

LISSON GALLERY

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Press Release

Mary Corse

11 May – 23 June 2018

67 Lisson Street, London

Opening: 10 May, 6 – 8pm

For her first major solo show in the UK, Mary Corse presents new and historically significant work at her inaugural exhibition at Lisson Gallery, London. Based in Los Angeles, Corse has built a practice that occupies an independent space at the intersection of minimalist painting, Abstract Expressionism and scientific inquiry. Obsessively engaging with light and perception, Corse's paintings embody rather than merely represent light, experimenting with the concept of subjective experience in new and innovative ways. From lightboxes to painting embedded with materials that refract light, Corse combines a philosophical quest for the portrayal of the infinite with a highly skilled methodical and scientific rigour. The exhibition at Lisson Gallery London coincides with two major presentations of the artist's work in the United States: Corse's first solo museum survey this June at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and a long-term installation at Dia:Beacon with recently acquired works, opening in May.

Lisson Gallery's exhibition will feature ten works, including seven new works created specifically for the show. The presentation will include a selection from Corse's *White Black White* and *White Inner Band* painting series, alongside a new lightbox - with works spanning from 2003 to 2018.

First gaining recognition in the mid-1960s, Corse is widely recognized for her innovative painting technique using materials which both capture and refract light. In 1968, she developed her *Electric Light* series, for which she enrolled in a quantum physics course to allow her to secure the parts, engineer her own work, and experiment with wireless cording in order to "free the light painting from the wall". It was this further education that led Corse to her theory that humans experience reality through an eternally subjective lens, maintaining that "there is nothing static in the universe". Compelled to bring the subjective back into her work, Corse re-embraced the paintbrush and focused further on light, incorporating unconventional materials into her paintings to investigate the subtle differences in surface treatment. It is these materials – including the glass microspheres found in the reflective lines on motor highways – that allow her work their enigmatic and seductive quality, shifting before your eyes as you move around them.

Corse's evolution as an artist has seen her refine and expand her practice, including the innovation of the 'inner band': a vertical stripe full of luminous, active brushstrokes that disappear into the surrounding field of the canvas from certain viewing angles. Realising that the inner band epitomised her career-long aim to demonstrate how dramatically perception affects our experience, she began a series of *White Inner Band* paintings in 1999. Since then, she has continued to hone her techniques, subtly evolve her core themes and resurrect materials from the preceding decades to captivating new ends.

The exhibition at Lisson Gallery will include *Untitled (White Multiband, Vertical Strokes)* (2003), incorporating glass microspheres in acrylic on canvas; multiple works from the innovative *White Band* series; and recent paintings from the *Black Band* series; alongside the lightbox *Untitled (Electric Light)* (1968/2017), composed of argon and Plexiglas.

About Mary Corse

Mary Corse was born in Berkeley, California in 1945 and lives and works in Los Angeles. She earned her BFA from Chouinard Art Institute (later renamed the California Institute of the Arts, or CalArts) in 1968. Corse first gained recognition in the mid-1960s for a series of shaped canvases – almost all of which were white monochromes. Here she

began to extend beyond the traditional structure of painting and incorporate the effect of light by investigating subtle differences in surface treatment. Between 1965 and 1968, her interest in creating space continued with a series of triangular column sculptures, wall-mounted constructions of painted wood and Plexiglas and electric lightboxes. After creating a series of wall-mounted fluorescent light works in 1966 – each one also tethered to the surrounding architecture via an electrical plug – Corse hung her lone 1967 light work from the ceiling in the centre of the exhibition space. In 1968 she then eliminated the visible cords by creating a third series of light works powered wirelessly by Tesla coils, all in an effort to achieve a truly objective artwork.

Seeking to maximize the effect of the existing lightboxes, Corse conceived of an even larger light work that would require the construction of a Tesla coil over one metre in height. Her studies in physics at the University of Southern California introduced her to quantum physics and key doctrines such as the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, all of which clarified that, in her words, “there is nothing static in the universe”.

In the 1970s, Corse continued her evolution by investigating other materials with light-interactive properties, while simultaneously branching from white monochrome into black. What followed were her *Black Light* paintings and her *Black Earth* works. The succeeding years saw Corse both refine and expand her practice: creating black and grey microsphere paintings in the late 1970s and 1980s; initiating compositions such as the arch and double-arch in the late 1980s and 1990s; even returning to use of the primary colours just before the millennium. Corse believes that her greatest innovation arrived in 1996 when she first painted the “inner band”, a vertical stripe full of luminous, active brushstrokes that completely disappears into the surrounding field of the canvas from certain viewing angles. Since that time she has continued to hone her techniques, subtly evolve her core themes and resurrect materials from the preceding decades to captivating new ends.

Corse’s work is in a number of public collections including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA; the Menil Collection, Houston, TX, USA; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, USA; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA; and the Fondation Beyeler, Basel, Switzerland, among many others. She is a past recipient of the Guggenheim’s Theodoron Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and the Cartier Foundation Award.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 58 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Richard Long, before introducing a generation of significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. In addition to a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation, the gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza and Wael Shawky.

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