', *Representations*, 141: 1, Winter 2018, 39–58.
- 31 Elliott Colla explores the contest over Tutankhamun's relics at the time of their excavation in *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*, Durham, NC, 2007, esp. 172–226.
- 32 Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000*, Berkeley, 2001, 125–154; and Schulze, 'Tutankhamun in West Germany, 1980–81'.
- 33 Zaki, 'Tutankhamun Exhibition at the British Museum in 1972', 85.
- 34 For a cogent analysis of soft power and its correlate, cultural diplomacy, see Melissa Nisbett, 'Who Holds the Power in Soft Power?', *Arts and International Affairs*, 1: 1, March 2016, theartsjournal.net/2016/03/13/nisbett
- 35 Government Art Collection Acquisition and Disposal Policy, November 2014. See also Penny Johnson, Julia Toffolo et al., *Art, Power, Diplomacy: Government Art Collection, the Untold Story*, London, 2011. The GAC is one of the largest collections of British art in the world, comprising upwards of 14,000 works, including around 2,600 paintings.
- 36 Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: The History of Britain's Diplomatic Buildings Overseas 1800–2000*, Salisbury, 2011, esp. 122–126.
- 37 These and other works mentioned can be found on the GAC website: artcollection.culture.gov.uk/artwork
- 38 The full-length painting was exhibited as *On the North-West frontier; F.M. the Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum, O.M., G.C.B., etc.* (no. 189). It still hangs at 116 Pall Mall, London, the former home of the United Service Club, now the headquarters of the Institute of Directors.
- 39 Christopher Wright et al., *British and Irish Paintings in Public Collections*, New Haven and London, 2006, 252–253.
- 40 The GAC, under the purview of the Ministry of Works, acquired more than a dozen works by Lear during the 1950s, mostly Middle Eastern and Mediterranean scenes, but also including three oil paintings of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for the British high commission in Colombo.
- 41 *Illustrated London News*, 20 March 1869, 4.
- 42 Wendy Baron, 'Hanging's Too Good for Them', *New Statesman*, 12 June 1998, 40.
- 43 G. W. Stevens, *With Kitchener to Khartum*, Edinburgh and London, 1898, 45–52.
- 44 OECD Review of Foreign Direct Investment Statistics: Egypt, 2020; Robert L. Tignor, 'Decolonization and Business: The Case of Egypt', *Journal of Modern History*, 59: 3, September 1987, 479–505.
- 45 BP press release, 6 March 2015, www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/news-and-insights/press-releases/bp-finalises-deal-develop-egypt-nile-delta.html. See also Dania Akkad, 'The Great Egyptian Gas Giveaway?', *Middle East Eye*, 10 April 2015, www.middleeasteye.net/news/great-egyptian-gas-giveaway.
- 46 Government Art Collection Annual Report and Acquisitions 2011–2012, 5; and 'An Artful Look Behind the Doors of Power', *Evening Standard*, 3 June 2011. Reflection was also shown in Birmingham and Belfast, and at 10 Downing Street. It returned to Cairo in 2015.
- 47 *Working with Colour*, unpaginated.
- 48 *Colour Moves* was choreographed by Robert North. It premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1983. Rambert Performance Database, *Colour Moves*, www.rambert.org.uk/performance-database/works/colour-moves.
- 49 Cumming, 'Colour and Light', unpaginated. Riley travelled with her sister Sally and the art historian and curator Robert Kudielka.
- 50 See Betty LaDuke, 'Inji Efflatoun Art, Feminism, and Politics in Egypt', *Art Education*, 45: 2, March 1992, 33–41. Also, Kaelen Wilson-Goldie, 'Public/Private: The Many Lives of "Rebel Painter" Inji Efflatoun', and Annela Lenssen, 'Inji Efflatoun: White Light', both in *Afterall*, 42, Autumn/Winter 2016, 70–83 and 84–95.
- 51 Selma Botman, 'The Experience of Women in the Egyptian Communist Movement, 1939–1954', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 2: 2, 1988, 117–126; Didier Monciaud, 'Les engagements d'Inji Aflâtûn dans l'Égypte des années quarante: la radicalisation d'une jeune éduquée au croisement des questions nationale, femme et sociale', *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, 126, 2015, 73–95.
- 52 See for, example, Mathbahat Dinshaway ('The Dinshaway Massacre'), 1950s, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; and *The Girl of Port Said*, 1957, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha. Alex Dika Seggerman presents an illuminating discussion of the image of the fellaha in modern Egyptian art in *Modernism on the Nile: Art in Egypt Between the Islamic and the Contemporary*, Chapel Hill, 2019, esp. chapter 5.
- 53 See Liliane Karnouk, *Modern Egyptian Art 1910–2013*, Cairo, 2005; and Nadine Atallah, 'Have there Really Been No Great Women Artists? Writing a Feminist Art History of Modern Egypt', in *Under the Skin: Feminist Art and Art Histories from the Middle East and North Africa Today*, ed. Ceren Özpınar and Mary Kelly, Oxford, 2020, 11–25.
- 54 LaDuke, 'Inji Efflatoun', esp. 38–40.
- 55 See, for example, *Les Diables Rouges*, 1964. Despite her imprisonment, Efflatoun regarded Nasser as 'a great patriot' (LaDuke, 'Inji Efflatoun', 40).
- 56 Heba Saleh, 'From Surrealism to Socialism', *Cairo Today*, August 1986, 18, cited in LaDuke, 'Inji Efflatoun', 41. Egypt's textile industry was suppressed under the administration of Evelyn Baring, in favour of the production of raw exportable cotton to supply English mills.
- 57 *Catalogo della XXXIV Esposizione biennale internazionale d'arte Venezia*, Venice, 1968, 100, 129.
- 58 See, for example, 'Seurat as Mentor' (2007) in Kudielka, ed., *The Eye's Mind*, 61–73.
- 59 For example, Zeynep Çelik, 'Colonialism, Orientalism and the Canon', *Art Bulletin*, 78: 2, June 1996, 202–205; Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts, eds, *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*, Durham, NC, 2002; and Casid and D'Souza, *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn*.
- 60 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York, 1993, esp. 111–132. For a recent overview and analysis of counterpoint in Said's thinking and its wide critical legacy, see Wouter Capitain, 'From Counterpoint to Heterophony and Back Again: Reading Edward Said's Drafts for Culture and Imperialism', *Journal of Musicological Research*, July 2020, DOI: 10.1080/01411896.2020.1787793.
- 61 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 320.