

# WHITE CUBE

Bermondsey

## Press Release

Robert Irwin  
2 x 2 x 2 x 2  
23 September – 15 November 2015  
North Galleries & 9x9x9

White Cube presents 2 x 2 x 2 x 2, an exhibition by Robert Irwin, one of the pivotal figures in recent American art. Irwin's oeuvre has spanned more than 60 years and includes painting, sculpture, installation and large-scale architectural projects. Minimal and perceptual, his works attempt to highlight particular spatial situations, acting like brackets for our phenomenological experience. This exhibition brings together three groups of works, including fluorescent works, transparent acrylic columns and a diptych.

Since the 1970s, Irwin has used light and subtle alterations of space to refocus the habituated eye, encouraging an awareness of the visual field around us. He has said that 'the pure subject of art is human perception': a conditional activity determined by context. In the 'cuts', Irwin creates a sequential experience of colour for the viewer, with a series of long, coloured fluorescent tubes placed on the wall in vertical lines. Each measuring 7 by 8 feet, the tubes are covered with various coloured gels to create an array of blended hues of intensity and weight. As he has previously stated 'all colour is equal in its 'place' ... all colour can be used with a feel for its correctness. Colour has the ability to put life in inanimate situations.'

A diptych - 'Black Painting' (2015) - is also displayed in the North Galleries. Two monochrome black squares, made with multiple layers of urethane paint and lacquer on honeycomb aluminium, are highly reflective, making the mirrored image the subject, while at the same time suggesting a void within the space. Irwin's investigation of colour relates to the work of Josef Albers and Barnett Newman but here particularly to Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1913).

Two acrylic columns in the 9 x 9 x 9 gallery exploit both the verticality and volume of the architectural space. Irwin first conceived of these works as early as 1969. While almost invisible under certain light conditions they both obstruct and frame their surroundings, through a minimal interruption of its internal space. Irwin has said that the columns 'sit on a delicate edge', creating conditions where 'you don't think about whether it's art or not art. It's just about what you're seeing or not seeing.'

Robert Irwin was born in 1928 in Long Beach, CA and lives and works in La Jolla, CA. He has exhibited in many museums internationally since 1960 including Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; MCA Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Louisiana Museum of Art, Humlebaek and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Wiener Secession, Association of Visual Artists, Vienna (2013); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2010) and MCA San Diego (2007–08). He was the first artist to receive the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur 'Genius' Award, in 1984.

**White Cube Bermondsey is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am—6pm and Sunday, 12—6pm. For further information, please contact Nicola Jeffs: [press@whitecube.com](mailto:press@whitecube.com) or +44 (0)20 7930 5373**

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