

Press Release

Jason Martin *Long Way Home*

15 May – 22 June 2019
67 Lisson Street, London
Opening: 14 May, 6 – 8pm

Lisson Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Jason Martin. Following exhibitions in New York and Paris last year, Jason Martin continues his investigation into the fundamentals of oil painting, creating horizontally banded compositions of multiple shades, chromatic blends and subtle tonal shifts. This exhibition will be constructed around a trio of different colours divided across three rooms, working from variations on titanium white, Cobalt blue and a suite of works made using a new material for the artist: graphite.

As seen throughout his career, Martin never ceases to challenge himself and interrogate the origins and parameters of painting. Through his experiments into the unknown, Martin explores new materials to discover different reactions through which to expand his practice. For this exhibition Martin utilises graphite, known for many purposes, from lead pencils to batteries, and yet not known for its use in painting. Working with the paint manufacturer Old Holland – a company started by Dutch Old Master painters in the 17th century that has for centuries produced paint for artists, from Van Gogh to Vermeer – Martin has invented a new type of oil paint. The two unique shades, ‘Jason Graphite Grey’ and ‘Jason Graphite Grey Deep’, blend graphite into the paint mixture directly. The resulting series of works have an intensely textured, metallic-like finish, and due to their earthy and elemental nature, possess a fundamental sculptural quality.

Complimenting the dark tones is another room dedicated to Martin’s sharp titanium white paintings. Just as with the dark graphite paintings, these works are made up of multiple shades, from green to blue to pink. Harmonising together to create an indefinable colour, they rhythmically divert the eye with spatial interplay. These works sit within a more traditional understanding of oil painting: viscous and thixotropic, free flowing and malleable to apply, yet fixed and smooth on finish. While Martin’s previous bodies of work assumed a sense of chance and serendipity, this new series of symphonic gradations are more restrained in composition. These paintings are considered and thoughtful, exploring subtle tonal relationships and veering away from the expressionistic gesture or the happenstance of painting.

Continuing into the exhibition, visitors will experience Martin’s Cobalt Blue and Cobalt Violet paintings. While Martin’s work naturally aligns in the history of Minimalist painting, each of his paintings reflect a particular subject matter. These works, created using a range of blue hues, depict a landscape scene, traditional in the colouring and composition, yet rendered in a square format and with thick impasto oil. Equally, by transforming landscapes into either portrait or square formats (and often also by converting colour into grey tones), this new development suggests digital photographic processes. These add to the multiple tensions articulated in these paintings: between nature and manipulation; object and image; and between gestural abstraction and the impulse towards representation.

All works presented in the exhibition are consistent in their compositions between three and six divisions, with each band individually created using one broad, focused sweep of the brush. This physical manipulation of the paint is a work of performance in its own right – a representation of the artist’s intense interaction with the space beyond the two-dimensional. The physicality of flooding the surface with the dense layers of paint is at once a personal, solo act and a public presentation – the precise moment is shaped in the layers of folding paint, the deliberate motion immortalised in the final work of art.

About Jason Martin

Jason Martin channels a minimal approach to painting through an expansive yet controlled use of colour, brush and medium. Working in pigment, acrylic, oil paint, graphite and cast metal, Martin interrogates the fundamentals of painting, veering from epic and luscious compositions of swirling forms (such as *Oceania*, 2006) to pared-down and muted abstractions in precisely blended tones. Structured according to the harmonic relationships between these hues (included in the titles, such as *Davy's Grey Deep/Graphite Grey/Titanium White*, 2017), the paintings manifest as parallel strata, their horizons exploring suggestions of landscape and atmosphere through the viscosity of oil or the granular texture of other material added to the paint. Albeit with the occasional intervention of chance, moments of happenstance and the unexpected whorl of chaos, this process of repeated, sweeping gestures has been honed over the years since Martin attended Goldsmiths College in London in the early 1990s. These early works saw Martin dragging skeins of oil or acrylic gel across hard surfaces such as aluminium, stainless steel or Plexiglas with a fine, comb-like tool.

Martin also does away with paint altogether in his wall-mounted casts of gold, rose gold and silver, whose surfaces are unctuous but frozen, fluctuating between sculpture and painting. In monochromatic, pure pigment works, vivid colour is applied to moulded panels, whose baroque contortions appear like extreme close-ups of a painter's ridged and furrowed palette. Uniting his practice is an attempt to further the language of abstraction through discrete and measured interventions, which both disrupt and activate the surfaces and spaces he inhabits.

Jason Martin was born in Jersey, in the Channel Islands, in 1970 and lives and works between London and Portugal. He has a BA from Goldsmiths, London (1993). Solo exhibitions include Schauwerk Sindelfingen, Sindelfingen, Germany (2017); Museum gegenstandsfreier Kunst, Otterndorf, Germany (2016); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy (2009); Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma, Majorca, Spain (2008); Kunstverein Kreis Gütersloh, Gütersloh, Germany (2007); and Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2005).

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 61 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York as well as its new space in Shanghai. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie, to the international public for the first time. The gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Liu Xiaodong, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully, as well as a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

Opening Hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

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