

Art Dubai

20–23 March 2019



Doug Aitken, *Vision*, 2016
High-density foam, resin, mirror
147.3 x 221 x 35.6 cm
58 x 87 1/8 x 14 1/8 in
© Doug Aitken, courtesy 303 Gallery, New York; Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich; Victoria Miro, London/Venice; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Victoria Miro participates in Art Dubai (Booth B9) with works by Doug Aitken, Stan Douglas, Alex Hartley, Idris Khan, Yayoi Kusama, Conrad Shawcross and Do Ho Suh. Additionally, work by Conrad Shawcross will displayed as part of the fair's sculpture programme.

Doug Aitken creates works that, diverse in form, speak potently of the condition of twenty-first-century life. While certain aspects of his practice possess an exterior toughness akin to that of the commercial landscape, his art moves beyond surfaces, often breaking down into abstraction in order to demonstrate the nature and structure of our media-saturated age. Made from hand-carved foam and acrylic, *New Land (blue field / white holes V)*, 2015, appears to exist between abstraction and representation, its high-sheen, industrial-looking surface pitted rhythmically to reveal substrata of inscrutable whiteness. *Vision*, 2016, is an example of Aitken's iconic text works, in which a landscape of commercial signage is mined in order to underscore the cultural potency of language. Aitken 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 *Vision* its mirrored surface causes a fractured, endlessly changing experience for the viewer – a splintering of vision itself.

Stan Douglas's *DCT* works, such as *0660*, 2016, extend the idea of the photographic, blurring the lines between photography and painting in the process of their creation. While they are a relatively new format for the artist, their complex forms and almost psychedelic patterns relate to Douglas's earlier experiments with film, video and photography, in which he tested the capabilities and possibilities of his media, occasionally to the point of abstraction. *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. Analysing thousands of permutations, Douglas selects a small number that are both compact – composed of very few coefficients – and multivalent – possessing visual complexity beyond simple geometric shapes such as squares, circles or diamonds. 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 can be achieved. Stan Douglas is featured in *Sharjah Biennial 14: Leaving the Echo Chamber*, which takes place between 7 March and 10 June 2019.

Alex Hartley's work addresses complicated and sometimes contradictory attitudes toward the built and natural environments, showing us new ways of physically experiencing and thinking about our constructed surroundings – through surface and line, scale and materials, locations and contexts. Inspired by iconic examples of modernist domestic architecture, in *The Houses* he brings together photographic and painterly elements to examine the idea of the viewpoint, the frame and the boundary – between interior and exterior, manmade and natural environments, public and private space, two and three dimensions. Iconic examples of modernist domestic architecture, photographed by the artist over the past twenty-five years, primarily in Los Angeles, form the basis of these atmospheric monochrome works, in which the photographic image lies separated beneath hand-painted elements – describing and embellishing a verdant landscape – applied directly to a layer of semi-transparent acrylic. Examples on view include *Case Study #21 Bailey House*, 2018, featuring one of Richard Neutra's seminal designs for the Case Study Program, experiments in American residential architecture sponsored by Arts & Architecture magazine, which ran intermittently from the mid-1940s until the mid-1960s, and which changed the careers of Neutra and, to some extent, Charles and Ray Eames. *Case Study #8 Eames House (West Elevation)*, 2018, features the building designed by the Eameses for their home and studio, which has been revisited in Hartley's work many times, and in various materials and formats, over the course of his career.

Recent works by **Idris Khan** continue a career-long investigation into memory, creativity and the layering of experience, where the boundaries between form and formlessness, light and its absence, rational and irrational thought provide a rich seam of conceptual enquiry and poetic reflection. In the deeply sonorous *Nocturne 2*, 2017, Khan reflects on the contemporary world. Using stamps of text applied repetitively to the surface of glass, he creates a work of intense power, presence, gravity and resonance; its content, overlaid, becoming fragmentary while its radial composition evokes forces of great energy. Here, as Khan pushes his subject matter to the fringes of legibility, addition and erasure become as one. Whether working with the still or moving photographic image, painting on canvas or directly on to the wall, Khan retains an aesthetic of elegant saturation. The density and precision of his imagery allude to the excess of information in the technical age, while encouraging a slower and more engaged way of looking and responding to our collective history and culture. He creates an expanded sense of time.

Yayoi Kusama's painting *Vestiges of Stars*, 2010, is part of her magnum opus of recent works, a vibrant flowering of an artist whose seven-decade career has been a constantly evolving enquiry into the twin themes of cosmic infinity and personal obsession. Completed in contrasting hot red and cool blue, the painting features an iconic motif in Kusama's art – the dot, enlarged and repeated as a series of discrete biomorphs contained within a border of fringe-like triangular forms, alternately solid and striped. It is at once microscopic and macroscopic, concerned with the mind, the body and, as intimated by the title, the heavens.

New *Fracture* sculptures by **Conrad Shawcross** mark a significant development in the artist's practice. In these majestic, ethereal works, which seem almost to disappear as they rise up and expand, a twisting spine supports a series of branches which in turn support hundreds of fragments, which the artist refers to as 'shields'. For Shawcross, an aesthetic of the designed,

scientific and the rational serves as a device to cloak more poetic, philosophical and metaphysical themes. These new works, which are an evolution of his acclaimed *Paradigm* sculptures, contain within them a temporal element that seems to convey growth, transcendence or ascension. Speaking about the work, Shawcross comments: ‘A potential way to think of them is as some sort of complex model by a scientist or a mathematician. While they appear to be functional or of rational intent, their meaning remains elusive... They perhaps capture an instant after an explosion but before the collapse of the system that they chart, like a Muybridge sequence; the story of a complex system and its expansion from birth to death. One of the key ways that scientists talk about time is in the dispersal of heat, that time is defined by energy dissipating. In this way, these new works also contain a sense of expansion or a loss of heat, which in turn relates to the expansion of the universe and its possible contraction. This preoccupation aligns with the concerns of my previous works, such as the early rope machines.’

Do Ho Suh’s work stems from the measuring of space and the processes, rational yet sensual, that enable him to determine and connect with his surroundings. Inspired by his peripatetic life, the artist has long ruminated on the idea of home as both a physical structure and a lived experience, the boundaries of identity and the connection between the individual and the group across global cultures. *Bathtub, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA*, 2013, is a life-size evocation of a household fixtures from Suh’s former home in New York City. Rendered in the artist’s signature translucent polyester and presented, lit by LED, in a glass vitrine, the work is simultaneously highly detailed and ghostly, inviting the viewer to reflect on their interactions with everyday objects and the physical and metaphorical manifestations of memory. *Basin, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA*, 2015, is the result of a process, developed during a residency at STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery, Singapore, in which Suh’s fabric pieces are compressed into large-scale two-dimensional ‘drawings’. Using gelatin tissue, the works are sewn in the same way as Suh’s architectural fabric pieces. Once immersed in water, however, the gelatin dissolves, fusing with the paper to leave an image in which the threads appear like a skeletal framework against the coloured form of the object. Residual yet highly visceral, these works draw parallels between architectural space, clothing and the body, making explicit Suh’s fascination with the interconnected spaces we inhabit while continuing his career-long investigation into the porous boundaries of identity. Suh’s close relationship with STPI is attested to in smaller works such as *Rubbing/Loving, STPI, Artist Studio 48, 41 Robertson Quay, Singapore, 238236*, 2017. Created by lining fixtures and fittings at the workshop with paper and rubbing their surfaces with coloured pastels, the works on display lend a quiet poetry to the quotidian, existing at the boundary of drawing and sculpture.

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