

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Roy Colmer

55 Main Street
East Hampton, NY
May 6 – 16, 2021

For the latest exhibition in East Hampton, Lisson Gallery is pleased to present a selection of Roy Colmer's early spray-gun paintings. A unique approach that dominated the artist's career for a decade, the spray painting practice developed by Colmer in the 1960's would lead to the artist's lifelong experimentation with color, form and technique.

Roy Colmer's color-intensive, vibrating paintings from the mid-1960s and 70s would lay the groundwork for his work in conceptual photography and film, mediums for which the artist ultimately became best known. Colmer (1935-2014), inspired by the introduction of electronic media in the 1970's, explored the boundaries between painting and film to establish a new kind of perception. In his paintings, the artist originated the technique of switching colors in the flow of a single pass of the spray gun, creating an immediate and versatile gesture on the canvas and achieving what Colmer described as "feedback" – filmic effects similar to motion, flash and distortion. While Colmer stopped experimenting with the painting process entirely after ten years, these acrylic works were the catalyst for his manipulation of space and depth through color and form.

In the 1972 work on view, Roy Colmer's traditional format of horizontal stripes of alternating colors are presented in a multicolored visual haze, reverberating throughout the canvas suggesting an early television set flashing to life. Encouraged by the teachings of Almir Mavignier, Eduardo Paolozzi and Georg Gresko at the esteemed Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, Colmer utilizes the layered ribbons of paint to manifest forms and waves across a backdrop of fluctuating colors.

Lisson Gallery's East Hampton space will continue its focused format featuring both influential, historical artworks and debuting new bodies of work in an experimental, intimate setting. Following the Roy Colmer exhibition the gallery will offer presentations by Leon Polk Smith, Ceal Floyer, Laure Prouvost, Sean Scully and Allora & Calzadilla, among others. The gallery will be open to the public each Thursday through Saturday, from 11am to 6pm, Sundays from 12 – 5pm and Wednesdays by appointment.

About Roy Colmer

Known primarily for his conceptual photography, film projects and color-intensive paintings, Roy Colmer challenged the boundaries between these disciplines in order to develop a new kind of perception. Inspired by the shifting artistic cultural landscape brought about through the introduction of electronic media, Colmer connected the surfaces of his paintings to video through the use of spray techniques and a careful selection of color, suggesting filmic effects such as movement, flicker, distortion, and as Colmer described, "feedback." He was interested in the immediacy and versatility of the spray gesture and the ability to manipulate space and depth through color and form, notions influenced by his Concretist mentors at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, Germany. By the early 1970s, Colmer began to incorporate this telegenic feedback directly into his practice, increasingly working in video and film. His exploration and manipulation of electronic signals was part of a larger group of artists working in the area at the time, among them Nam June Paik and Bruce Nauman. Colmer stopped experimenting with paint entirely a few years later and focused his attention on photography and documentary projects, culminating in his seminal project. Titled *Doors, NYC*, the work is comprised of photographs of more than 3000 doors, inclusive and in sequence, on 120 intersections and streets of Manhattan from Wall Street to Fort Washington.

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Roy Colmer was born in London in 1935 and died in Los Angeles in 2014. Colmer taught photography at the New School in New York from 1987 to 1995. His paintings and video feedback works were included in the critically important 'High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1966-1975,' a touring exhibition organised and circulated by Independent Curators International from 2006 to 2008. Recent exhibitions include *Roy Colmer: An Optical Haze of Colour* presented in 2019 at Firstsite, Colchester, UK. His work *Doors, NYC* was incorporated in Hanne Darboven's work *Kulturgeschichte 1880–1983 (Cultural History 1880–1983), 1980–83*. In 2015, it was exhibited in part as part of 'Greater New York' at MoMA PS1, New York, and in '175 Years of Sharing Photography,' an exhibition from the collection of the New York Public Library. The entirety of *Doors, NYC* was shown for the first time at Lisson Gallery, New York in 2020. Colmer was a recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 1988 and received a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Art in 1990. His work is included in important collections around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; New York Public Library, New York, NY, USA; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Brooklyn Museum, NY, USA; and John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, New York, NY, USA, amongst many others.

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 promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, two in New York, one in Shanghai, as well as temporary spaces opened in 2020 in East Hampton and London's Mayfair district. 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, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. 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.

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