

PACE LONDON



PRESS RELEASE

The Substance of Light

James Turrell / Robert Irwin / Larry Bell / Dan Flavin

Presented by Pace London at Cuadro Fine Art Gallery, DIFC Gate Village, Building 10, Dubai, UAE
6 November 2012 – 6 January 2013

Opening: Monday, 5 November 2012, 6 – 8 p.m.

DUBAI, 23 October 2012 — Pace is pleased to present *The Substance of Light*, an exhibition at Cuadro Fine Art Gallery in Dubai from 6 November 2012 to 6 January 2013.

The Substance of Light is a collaborative project between Pace London and Cuadro Fine Art.

This exhibition, the first by Pace in the Middle East, features iconic works by four of the most significant artists who have historically worked in light: Larry Bell, Dan Flavin, Robert Irwin, and James Turrell. The fourteen works in the exhibition explore the contrast between artists who seek to capture light's spiritual and phenomenological quality with those who access light's cultural history, from the glare of the neon sign to the glow of street lights.



In the early 1960s, while much of America and Europe was obsessed with the new wave of Pop Artists, Southern California quietly gave rise to a very different aesthetic revolution, the so-called Light and Space movement. Two artists in particular, Robert Irwin and Larry Bell, began to combine ideas from radical advances in perceptual psychology and new philosophical inquiries into the nature of human experience with the immersive abstraction that had been pioneered by artists like Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman.

The result was a new approach to art that replaced the object with a phenomenon. Finding traditional painting and sculpture too restrictive and self-contained, this group of young artists turned to the actual “substance” that makes all art possible: light. Irwin and Bell were the first to make objects and installations that were purely designed to manipulate the light in front of or around the viewer, and it was one of Irwin's first students, James Turrell, who sought to create artworks solely from light, giving substance and physical form to light itself.

Since those early days, artists around the world have embraced light as a medium to create a powerful art experience in the viewer. To transform this most elusive material has been the ultimate challenge for many, and when they succeed, the light, the shape and created forms dissolve the veneer of centuries of painting and sculpture to reveal the essential truth of art.

Highlights from *The Substance of Light* include seven reflective holograms by Turrell, made between 2006 and 2008. In these works, Turrell explores the mass and physicality of light, a subject he first addressed in his seminal *Projection Pieces* from the 1960s. Here, that physicality is generated using the optical space of dichromate reflection holograms. While holograms are traditionally used to make an illusion in which light becomes the means through which a three-dimensional object is depicted, Turrell instead uses holography to examine the phenomenon of the light itself, capturing its normally fleeting qualities and allowing light to become the object: “*My work is about space and light that inhabits it. It is about how you confront that space and plumb it with vision. It is about seeing, like the wordless thought that comes from looking into fire.*” James Turrell, 2010.ⁱ

The exhibition will also feature three of Robert Irwin’s fluorescent light installations from 2009 and 2011. Irwin wraps fluorescent tubes in as many as ten coloured gels to attain a range of hues. He mounts the lights in vertical groupings on the wall, creating an installation that experiments with the perceptual qualities of light, playing with rhythm, texture, densities, temperature, and chromatic relationships. Like all of Irwin’s oeuvre, the works respond to the specific circumstances and conditions of each project site that he takes on, transforming art into a “conditional activity” that “exists in the real world”.

Iconic works by Dan Flavin and Larry Bell will also be on view. Flavin’s *Untitled (to Bob and Pat Rohm)* (1969), is made of inverted green, red, and yellow fluorescent neon tubes installed in a square to create a powerful and harmonious structure that interacts with the architecture of the gallery. This work has been included in museum exhibitions worldwide and was most recently featured in the Seattle Art Museum’s 2009 exhibition *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949–78*. The exhibition will also include Bell’s *Untitled* (1970), one of the artist’s seminal cubes made from mineral-coated glass. The work was shown at the Hayward Gallery, London in *11 Los Angeles Artists* (1971), and at the Centre Pompidou, Paris in the ground-breaking exhibition *Los Angeles – Paris* (1966). With its clean lines, the box seems to encase an internal light and confirms Bell’s position as one of the leading artists of Minimalism.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Artists in *The Substance of Light*:

Robert Irwin (b. 1928, Long Beach, California) has explored perception as the fundamental issue of art for over six decades. Irwin, who began his career as a painter in the 1950s and became the pioneer of the L.A.-based “Light and Space” movement in the 1960s, has, through a continual breaking down of the frame, come to regard the role of art as “conditional,” or something that works in and responds to the specific surrounding world of experience. Irwin has conceived fifty-five site-conditional projects since 1975, ranging from the architectural and grounds design of Dia: Beacon Center for the Arts (completed in 2003) to the lush Central Gardens for the Getty Center in Los Angeles, California (completed in 2005). Robert Irwin became the first artist to receive the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur “Genius” Award in 1984. He has been represented by Pace since 1966.

James Turrell (b. 1943, Los Angeles) has had over 160 solo exhibitions worldwide since 1967. For over three decades, James Turrell has used light and indeterminate space—not objects or images—to extend and enhance perception. In addition to 22 permanent installations at institutions such as the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; The Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, which opened in October 2003; and PS1, Long Island City, New York. James Turrell’s work can be seen in over 70 international collections. Since 1968, when Turrell received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the artist has been the recipient of a total of 22 awards ranging from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (1984) to being named a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the

French Government (1991). Turrell first joined Pace in 1968. Since 2003, the gallery has presented four solo exhibitions of Turrell's work.

Dan Flavin (b. 1933, Jamaica, New York, d. 1996, Riverhead, New York) was a leading Minimalist sculptor who pioneered the use of electric light as a medium, working primarily with fluorescent light tubes from the 1960s onward. His work often explores the connection between sculpture and space. His site-specific installations include the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, and both Dia:Beacon and Dia:Chelsea in New York. Flavin has been the subject of major exhibitions at museums worldwide, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1967), the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (1969), the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden (1989), and *Dan Flavin: A Retrospective*, a touring exhibition organised by the Dia Art Foundation in association with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2004–2007).

Larry Bell (b.1939, Chicago) studied at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles from 1957 to 1959 as a student of Robert Irwin. He began his career as an Abstract-Expressionist painter, rapidly incorporating elements which would later be used as the main materials for his three-dimensional pieces. His works often achieve effects of transparency and reflection, addressing the relationship between the object and its surrounding environment. During his fifty-year career, Bell's work has been shown and collected by museums worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., and the Tate Gallery, London. He has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., as well as by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Bell lives and works in Taos, New Mexico.

Pace

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the 20th and 21st centuries. Founded by Arne Glimcher in Boston in 1960 and led by Marc Glimcher, Pace has been a constant, vital force in the art world and has introduced many renowned artists' work to the public for the first time. Pace has mounted more than 700 exhibitions, including scholarly exhibitions that have subsequently travelled to museums, and published nearly 350 exhibition catalogues. Today Pace has seven locations worldwide: four in New York; two in London; and a 25,000-square-foot gallery in Beijing. Pace London recently inaugurated its flagship gallery at 6 Burlington Gardens with the exhibition *Rothko/Sugimoto: Dark Paintings and Seascapes*, on view through 17 November 2012.

www.pacegallery.com

Cuadro Fine Art Gallery

Cuadro Fine Art Gallery, located in the Dubai International Financial Center (DIFC), has quickly become one of the Middle East's premier contemporary and modern art venues. Founded in 2008 by Fatima Al Shroogi and led by Alaa and Bashar Al Shroogi, Cuadro exhibits the work of international established and emerging artists and nurtures the careers of young artists from around the world. Cuadro's curated exhibitions are supplemented by the Cuadro Education Program, comprised of lectures, workshops and panel discussions. Through its residency program, the gallery offers a select group of local and international artists' studio space in the UAE.

www.cuadroart.com

For press inquiries, please contact:

Pace

Nicolas Smirnoff, nicolas@pacegallery.com / +44 (0) 20 7297 2820

Sarah Goulet, sgoulet@pacegallery.com / +1 212 421 8987

Cuadro Fine Art

Zaib Shadani, Zaib.shadani@theportsmouthgroup.com / +9714 369 3575.

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Image: Robert Irwin, #3 x 6' - *Four Fold*, Light + Shadow + Reflection + Color, 182.9 x 41.6 x 11.7 cm (72 x 16-3/8 x 4-5/8"), © Robert Irwin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

ⁱ James Turrell, 2010, on the occasion of the opening of *Within without*, a major new Skyspace at the National Gallery of Australia. <http://nga.gov.au/turrell/>