

5130 W. EDGEWOOD PL.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90019
T. 323.935.3030
F. 323.935.3031
www.davidkordanskygallery.com

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present Sh/Ash/Lash/Splash, a solo exhibition of new work by John Armleder. Featuring paintings of several different kinds, as well as wall-mounted mirror objects and installation-based elements, the show highlights the artist's use of painting—and the tropes associated with it—as a playfully experimental vehicle for posing questions, provocations, and aesthetic quandaries. The show opens on Thursday, June 27 and will remain on view through August 24, 2019. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, June 27 from 6:00pm until 8:00pm.

John Armleder consistently rewrites presumptions about what art can be in the wake of the modernist and postmodernist revolutions of the last century. His early association with the Fluxus movement has provided the springboard for an ever-evolving array of projects and conceptual approaches—he has produced performances, music, sculptures, and installations as well as paintings—each of which leaves room for the operation of chance and the eruption of humor and pathos alike. These qualities posit Armleder as one of the most representative artists of his generation, and as a key figure in the story of Swiss art.

Armleder's second solo exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery is organized around a central motif: a stylized splash of paint that is found in several different kinds of works, rendered in several different materials. Splashes and puddles have been defining characteristics of many of the paintings the artist has made over the last few years, so that this sharp-edged, graphic iteration alludes to—and symbolizes—a significant portion of his recent work, one in which he detaches the idea of the action-based splatter from the movement of the hand, undermining preconceptions about authenticity and the subjectivity of the heroic individual artist.

Even when it comes to the paintings with “actual” splatters and pours—several of which are included in this show—he proceeds less with specific compositional ideas in mind than with a curiosity about the interactions between different materials. In his Puddle Paintings, for instance, he often combines large quantities of paints made from contraindicated mediums that react in unpredictable ways, and throws glitter, toys, and other bric-a-brac into the still-wet puddles that accumulate. As they dry, visual and sculptural incidents emerge out of

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what seems like the materials' own volition, exceeding the artist's intention and placing him, like any other viewer, in a position where he can stand back and observe formal relationships between textures and colors.

Armleder's Pour Paintings, meanwhile, focus attention on the movement of paint across the canvas as it is thrown. In each he privileges sweeping, calligraphic arcs (complete with the drips that fall from them), channeling the energies of abstract expressionism and action painting. And yet, as is often true of his work, these paintings somehow replace the solemnity of their modernist predecessors with a light-hearted appreciation for the ingenious nature and innate visual interest of their materials, not to mention the very act of creating and looking at energetic splashes of color. In Sh/Ash/Lash/Splash he includes examples of the Pour Paintings that have also been emblazoned with a stenciled splatter. Symbol overlays gesture, and two seemingly competing ways of including a splatter in an artwork exist side-by-side, as if prodding one another into states of mutual admiration—and skepticism.

The splatter threatens to break entirely free of its relationship to painted abstraction in a series of new wall-based mirror sculptures, each of which shares the same silhouette. Fabricated in mirrored glass in a variety of colors and in two sizes, these objects exemplify Armleder's propensity for engaging viewer participation in implied and literal ways, as well as his tendency to activate the spaces in which his artworks appear. The mirrors not only reflect the other artworks in the show and the bodies of the viewers before them; they allow for perspectives in which the exhibition as a whole appears inside the shape of a splatter, so that this caricature of a specific kind of painting also becomes an optical container for other kinds of artmaking strategies.

These works are reminders that Armleder's art is as straightforward as it is complex, and that what you see really is often what you get. Embedded in this notion, of course, are any number of philosophical, visual, biological, and language-based subtleties. Over and over again throughout the course of his multi-staged and varied career, he has demonstrated how such openness sheds light not only on foundational principles of art itself, but on the ways in which people interact with the artifacts of the physical world.

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This summer, John Armleder (b. 1948, Geneva) is the subject of two museum solo exhibitions, at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (opening June 7, 2019) and the Aspen Art Museum (opening July 4, 2019). He has also been the subject of solo shows at institutions that include MUSEION, Bolzano, Italy (2018); Museo MADRE, Naples, Italy (2018); Istituto Svizzero, Rome (2017); Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2014); Fernand Léger National Museum, Biot, France (2014); Dairy Art Centre, London (2013); Swiss Institute, New York (2012); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2011); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2010); Kunstverein Hannover, Germany (2006); Tate Liverpool, England (2006); and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2006); among many others. Recent group exhibitions include A Time Capsule Continued, Parkett Exhibition Space, Zurich (2019); Abstraction: Aspects of Contemporary Art, National Museum of Art, Osaka (2019); THE ARTIST IS PRESENT, Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2018); Brand New. Art and Commodity in the 1980s, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (2018); Sanguin. Luc Tuymans on Baroque, Fondazione Prada, Milan (2018); Inaugural exhibition: The Bunker, The Bunker, West Palm Beach (2017); The Trick Brain, Aishti Foundation, Beirut (2017); and L'Oeil du collectionneur. Neuf collections particulières strasbourgeoises, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg, France (2017). He lives and works in Geneva.

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