

Roy Colmer

January 13 – February 18, 2017
504 W 24th Street, New York

Lisson Gallery is pleased to announce representation of The Estate of Roy Colmer, and will open the gallery's first exhibition of his work in January 2017 in New York. The exhibition will feature fifteen of the artist's early spray-gun paintings, most of which have never been exhibited, and a selection of late photo collages. To accompany the presentation, Lisson Gallery will produce a new publication, featuring an essay by exhibition curator Alex Bacon, as well as previously unpublished archival material.

Known primarily for his conceptual photography and film projects, Colmer began creating his experimental, color-intensive paintings in the mid-1960s, upon moving to New York after graduation from the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, Germany. Inspired by the shifting artistic cultural landscape created by the introduction of electronic media, Colmer challenged the boundaries between painting and film to develop a new kind of perception.

Of his process, Colmer noted: "Experimenting with video feedback, I became excited working with a flowing and constantly changing form. Working in black-and-white video, the liquid properties of the image suggested many possibilities. In my painting, the use of an industrial model spray gun allowed me to cover large areas of the canvas with little effort. The stripes were taped horizontally. I could then approach a breaking down of the color vertically."

Colmer was able to connect the surfaces of his paintings to video by using this spray technique and a careful selection of color, to suggest filmic effects such as movement, flicker, distortion, and as Colmer described, "feedback." He was interested in the immediacy and versatility of the spray gesture, and the ability to manipulate space and depth through color and form, notions influenced by his Concretist mentors at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, Germany.

By the early 1970s, Colmer began to incorporate telegenic feedback directly into his practice, increasingly working in video and film. His exploration and manipulation of electronic signals was aligned with a larger group of artists working in the area at the time, among them Nam June Paik and Bruce Nauman. Colmer stopped experimenting with paint entirely a few years later and focused his attention on conceptual photography and documentary projects.

A selection of photographic works from the 1980s are also included in the exhibition. Arranged in a grid, they create striking contrasts between order and disorder, and focus and distortion, similar to the tension between the field and centralized figure in the early spray paintings. Placed together, the early paintings and late photo collages articulate Colmer's lifelong experiment with color, form, and technique.

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About Roy Colmer

Roy Colmer was born in London in 1935. Aged twenty he enlisted in the British Army and was stationed in Germany. After leaving the military, he studied painting at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg on a full scholarship, where he was taught by professors Almir Mavignier, Eduardo Paolozzi, and Georg Gresko. As a student he began a lifelong friendship with Hanne Darboven, which resulted in multiple collaborations. The two remained champions of the others' work throughout their careers, with Darboven often introducing Colmer's work to artists and dealers and even incorporating selections of his photographs into her own installations.

In 1966 Colmer moved to New York where he continued his painting practice and began to experiment with film and photography. From November 1975 to September 1976, Colmer photographed more than 3000 doors, inclusive and in sequence, on 120 intersections and streets of Manhattan from Wall Street to Fort Washington. The project, titled *Doors, NYC*, became his seminal work, and the New York Public Library acquired a full edition for its archives in 2008. Although documentary in nature, Colmer saw *Doors, NYC* as a conceptual exercise – an exploration of the serial possibilities of photography. Portions of *Doors, NYC* were incorporated and shown in Darboven's work *Kulturgeschichte 1880–1983 (Cultural History 1880–1983)*, 1980–83, currently on view at Dia Art Foundation, Chelsea in New York.

After studying photography at the New School, he taught conceptual photography there with Lisette Model from 1987 to 1995. Colmer's paintings and video feedback works were included in 'High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1966-1975,' a touring exhibition organized and circulated by Independent Curators International from 2006 to 2008. In 2015, *Doors, NYC* was exhibited at 'Greater New York' at MoMA PS1, New York, and in '175 Years of Sharing Photography,' an exhibition from the collection of the New York Public Library. Colmer was a recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 1988 and received a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Art in 1990. The artist died in 2014 in Los Angeles.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade it introduced significant British artists, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Today it continues to support a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander and Haroon Mirza. Across two exhibition spaces in London, one in Milan and a fourth under the High Line in New York, the gallery supports and develops 52 international artists.

Opening Hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

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