

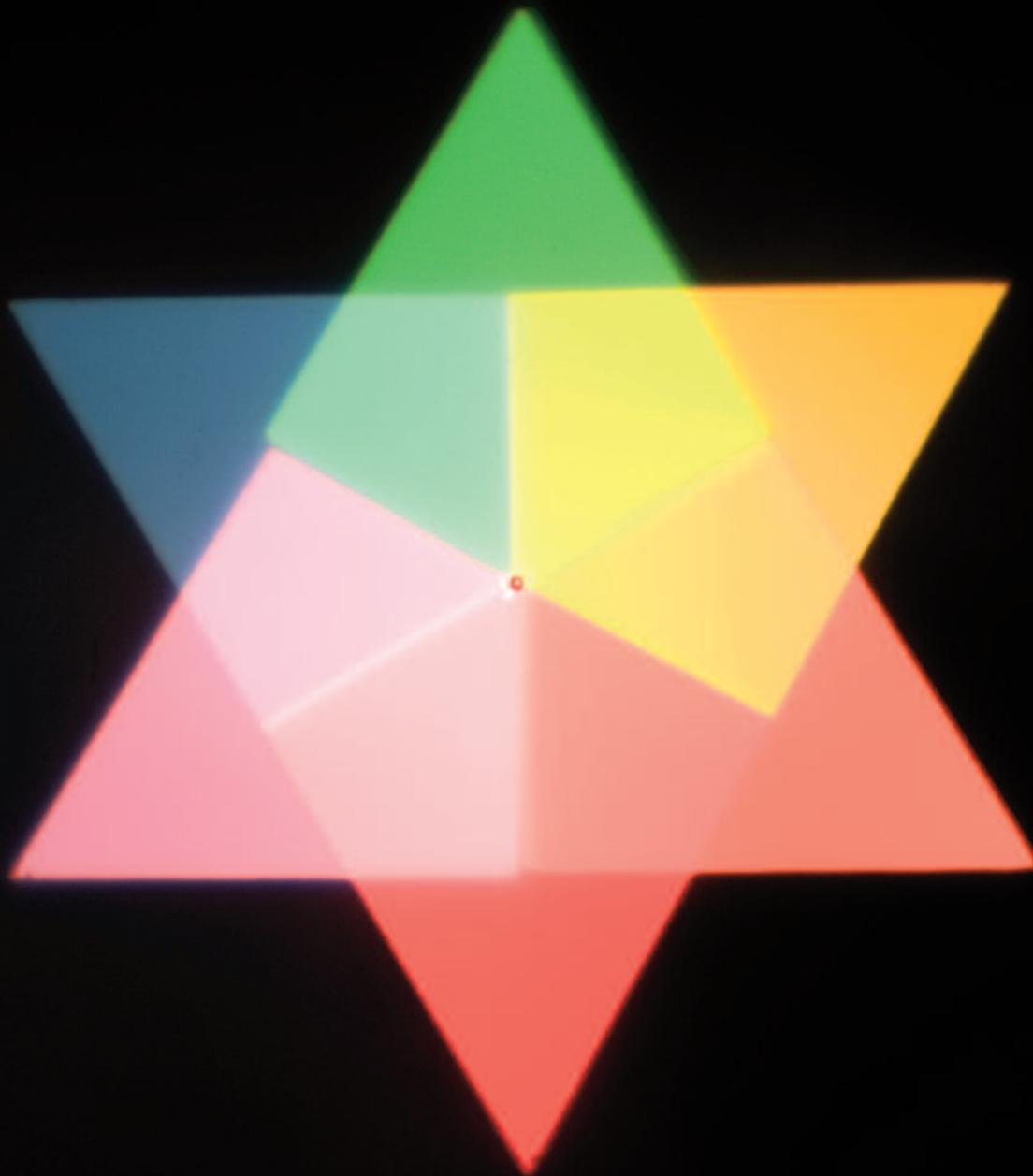
Learning Through Exhibitions

A resource for teachers
and community leaders

Another Minimalism

Art After California Light and Space

14 November 2015 – 21 February 2016



**The
Fruitmarket
Gallery**

45 Market Street, Edinburgh
Mon–Sat 11 am–6 pm, Sun 12–5 pm

Entry to our exhibitions is **always free**

Learning Through Exhibitions

A resource for teachers and community leaders

The Learning Through Exhibitions series helps schools and community groups to explore exhibitions before, during and after a visit to The Fruitmarket Gallery. They can also be used for arts activities at any time alongside our other resources documenting the exhibition. The series suggests ways to think with and through art and be inspired to make it. Creative Challenges are open-ended and adaptable to any age group.

Art forms: drawing, film, installation, participatory art, photography, sculpture

Themes: colour, light, space

Activities support Curriculum for Excellence levels 0–4: Expressive Arts, Literacy, Sciences, Social Studies

The Learning Through Exhibitions series can be downloaded from www.fruitmarket.co.uk.

Group visits are free and include an introduction to the exhibition and a copy of the current Learning Through Exhibitions resource.

Exhibition: Another Minimalism: Art After California Light and Space

Date: 14 November 2015 – 21 February 2016

Curated by Melissa E. Feldman

Uta Barth (Germany), Larry Bell (US), Carol Bove (Switzerland), Sarah Braman (US), Tacita Dean (UK), Olafur Eliasson (Denmark), Sam Falls (US), Jeppe Hein (Denmark), Robert Irwin (US), Ann Veronica Janssens (UK), Spencer Finch (US), James Welling (US)

Bringing the work of a select group of current-generation artists together with that of two pioneers of West Coast American minimalism, this exhibition examines the impact of California Light and Space art on artists working today. Robert Irwin and Larry Bell are two of California's best-known artists. In this exhibition, two of their signature objects – one of Irwin's iconic discs and a Larry Bell cube – signal the radical and ground-breaking art made in California in the 1960s and 70s. Taking inspiration from this art, works by the more contemporary artists in the exhibition explore the perceptual and psychological aspects of seeing in optically inventive forms, structures, spaces, images and narratives. Some works cause profound shifts in our perception by the simplest and most transparent of means – coloured light gels, mist, the deployment of after images. Others use tinted glass, mirror, resins and highly coloured metals. Two films engage the viewer in a subtle exploration of perception and the slowing down of time, while photographs use light as both subject matter and material. Together the artists in this exhibition, like those associated with California Light and Space, embrace the temporal and unstable nature of subjective experience. These are the very ways in which California's minimalism differed from the literalness, pure objecthood and materiality of New York's.



Thinking with art

Use the guide below to introduce your group to ideas around the artwork in the exhibition before making a visit to the Gallery or starting your own project. Activities suggest ways to think about making art with colour, light and space.

- Play a colour perception game in pairs or small groups. Take it in turns to describe a colour you see to the group, without them seeing it – either something around you, colour swatches, or colour pictures online. Compare your results. Were there particular colours members of the group see differently? Why might this be?
- Layer coloured acetate or transparent sweet wrappers to mix colours. How are the results different to mixing the same colours with paint?
- Make a photogram, a type of photograph made without a camera by placing objects directly onto light-sensitive paper. Try using simple shapes and a mix of translucent and opaque materials.
- Find out about the relationship between light and photography, and the different light effects that can be created using a camera.
- What presence can light have in a room? How could it be used to make sculpture? Think about how light can change space and affect mood.
- What might 'experiential' or 'active' art look and feel like? Think about effects created with light and colour, and compare this to looking at static objects or paintings.
- Research the emergence and characteristics of minimalist art. Note down artists and artworks associated with this type of art.

Look and Respond

The guide below helps explore the artwork in the exhibition by investigating your group's different experiences of light and space. It can also be used alongside resources documenting the exhibition.

Explore the illuminated environments in the exhibition – Ann Veronica Janssens' *Yellow Rose*, 2007, and Robert Irwin's *Untitled #2220*, 1969.

- Move in, around and through the artworks and record how the light in the space makes you feel, e.g. warm, cold, sleepy, awake, heavy, light, calm, excited, sad, safe, nervous, moving, still. Write descriptions of your experience and share these with the group.
- Where do you feel you are in the artwork? Are you in it, outside it, or just passing through? Does the artwork always stay the same?
- Observe other visitors interacting with the artworks. How are they moving within the space? Do they slow down, stop, speed up, or talk to each other? Do their clothes change colour? If so, how?
- Where are the edges of the room? Are the artworks part of the building? How would they change if they were installed in a different space?

Look at Olafur Eliasson's *Ephemeral afterimage star*, 2008. Can you tell the difference between the layers and shapes that actually build in the image and those that build through looking at it? Why might coloured light behave in this way?

Look at the artworks by Larry Bell, Carol Bove, Sarah Braman, Sam Falls, Spencer Finch and Jeppe Hein.

- Note down everyday objects and materials and those that have been specially made. What are their common characteristics?
- Walk all around the artworks, noticing the effects of different surfaces, materials and how the works have been placed in the space. Sketch the effects from different perspectives.
- What are the similarities and differences between the room sized and the object sized artworks? Think about their scale in relation to you, the space you move in, where you view them from, and how the objects interact with you and the space around them.

Look at the artworks by Uta Barth, Tacita Dean and James Welling.

- How have the artists used film and photography to document the effects of light in different ways?
- How do the films differ from photographs in exploring their subject matter? Think about how time and movement add to the experience.



Clockwise from top, installation images at The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh: **Ann Veronica Janssens**, *Yellow Rose*, 2007; **Jeppe Hein**, *Geometric Mirrors II*, 2010; **Larry Bell**, *Cube #15 (Amber)* 2005. Photos: © Sally Jubb



Creative Challenges

These creative challenges use participants' own ideas and artistic responses to the exhibition to explore making artwork using light, colour, movement and space.

1. Image and Reflection

Find a good place to cast shadows using your hand, body or interesting objects to make new shapes or a sequence of movement. Draw around your shadow shapes. You could film or photograph your shadows and use a projector to add interesting shapes to the scene.

Draw or photograph the reflections from objects that have shiny or highly coloured surfaces, e.g. cars, street signs, stained glass, glass bottles, wood or plastic surfaces.

Look through a window and draw the reflection. You could develop this by filming the view while walking slowly past a window or from a moving car or train, or make a time-lapse film by setting up a camera to take photographs at intervals to capture changing light over a period of time.

Tips and development:

- Focus completely on the shine or glow of light as your subject matter rather than the scene or objects in front of you.
- Try working in natural and artificial light inside and outside. How does the light behave? What are the different atmospheric effects?
- Whether drawing or taking photographs or film, start by working in black and white and move to working with colour. Focus on the way light enhances the glow and feeling of colour, e.g. is it warm or cold, calm or angry? How does it blend with its surrounding environment?
- Create coloured or fogged effects by looking through transparent or semi-transparent materials, e.g. coloured or misty acetate, sweet wrappers or glass. You could use pen, paint or nail varnish on acetate or tape to create different transparencies and textures. Try putting these materials in front of a camera lens when taking photographs or filming.
- If taking photographs, experiment with using flash but don't point the camera directly into the light.

2. Sculpting with Light

Objects

Collect everyday objects and materials that have shiny, reflective, glowing, sparkly or lustrous surfaces e.g. tin cans, glasses, saucepans, a polished shoe, tin foil, jewellery, beads, coloured glass, fabric with a sheen, acetate, plastic, polished wood, metal or mirrors. Use transparent and opaque materials. View them in natural light and shine light directly onto them in a

dark room to play with their different surface effects.

Place an object or shape directly against a mirror or reflective surface and draw or photograph it and its reflection as one complete image.

Combine two objects or materials to make a sculpture with contrasting surfaces and colours e.g. transparent and opaque, or an everyday object with an industrial material. You could wrap tin foil around part of a balloon or place stickers in different arrangements on a piece of wood or plastic bottle. Display your sculptures around a room, in a window or hang them from the ceiling. You could use mirrors or reflective surfaces around the room behind or in between the sculptures to create an installation.



Tips:

- Work simply and quickly with no more than two objects or materials. Look for the effects created by light reflecting from the surface rather than the object or material itself. How do they glow and shine into space or reflect back at you? How do opaque surfaces block or interrupt the effect of light? Walk around your objects or sculptures and consider the view from all angles.
- Document your work through photographs or film, or draw the light and atmospheric effects of your object or sculpture.

Space

Draw the feeling of the light or colour in a room or small dark space, e.g. a cupboard or a box, using abstract shapes and marks. Is it warm and fuzzy? Disorientating and dark?

Activate a space using subtle interventions with light:

- Draw lines or words with a torch, glow sticks or lamps in a dark room. Discuss the effects as a group and capture your actions in photographs or film.
- Layer coloured acetate on an overhead projector or make a colour slide show on a computer and project it in a dark room.
- Hold or display a single torch or lamp in a dark empty room, space or a box with a hole cut out to view through, or shine a light on coloured glass or a window in a dark space. Experiment by placing coloured filters over lights and using light from two or more sources, e.g torches or lamps placed in different parts of a space.
- Place an object or sculpture in a dark room or box and direct light at it using a torch or lamp. Choose a simple object with a shiny surface or a combination of two objects or materials to create a sculpture or installation. You could fill a plastic bottle with coloured water, or suspend balloons from the ceiling and use a fan to create movement.

Tips and discussion:

- How does light change the feeling of a space or the focus on an object placed within it? E.g. has a hard space become soft, or a warm space become cold? If there's an object in the space can you see how it's fixed or placed, or does it appear to float?
- Observe others moving around or viewing the space or object. How do they interact with it? What path do they take? Do they move slowly, quickly, or remain still? Ask them to describe their sensory experience. What do they see and feel? Is the experience immersive, disorientating, subtle or slight? How do they feel when they step away from the installation or object back into normal light conditions?
- Draw or photograph people interacting with the space.

3. Further Research

Research other artists who have used light and space in their work for further inspiration:

Martin Creed

Dan Graham

Yayoi Kusama

Sarah Oppenheimer



Installation view at The Fruitmarket Gallery; **Ann Veronica Janssens**, *Yellow Rose*, 2007. Photo. © Sally Jubb

General Questions

The Fruitmarket Gallery is an art gallery funded by the taxpayer displaying exhibitions of work that are not for sale. The Gallery makes and shows free exhibitions of contemporary art by some of the world's best artists. We ensure that our exhibitions are accessible to everyone, without compromising art or underestimating audiences. Gallery facilities include a bookshop and café. The Gallery is physically accessible and family-friendly.

What is contemporary art?

Contemporary art is the term used to describe art of the present day. It is art that has been or continues to be created during our lifetimes from the 1960s to the present.

What is minimalist art?

Minimalist art focusses on the simplicity and form of objects or materials in their own right, their relationship to space and to the viewer's experience.

What is installation art?

Installation art can be three-dimensional or occupy an entire room or gallery space into which the viewer can usually enter. It is often site-specific and designed to transform the perception of a space. Generally, the term is applied to interior spaces that the viewer can interact with and become part of the artwork.

Resources

The Fruitmarket Gallery produces resources that are available in the Gallery and online at www.fruitmarket.co.uk:

Little Artists are activity sheets for families and primary school groups to enjoy the exhibition together.

Exhibition guides provide detailed information about the art on show.

Short Exhibition films with the artist or curator can be viewed in the resource room or online at www.youtube.com/fruitmarketgallery

Talks and events are programmed for each exhibition with **recordings** available online.

Publications can be viewed in the **resource room**.

The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication, *Another Minimalism: After California Light and Space*. An educational discount is available. please enquire at the bookshop.

Send us your work

Send us examples of work produced in response to the exhibition and we will feature a selection on The Fruitmarket Gallery's Facebook page.

Caitlin Page

Learning Programme Manager
Email caitlin@fruitmarket.co.uk.

Book a group visit

Group visits are free and include an introduction to the exhibition and a copy of the current Learning Through Exhibitions resource. To book call **0131 225 2383** or email info@fruitmarket.co.uk



The Fruitmarket Gallery

Tell us what you think

Are you a

- Teacher Primary/Secondary Name of school _____
- Group leader Name of group _____
- Other _____

Your feedback is important to us so we can make improvements to future resources. Tell us what you think about the learning resources and how you've used them.

Keep in touch Join our e-list _____

By providing your e-mail address we can keep you updated about all Gallery activities including, talks, events and workshops. **The e-mail address provided will be used by The Fruitmarket Gallery to send you information about our activities and will not be supplied to any other organisations.**

The Fruitmarket Gallery shows the work of some of the world's most important Scottish and international artists, helping people engage with it in the way that is best for them - for free. We are committed to making contemporary art accessible without compromising art or under-estimating audiences. We aim to bring artists and audiences together, offering an intimate encounter with art that can change lives.

We make exhibitions, commissions and publications directly in collaboration with artists. We celebrate new thinking, and offer an international platform for artists, curators and writers, whether they have made their reputation here or abroad. The Fruitmarket Gallery welcomes all audiences. We make it easy for everyone to engage with art, encouraging questions and supporting debate.