

Mary Corse

Seen and Unseen

Pace Gallery Seoul
2022.03.29 – 2022.04.30



Credits: Mary Corse, *Untitled (White, Black, Yellow, Beveled)*, 2022, glass microspheres in acrylic on canvas, 213.4 × 213.4 × 10.2 cm
Photography by Flying Studio, Los Angeles © Mary Corse, courtesy Kayne Griffin Corcoran and Pace Gallery

Seoul – Pace is pleased to present Mary Corse’s first solo exhibition, titled *Seen and Unseen*, at its Seoul gallery. This exhibition follows the artist’s critically acclaimed survey at the Amorepacific Museum of Art in Seoul, bringing conversations with the Korean audience initiated at the museum to a more intimate setting at the gallery. Pace’s presentation, curated across two floors of the gallery, will feature three monumental primary color paintings by Corse, along with works from her *White Inner Band* series. It will also include two of the artist’s iconic lightbox installations, wirelessly powered by high-frequency Tesla coils and originally conceived in the 1960s. The presentation will run from March 29 to April 30, 2022.

Mary Corse has earned critical distinction through her unique approach to painting. Through her works, the artist maintains a dialogue with viewers about the metaphysical experience of being. Corse’s investigations in light and painting have led to a radical innovation of a the medium. In the late 1960s, Corse, searching for a way to put light into her paintings, experienced an epiphanic encounter during a sunset drive on Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu, where she noticed the road markings were progressively illuminated by headlights as she drove along. This sparked her interest in industrial glass microspheres—a material used to enhance visibility of road signage. In 1968, Corse started applying these microspheres on the canvases of her *White Light* paintings. For over six decades, Corse has favored a highly tactile and empirical approach to art making,

resulting in her lightboxes and large-scale geometric abstractions on canvases of various dimensions and shapes. Corse's fluid transposition across different mediums creates a state of flux. Her practice is defined by a discursive pattern in which she often returns to earlier series and builds on them. Corse's oeuvre retains the formal qualities of her initial experimentations in light while challenging the affective resonance of her work in each iteration.

The exhibition opens on the second floor of the gallery with three large, seven-foot square canvases featuring primary colors between thick vertical bands of black and white. Predominantly known for her monochromatic works in black and white, Corse's interest in color is informed by the ways microspheres act as tiny prisms, refracting the light that hits the surface of the painting rather than simply reflecting it. Corse's decades-long curiosity related to this prism effect reflects her eventual progression towards chromatic compositions. This development allowed the artist to go even "deeper into white light" and to explore pure colors. Large rectangles of red, yellow, and blue layered with microspheres, enclosed between matte-black stripes and juxtaposed by brackets of radiant white stripes with microspheres, create a sense of depth in the otherwise two-dimensional geometric composition.

On the gallery's third level, the exhibition includes two lightboxes and four white paintings. Early in her practice, the artist's efforts to free her artworks from the wall led her to quantum physics. With these interests in mind, Corse created a series of highly engineered lightboxes, which she referred to as "light paintings." Suspended using monofilaments, the lightboxes are powered wirelessly by Tesla coils—high-frequency generators that transmit electromagnetic fields through walls. These works produce uncanny, spectral effects. Around the same time as her lightbox installations, Corse developed her famed White Light paintings. These geometric abstractions embody an aesthetic akin to Minimalism, though this impression is challenged by the artist's highly gestural brushstrokes, accentuated by the microsphere infused paint. Corse built on the White Light paintings with her Inner Band series in 1996. In these works, vertical bands running down the white canvas disrupt the planar qualities of its surface. Corresponding to the viewer's position across the exhibition space, these bands seem to appear and disappear from one's field of perception. Bevelled edges tapering from the back of the panel toward the wall add to the illusion that these paintings are hovering in front of the wall.

Corse's paintings exude an aura that is not confined to the planar dimension of her canvases. Rather, these works create an energy field as soon as the viewer makes perceptual contact with them. This perceptual aura is maintained and mobilized as the viewer traverses the exhibition space. The geometric, minimal qualities of each work offer a sense of objectivity juxtaposed with the subjectivity of the viewing experience, emphasizing the futility of the pursuit of an objective truth. In the Korean context, the local audience may connect Corse's visual vocabulary to that of the Dansaekhwa movement, deepening dialogues about the artist's practice and its intersections across time and history.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public



installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.


The gallery has also spearheaded explorations into the intersection of art and technology through its new business models, exhibition interpretation tools, and representation of artists cultivating advanced studio practices. Pace’s presence in Silicon Valley since 2016 has bolstered its longstanding support of experimental practices and digital artmaking. As part of its commitment to innovative, technologically engaged artists within and beyond its program, Pace launched its own dedicated NFT platform, Pace Verso, in November 2021. The gallery’s past NFT projects have spotlighted digital works by Glenn Kaino, DRIFT, Lucas Samaras, Simon Denny, Urs Fischer, John Gerrard, and other artists.

Today, Pace has nine locations worldwide including London, Geneva, a strong foothold in Palo Alto, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2020, Pace opened temporary exhibition spaces in East Hampton and Palm Beach, with continued programming on a seasonal basis.

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