

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Jason Martin

18 November – 7 January 2016
27 Bell Street, London

Lisson Gallery presents the latest exhibition by Jason Martin featuring new oil paintings and a series of silver cast works all made this year. The works on display at Lisson Gallery represent a new departure for the British artist who, for over twenty years, has pursued a deeply personal investigation into painting.

Oil paint is both medium and motive in Martin's new work. Loaded onto boards in thick impasto and sculptural in its three-dimensionality, the painters' most traditional medium – autocratically absent from Martin's practice over the past three years – is transformed into performative volume, its material properties made dramatic in their own right. The viscosity of oil – simultaneously slick and sticky, solid and liquid, when pushed and dragged across the aluminium and panel supports – is exemplified in the adventures of globules of paint that have resisted their gravitational pull to instead rise upward in minutely intricate formations.

Executed in subdued palettes of white, grey and black, with a monochromatic approach further implied in the works' titles through reference to formal names of paint colour (including Burnt Sienna, Payne's Grey, Ivory Black and Titanium White), these works continue a long dialogue with minimalism and seek to heighten the viewer's sensitivity to subtle colour variation. While Martin has always pushed the physical qualities of pigment to its limits, here there is an all-over quality to the compositions reminiscent of the paintings of Frank Auerbach, in which paint becomes a vector of force that constructs the image. A central movement of pigment horizontally traversing the image is common to all these works, forming a delicately ribbed surface that is flanked above and below by negative space sculpted out of dense slabs of pigment. With their strongly suggested horizons and rugged, almost geological physicality, the paintings suggest landscapes: their surfaces resembling terrains marked by topographical contours – crevasses, ridges, valleys and outcrops – while always emphatically remaining just paint. Yet each work is portrait in format, a narrow composition that articulates multiple tensions: between nature and manipulation; object and image; and between gestural abstraction and the impulse towards representation.

In Martin's series of silver cast works, paint is swapped for polished metal. In these works, mountainous sweeps of modeller's paste are hand-sculpted, cast and then plated in silver. Fixating on surface and freezing the artist's painterly gestures in memorialising metal, these works cloak expressionistic creativity under their argent veneer. Like the oil paintings, they embody the dialectical oppositions that occur between sculpture and painting, both spontaneous and permanent, handmade and fabricated – their hybrid forms and mirror-like surfaces ultimately impenetrable and self-reflexive.

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About Jason Martin

Jason Martin's work oscillates between sculpture and painting, with the vigour of action painting but a controlled hand, most visible in his monochromatic paintings where layers of paint are dragged across a variety of surfaces with a fine, comb-like piece of metal or board. Trained as a painter in oil and acrylic, Martin began manipulating his chosen material in the early 1990s, creating rhythmic textures suggestive of the ridges in a vinyl record, strands of wet hair or the grain of feather. In his pure pigment works, vivid colour is applied to moulded panels, whose baroque, velvety contortions appear like an extreme close-up of a painter's palette. These raw, worked surfaces find their equal in Martin's recent paintings, which showcase a painterly return to the more traditional approach of oil on canvas. Martin does away with paint altogether in his wall-mounted casts of copper, bronze and nickel, whose surfaces are unctuous but frozen, forever immortalising the artist's mark making.

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 Museum gegenstandsfreier Kunst, Otterndorf, Germany; Centro Hospitalar Psiquiátrico de Lisboa, Júlio de Matos, Lisboa, Portugal; Pelaires Centre Cultural Contemporani, Palma de Mallorca, Spain; Sindelfingen Museum, Sindelfingen, Germany (all 2016); Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti, Venice, Italy (2013); Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2012); 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). He was a prizewinner in Walker Art Gallery's John Moores 21 and participated in the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art in 1999 as well as the Golfo della Spezia, European Biennial of the Visual Arts, La Spezia, Italy in 2000.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it 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. In its second decade it introduced significant British artists, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Shirazeh Houshiary, Anish Kapoor, John Latham and Julian Opie. Today it continues to support a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza and many more. Across two exhibition spaces in London, one in Milan and a fourth under the High Line in New York, the gallery supports and develops 51 international artists.

Opening Hours

27 & 52 Bell Street
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Monday-Friday, 10am-6pm
Saturday, 11am-5pm

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