

# Rothko Cage Turrell

9<sup>th</sup> June – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Private View: Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 6-8 PM

“Silence is so accurate.”

– Mark Rothko

Nahmad Projects is pleased to announce the exhibition *Rothko Cage Turrell*, the first ever joint-presentation of these three cultural icons of Post-War America. The exhibition features a major painting by Mark Rothko, a unique hologram by James Turrell, and the seminal *Music for Piano no. 3*, a composition by John Cage. These works stimulate a dialogue on the notion of silence as a means to enhance sensory experience. In line with previous exhibitions by Nahmad Projects, this show explores the phenomenology of space, the perception of colour, and the effects of sound.

Mark Rothko (1903-1970) is one of the most significant figures of the Abstract Expressionist movement. Rothko sought to engage the mind and the spirit through the stillness of his paintings. *Untitled (Yellow, Orange, Yellow, Light Orange)* was executed in 1955. Referring to the sublime, Rothko's use of colour allows the viewer to experience feelings of joy, gloom, anxiety and peace. Philanthropist Dominique de Menil, collector and friend of the artist, once stated that “Rothko's paintings evoke the tragic mystery of our perishable condition. The silence of God. The unbearable silence of God.” The present work draws attention to the crafted nature of the painting with unusually visible brushwork around the colour blocks.

John Cage (1912-1992) was a composer known for disrupting modern music's conventions to emphasize the role of silence. Cage believed that silence was impossible to reach, asserting that even the pause between musical sounds is an entity, made up of noise in the surrounding space. *Music for Piano no. 3* was composed in 1952, the same year as his radical *4'33*, a three-movement

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composition where the performer does not play their instrument during the entire duration of the piece. *Music for Piano no. 3* is one of the first works where Cage makes use of the *I Ching*, a Chinese classic text that would become fundamental in Cage's practice. Dedicated to the composer Morton Feldman, this piece is made of only seven notes without any indication of duration. The silence between each note is as integral to the composition as the sound.

James Turrell (b.1943) has spent a lifetime working directly with light and space to explore the limits of human perception. Holograms are traditionally used to make an illusion, where light becomes the means through which a three-dimensional object is depicted. Turrell instead uses holography to examine the phenomenon of the light itself, capturing its fleeting qualities to transform it into a visible and tangible object. *Untitled (20NOGB+B)*, created in 2007, is light in three-dimensional physical and sensory form. As Turrell explains, "My work has no object, no image and no focus. With no object, no image and no focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you looking. What is important to me is to create an experience of wordless thought."

## **About Nahmad Projects:**

Founded by Joseph Nahmad in collaboration with Tommaso Calabro, Nahmad Projects opened in June 2016 with a performance exhibition '*I am NOT tino sehgal*', a concept by Francesco Bonami. The gallery is known for its innovative, multi-media shows as well as opening dialogues between artists rarely exhibited together. The previous exhibition *Jean Tinguely* gathered works by the Swiss artist that have seldom been seen in the UK.

## **Practical Details:**

Nahmad Projects

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Monday – Friday, 10 AM – 6 PM

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