AUTOLUMINESCENT

Brendan Van Hek Rebecca Baumann Ross Manning



An artwork's capacity to resonate in the minds of an audience is very much contingent on its 'poetic' presence. Hovering just beyond the immediately understood or directly knowable, this shadow-breath on our minds invests the poetic with its resonating power. - Peter Kennedy

Autoluminescent presents artwork by three Australian contemporary artists who work across a variety of media, yet all embrace luminescent materiality in aspects of their work, to explore the nature of visual perception, light-induced sensory experience, temporality, transformation and interplay between minimalism and monumentalism.

Autoluminescence is a phenomena referring to 'the spontaneous emission of light by a substance at room temperature' or 'the luminescence of a substance (such as a radioactive material) due to energy originating within itself.'

Autoluminescent thus presents a range of luminescent works of art that either emit light or draw on available ambient light, transforming it through processes of reflection, refraction and absorption.

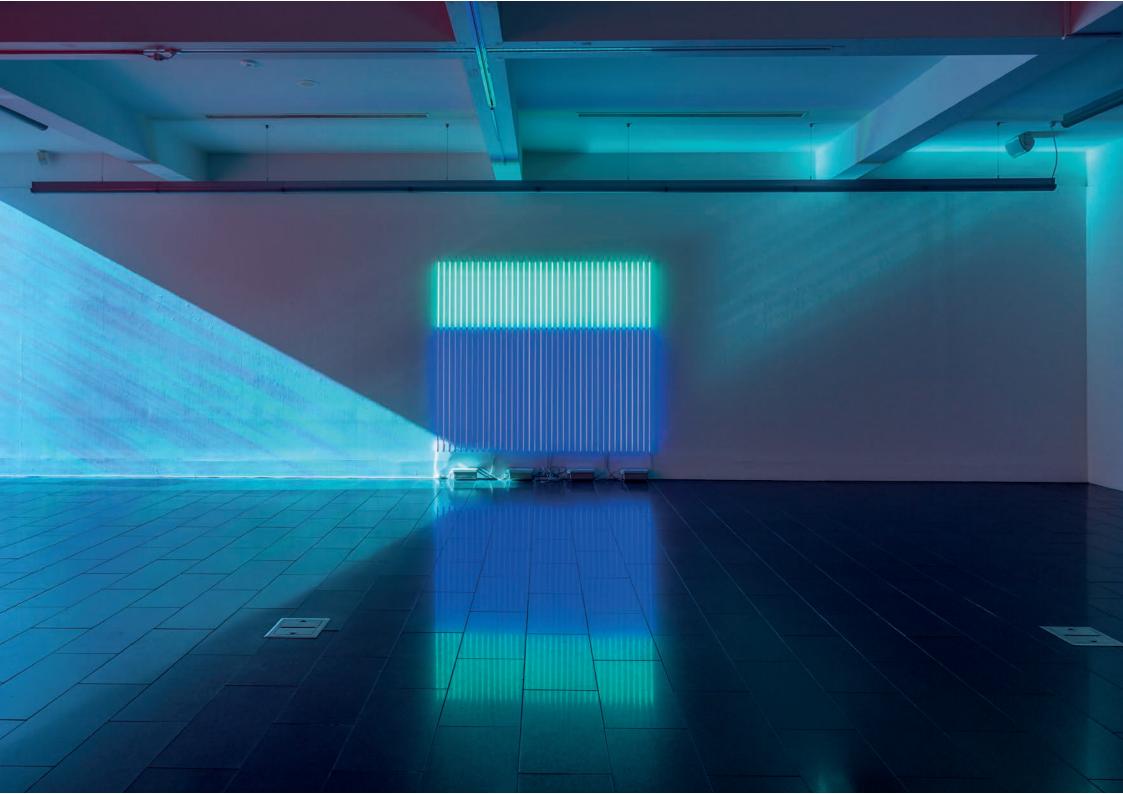
Light has an inherent and unavoidable impact on our perception of space and how we measure time. The presence, absence and durational nature of light is experienced directly through our sensorial and bodily relationship to the material world.

Autoluminescent moves beyond the spectacle of 'light media' and focuses on the more subtle and intangible aspects of light: transformation, perception and embodied experiences of presence/absence, time and place. Each artist exhibiting in Autoluminescent harnesses the continuous, transient and transformative nature of light, shifting our perception from the minute to the extremely vast and back again.

Travis Curtin Curator

Cover image: Autoluminescent installation view
La Trobe Art Institute, 2019. Photo by Ian Hill
Artwork: (left) Brendan Van Hek, Horizon (tangerine, pale pink)
2015, neon, 160 x 152 cm. Courtesy of the artist and
Sarah Cottier Gallery (centre) Rebecca Baumann
Light Moments, Light Movements, 2019, dichroic film
dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Starkwhite
(right) Brendan Van Hek, Horizon (aquamarine,
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Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

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middle the boundary that binds foregrounds and backgrounds blue that is green that is grev expression and action binds that bound sense and the sensual another matter directness of address thingaround see right through think thing context of the revealing quite another question too matte intoxicating inaction black as grey counting deferrals across too glossy excess piques the partaking of it a transparent that allows through hunting it down centred on the surface when dealings across modalities unsettled transparency layered on another not making referred to another site postsense the too intense thinking desensitise desensitised buzz the intensity isn't that harshness that one might self-absorbed as surface and thought self-made and self that is self-evident the covered the vague colour is related to this the tense of sense where angle of approach matters what the phenomena a difference of slight right from the entrance and through nor sensibility light is related to this experience image and colour above and below the pleasure of objectness past hence the bind paste what is sensing that illuminating the abstraction is here the focus of it colour reflected on the wall what is a phenomena of sensing the overlap the underlay white walls are not poste haste of the sublime repetition in the simplest form none not the opposite of for space behind the light all at this one time a provision of time where movement of impression across that there could even be so much why the sensed so serious an objectness that holds of the felt complementary colours hinged above of the tacit refractions do unfold surfaces undoing it or of a floor that picks it up breaking the image through to the exiting bounce of their feeling sobering sensitiveness that purples and greens and pinks modalities of noticing across an edge where it meets abstraction of sensation and then you can't see it any more and of that of feeling at the side of your attention the closeness of abstraction suffused throughout the situation when abstraction tells also of such distance as references shift sideways because understanding develops a narrative were it not for all that space when to make sense of not sensing that pink comes from there but not truly would be a sensing of sense each point a whole extension of context to feel too just suspended under the threshold definitively less deferred of an iterating oscillating of a feeling of felt that requires the power to energise it absolutely more sensed because the colour does not tell you what it is not sober horizons of perceptual just beyond that of hearing and that buzz of hearing out of touch found but not felt to speak of phenomena how can we cut the word the accusations of pleasure to make things more direct that if we know something less in alignment one after another above another the closeness of presence to avoidance the closeness of senses to presence attached to the surface sitting beyond it to have pointers not checklists those views through which they function surfaces that defer to another site sensual abstraction of presence that is on the continuity decentralised despite the geometry the movement of sight through site the abstraction of it here is the focus on it already seen in another light the possibility of engagement when you can't tell what a colour is see right through unless kept at a distance there is a centre to things to writing to light to horizons to luminescence

BRENDAN VAN HEK

Brendan Van Hek works across mediums, incorporating materials such as neon, mirror, glass and metal. Ranging from text-based work to large-scale abstract installations, his work deals with narratives located in personal history, fiction and cultural politics.

Brendan graduated with Honours from Curtin University Western Australia in 2001 and currently lives and works in Sydney. He has exhibited widely nationally, including: Superposition of three types, Artspace, 2017; Colour Restraint (with Rebecca Baumann), Campbelltown Arts Centre, 2015; turn the night to day, Sarah Cottier Gallery 2015; LUMINOUSFLUX, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth, 2013; NEW11, ACCA; Some Kind of Love Story, Anna Schwartz Gallery Sydney, 2011; TWMA Contemporary 2010, Tarrawarra Museum of Art; and A Certain Slant of Light, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2009. He has exhibited internationally in Amour Fou, New Westminster New Media Gallery, New Westminster, Vancouver, Canada; Shifting Geometries, The Australian Embassy, Washington DC, USA and Becoming: Worlds In Flux, C24 Gallery, Chelsea, New York, USA. In 2012 he undertook a residency at ISCP, New York, and was the recipient of a Mid-Career Fellowship from the Department of Culture and the Arts WA, and in 2013 and 2016 a New Work Grant from the Australia Council.

Artist Statement

A horizon is a beckoning, unreachable line. It is a point of transition – elsewhere between land, sea and sky, here from aquamarine to midnight blue, from tangerine to pale pink, from one state to another, above and below. The call of light is undeniable, it reaches to us, as does a horizon – where hopes and dreams are traced – it cannot be grasped but it exists.



REBECCA BAUMANN

Rebecca Baumann is a visual artist currently living and working in Perth, Western Australia. Her practice spans sculpture, installation and performance, and she often works site-responsively, using colour, light and time in an intervention with space. Her materials are sourced from the everyday, commercial and industrial realms, where she repurposes fans, clocks, and billboards, subverting their inherent language as a means to talk about the world around us. Often kinetic and ephemeral in nature, her work seeks to affect the audience through experiential, momentary and emotive qualities.

Baumann has exhibited widely across Australia and overseas, and her solo exhibitions include: Window work (intersections and notations), National Gallery of Victoria (2018); Untitled (Exploded View), Dunedin Public Art Gallery, NZ (2017); WA Focus: Rebecca Baumann, Art Gallery of WA (2016); Manoeuvres, Fremantle Arts Centre (2015); Once More With Feeling, Starkwhite, Auckland, NZ (2014). She has been included in group exhibitions: Dancing Umbrellas, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne (2016); New Romance, MMCA, Seoul (2015); Color Fields, MassArt Bakalar & Paine Galleries, Boston (2015); Encounters, Art Basel Hong Kong (2014); Contemporary Australia: Women, GoMA, Brisbane (2012); Primavera 2011, MCA Sydney (2011), and NEW11, ACCA, Melbourne (2011).

She has also been the recipient of numerous awards and grants including an Arts Project Grant, Australia Council (2015), DCA Mid-Career Fellowship (2013), Veolia Primavera Acquisitive Art Award (2012), Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award (2011), and Qantas Spirit of Youth Award (2009). Baumann has undertaken residencies at HIAP, Finland (2016), ISCP New York (2012), and Culturia, Berlin (2010).

Artist Statement

Light Moments, Light Movements (2019) is an architectural intervention using dichroic film applied to the glass surfaces of the La Trobe Art Institute. Dichroic film is a dynamic material, which changes colour as you move around it, and transmits a different colour light to that it reflects. The perceptual experience of the work is affected by factors such as the atmospheric conditions, and as the sun travels across the sky, the light transmitted throughout the building will be constantly shifting and evolving. In Light Moments, Light Movements the building becomes a fluctuating entity – a meditation on impermanence and change.



ROSS MANNING

Ross Manning creates kinetic sculptures made from everyday unpretentious materials such as domestic fans, fluorescent lights, household twine and electronics. Revealing both the construction and materials in his installations, Manning playfully dissects overlooked technologies to produce hypnotic exchanges between light, sound and movement.

Selected solo exhibitions include Melody Lines, Liveworks: Festival of Experimental Art, Performance Space and Carriageworks, Sydney (2016); New Work, Milani Gallery, Brisbane (2016); NO OPUS, CORFLUTE, Brisbane (2015); Different Rhythms, Dark Mofo, Hobart (2014); Ross Manning: Volumes, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth (2013); Field Emissions, Starkwhite Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (2012); Double Refraction, Lismore Regional Gallery, New South Wales (2010); Sunshine and Zincaloom, Ptarmigan space, Helsinki (2009).

Selected group exhibitions include Set in Motion, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand (2016); Colourshift: Ross Manning + Kit Webster, Alternative Space Loop, Seoul (2016); Light Play: Ideas, Optics, Atmosphere, The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane (2015); GOMA Q: Contemporary Queensland Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2015); The Kaleidoscopic Turn, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2015); 19th Biennale of Sydney: You Imagine What You Desire, Cockatoo Island, Sydney (2014); Sonic Spheres: TarraWarra Biennial 2012, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria (2012); Primavera 2009: Young Australian Artists, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2009).

Artist Statement

I am currently interested in harnessing pre-existing energies in my artwork,

such as ambient light, sunlight, heat, wind, tidal movement, gravity and magnetism. The *Ambient Paintings* series (2016 - ongoing) shows my particular interest in creating light works that utilise the ambient energy of the environment they exist in, rather than being powered by electricity.

I think of these works as passive or ambient electronic images.

The Ambient Paintings use components removed and repurposed from old data projectors, that were previously used to process and generate colour images in the optical matrix of the projector. These small glass dichroic filters are mounted directly to the surface of the canvas at right angles using sliver clasps. Dichroic filters remove or 'filter out' certain frequencies from the visible light spectrum and are critical components in the colour mixing process involved in data projection.

The images created by the *Ambient Paintings* are produced by the interaction between light and the object. The nature and character of these images are determined by the position of the canvas in relation to the source of light, the distance of the lighting source to the artwork, the angle of light, the number of lights and the impact of other sources of ambient light, such as sunlight.

The Ambient Paintings also reference traditional painting, embracing the canvas as a support. Colour paint, as we experience it, absorbs all of the colours that comprise visible white light. The frequencies reflected by the paint produce the colour we see. The Ambient Paintings have similar qualities to abstract painting, yet simultaneously embody the qualities of electronic images, they also reference minimalism and temporal forms of art.

Image: Ross Manning, *Ambient Painting #7* (detail), 2018, acrylic, silver and dichroic glass on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane. Photo by Ian Hill.



AUTOLUMINESCENT

Autoluminescent takes its title from a song by the late great Rowland S Howard, and diverges from the blinding brightness of the gritty-end of the rock'n'roll scene, to emerge on the other side of the lens here in the world of contemporary art. Two of my great loves converging for a brief moment.

This isn't the first time this group of artists have exhibited in various combinations together, which shows whilst exploring different ideas in their work conceptually, aesthetically and materially, there is a connectedness between their practices.

I was talking to Ross Manning during the install of the exhibition and we discussed the fact that there are some clear points of convergence between the work of the three exhibiting artists. The most obvious being that each of them embraces the immaterial materiality of light.

Just as Rebecca Baumann and Brendan Van Hek's works intersect in the front gallery for mere moments during specific times of the day, there are points of convergence that connect these artists and points of divergence where they depart from each other. It is this intersection, in the liminal spaces 'in-between' objects and 'things', that *Autoluminescent* seeks to celebrate.

Perhaps the greatest joy of working with an immaterial material such as light, is that it commands an experience of 'being here'. An experience that is unreproducible outside of itself. In our current digital age of image reproduction such embodied experiences are a rare treasure.

All of the works in *Autoluminescent* are highly context sensitive. They are temporal, but also beyond the abstract idea of space, they are embedded in place, reflected in the way they coalesce for short moments each day.

Our experience of standing in front of a work of art doesn't begin and end within a frame or gallery walls. It is not bound within the confines of the image we are looking at, but extends to our lived experience.

The immaterial materiality of light makes us all the more aware of this bodily relationship to the object, more aware of our sensory response and embodied experience.

We see ourselves reflected in the present-absence at the centre of Brendan Van Hek's *Void* (2014). We see and feel the impact of his two neon works, *Horizon* (tangerine, pale pink) and *Horizon* (aquamarine, midnight blue) (2015), in the colours reflected both in the architecture of the gallery and on our skin or the skin of others. The body, completes the work in a liminal space, bridging the void between the neon object and viewing subject.

We move across the threshold of the automated doors at the buildings entrance and step inside Rebecca Baumann's *Light Moments*, *Light Movements* (2019). Its transformative swathes of light washing over the internal space of the building, engulfing us in Rebecca's work. The character of the work shifting subtly over the course of the day as the earth rotates on its axis. This temporal shifting of time produces vibrant angular blocks of geometric colour when the sun is out and more subdued subtle washes of colour when cloudy. The dichroic film responds to our physical position in relation to both it and the light, again making us aware of our bodily presence. It makes us aware of the confrontation between nature and architecture and the way that windows allow inside and outside to be transcended by light. Monumental daily interactions that we are oblivious to until they are made unfamiliar, sublimely unnatural.

This monumental scale is reduced to the minimal, microcosm of Brendan Van Hek's *Nothing to do but improve* (2017) positioned in the foyer and downsized again in the detailed reflections and refractions of Ross Manning's *Ambient Paintings* (2019).

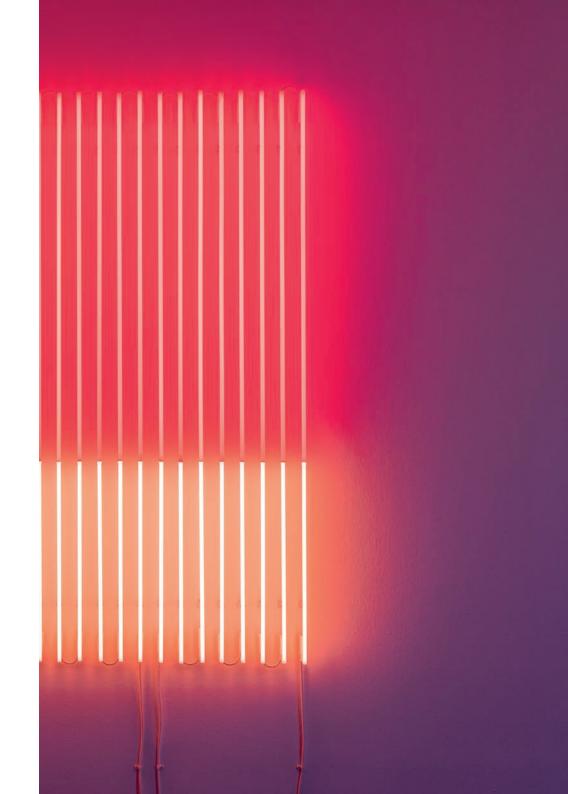
In all of these shifts in temporality, scale, colour, presence and absence we are made aware of our embodied experience, here and now.

Art theorist and historian Terry Smith describes his experience of Richard Serra's monumental steel sculptures at Dia:Beacon, referring to "their clarity of form read by the moving body (what might be called their crisp phenomenology)... These works embody pure contemporaneousness; they nail the spectator with this quality of the always present, and lift him or her into the sublime of the now."

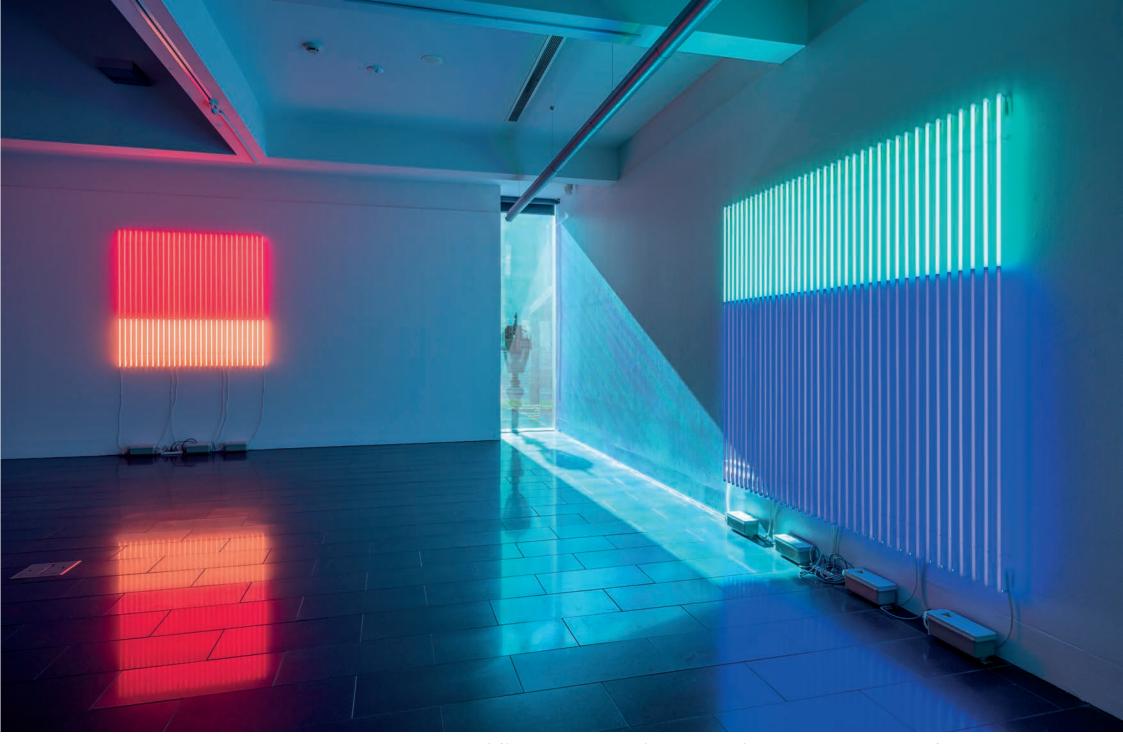
It is my hope that *Autoluminescent* presents a selection of light works that create a profound experience of Contemporaneity, making us acutely aware of our multisensory and embodied experience, our place in the sublime of the now.

Travis Curtin
Curator

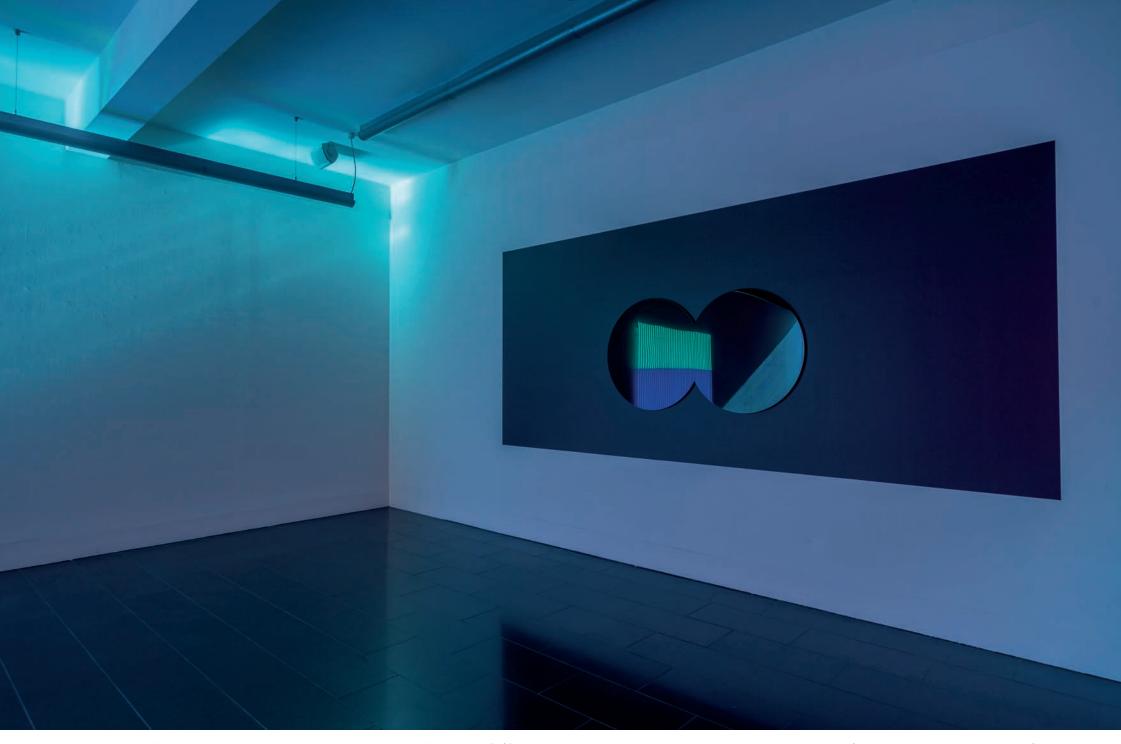
Image: Brendan Van Hek, *Horizon (tangerine, pale pink)* (detail), 2015, neon, 160 x 152 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery. Photo by Ian Hill.



¹ Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art*, 2009, The University of Chicago Press, pg44.



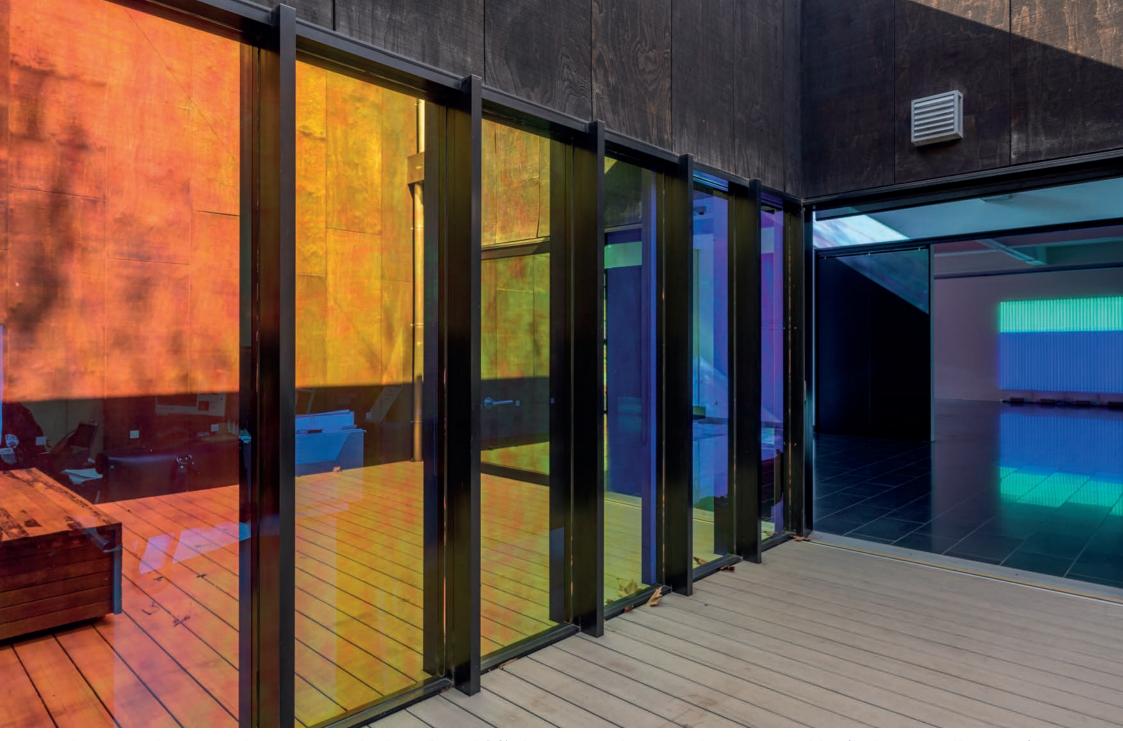
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Autoluminescent installation view, La Trobe Art Institute, 2019. Photo by Ian Hill. ArtworkL: (left) Rebecca Baumann, Light Movements, 2019, dichroic film, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Starkwhite (right) Brendan Van Hek, Void, 2014, perspex, paint, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery.



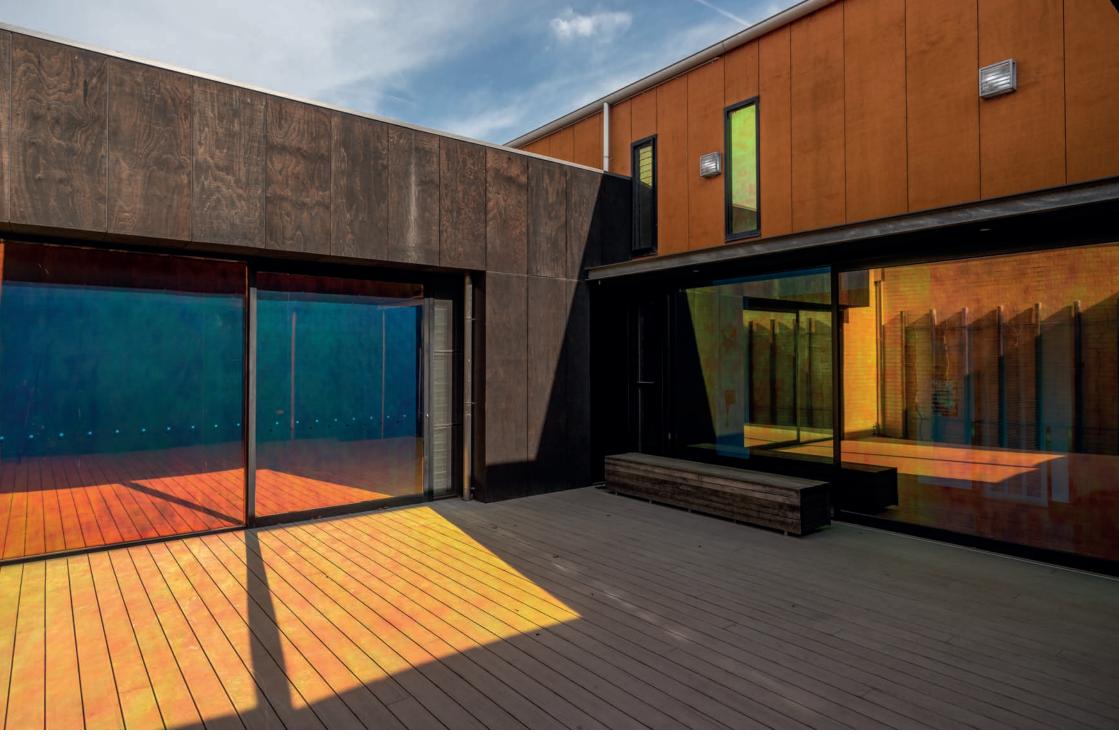
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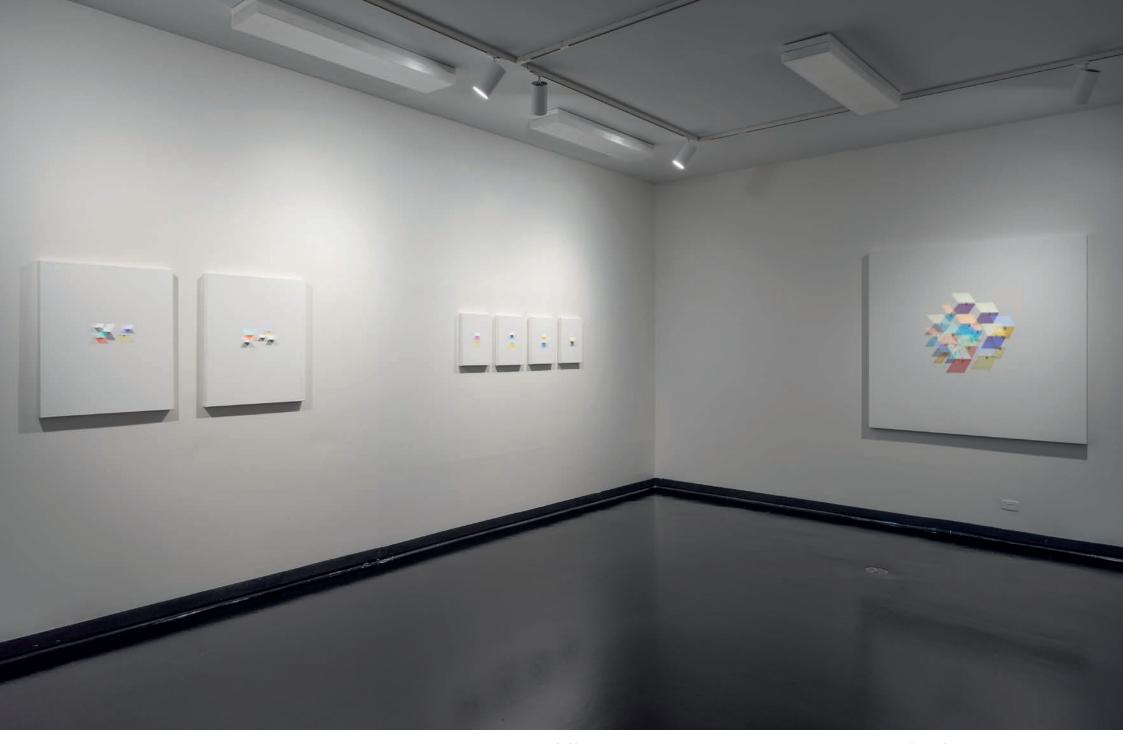
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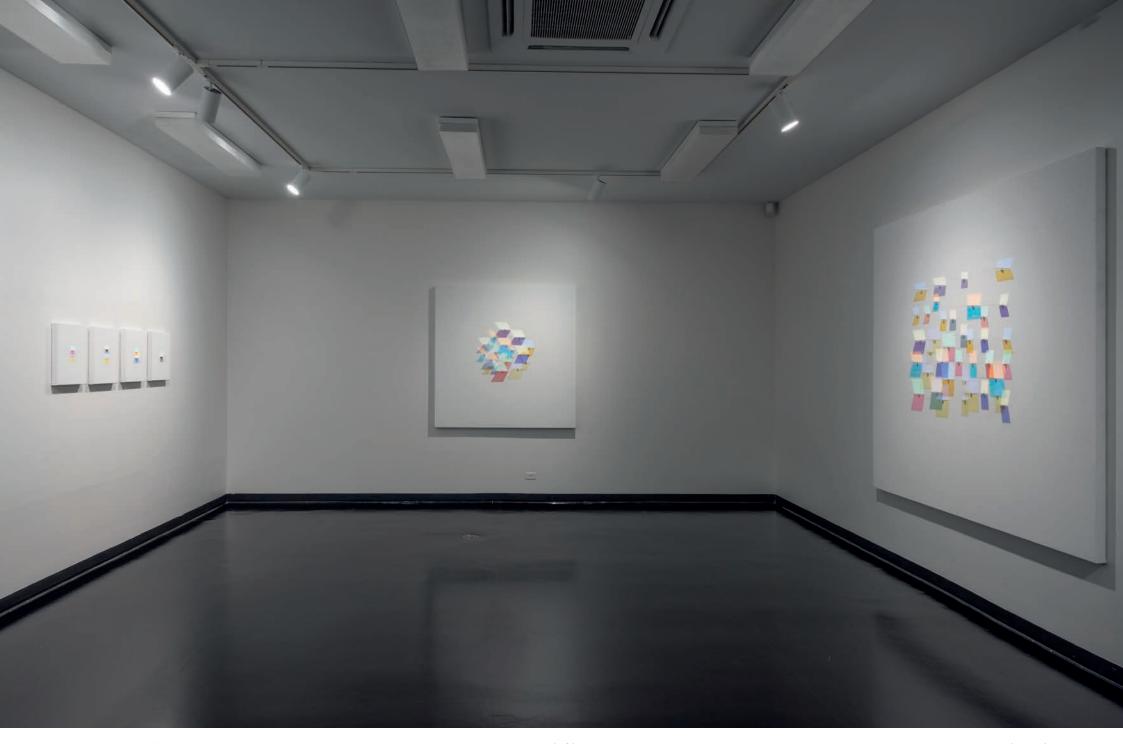
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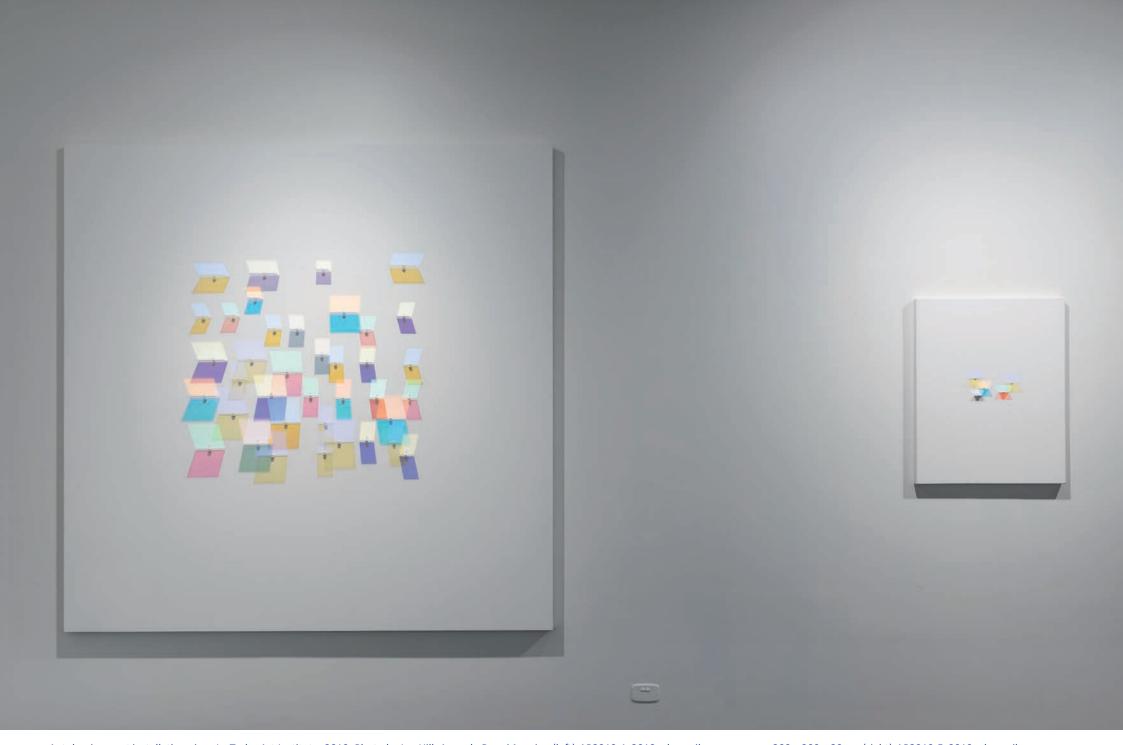
Autoluminescent installation view, La Trobe Art Institute, 2019. Photo by Ian Hill. Arwork: Ross Manning, (left) AP2019-3, AP2019-4, 2019, glass, silver on canvas, 60 x 76 x 30 cm. (centre) AP2019-6, AP2019-7, AP2019-8, AP2019-9, 2019, glass, silver on canvas, 20 x 30 x 30 cm (right) AP2019-2, 2019, glass, silver on canvas, 160 x 160 x 30 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.



Autoluminescent installation view, La Trobe Art Institute, 2019. Photo by Ian Hill. Arwork: Ross Manning, (left to right) AP2019-6, AP2019-7, AP2019-8, AP2019-9, 2019, glass, silver on canvas, 20 x 30 x 30 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.



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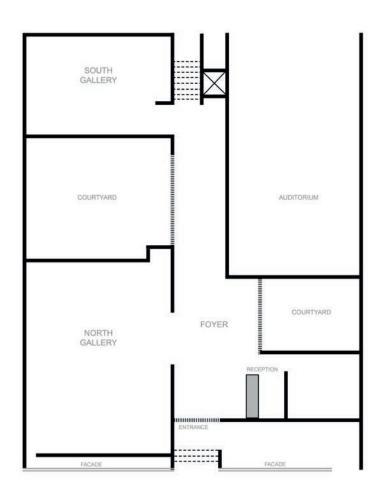


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ARTWORK



VIEW STREET

LA TROBE ART INSTITUTE

Rebecca Baumann

Light Moments, Light Movements (2019)

dimensions variable dichroic film

Courtesy of the artist and Starkwhite

FOYER

Brendan Van Hek

Nothing to do but improve (2017)

112 x 52 x 20 cm

perspex

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

NORTH GALLERY

Brendan Van Hek

Horizon (tangerine, pale pink) (2015)

160 x 152 cm

neon

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

Brendan Van Hek

Horizon (aquamarine, midnight blue) (2015)

230 x 242 cm

neon

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

Brendan Van Hek

Void (2014)

dimensions variable

perspex, paint

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

SOUTH GALLERY

Ross Manning

AP2019-3 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas

60 x 76 x 30 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

AP2019-4 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

60 x 76 x 30 cm.

AP2019-6 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas 20 x 30 x 30 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

AP2019-7 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas

20 x 30 x 30 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

AP2019-8 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas

20 x 30 x 30 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

AP2019-9 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas

20 x 30 x 30 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

AP2019-2 (2019)

glass, silver on canvas

160 x 160 x 30 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Ross Manning

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glass, silver on canvas

200 x 200 x 30 cm.

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glass, silver on canvas

60 x 76 x 30 cm.

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Brendan Van Hek | Rebecca Baumann | Ross Manning

08<mark>07</mark>2019 — 24<mark>08</mark>2019

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Special thanks to:

Brendan Van He

Ross Manning

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Sarah Cottier Gal

Starkwhite

Ian Hill

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