

Darren Almond

Distant Silence

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

4 November – 23 December 2022

Opening: Friday, 4 November, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce the solo exhibition *A Distant Silence* with new works by **Darren Almond** at Bleibtreustraße 45, in Berlin.

Testifying to Almond's longstanding preoccupation with abstract ideas of time, space, history and memory, this exhibition considers how these concepts relate and intersect. Drawing on the vastness of nature, the cosmos, and cycles of existence, new paintings from the artist's 'Mono-Lith' and 'Counter' series are on view, alongside one of his 'Train Plates'.

The 'Counter' paintings elaborate on Almond's interest in numbers as a means of charting space and time. In one work, images of the night sky are abstracted into a multi-panel composition where fragmented digits float on a dark, indigo ground. Here, the number zero – the only whole integer – assumes a particular importance: symbolising a celestial pole, it acts as a point of focus which is at once empty and infinite, containing both everything and nothing. Another painting from the series presents a six-panel golden frieze over which fragmented ciphers, in hues of indigo, ultramarine and emerald green, are dispersed. The work pays homage to 18th-century artist Ogata Kōrin's six-part *Irisés Screens*, c. 1701–05, which depicts drifts of spring irises, in ultramarine and verdant green, against a lavish golden backdrop. Fascinated by the reverence of nature within Japanese culture, Almond simultaneously alludes, in these works, to the open architectural structures of Japanese temples, designed to frame the sky in order to invite the contemplation of the rising and falling moon and sun.

The gestural paintings from the 'Mono-Lith' series can similarly be understood as landscapes. These paintings evolved out of Almond's 'Fullmoon' series, a body of photographs initiated in 1998 which captures landscapes by moonlight using a long exposure time, to create what the artist has termed as 'light within darkness'. The title of the 'Mono-Lith' works reference the quasi-lithographic process by which they are created, whereby Almond presses indigo paint over a relief surface placed beneath raw canvas. The resulting images are simultaneously animated by emptiness and gesture, thus recalling the harmony of Eastern calligraphy. From these subtle images, suggestions of waterfalls, fields of grass, or desert sandscapes begin to emerge.



Darren Almond, *Night Walker*, 2022
Photo: def image

The exhibition takes its title from a further work in the exhibition. Made of bronze and belonging to Almond's 'Train Plate' series, *A Distant Silence*, 2022, refers in part to John Cage's 1952 composition *4'33''* and, by association, to the significance of space and silence in Japanese culture. The work's aged patina and wistful inscription calls to mind an omnipresent silence which alludes to the weight of contemporary politics and information overload in the digital age.

What unites these diverse works is a profound interest in the vastness of the universe, both earthly and celestial. These landscapes cannot be captured in traditional images. Rather, it is in darkness, in the silence between notes, that we become attuned to the timeframe of the natural world.

Darren Almond (*1971, Wigan, United Kingdom) lives and works in London. In 2005, he was nominated for the Turner Prize, and in 1996 he was awarded the Art & Innovation Prize by the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. Almond's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at international institutions including Jesus College, Cambridge (2019); Villa Pignatelli-Casa della Fotografia, Naples (2018); Mudam, Luxembourg (2017); Museum Sinclair Haus, Bad Homburg (2016); SCAI the Bathhouse, Tokyo (2016); Kunsthaus Graz (2015); Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire (2012); Villa Merkel, Esslingen (2011); and FRAC Haute Normandie, Sotteville-lès-Rouen (2011), among others. His work has been included in several group shows, most recently at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern One), Edinburgh (2019); Leeds Art Gallery (2019); Kunsthaus Zürich (2019); Dojima River Biennale, Osaka (2019); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2019); Centre Pompidou-Metz (2018); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humblebaek (2018); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2018); Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2017); and Royal Academy of Arts, London (2015).

Darren Almond's works are in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris; FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand; FRAC Haute Normandie, Sotteville-lès-Rouen; Kramlich Collection, San Francisco; Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Palm Springs Art Museum; Tate Gallery, London; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; and Queensland Art Collection, Brisbane, among others.

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4 November – 23 December 2022

Navid Nuur

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BodyLand, curated by Lauren Taschen

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