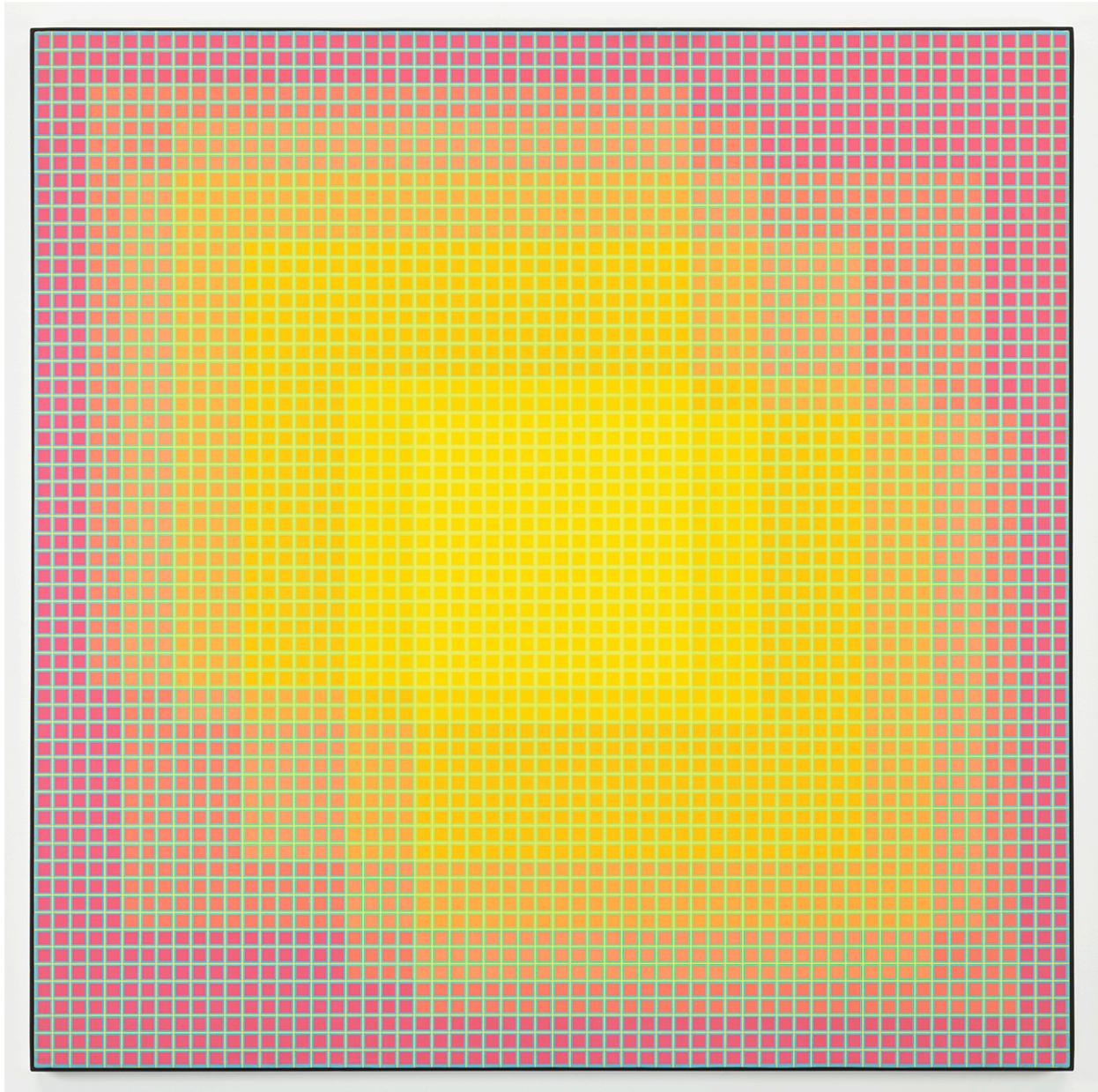


Julian Stanczak: *Green Light*, 1973, 60 x 60 inches



The first and last impression this 15-color painting leaves with the viewer is its light-giving quality. The painting glows, not as a central hub of light but in response to a measured progression of “yellowness.” There are no hard edges in the form produced by this painting, no defined shape outlines, no rhythms or beats, no lineal acrobatics. *Green Light* is almost static—it is like looking into the sun. We are sometimes tempted to look into the sun and, if we do, shapes flare up and disappear before our eyes, blurring our concrete reality. That’s what *Green Light* does to me....

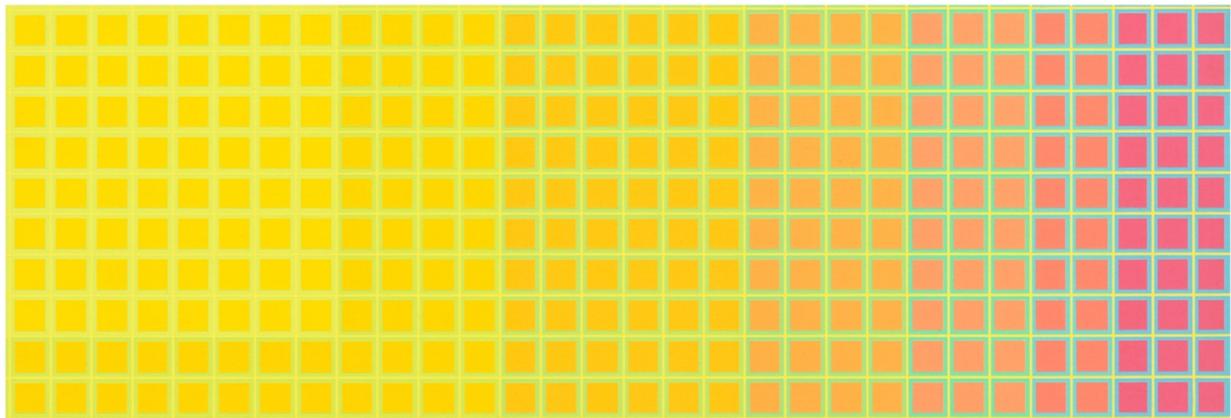
Analyzing *Green Light*’s structure, I count seven irregular steps in the top layer of squares, going from Cadmium Yellow Medium in the center to light magenta at the edges. Some steps are so minute that they are only

recognizable as they intensify at the edges of change. Although the steps get a little darker as they move from the center to the edges of the painting, they still remain in close, high-value relationships.

What first appear as overlapping, semi-transparent squares are in fact, when viewed more closely, rectilinear fields of irregular proportion that are being overlapped and stacked around the center. Neither the shapes nor the colorants fight for individual recognition; rather, they are all subservient to the filtration of warm light.

The artist chose squares as the containers for his colors in this painting. Squares, to Stanczak, represent the most stable format, being stoically balanced by equidistant verticals and horizontals. Squares just sit there, they do not go anywhere, which works perfectly when you want to create a throbbing, pulsating feeling.

Why did the artist call this painting *Green Light*? Where does that green come from? Looking closely, I detect that each of the larger yellow to pink-purple squares is surrounded by a mixture of seven steps of greens from high pitch yellow-green to a light aqua green. The surface and ground colors move together in sequence. The warm colors are boosted in their “yellowness” by the cool green wavelengths surrounding them. All of the colorants fade at the edges into darker hues in unison, always keeping their value levels constant in their pairing.



Detail, *Green Light*, 1973

As if the fourteen colors discussed above were not complex enough to mix and control, there is another color in the middle of the greenish fields surrounding the yellow squares! It is a very thin, cooler, high-pitch yellow line. This yellow line grid was probably the very first color that Stanczak applied to the canvas before adding the greens and finally the larger yellow squares. This line helps to soften the beat of the squares and increases the yellow filtration throughout.

I would invite everyone to warm themselves in the sunshine of this painting!

Barbara Stanczak, 2023