

reviews: international

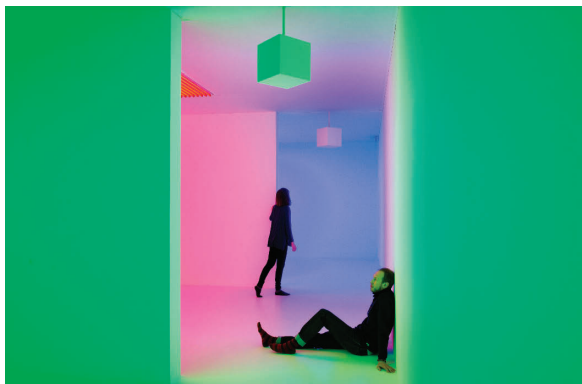
'Light Show'

Hayward
London

This exhibition offered an entertaining survey of contemporary artists who have explored the properties and possibilities of artificial light, from Dan Flavin's pioneering 1960s work in colored fluorescent tubes to the strobe-lighted optical illusion of Olafur Eliasson's *Model for a timeless garden* (2011). Demonstrating how artists have used relatively simple, consumer-friendly bulbs to sometimes dazzling effect, "Light Show" documented a rich and ever-shifting vein of production.

The first piece to greet viewers was Leo Villareal's *Cylinder II* (2012), a glittering tower of light and mass. It set an ethereal, even glamorous tone that found its darker counterpart in Jenny Holzer's *MONUMENT* (2008)—a stern, imposing totem of LED tickers that relay the texts of declassified United States government files from the Iraq War. Other works matched light with mirrors to create a trompe l'oeil paradox. In *Reality Show* (2010), Iván Navarro built a cubicle of one-way mirrors in which viewers saw an infinite series of reflections that, puzzlingly, did not include their own image. They could not see out, but people standing outside the box could see in, subtly alluding to police-state interrogations in Navarro's native Chile.

Anthony McCall's *You and I, Horizontal* (2005) used video projectors and mist to give light seemingly material form. In London artist Conrad Shawcross's *Slow Arc Inside a Cube IV* (2009), a metal cage in the center of the room contained a rotating light that cast looming shadows on the walls, demonstrating how light can be used to subvert our sense of scale.



Carlos Cruz-Diez, *Chromosaturation*, 1965-2013, fluorescent lights with red, blue, and green filters, dimensions variable. Hayward.

Also featuring works by James Turrell, Doug Wheeler, and Carlos Cruz-Diez, "Light Show" might have included others, such as Robert Irwin and Julio Le Parc, but it nonetheless provided an exquisitely curated trip through one of contemporary art's most flexible mediums.

—Roger Atwood

'Becoming Picasso: Paris 1901'

Courtauld
London

Throughout his long working life, Picasso created for himself a virtually unassailable reputation for precocity. There were numerous breakthrough years; so many, indeed, that his diversity is almost as big a topic as his overall stature. Even in 1901, when he was 19, he produced—sometimes at the rate of three paintings a day—works that pushed every button within range, all destined for his debut exhibition with dealer Ambroise Vollard. In this concentrated, illuminating show, curator Barnaby Wright demonstrated the virtue of clear focus and exemplary choices. The 18 pictures from 1901, drawn from collections from around the world, were the necessary ones.

In the summer of that year, having just arrived in Paris from Madrid, Picasso took on van Gogh, Cézanne, and Toulouse-Lautrec, moving from froufrou Hispanesque to low-key Nabis. His aim, it seems, was to adopt vivacious styles as a matter of urgency. His friend, the poet Casagemas, had shot himself that February, and Picasso elected himself as chief mourner in his paintings. (He couldn't be there at the funeral.) *Evocation (The Burial of Casagemas)* trans-

figures the suicide into an El Greco-like altarpiece composition, with women perched on the clouds above. They are naked save for black stockings, already foreshadowing the figures of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, which Picasso would create six years later.

"Becoming Picasso" celebrated the unstoppable of the artist. In



Pablo Picasso, *Self-Portrait (Yo)*, 1901, oil on board, 21 1/4" x 12 1/2". Courtauld.

Self-Portrait (Yo), an oil on board, the artist's blazing eyes emerge from a dark background, sizing up the challenges and the options. In 1902-3, Picasso would tone things down and step into his Blue Period, risking a drear combination of Puvis de Chavannes and Edward Burne-Jones. But he soon got over that as well. As this exhibition proved, his devouring spirit and his habitual remakes were there right from the start. —William Feaver

Armando Romero

Inception
Paris

For this subversive exhibition, titled "Les Faceties d'Armando Romero" (Armando Romero's Facetiousness), the 49-year-old Mexican artist appropriated iconic works by the likes of Goya, Botero, and Bosch and reinterpreted them with impertinent modifications and additions. His surprising desecrations—proof of great skill—included graffiti, comic-book heroes, and cartoon characters, as he injected high-brow art-historical masterpieces with low-brow contemporary references.

All the works on view were both funny and uncomfortable in their irreverence. In a suite of anachronistic paintings, Romero integrated such characters