

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

Anthony Pearson

On View June 27 – July 20, 2019, in Aspen, Colorado

Artist Talk and Opening Reception, June 28, 5:00 PM

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present Los Angeles-based artist Anthony Pearson's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery this summer, at its location in Aspen, Colorado. The exhibition will feature works from Pearson's *Embedments*, *Etched Plasters*, and *Tablets* series, each of which capture his sensitivity to the experience of light, texture, and color. Pearson's work is powerful in its quietude, revealing layers of complexity as one explores the surface, patterning, and material closely and from a range of perspectives and environments. Pearson's work feels particularly at home in Aspen, where set against the rugged landscape and open expanses, his evocations of light and materiality are further amplified and affecting. *Anthony Pearson* will be on view in Aspen from June 27 through July 20, 2019.

The exhibition coincides with the release of the Pearson's new monograph, featuring a substantive essay on the artist's vision and approach, written by Alex P. Klein, Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia's Dorothy and Stephen R. Weber Curator, as well as a wide selection of images highlighting the range of his practice. As part of the opening celebrations, on June 28, the gallery will host a talk with Pearson and Klein, moderated by Heidi Zuckerman, CEO and Director of the Aspen Art Museum. The talk will be followed by a reception to mark the opening of the show.

Pearson's practice is fueled by a longstanding engagement with the dichotomies of lightness and darkness—first sparked by his early work as a photographer. His explorations manifest through a spectrum of processes with materials such as clay, bronze, and gypsum cement, which he develops methodically and contemplatively through time to yield a wide range of visual effects. His innate ability to capture the sensation of light emanating from deep within his materials positions him within the trajectory of California's Light and Space Movement, which has concerned itself with the effects of form and light on viewer perception and experience.

Further underlying Pearson's practice is an experimentation with physicality, which results in works that behave in instances as both sculpture and painting as well as both object and image. This interplay between formal vocabularies is particularly felt as one experiences and considers the progression of his distinct series, starting with the *Tablets*, which Pearson produced between 2010 and 2014. Abstract sculptural works that are affixed to the wall, the *Tablets* appear as soft organic forms folding onto themselves or as small bundles of volumetric cylinders. Handcrafted in clay, cast in bronze, and coated with cobalt and silver nitrate patina, the *Tablets* actively respond to their

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environment, absorbing and reflecting the light within the space. While their physicality positions them clearly within the trajectory of sculpture, their placement on the wall retains some suggestion of the experience of painting.

Pearson's development of the *Tablets* series gave way to an extensive exploration of the formal possibilities of hydrocal, a gypsum cement, which continues to today. To create the *Etched Plasters*—the second of his hydrocal series—Pearson pours the material, mixed with colored pigment, into a frame and then uses a carbide knife and custom-made wood guides to make incisions into the surface. The finished pieces are distinguished by the intricate interplay of line and density, as the subtle and precise cuts stand in dynamic contrast to the solidity of the hydrocal. Here, Pearson's work on the surface replicates the expression of paint on canvas or pencil on paper, while the material itself provides the dimensionality of sculpture—fusing the two media into a new kind of object. The incisions, which actively read as line drawings, are executed in rich, arabesque-ing patterns that evoke vibrant energy and fluid movement. As the mica-based pigments in the hydrocal catch the light, this sensation is heightened, and the lines take on the quality of rays of light or wisps of sand flowing through one's fingers.

With his *Embedments* series, Pearson more fully embraces the language of free-form gesture, most often associated with painting. In this most recent series, Pearson pours the differently colored hydrocal in layers, into a mold backed by a stretched canvas. In instances, Pearson shifts the mold, while in others he allows the cement to settle organically. This action results in the creation of rich color fields that weave together to suggest abstract landscapes. In this way, the painterly gesture is inextricably tied to the physicality of the work itself, which is also emphasized by the textural impressions and traces of fiber filament left on the surface from the stretched canvas that is removed upon the material's hardening. These actions shift Pearson's work more directly into the space between object and image, with the formal qualities of painting and sculpture coalescing into a new whole. At the same time, these newest works retain their sense of light, as they allude to the setting sun and the desert and ocean views of California.

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Anthony Pearson (b. 1969, Los Angeles) is well-known for his highly formalized and sensitive use of both process and materials. By experimenting with the formal limits of photography, where his practice originated, he found a visual vocabulary rooted in abstraction that explores the balances between positive and negative, lightness and darkness. He continues to investigate these dichotomies across a range of media. Pearson has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY (2018), David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2017), the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2012), and Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, MN (2008), among numerous others. Group exhibitions include *Tantric drawings: sites of*

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transformation, Drawing Room, London, UK, and Peninsula Arts, Plymouth University, Plymouth, UK (2016-17); *L.A. Exuberance: New Gifts by Artists*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2016-17); *The Sun Placed in the Abyss*, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH (2016); *Variations: Conversations in and Around Abstract Paintings*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2014); *second nature: abstract photography then and now*, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA (2012); and *The Anxiety of Photography*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO, and Arthouse at the Jones Center, Austin, TX (2011). Pearson lives and works in Los Angeles.

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