

## Frieze London

Stand C3, 5 – 8 October 2017



Image: Doug Aitken, *NIGHT*, 2016  
Mirrored stainless steel, 80.6 x 252.7 x 43.2 cm,  
31 3/4 x 99 1/2 x 17 in  
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**Victoria Miro is delighted to participate in Frieze London 2017 with a stand dedicated to the theme of the nocturne. Nocturnal glamour, intrigue and magic, and nighttime as an agent of transaction, transition and transformation are conjured in works by Doug Aitken, Milton Avery, Jules de Balincourt, Hernan Bas, Varda Caivano, Stan Douglas, Christian Holstad, Isaac Julien, Idris Khan, Yayoi Kusama, Chris Ofili, Tal R, Do Ho Suh and Sarah Sze.**

Works on display include *NIGHT*, 2016, by **Doug Aitken**. This example of the artist's iconic sculptural text works is composed of mirrored stainless steel, its lettering picked out in contrasting midnight blue. Terse, yet slippery in meaning, *NIGHT* speaks in form and in content of a crepuscular moment, when the certainties of daylight give way to the spatial, and other, ambiguities of night. Populated by dilapidated hotels and dimly-lit alleyways, largescale photographic works by **Stan Douglas**, such as *Bumtown*, 2015 and *Lazy Bay*, 2015, borrow from film noir. The darkly hyperreal quality of these images is the result of digital rendering – a means of image-making foreign to both the naked eye and the camera lens, which departs from logics of documentary accuracy even as it makes possible an almost hallucinatory sharpness of detail. **Isaac Julien**'s largescale photographic works, such as *After George Platt Lynes (Looking for Langston Vintage Series)*, 1989/2017, are similarly infused with a 1940s film-noir feel. Revisiting aspects of his seminal work *Looking for Langston*, Julien expands on the film's multilayered narratives of memory and desire set within a nocturnal shadow world of expression and repression.

Events carried out under cover of darkness are referred to in further works on display. *Midnight Cowboy*, 2017, a new painting by **Jules de Balincourt**, continues his fascination with the Los Angeles landscape as a disjunctured synthesis of the human, the architectural, and the organic, a repository of the American Dream and desires that seem ever-elusive in the neon glow of the metropolis at night. Following a period of research while in residence at Jesus College Cambridge in 2016, **Hernan Bas** has created a new body of work exploring the lore and romanticism of varsity life. An aura of camaraderie, transgression, eroticism and decadence permeates works such as *May Ball Fireworks*, 2017, which depicts young men punting on the river after dark. Pleasures of the night, though not necessarily limited to nighttime, are explored by **Tal R** in his new *Sexshops* paintings, of which *Peep Show*, 2017, is a resonant example. The artist sees the exteriors of sex clubs, massage parlours, strip clubs, adult theatres and other red-light establishments as being metaphorically allied to the function of desire within a painting. For the artist, that which is on display is only successful in as much as it activates the imagination, hinting at something tantalisingly out of reach; in the 'back room' as the artist says – unseen and unknown. In **Chris Ofili**'s painting *Dance in Shadow*, 2008-2009, a dancing couple, their forms reduced to simple shapes and a palette of rich purple, brilliant yellow and intense blues and blacks,

appear to merge with a vibrant and sensual landscape. Nighttime's distinct emotional register is conjured, along with the transformative energies of nature, sexuality and music. Metamorphosis and magic are driving forces behind **Christian Holstad's** collage *The Vampire Cat of Nabeshima*, 2010. Taking as his starting point a classic Japanese tale dating back to the Sengoku Era (1568-1615), Holstad creates a scene of erotic pleasure, ritual, costume and theatre beneath a hazy full moon.

An iconic work by **Milton Avery**, *Hot Moon*, 1958, was completed during one of the richly creative summers spent by the artist in Provincetown, Cape Cod, between 1957 and 1961. During this period, Avery rekindled his friendship with artist-colleagues Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, and it is possible to see the rich, ongoing dialogue between Avery and the younger generation in *Hot Moon*, its sonorous hues and interlocking forms existing, as Clement Greenberg described, at the 'edge of abstraction'.

Abstraction and its relationship to themes of the nocturne and enveloping darkness are explored in a dark *Infinity Net* painting by **Yayoi Kusama**. Kusama has described her *Infinity Net* paintings as visualisations of hallucinations that have recurred since her childhood. During these episodes, her visual field is obscured by an overlay of nets or dots that appear to cover her surroundings. With their dark palette of blues and blacks, *INFINITY-BLACK-NETS*, 2015, heightens a sense of being cloaked. As Kusama has said: '...the spell of the dots and the mesh enfolded me in a magical curtain of mysterious, invisible power.' In **Varda Caivano's** practice, abstraction undergoes a rigorous examination, reinforcing a painterly territory as something fluid, undetermined, and open for constant re-evaluation. While the colour harmonies of *Untitled*, 2017, may be suggestive of dwindling daylight, equally the rhythmic interplay of forms gives rises to thoughts of the nocturne in a musical sense.

Works by **Idris Khan** including *Silence 2*, 2017, composed of glass stamped with blue ink, employ texts that attempt to describe almost unimaginable situations of incarceration and sensory deprivation. Darkness is an abiding theme – both physical darkness and the metaphorical and emotional darkness of his source material. Sharing Khan's deft enfolding of rational geometry with unquantifiable human experience is **Do Ho Suh**. A meticulous replication of part of his home during his undergraduate years at Rhode Island School of Design, *Main Entrance, 388 Benefit Street, Providence, RI 02903, USA*, 2016, is a sonorous example of the artist's *Hub* works – transitory, connecting spaces between rooms, such as vestibules and corridors, that speak metaphorically about movement between cultures and the blurring of public and private. Rendered in a rich blue fabric, the work speaks to other transitions – the solid forms of urban daytime ceding to the less certain architecture of night, where viewers (who are invited to walk through the piece) are drawn into a space of enchantment, mutability and potential.

A series of screenprints by **Sarah Sze** mark a singular moment in time – 1 January 2014 – and are based on newspapers gathered from around the world on that date, including Dubai, Mexico City, Santiago and Cairo, with all images replaced by depictions of the midnight sky. A new sculptural work, *Model for a Heavy Sky*, 2017, will also be on display. Sze has referred to her small-scale sculptures as being discrete models serving as their own temporary site marking a precisely composed moment. The sculptures, conceived as models of chance occurrences, highlight the tension between the effort to map, dissect and understand information, and the inevitable measure of futility in that effort. While the delicate hammock form of *Model for a Heavy Sky* can be seen as a model for 'framing absence', it also makes reference to Sze's large-scale work, *Hammock (for A. Albers)*, 2017, which will be on display as part of Frieze Sculpture for the duration of Frieze London 2017. Evocative of the absent body, it speaks equally to ideas of reverie and the boundaries of consciousness that prefigure sleep.

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