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EDITOR'S PICK

Artist Frank Stella, an Andover, Addison favorite, dies at 87

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Artist Frank Stella stands in front of one of his works at an exhibition devoted to him in Warsaw, Poland, in 2016. Stella, a painter, sculptor and printmaker whose constantly evolving works are hailed as landmarks of the minimalist and post-painterly abstraction art movements, died Saturday at his home in Manhattan. He was 87.

Czarek Sokolowski

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Gallery owner Jeffrey Deitch, who spoke with Stella's family, confirmed his death to The Associated Press. Stella's wife, Harriet McGurk, told the New York Times that he died of lymphoma.

Stella, who graduated from Phillips Academy in 1954, is celebrated at the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, where he returned as an artist-in-residence for shows in 1982, 2013 and 2017. In all, the museum has 106 pieces of his art, many donated by him.

Born May 12, 1936, in Malden, Massachusetts, Stella studied at Princeton University before moving to New York City in the late 1950s.

At that time many prominent American artists had embraced abstract expressionism, but Stella began exploring minimalism.

By age 23 he had created a series of flat, black paintings with gridlike bands and stripes using house paint and exposed canvas that drew widespread critical acclaim.

Over the next decade, Stella's works retained his rigorous structure but began incorporating curved lines and bright colors, such as in his influential Protractor series, named after the geometry tool he used to create the curved shapes of the large-scale paintings.

In the late 1970s, Stella began adding three-dimensionality to his visual art, using metals and other mixed media to blur the boundary between painting and sculpture.

Stella continued to be productive well into his 80s, and his new work is on display at the Jeffrey Deitch Gallery in New York City.

The colorful sculptures are massive and yet almost seem to float, made up of shining polychromatic bands that twist and coil through space.

“The current work is astonishing,” Deitch told AP on Saturday.

“He felt that the work that he showed was the culmination of a decades-long effort to create a new pictorial space and to fuse painting and sculpture.”

At the Addison, Communications Coordinator Rebecca Mongeon said museum officials are just beginning to explore ways to celebrate Stella’s art immediately after his death and in a future exhibition.

News Editor Joel Barrett contributed to this story.