

**York Factory II**  
**Frank Stella**



Date : 1974  
Screenprint on Black Arches Cover  
18 7/16 x 44 7/16 in.  
Edition of 100  
Pencil signed, dated and numbered

## Artist bio

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Frank Stella is an American painter and printmaker, significant in the art movements of minimalism and post-painterly abstraction. He is one of the most well-regarded postwar American painters still working today. Notably, he is heralded for creating abstract paintings that bear no pictorial illusions or psychological or metaphysical references in twentieth-century painting.

Early visits to New York art galleries influenced his artist development, and his work was influenced by the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline. Upon moving to New York City, he reacted against the expressive use of paint by most painters of the abstract expressionist movement, instead finding himself drawn towards the “flatter” surfaces of Barnett Newman’s work and the “target” paintings of Jasper Johns. He began to produce works which emphasized the picture-as-object, rather than the picture as a representation of something, be it something in the physical world, or something in the artist’s emotional world. *“A picture is a flat surface with paint on it - nothing more”*.

Many of Stella’s works are created by simply using the path of the brush stroke, very often using common house paint, in which regular bands of paint were separated by very thin pinstripes of unpainted canvas. Stella’s art was recognized for its innovations before he was twenty-five.

In the 1960’s, Stella began to use a wider range of colors, typically arranged in straight or curved lines. Later he began his Protractor Series of paintings, in which arcs, sometimes overlapping, within square borders are arranged side-by-side to produce full and half circles painted in rings of concentric color.

In 1970, The Museum of Modern Art in New York presented a retrospective of Stella’s work, making him the youngest artist to receive one. During the 1970’s Stella introduced relief into his art, which he came to call “maximalist” painting for its sculptural qualities. It is ironic that these paintings were completely the opposite of what had brought him fame, the decade before. His work also became more three-dimensional to the point where he started producing large, free-standing metal pieces, which, although they are painted upon, might well be considered sculpture.

In the 1980’s and 1990’s, the increasingly deep relief of Stella’s paintings gave way to full three-dimensionality, with sculptural forms derived from cones, pillars, French curves, waves, and decorative architectural elements. In the 1990’s, Stella began making free-standing sculpture for public spaces and developing architectural projects.

Stella’s work was included in several important exhibitions that defined 1960s art, among them the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum’s *The Shaped Canvas* (1965) and *Systemic Painting* (1966). His art has been the subject of several retrospectives in the United States, Europe and Japan.