



Barnett Newman's paintings can seem to be doing barely anything at all, and yet, given time and attention, they reveal depths and subtleties of immense power. That's what the experts say.

Then again, some might wonder whether the experts have their collective hand on it. Look at it. An orange smear on a brown square. It's a nice choice of orange, he can have that. Kind of Jaffa orange. And the brown is kind of chocolatey looking. So why did he call it 'Onement' instead of something snappy like 'Streaky Jaffa'?

If he had, this could have ushered in what might have been referred to as his 'Confectionery Period'. Though come to think of it, that might have been fairly short-lived. When his brown streak on brown square 'Malteser' came out looking exactly like his 'Twix', he would've been bugged.



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Gene Davis looked for just the right colour the way a musician listens for just the right note. His choices were intuitive and sometimes emotional. To him they “felt right”. But to some, this piece might feel like a giant barcode. On acid. Then again, he did paint this in 1967. The year the Beatles decided all they needed was love and the world still believed peace was possible.

Theorists say his technique creates visual rhythms that lead our eyes quickly or slowly, smoothly or erratically, across the painting. Which would make complete sense if you're in a psychedelic state. And given that Davis called this piece 'Raspberry Icicle', you really do have to wonder what he was on. And where he got it. Maybe he was friends with the Beatles? God only knows. Hang on, that was the Beach Boys.



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Kenneth Noland's paintings have been described as a symbol of natural phenomenon, organic growth, mysticism and divinity. Which seems like a pretty lavish description for something that resembles your mum's dinner set. Or the spare wheel of a Honda Civic. He's even popped the wheel nut in the middle. Nice touch.

But completely unintentional. Noland liked painting circles not because he liked Honda Civics but because he reckoned circles related to the cosmos, while the square is most closely associated with man and manmade forms. Which is all a little confusing considering the painting's mounted on a square frame. Not what you'd call consistent, really.

Bit of a dab hand on the old circle work though. Wonder if he traced?



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