

Where Were You?

19 July – 23 August 2014
52 Bell Street, London

Allora & Calzadilla, Cory Arcangel, N. Dash, Robert Janitz, Paulo Monteiro,
David Ostrowski, Michael Rey, Julia Rommel, Dan Shaw-Town

*When I was waiting in a bar, where were you?
When I was buying you a drink, where were you?
When I was crying at home in bed, where were you?
When I watched you from a distance, did you see me?*

Taking its title from a 1978 song of the same name by British punk band The Mekons, *Where Were You?* is a group show of paintings, prints, relief objects and works on canvas that seem to require minimal intervention on the artists' behalf, but actually belie the often complex ideas or extended periods of time spent contemplating, reworking and refining these processes. Although Minimalism has been presented in many of its guises at Lisson Gallery over the decades, through exhibitions of Peter Joseph, Robert Mangold, Robert Ryman, Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt among others, *Where Were You?* focuses on the work of nine artists, five of which have not shown in the UK before. Each of them articulates a minimalist aesthetic through abstraction, repetition or interruptions in surface and structure, foregrounding the intention, scale and execution of their gestures as both subjects for their work and as performative records of transient actions or incomplete thoughts.

While Cory Arcangel issues instructions to Photoshop to create his *Gradient* pieces ("*Blue, Red, Yellow*", *mousedown y=5750 x=8250* and so on) in the manner of a 1970s conceptual artist, the Los Angeles-based Michael Rey populates his shaped wall works with a flattened layer of carefully hand-modeled, painted plasticine ground: "The choice of this material began as an experiment," says Rey, "but continues to reflect my personal anxieties about finitude." Robert Janitz employs a mixture of oil paint and flour (and sometimes egg or wax) to obfuscate his own line, or as he puts it: "to conceal painting with painting to show painting". N. Dash's paintings, which take the form of wall-hung assemblages, use the vocabulary of painting to create an amalgam of interior and exterior space. Her new series of works reflects the manner and matter of its creation in order to expose the underlying meaning of the making, as well as the materials themselves.

Julia Rommel's paintings seem to highlight their frames, having been stretched many times over during their creation, whereas in truth the main bodies of the canvas are often intensely wrought through a process of layering and erasure that she likens to a fight: "I've found myself taking elaborate steps to keep my own signature away. I still remain perplexed at my constant refusal of my own gesture, why I find it so excessive." Allora and Calzadilla have collated used sandpaper sheets from Detroit construction sites into a gridded abstraction that represents both labour and delegation. The sheaths of stacked paper by Dan Shaw-Town have also been degraded through abrasion, folding and manipulation, until left puddled on the floor. Paulo Monteiro fills entire walls with beautifully contingent constellations of objects and paintings, marked by his physical engagement or the necessity of their making, much as David Ostrowski starts each painting as if it were his first, or last, questioning his practice at every stage. For works that rely on such an economy of gesture, they nevertheless suggest an interrogative and antagonistic position, one that requires both artist and viewer to complete the unspoken partnership with each piece and to respond to the titular challenge: *Where Were You?*

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About the artists

Allora & Calzadilla (born 1974 in Philadelphia and 1971 Havana, respectively), and **Cory Arcangel** (b. 1978, Buffalo) are represented by Lisson Gallery. **N. Dash** (b. 1980, Miami) has previously shown at White Flag Projects, St Louis; Untitled, New York; Nicole Klagsbrun, New York and has a forthcoming solo exhibition at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. **Robert Janitz** (b. 1962, Berlin) has shown at Team Gallery, New York; Gallery Sobering, Paris; Clearing, Brussels and has a forthcoming solo show at Meyer Riegger, Berlin. **Paulo Monteiro** (b. 1961, São Paulo) has shown at Mendes Wood, São Paulo; Galeria Marília Razuk, São Paulo and Carlos Carvalho Galeria, Lisbon. **David Ostrowski** (b. 1981, Cologne) has shown with Peres Projects, Berlin; Almine Rech, Paris; Simon Lee Gallery, London and has a forthcoming solo show at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin. **Michael Rey** (b. 1979, Sarasota) has shown at Room East, New York and has a forthcoming exhibition at Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles. **Julia Rommel** (b.1980, Salisbury) has shown at Bureau, New York and Gaudel de Stampa, Paris. **Dan Shaw-Town** (b. 1983, Huddersfield) has shown at Room East, New York; Maisterravalbuena, Madrid and has a forthcoming exhibition at Christopher Crescent, Brussels.

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About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Since being founded in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it has championed the careers of artists who have transformed the way art was made and presented. It continues to support the future of its artists, the legacy of historical figures, the evolving practice of established artists and the wide-ranging potential of emerging and new talents including Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, Gerard Byrne, Tatsuo Miyajima and Santiago Sierra.

Lisson Gallery has a long tradition of curated summer exhibitions, which includes an exploration of seemingly minimalist work with roots in the actual world staged in 1990, entitled *Real Allegories*, which featured Grenville Davey, Bernard Frize, Rodney Graham, Allan McCollum, Paul Morrison and Julian Opie among others. Last year the gallery invited Lithuanian curator Raimundas Malašauskas to produce a group show of 14 international artists entitled *Fusiform Gyros*, based on the region of the brain that controls facial recognition.

Exhibition Facts

Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 11am-5pm

Location: 52 Bell Street, London, NW1 5DA

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