

individual and shared experiences. As Robert Irwin suggests, 'The point is to get those people to ... abandon the screens. Those screens whose very purpose is to screen the actual world out. Who cares about virtuality when there's all this reality – this incredible, inexhaustible, insatiable, astonishing reality – present all around!'

A new book by Melissa E. Feldman investigating and celebrating the legacy of California Light and Space accompanies the exhibition and is available at a specially reduced price for the duration of the exhibition from The Fruitmarket Gallery bookshop.

Exhibition supported by **The Idlewild Trust**

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Another Minimalism Art After California Light and Space

Until **21 February 2016**

Uta Barth, Larry Bell, Carol Bove, Sarah Braman, Tacita Dean, Olafur Eliasson, Sam Falls, Spencer Finch, Jeppe Hein, Robert Irwin, Ann Veronica Janssens, James Welling
Curated by Melissa E. Feldman

Another Minimalism brings together works of art that are made as we look at and experience them, altered by ever-changing conditions of light and time. Guest curator Melissa E. Feldman's selection of works argues for the significance of the movement known as California Light and Space art for a new generation of artists working now. The exhibition's title comes from James Meyer's 2004 essay which sought to redress a lack of critical engagement with Light and Space art, eclipsed as it was by East Coast Minimalism in art historical writing. This exhibition is the result of new thinking about minimalism, acknowledging Light and Space art's consistent impact on work made since the 1990s following its origins in California in the 1960s and 1970s.

The contrast between the two forms of minimalism is often polarized as art that takes the form of objects (New York) versus art that takes the form of an environment (California). Where East Coast Minimalism can be characterized as object-based, material and self-referential, West Coast minimalism was ambient, immaterial, situational and experiential. Along with Light and Space art, West Coast minimalism included more object-based practices known as Finish Fetish or LA Glass and Plastic, which incorporated innovative, reflective or transparent materials from the burgeoning aerospace and plastics industries.

Two artists, Robert Irwin (b.1928) and Larry Bell (b.1939), represent Light and Space art in this exhibition with two iconic works: Irwin's *Untitled #2220* (1969) and Bell's *Cube#15 (Amber)* (2005). (Bell has been making his cube sculptures since the mid 1960s.) Irwin used the word conditional, or site-conditional, to describe his work, as the experience of viewing them is wholly dependent on their conditions of display. Illuminated by 4 spotlights, Irwin's acrylic disc loses its edges, appearing to dissolve into its environment as it both hovers before and becomes one with its shadows and the wall. Similarly, Larry Bell's cube both confines space and extends into it as the viewer walks around the work, which partly reflects its environment while also permitting the viewer to see through it.

Light – natural and artificial, filtered, projected, reflected and refracted – is the primary material in the exhibition. California Light and Space artists explored the nature of ephemeral subjective experience generated by the Californian environment: along with light, colour, atmospheric conditions and shadows are all important. In *Shadows (After Atget)* (2007), Spencer Finch (b.1962) uses fluorescent tubes to precisely reference the quality of the shadows in Eugène Atget's nineteenth-century photographs of Paris. Viewers see shadows as fields of light that change as they move through the space.

Several works demand prolonged attention and focus the viewer's concentration. Tacita Dean's (b.1965) *Disappearance at Sea* and James Welling's (b.1951) *Sun Pavilion* (2010) slow down the perception of time by demanding that the viewer take time to look at them. Welling's photographs essentially transform Philip Johnson's iconic modernist Glass House house into a Larry Bell cube, capturing reflected and refracted light. Olafur Eliasson's (b.1967) interest in slowing down the viewing experience results from his interest in Light and Space. His work explores the subjectivity of colour perception, after images, and heightened self-awareness that prolonged attention can engender. In *Ephemeral afterimage star* (2008), Eliasson projects a series of forms through colour filter foils to provoke our own unique internal after images.

Perception also changes with bodily movement. Eliasson's *The colour spectrum series* (2005) consists of 48 colour photogravures. This work describes a process in which prints are made from a copper plate coated with a light-sensitive gelatin tissue which has been exposed to a film positive, and then etched, reproducing the detail and continuous tones of a photograph. The artist uses the technique here to create a seamless movement of tone and colour across each print, and across the whole series (and the whole spectrum) when it is viewed by walking from one side of the room to the other.

Another critical aspect of Light and Space stems from the L.A. County Museum of Art's science and engineering-oriented Art and Technology programme, initiated in 1966 by the curator Maurice Tuchman, who introduced artists such as Irwin, Bell, James Turrell and others to various technological industries through work placements. Irwin and Bell were interested in aerospace engineering research into sensory deprivation in outer space and its effects on human perception. Long-term sensory deprivation takes the viewer to a perceptual ground zero which then sensitizes them to their own perceptual processes and focuses their attention in a particular way. Certain Light and Space artists sought to replicate this homogenous, undifferentiated visual field, called a *Ganzfeld* (German for 'complete field') in their work.

Ganzfelds are taken up by Ann Veronica Janssens (b.1956). Since the 1980s, she has made work that dematerialises architecture and materials. She has said 'Gazing at mist is an experience with contrasting effects. It appears to abolish all obstacles, materiality, the resistances specific to a given context, and at the same time, it seems to impart a materiality and tactility to light.' Her mist installation *Yellow Rose* (2007) transforms space, projected light and colour into things felt and seen. The work changes as you walk around it, and the artist describes the empowerment of the body as political, an idea that Mieke Bal has explored at length.

Janssens's interest in embodied perception, where the body is the source of our interpretation and knowledge of the world, can be seen in all of her work, including more object-based works such as *June* (2011–13), and much of the work in the exhibition. Jeppe Hein's (b.1974) freestanding *Geometric Mirrors II* (2010) is a sculpture that confounds interpretation as the viewer walks around it, reflecting parts of the body and environment in its configuration in the space. Similarly, Uta Barth's (b.1958) *...and to draw a bright light line with light (Untitled 11.5)* (2011), conveys a sense of the subjective, unstable and transitory qualities of light as perceived by the body in a domestic environment.

Other works explore embodied perception in different ways. Carol Bove's (b.1971) *Netting* (2009) divides space with an unlikely marriage of a wooden beam and an intricate and intimate silver chain link fence or net. The artists Sarah Braman (b.1970) in *Your Door* (2011) and Sam Falls (b.1984) in *Untitled (Cobalt, Red, Sky Blue, Teal 18)* (2013) bring together industrial materials and elements of Californian car culture.

All the works in the exhibition elicit a sense of bodily self-awareness that offers a respite from the digitally mediated contemporary world through transformational