

PAUL STOLPER

Brian Eno/Dan Flavin

16 June – 25 August 2023

Paul Stolper is pleased to announce an exhibition of light works and sonic sculpture

'I've been trying to make pictures that change slowly in time and which don't repeat. I started working with light around about the same time I started working with sound, which was in the mid-to-late 1960s'¹ 'I was at school, studying Fine Art, so I was studying painting, but I found that I wanted to create painting that was more like music, in the sense that it changed in time'² 'By the mid 1970s I was starting to develop a kind of music that I called Ambient music, which was really an attempt to make music that was more like painting. So, it was music that pretty much stayed in one place and didn't tell you a story: it was an atmosphere or condition that you could enter and leave when you wanted'³ '...there's a space in our lives for this kind of experience, this type of experience, where nothing much happens'⁴ 'The process is simple. The results are complex. I started using light and video because I wanted to make visual experiences that had some of the qualities of musical experiences'⁵ **Brian Eno** 'Culture is not just a shrine holding the relics of our greatest ideas. It is a psychic space that we all constantly recreate. It is makeshift, unstable, evolving, always being re-evaluated and reconstructed. It is as necessary a space for the psyche as shelter is for the body. It is where we experiment with our thoughts and is being created by all of us, all the time'⁶ 'Generative art is always in the process of making itself. It is always unfinished'⁷ 'I try to make my work seductive enough for people to want to surrender to it. I like the idea that art can be there to comfort you, to warm you and surround you'⁸ 'Most importantly, perhaps, we might start to think the same way about ourselves: that we are unfinished (and un-finishable) beings whose task is constantly to re-examine and remix our ideas and our identities. This is the most optimistic thing I can think of - that people abandon the increasingly perilous old definitions of identity, such as race and ethnicity, class and blood, and start thinking of identity as something multiple, shifting, blurred, experimental and adaptive'⁹

'real materials in real space'¹⁰ 'fluorescent/soles/shimmer/shiver/flick/out/dim/monuments/of/on/and/off/art'¹¹ 'I knew that the actual space of a room could be disrupted and played with by careful, thorough composition of the illuminating equipment'¹² 'Now the entire interior spatial container and its components – wall, floor and ceiling, could support a strip of light but would not restrict its act of light except to enfold it'¹³ 'Regard the light and you are fascinated practically inhibited from grasping its limits at each end'¹⁴ 'Flavin's career-long preoccupation with the corner of the gallery echoes both Tatlin's radical gesture to remove the frame and engage real space with a construction of nontraditional, industrial materials'¹⁵ 'I like art as thought better than art as work. It's important I don't get my hands dirty. It's not because I'm instinctively lazy. It's a declaration: art is thought'¹⁶ **Dan Flavin** 'When one uses an unfocused source, which in the main is what fluorescent light is, the spread of light, to a certain extent, is uncontrollable'¹⁷ 'PT: "Is one color as good as another?" DF: "...Red is a rather precious thing in fluorescent light, as it once was in the historic traditions of Western painting. You have to manage red carefully. You know, the touch in a Goya, or something like that, the touch of red which makes the painting? That's revived in fluorescent painting"¹⁸ 'With the color usage, you might consider a certain installation to be LA vulgar or Beach Boy vulgar'¹⁹ 'The dedications are mostly extraneous but personal. They're sentimental, and that's nice'²⁰ 'I think it's obvious that what I've done is urban backgrounded. I'm a city boy. I rode the subways, rode the elevated, and god knows what else'²¹ 'I can abuse lighting in a sufficiently useful way and still accomplish what I regard as art'²² 'I think I'm one of those people who, for better or worse, really believes in of the simplest materials as being the best ones to think through'²³ 'It's electric current with a switch - dubious'²⁴

Footnotes

1-4 Brian Eno 2021 'Reflected'. Brian Eno at the National Gallery of Umbria. 5-9 Brian Eno Light Music Introductory booklet 2018. 10 Donald Judd Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights p53. 11 Dan Flavin 1961 concrete poem p.22 note 12. 12-14 Dan Flavin "...in daylight or cool white" an autobiographical sketch Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights p191. 15 Dan Flavin: The Complete Lights p42. 16-22 Unpublished interview with Phyllis Tuchman 09.03.1972. 23-24 DF interviewed by Tiffany Bell 13.07.1982