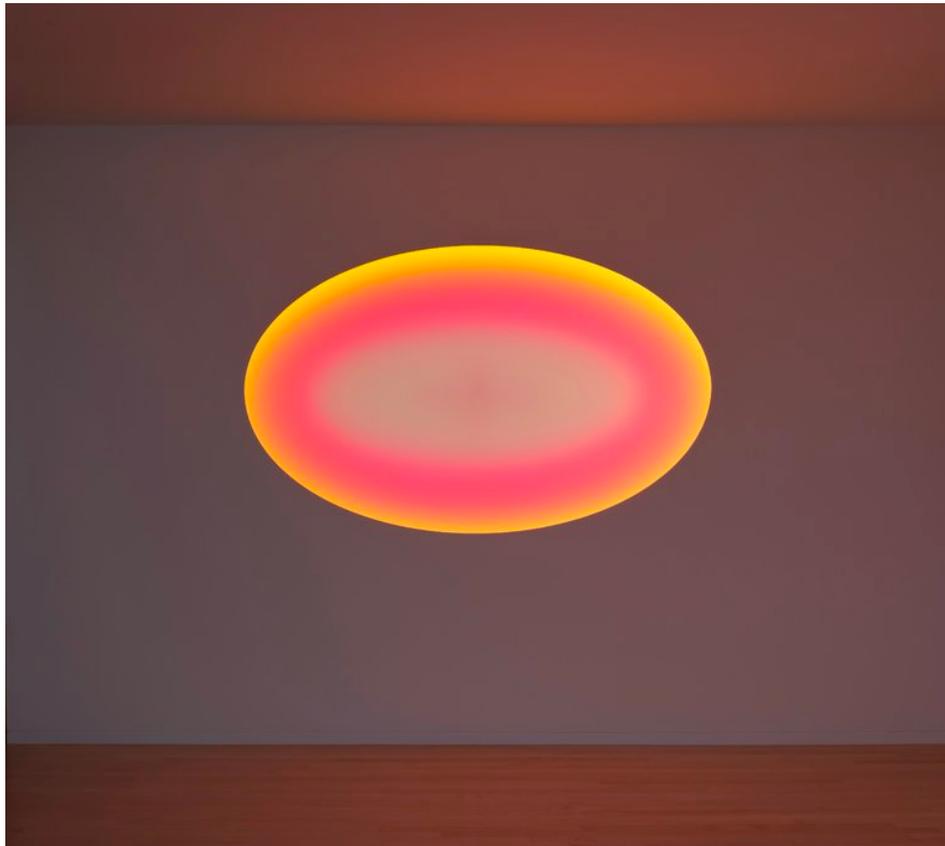


# Kayne Griffin Corcoran

## The New York Times

### At Frieze London, Throwing Light on Tense Times



Part of "Elliptical Wide Glass," by James Turrell, which will be on display at the 14th edition of Frieze London this month.  
Credit James Turrell, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles, photo by Robert Wedemeyer.

As the British capital gears up for the 14th edition of Frieze London, the artists, gallerists, dealers and collectors gathering for the event are trying to anticipate the mood of the art market at a time of pronounced political uncertainty, at home and abroad.

In some ways, Frieze London, which opens on Oct. 6, is conducting art-business as usual: presenting a lively annual showcase of new and emerging artists alongside a full array of auxiliary events and socializing.

But this year's fair is also expected to be an indicator of how political and social tumult in the world at large — post-Brexit vote, pre-American election, with fluctuating financial markets and fears of terrorism — will be reflected in the art people make, and in the works that are bought.

Segal, Nina. "At Frieze London, Throwing Light on Tense Times". The New York Times. October 6th, 2016. Web.

"One of the reasons fairs work is that it's a way to walk around and see and feel the mood of the world," Victoria Siddall, the director of Frieze, said by telephone. "But until the crates open at the fair and the art comes out, it's very hard to tell what it's going to be, how it's going to look and what the mood of the fair will be."

This year's Frieze London in lush, leafy Regent's Park brings together more than 160 contemporary art galleries from 30 countries. Frieze Masters, its four-year-old sibling fair of blue-chip art from ancient times to the late 20th century, presents an additional 130 galleries.

Other attractions include the Frieze Sculpture Park of monumental outdoor works, also in Regent's Park, as well as a series of newly commissioned works, live participatory performance pieces and gallery talks.

Frieze London will also feature solo installations by the American light artist James Turrell and the French avant-garde artist Philippe Parreno.

With its concentration of galleries and museums, and its position as a crossroads for the world's collectors, London buzzes fairly consistently with art-world energy throughout the year. But it hits a surge twice a year — in June for the Masterpiece, Olympia and related shows, and in October for Frieze Week.

"The only time there's a real intensity and real hungry energy for art is during the week of Frieze, when art becomes the subject in London," said Timothy Taylor, a contemporary art dealer in London who will participate in both Frieze London and Frieze Masters this year. "It's the subject for the taxi drivers, for the museums, for the curators, for the writers, critics and the galleries, and of course for the artists."

Frieze began in 1991 as an art magazine — the fairs followed later, with London in 2003 and New York in 2012 — so this year marks the 25th anniversary of the brand. Befitting the occasion, this year's London fair will also feature a look back at the decade when its parent organization got its start.

A new gallery section, "The Nineties," curated by Nicolas Trembley, will feature recreations of 11 seminal exhibitions from that decade in New York, London, Paris and Cologne, Germany.

"It was a moment in London when contemporary art became something different and kind of exploded," Ms. Siddall said. "It's a reflection on the galleries who are really critical today, and what they were doing in the nineties and how they shaped the scene and the world we live in now."

Mr. Trembley said that now felt like an "interesting time" to look back on a tumultuous decade and its "seismic effect" on the art world.

"It was a difficult moment, with the AIDS crisis," he wrote in an email, "but also a futuristic one, witnessing the emergence of the internet and globalization, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War."

The section will include a replica of the first gallery show by the German photographer Wolfgang Tillman, in 1993, which took place in the basement of his father's bookshop, and two installations by the British artist Michael Landy, precursors to his best-known work, "Break Down" in 2001.

The 1990s represent "the opposite of today," Mr. Trembley said, since in some ways it was a period of the opening of borders, post-glasnost, and the beginning of globalism. "It was the end of the western hegemony and the fall of painting, in a way," he added. "In this way the '90s was about exploration — the traditional art world models were being redefined. The work was less about material success and more about freedom, evolution and collaboration."

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The current state of the world will be addressed most directly at Frieze Talks, which this year will present a series of daily lunchtime discussions on the theme of "Borderlands." Issues will include Donald J. Trump's proposed wall between the United States and Mexico, the refugee crisis in Europe, and transgender politics in art.

Speakers will include the Kuwaiti musician and visual artist Fatima Al Qadiri, the American artist and curator Josh Kline, the American conceptual artist and writer Jill Magid, and the British art writer Hannah Black.

"We realized that we were about to launch into Frieze Talks in a moment when the world is really so turbulent," said Gregor Muir, a co-curator of Frieze Talks. "In a sense what we wanted to ask was whether contemporary art could address this and the multitude of issues that are being thrown up everywhere in the world right now. How do artists equip themselves to engage the world in its present state of turmoil?"

Since Frieze London is also a commercial event, the more immediate question for participating galleries will be how art sales at the fair might be affected by the recent turbulence in financial markets.

Clare McAndrew, an economist and founder of the Dublin-based consulting firm Arts Economics, said she saw the possibility of a positive impact for buyers from outside Britain.

In the short term, she said, the weakened pound will create "a little added bonus" for buyers from the United States, since "people have more money in their pocket, really, when they're coming over with dollars."

"There are a lot of negatives generally about the U.K. leaving the E.U. from an economist's point of view," she said. "But I think in terms of the art market in the U.K., it's actually quite a positive — or, anyway, there are a lot of opportunities for it to be a positive thing."

Others said they thought there was unlikely to be much of an effect.

"The Brexit experience certainly shocked London tremendously, but since then really nothing has changed," Mr. Taylor said. "There's as much talk about Brexit as there is about Hillary Clinton's health right now, it's just nonstop, but it doesn't seem to manifest itself in anything tangible or in anything real. We, as a trade in London, continue much as before."

Lisa Schiff, an art adviser based in New York, said the global sense of unease and uncertainty was likely to have some influence on sales, but it was difficult to predict exactly how.

"I have the feeling it'll be much like Art Basel this year, where some galleries will have the best year they've ever had and others will be spotty and it's sort of random," she said.

She added that there had been a shift away from speculation on young artists, though "a lot of people are looking for under-recognized, undervalued blue-chip artists, less hyped and more solid."

Collectors often buy art based on a feeling of security and ease, she said, and a sense of hopefulness needs to be part of the equation.

"Art is a place to escape — it's a place to love something," she said. "It comes from a place of joy when you want to buy something and hang it in your home. That's still happening, it's not that it's gone at all, but it's a little wobbly at the moment."

-Nina Siegal