

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian London to Present New Work by Douglas Gordon, Opening November 23, 2022

Neon Ark Incorporates On-Site Neon Workshop



Artisans fabricating neon text works for Douglas Gordon: Neon Ark, London, 2022. Photo: Lucy Dawkins

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I'm interested in the fine line between my intentions and the perceptions of others; that moment when someone encounters something and realizes that there is more to it than meets the eye.

—Douglas Gordon

LONDON, November 18, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to present *Neon Ark*, an exhibition of new neon works by Douglas Gordon that incorporates a live workshop in which artisans will fabricate works in situ that will then be installed in the gallery. During certain hours the space will be closed while activity in the workshop is visible through the street-facing window.

In his films, projections, installations, photographs, performances, and works in other mediums, Gordon investigates collective memory and our sense of psychological security through extreme distortions of time and space, often using his own work and that of other artists and filmmakers as raw material. He has made text-based works since the 1990s; most of these have taken the form of vinyl transfers applied to walls, but a few—the first being *Empire*, installed in 1998 in an alleyway outside a Glasgow pub—have employed neon light.

Neon Ark, Gordon's first gallery exhibition devoted entirely to text works in neon, acknowledges the medium's change in status from a common platform for commercial signage toward a rarified technology superseded by digital display. The on-site workshop highlights the spectacle of this elemental production process—incongruous in its Mayfair location—in which a flame is used to bend

fine glass tubes before the air inside is evacuated (a process called “bombarding”) and noble gases, whose molecules emit light when activated by electric currents, are added.

The verbal content of Gordon’s texts—gnomic, sometimes aphoristic fragments—resonates with the alchemical nature of neon and its place in the history of modernism; the medium has a long and distinguished artistic heritage, having been used by numerous artists, including Dan Flavin, Bruce Nauman, and Joseph Kosuth. The title of the exhibition, perhaps an allusion to the rescuing of neon from cultural oblivion, or to the visible discharge of an electric arc, also hints at the paired “two-by-two” nature of the works’ wording. Each neon has a “partner”—these other halves are not on view in the exhibition—that completes a well-known line from a film or a lyric from a popular song. *A new winter coat for the wife*, for example, refers to a line from the Elvis Costello song “Shipbuilding,” while *Mighty real* borrows from Sylvester’s “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real).”

The gallery will be closed from 10am to 2pm on November 23–26 and 29–30, and December 1–3, during which times the workshop will be active and visible from the street. On these dates, the gallery will reopen from 2 to 6pm, once the neons produced during these sessions have been hung and illuminated. As daylight fades, the works in *Neon Ark* will remain on view through the gallery’s window throughout the hours of darkness.

Additionally, from December 6 to 31, 2022, on the large screen in Piccadilly Circus, the Cultural Institute of Radical Contemporary Art (CIRCA) will present a work by Gordon that responds to Soho’s neon heritage.

Douglas Gordon was born in 1966 in Glasgow, and lives and works in Berlin. Collections include Tate, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Solo exhibitions include *Timeline*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2006, traveled to Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires); *Pretty much every film and video work from about 1992 until now*, British School at Rome (2007, traveled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art); *Between Darkness and Light. Works 1993–2004*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (2007); Tate, London (2010); *I am also ...*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2013); *Pretty much every film and video work from about 1992 until now*, Musée d’Art Moderne, Paris (2014); 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014); Documenta 14, Athens, and Kassel, Germany (2017); and *In my shadow*, Aros Museum, Aarhus, Denmark (2019).

Gordon’s film works have been shown at the Festival de Cannes; Toronto International Film Festival; Venice Film Festival; and Glasgow Film Festival, among others. In 1996, he received the Turner Prize and the Kunstpreis Niedersachsen, Kunstverein Hannover. He was awarded the Premio 2000 at the 47th Biennale di Venezia (1997); Hugo Boss Prize (1998); and Käthe-Kollwitz Prize awarded by the Akademie der Künste, Berlin (2012). In 2012, Gordon became a Commandeur dans l’ordre des Arts et des Lettres, awarded the title by the French Cultural Minister in Berlin on behalf of the French Republic.

#DouglasGordon

DOUGLAS GORDON

Neon Ark

November 23, 2022–January 14, 2023

17–19 Davies Street, London

Press preview: Wednesday, November 23, 10am–12pm

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