

# GAGOSIAN

---

Gagosian Athens Presents New Neon Works by Douglas Gordon

---



Douglas Gordon, *mighty REAL*, 2022 (detail), neon, 3 1/8 × 17 1/8 × 2 inches (8 × 43.5 × 5 cm) © Studio lost but found/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, Germany 2023. Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd

[Download Press Images](#)

*Maybe some words read better in neon—maybe some people look better under neon.*  
—Douglas Gordon

**ATHENS, March 21, 2023**—Gagosian is pleased to present a selection of neon works by Douglas Gordon. The works were produced by the on-site workshop that Gordon established in his exhibition at the gallery’s Davies Street, London, location in 2022, in which artisans worked to shape Murano glass tubing into short texts.

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.

Gordon’s new neon works are autobiographical, but also spark nostalgia in the minds of many viewers raised in the same milieu; further, they resonate with the ways in which ideas and techniques are born, grow, and interconnect: “Because it’s a gas,” he has stated of neon itself, “and because it was discovered, not invented, it quickly became a byword or symbol for the very essence of discovery.” From seeing illuminated signs in old movies to observing the real thing in London’s Soho, Gordon was seduced by neon’s fusion of novelty and illicit glamour.

Each of the neon works in the exhibition has a “partner” (not on view) that completes a well-known line from a film or a lyric from a popular song. *I second that emotion* is taken from a 1968 song by Smokey Robinson that was covered in 1980 by English new wave band Japan, and that was popular

when Gordon was at school. *I dont care I dont care* has a dual reference, reproducing a line common to “There Is a Light That Never Goes Out” (1986) by the Smiths and Pavement’s “Cut Your Hair” (1994).

Finally, the exhibition acknowledges neon’s change in status from a common platform for commercial signage toward a rarified technology superseded by digital display. The gnomic verbal content of Gordon’s texts chimes with the alchemical nature of neon and its place in the history of modernism; the medium has a long and distinguished creative heritage, having been used by numerous artists, including Dan Flavin, Joseph Kosuth, and Bruce Nauman.

**Douglas Gordon** was born in 1966 in Glasgow, and lives and works in Berlin. Collections include Tate, London; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. 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*

Opening reception: Thursday, April 6, 7–10pm

April 6–May 20, 2023

22 Anapiron Polemou Street, Athens

---

### **Press**

#### **Gagosian**

[press@gagosian.com](mailto:press@gagosian.com)

Toby Kidd

[tkidd@gagosian.com](mailto:tkidd@gagosian.com)

+44 20 7495 1500

Vasso Papagiannakopoulou

[vassopap@gagosian.com](mailto:vassopap@gagosian.com)

+30 693 748 5660