

Art Basel Hong Kong

29 – 31 March 2018



Image: Doug Aitken, *100 YRS*, 2014
Hand-carved foam, chrome paint, neon
162.6 x 223.5 x 25.4 cm
64 1/8 x 88 x 10 in
© the artist

Victoria Miro is delighted to participate in Art Basel Hong Kong (Booth 1C25) with works by Doug Aitken, Milton Avery, Hernan Bas, Varda Caivano, Stan Douglas, NS Harsha, Secundino Hernández, Jorge Pardo and Conrad Shawcross. Large-scale works by Conrad Shawcross will additionally be on view as part of Harbour Arts Sculpture Park 2018, Hong Kong's first international sculpture park.

Doug Aitken's *100 YRS*, 2014, is an important example of the artist's iconic text works, in which he reclaims the commercial landscape of signage in order to underscore the cultural potency of language. The artist has described his sculptural text pieces as possessing a 'toughness' that echoes the abbreviated nature of much contemporary communication. At the same time, these works move beyond language, breaking down into abstraction – in the case of *100 YRS* its surface of chrome paint and neon creating endless permutations of light and reflection that speak to the temporal nature of the work's title. Doug Aitken is currently featured in *Future Shock* at Site Sante Fe (until 10 June 2018) and *Again and Again* at Haus der Kunst, Munich (until 8 April 2018).

Works on display by **Milton Avery** include the important landscape *Ten Pound Island (Sea and Rocks)*, 1956, a view of the harbour at Gloucester, Massachusetts – once the site of a lighthouse where Winslow Homer stayed and painted in 1880 – in which Avery imbues a simplified scheme of rocks and sea with a highly evocative sense of New England temperature and light. Avery spent numerous summers in Gloucester on Cape Ann between 1920 and 1945 and, during the early 1930s, worked there alongside Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb and Barnett Newman. Avery's *Grazing Brahmins*, 1952, depicts a herd of cattle, one of the constant motifs of Avery's oeuvre. For Avery, cows seem the embodiment of serenity – and often of collective harmony. In this work, Avery used a particular compositional device: a flattened verdant pastureland that encloses an abstract form denoting a turquoise lake, from which some of the cows drink. Avery used a similar device, much simplified, in his painting *Goat Island*, 1958, also on view. Still life, an important part of Avery's work from the 1920s onwards, is represented by *White Pitcher*, 1946, a highly refined image in which the artist, paring back on both detail and colour, creates a sense of simplicity and harmony.

Recent paintings by **Hernan Bas** continue the artist's interest in figuring historical and mythological narratives within the imagery and iconography of popular culture, fashion, the decorative arts, queer culture and mysticism. Loosely based on vintage men's fashion magazine covers, *Adam (Spring Cleaning)*, 2017, depicts a male 'cover star' surrounded by a choreographed array of artefacts, accessories and architectural elements that point to the idea of identity and meaning as being collage-like in their construction and dispersal. Permeated by an aura of eroticism and decadence, and loaded with codes and double-meanings, the works further point to the intricacies of self-identity, while celebrating moments of transformation – the ordinary becoming extraordinary. Hernan Bas will be the subject of a solo exhibition at CAC Málaga, opening in May 2018.

Inviting prolonged scrutiny, **Varda Caivano's** paintings repay with intimate evocations that shift and grow with each viewing. Caivano's paintings are undeniably of themselves yet they are also, unavoidably, touched by and suggestive of the wider world. In reference to her handling of painting, Caivano has spoken of an affinity with the writer Georges Perec's poetic litanies of the everyday tasks of dwelling, their layers evoking the textures of experience: 'cleaning checking trying out changing fitting signing waiting imagining inventing investing deciding bending folding stooping sheathing fitting out stripping bare splitting turning returning...' While some works are characterised by rich, sonorous hues, in others colour has been pared back to relatively subdued shades of grey, blue and brown. Heightening

the work's graphic qualities, and the attendant exploratory character of drawing, these paintings pivot between structure and openness, bringing to mind the *pentimenti* familiar in Medieval and Renaissance oil painting while retaining a restless, searching quality unique to the artist. Varda Caivano will feature in the exhibition *Surface Work*, a celebration of abstract painting by women, opening at Victoria Miro, London, in April 2018.

Stan Douglas' *DCT* works can be seen as a development of his *Corrupt Files* series from 2013, in which he examined the coding mistakes that can occur within a digital camera's memory card and the abstract, visual results that ensue. DCT refers to a 'discrete cosine transform', a series of data points that specify how JPEG image files, among others, are compressed. Using DCTs, Douglas is able literally to 'write' images, determining their frequencies, amplitudes and colour values. The results are printed in UV ink on large, square panels that have been primed with gesso, a porous white ground used traditionally in painting, chosen by the artist for the quality of colour and surface that is achieved. The *DCT* works extend the idea of the photographic, blurring the lines between photography and painting in the process of their creation, while talking more widely about constructed images and complex truths. Writing about the *DCT* works in *Artforum*, Duncan Wooldridge notes: 'The DCT abstractions... show how an image is built from the ground up, to act as a reminder us of its constructive, and not extractive, realities. Douglas presents how each and every event requires a viewer who is equally deconstructive, analytical, and willing to probe.' Work by Stan Douglas will feature in *Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art* at Tate Modern, London (2 May – 14 October 2018) and is currently on view in *Faithless Pictures* at the Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo (until 13 May 2018). His celebrated 2013 film, *Luanda-Kinshasa*, is featured in *Domestic Arenas* at Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague (until 18 March 2018).

Drawing on a broad spectrum of Indian painting traditions and popular arts, as well as the western canon, **NS Harsha** creates quietly philosophical, luminous works that reflect on geopolitical order and our ever-more technologically mediated relationship with the world. The exquisitely rendered watercolour and pencil works on paper displayed, such as *24 Karat 'Nation'!*, 2012, *Jumping over a puddle of unknown depth!*, 2012, and *Enlightenment*, 2012, entwines strands of personal biography with the shared narratives and broader socio-political scenarios of our, at once, macrocosmic and microcosmic world. Harsha's work may function in part as social commentary, but at its heart it is a playful and poetic reflection of the persistent singularities of human nature. Work by NS Harsha will feature in the *21st Biennale of Sydney* (16 March – 11 June 2018).

New paintings, made especially for Art Basel Hong Kong, by **Secundino Hernández** are energised through linear dynamism and derived in part from a process of removing paint with a pressure washer. Almost archaeological in nature, this method involves the artist erasing pigment to expose the canvas beneath. Redolent of the urban environment, the resulting 'wash' paintings have a dramatic, exploratory quality and openly display the triumphs and struggles of the artist's practice. Discussing the tension between calculation and spontaneity in these works, the artist says: 'When the works succeed I don't see geometric shapes any more. I see a dance between pictorial languages and a balance between something which is very much under control and something else which is accidental.' The presentation will also include a new 'palette' painting by the artist. Created through a highly visceral accumulation of pigment, the palette works, which Hernández refers to as being 'like a diary of everyday life in the studio', are like extended versions of the functional artist's palette, expanded in scale and through the duration of their making. In 2018, solo institutional exhibitions of Hernández's work will be held at CAC Málaga (16 February – 6 May 2018), and at Kunsthalle Helsinki (14 April – 13 May 2018).

Celebrated for his use of vibrant colours, eclectic patterns and natural and industrial materials, **Jorge Pardo**, a MacArthur Fellow, has since the 1990s drawn on the historical intersections of fine art, architecture and design to create a highly individual body of work. Characterised by its fluidity between genres, his diverse output ranges from paintings, sculptures and murals to furniture and even entire buildings. Pardo's focus on multiple meanings, purposes and contexts invites constant re-evaluation of objects, images and architectural space. The presentation includes a unique chandelier by the artist that offers an extended consideration of physicality and immateriality, the visible and invisible.

Sculptures by **Conrad Shawcross**, such as *Paradigm Optic (Stainless)*, 2017, and *Paradigm-B*, 2018, are part of his ongoing exploration of the four-sided tetrahedron as a tessellating form. As a building block, the tetrahedron behaves as an irrational number, creating sequences that, in theory, extend into infinity without repeating. Works from the *Paradigm* series elicit a subtle line between structure and nature, the metaphysical and the molecular and make reference to the notion of the paradigm shift – a leap of imagination that jolts scientific enquiry forwards. As with his *Paradigm* works, in *The Dappled Light of The Sun (Study II)*, 2016, Shawcross takes the tetrahedron as his 'brick'. Unlike the vertical *Paradigm* works, however, in *The Dappled Light of the Sun* works he creates a horizontal plane – a canopy of tetrahedrons held aloft by tripods. The 'cloud' form finds a pertinent connection in the tetrahedron, a shape that recurs throughout nature, including in the water molecule H₂O, which makes up two thirds of the earth's surface. The presentation also features a new triptych, *Catastrophe Sequence*, 2017, which, containing an internal dynamic between its three parts, eloquently encapsulates Shawcross' interest in conveying time and movement through static form. A four-metre-high *Paradigm* sculpture and a large-scale *The Dappled Light of the Sun* will be displayed as part of Harbour Arts Sculpture Park (22 February – 11 April 2018), curated by Tim Marlow and Fumio Nanjo.

Additionally, Victoria Miro will have works available to view by **Yayoi Kusama**.

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