



Cerith Wyn Evans  
*"...the Illuminating Gas"*

EN

Pirelli HangarBicocca

#### Public Program

11 January 2020 | Tour of the exhibition with Cerith Wyn Evans  
in conversation with Roberta Tenconi

Performative screening with new films by Cerith Wyn Evans  
and Stephen Farrer

9 February 2020 | Concert by Keiji Haino, curated by Pedro Rocha

For details and all the events related to the exhibition,  
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#### Cultural Mediation

To know more about the exhibition ask to our cultural  
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Via Chiese, 2  
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Thursday to Sunday 10.30 AM – 8.30 PM

Monday to Wednesday closed

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**FREE ADMISSION**

# Cerith Wyn Evans

## *"...the Illuminating Gas"*

31 October 2019 – 26 July 2020

Curated by Roberta Tenconi and Vicente Todolí

Pirelli HangarBicocca



Cerith Wyn Evans, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1995. Photo: David Busseel

## Cerith Wyn Evans

Cerith Wyn Evans (Llanelli, Wales, UK, 1958; lives and works in London and Norwich) began his career in London's experimental art scene in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A student at Central Saint Martins in London of artist John Stezaker and of theoretician and filmmaker Peter Gidal, he then graduated from the Royal College of Art in 1984. During this period he came into contact with post-punk culture and avant-garde filmmakers linked to independent cinema, and presented his own short- and medium-length films outside institutional settings. These works, realized by mixing and editing films, Super 8 and videos, are distinguished by their anti-narrative structure adopted from the experimental "structural film," a movement that developed in the United States during the 1960s. The performative and engaging nature of his projections—often activating the viewers' senses—, the unusual character of the experience and the attempt at deconstructing conventional visual mechanisms, recall what came to be known as "expanded cinema" in the 1970s. With respect to this approach, employed in his early films, and to the potential of the medium in generating new ways of experiencing and perceiving film, Cerith Wyn Evans has commented: «I suppose one could say that I have been referred to as an experimental filmmaker. I wanted to work with non-narrative cinema, cinema that was essentially about not telling stories but looking at pictures. The condition of cinema and perhaps the relationship of cinema to text was very attractive to me.»

Starting from the 1990s, Cerith Wyn Evans turned his research away from film and concentrated on sculptures and site-specific installations through which he continued his exploration of language and perception. Integrating elements like sound and light, these works are characterized by the use of editing as a compositional technique, the imaginative potential of the word, the centrality of the temporal dimension in the experience of a work.

In 1996 he had his first solo exhibition at White Cube in London, where he presented *Inverse, Reverse, Perverse* (1996), a sculpture that featured a large concave mirror positioned on one of the gallery's walls. Depending on the point of view, the sculpture presented distorted reflections of the viewers and no one would see the same image when approaching it. Positioned above the entrance to the space, the neon work *TIX3* (1994)—the standard "EXIT" sign in public places written backwards—induced the viewer to consider the notion of dislocation and the limits of the perceptual experience. Also part of the exhibition was a series of photographs of the artist as a child taken by Evans' father, which were displayed upside-down on the gallery walls.

Using a variety of materials, such as mirrors, neon lights, plants, fireworks, projectors and mirror balls, Evans generates—in a tangible or more ephemeral form—a reflection on the potential of art to evoke and create collisions among different meanings, often pushing the boundaries between the material and the immaterial, between the visible and what escapes our sight: «There are things immersed within the texture of the work that allude to other spaces and possibly

other times. A work has to have a resonance so that it can move on different levels. I'm drawn to evoking polyphony, superimposition, layers, levels, the occluded and the visibility of the mask.»

The artist's practice may be thought of as a constant process of translation and transposition of different languages, codes and temporal dimensions, which range from sound pulses to projection of images understood as a cinematic phenomenon, and textual materials that, decontextualized, become simply luminous signs. This process occurs for example when words are transcribed into neon lights or in the form of fireworks, as well as in sculptures that emit flashing light signals in Morse code. It is also the case of works like *Neon Forms (after Noh)* (2015–2019) in which choreographic notations of the movements of Noh theatre actors (a theatrical representation form born in Japan in the 14th century) are transposed into neon forms. An essential element in his practice, Evans' research on language also emerges from the titles of his works, which, by offering a further level for readings, open the way to an array of interpretations.

Synesthetic in their nature, the works merge the visual, sound and movement dimensions, often drawing on a repertoire of references and quotations taken from an array of cultural sources of the 20th and 21st centuries, including literature, music, philosophy, photography, poetry, art history, astronomy, and science. Thus placing the viewer before a dynamic system in which complex layers of meaning, associations and interpretations are to be deciphered. Evans' works generate multiple perspectives, short-circuits and

juxtapositions of meaning, while opening a variety of view-points on the concept of reality.

Recurrent references in his practice include major figures of 20th-century art, such as Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), to whom Evans relates by questioning, among other issues, the visual mechanisms of an artwork. Another key reference is Marcel Broodthaers (1924–1976), whose exhibition “Décor: A Conquest” Evans visited as a teenager. Held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1974, the exhibition influenced him above all for its reflection upon history and society, which was manifested through works investigating the idea of imperialism and colonialism. Other significant sources of inspiration are several authors, among which Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), Guy Debord (1931–1994) and Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975). In his graphical and textual works as well as in filmic pieces or installations, Evans refers to these figures such as in *Firework Text* (Pasolini) (1998), a film shot at the Idroscalo in Ostia that ends with an image of a sentence taken from Pasolini’s film *Oedipus Rex* (1967), which burns in the form of a firework.

Cerith Wyn Evans often collaborates with visual artists, musicians and scientists, further emphasizing the manifold nature of his work, a corpus that falls into no set category. During the 1980s, he worked closely with the writer and artist Brion Gysin (1916–1986) on a version of the latter’s *Dreamachine*. This rotating cylindrical lamp produces intermittent light through forms cut in its surface and was conceived as a visible object even when the viewer’s eyes are closed, generating a vision that differs from reality. During a residency at the



*Firework Text* (Pasolini), 1998 (film still). Super 16mm film, color, mute, 15 mins

Center for Contemporary Art CCA Kitakyushu in Japan in 1998, Evans presented a new version conceived to induce viewers to enter a dreamlike state in an immersive setting furnished with tatami and plants, together with films by Guy Debord projected on the walls. Other collaborations include projects with musicians and composers such as Russell Haswell and Florian Hecker. With the latter, Evans created *No night No day* (2009), an abstract composition of sound and projected images that was presented at Teatro Goldoni in Venice during the 53rd Biennale.

From the 2000s onwards, Evans turned his attention to creating large-scale sculptures and installations in which he combined light, movement and sound, in a dialogue with the scale and proportions of the physical space. This research took

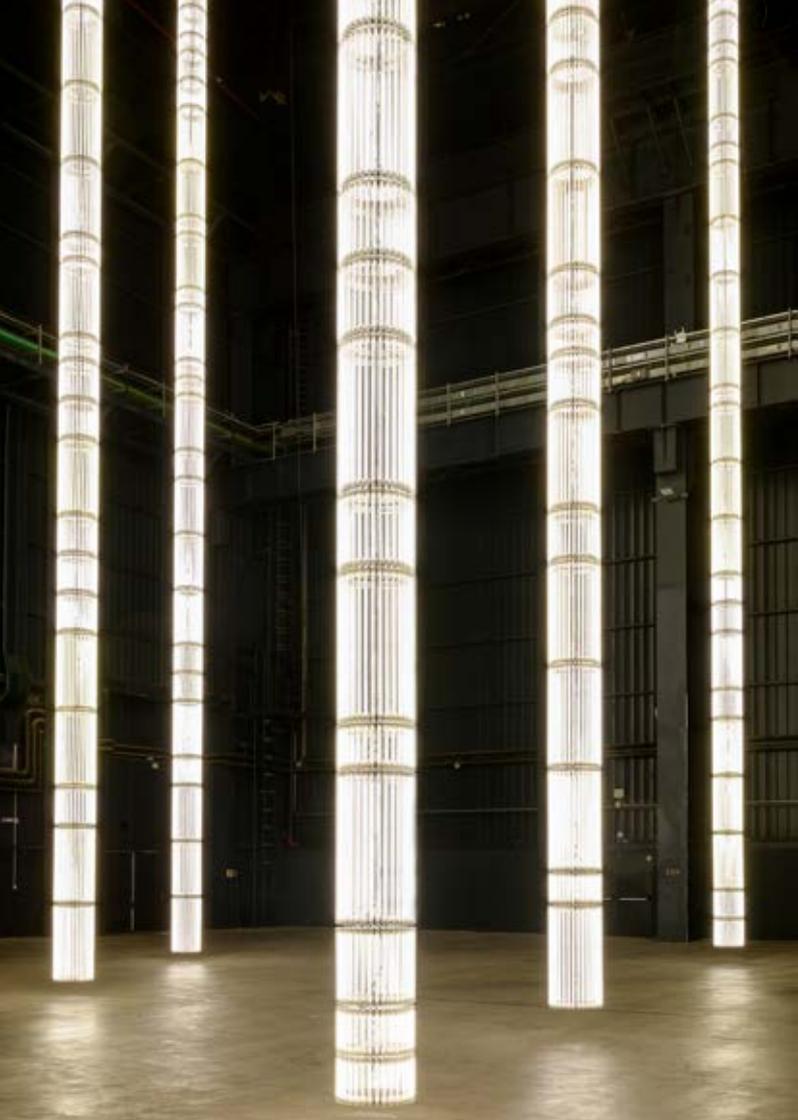


*Dreamachine (I)*, 1998. Mixed media, variable dimensions. Installation view, Center for Contemporary Art CCA Kitakyushu, Japan, 1998

form in works and interventions that exert an influence on the viewer's experience, as the artist himself recalls: «There's a kind of ripple effect that goes out, that is sort of sonorous on various scales. The work is very acutely involved with notions of the "hic et nunc" (the here and now) in relation to scale. Scale has ways of appearing that haven't just to do with mass, volume and weight, and the rather kind of tortuous rules that the physical world would place on us.»

Cerith Wyn Evans taught at the Architectural Association in London between 1989 and 1995 and was Professor of the Research Program at the Center for Contemporary Art CCA

Kitakyushu in Japan from 1998 to 2007. He is regarded as an important figure for many young artists for his constant attempt to overcome a univocal conception of space and of the idea of subjectivity. In his exploration of the mechanisms of the representation of reality, the concepts of time and duration have become for Evans key elements that allow a viewer to enter a contemplative dimension, composed of different rhythms, epiphanies and levels of visibility.



## The Exhibition

“...the *Illuminating Gas*” is the largest of Cerith Wyn Evans’ exhibitions and has been realized as a synesthetic composition in which the elements that characterize the works—such as light, sound, movement and time—generate sensorial collisions and perceptual short-circuits. Conceived by the artist as a «love letter to the space,» the exhibition corresponds to the architecture and offers a unique experience for each visitor. Twenty-four works, from the first neon sculpture *TIX3* (1994) to complex installations and new works produced especially for the show, fill the volumes of the Navate and the Cubo spaces both in height and depth.

The exhibition creates a landscape of light and sound in which the works are displayed in a choreographic arrangement that alternates different rhythms to moments of pause. The works are introduced by the slow and intermittent pulsing of the seven light columns of *StarStarStar/Steer (totransversephoton)* (2019) that rise as high as the ceiling. It continues with thirteen neon sculptures from the series *Neon Forms (after Noh)* (2015–2019), a counterpoint to the imposing *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)* (2017), an arabesque of forms and lines that expand down the length of the aisle. Lastly, the Cubo hosts a heterogeneous set of works that include ethereal neon texts, suspended mobiles, and moving sculptures, in which sounds blend and contribute to generating different harmonies.

*StarStarStar/Steer (totransversephoton)*, 2019. Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, 2019. Photo: Francesco Margaroli

The title of the exhibition refers to the central element in the show, light, in particular neon, the gas that becomes incandescent when electric energy passes through it. It is also a homage to Marcel Duchamp's last work—*Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage...* (1946–1966)—which he worked on secretly over a period of twenty years and was only revealed after his death. "The Illuminating Gas..." is in fact the English translation of the final section of the title of this work.

### **1** *StarStarStar/Steer (totransversephoton), 2019*

The exhibition path opens with seven imposing luminous columns that almost reach the ceiling and that fill with light the space of the Piazza through a complex sequential lighting system. The work, made specifically for the spaces of Pirelli HangarBicocca, is composed of LEDs forming cylinders of different height. The artist created a "score" in which the columns light up to a rhythm that alternates from one part of the space to the other in accordance with a light pulse that reveals and hides the structure itself, either gradually intensifying or slowly fading it. Each column lights up independently, passing from a state of translucency to a brightness so powerful that it makes looking at the work almost impossible. When the light slowly decreases, the columns become transparent and viewers can glimpse the materials that they are made of (cables, transmitters, LEDs and the metal framework that supports each element). Simultaneously, it is possible to see through the columns and see those behind. In their form, the lines of the columns evoke the Doric architecture and yet contradict the very idea of a column. They are in fact sus-

ended from the ceiling and rest a few centimeters above the ground, thus not supporting any architectural element but instead seem to float in the air.

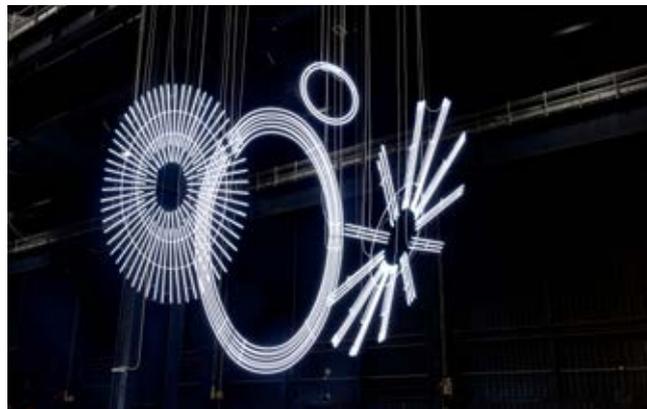
In previous versions of the work, the artist used incandescent bulbs. As those are no longer in production, the work indirectly alludes to how our society creates objects that are intrinsically obsolescent. As the artist explains: «When it comes to the production of certain kinds of lights, this of course reminds you that with emerging technologies—and especially those to do with artificial lighting—there are certain atmospheres that belong to the past [...] and the world appears differently at different times [...] so it's a comment on the notion of how certain technologies now have a built-in obsolescence.»

The title opens to different levels of interpretations of the work. The first part of the title comes from a print made by the conceptual artist and poet Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925–2006), consisting in a concrete poem in which repetitions of the word "star" are printed to create a graphic sign that ends with the word "steer." The word in brackets alludes to notions of quantum physics, in particular to the photon, which is a carrier of electromagnetic forces, including light.

## 2 *Composition for 37 Flutes (in two parts)*, 2018

The only sound work in the Navate, *Composition for 37 Flutes (in two parts)* is a transparent sculpture composed of two pairs of concentric circular tubes around which 37 glass flutes radiate. Like mechanical lungs, two artificial units blow air from the surrounding environment into the tubes in a rhythm generated by a predefined algorithm. As the air passes through the glass tubes, it produces a sound at the limit between harmony and dissonance, which, like exhalations and inhalations, resembles the rhythm of human breathing. Furthermore, the circular forms of the work are flat, recalling the perspective used in Renaissance painting, in particular representations of halos, and harmonizing with the neon tubes in the adjacent work *Radiant Fold (...the Illuminating Gas)*.

Winner of the Hepworth Prize for Sculpture in 2018, *Composition for 37 Flutes (in two parts)* was created specifically for the Hepworth Wakefield art museum. Cerith Wyn Evans was inspired by the close relationship between the building, constructed near the river Calder, and the set of locks that control the water flow in the surrounding countryside. At Wakefield, the work was fed by the system of pumps and pipes that supply the museum with electricity generated by the flow of the river: the transformation of energy thus turned into an aesthetic experience, evoking the relationship between the organic and the mechanical, between breath and the voice, and the potential of sound to shape space.



*Radiant Fold (...the Illuminating Gas)*, 2017–2018. Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, 2019. Photo: Francesco Margaroli

## 3 *Radiant Fold (...the Illuminating Gas)*, 2017–2018

The work is a light sculpture that subverts spatio-temporal coordinates. Placed at the entrance of the Navate, resembling a magnifying glass, this work symbolically introduces a series of neon sculptures suspended in the air. *Radiant Fold (...the Illuminating Gas)* is also a reference to two of Marcel Duchamp's most celebrated and enigmatic works, both of which marked the history of 20th-century art. It consists of circular forms of neon tubes that are three-dimensional transpositions of motifs in *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even), realized by Duchamp between 1915 and 1923 and also known as *Le grand verre* (The Large Glass). The circular elements in the bottom part of the work, described by Duchamp

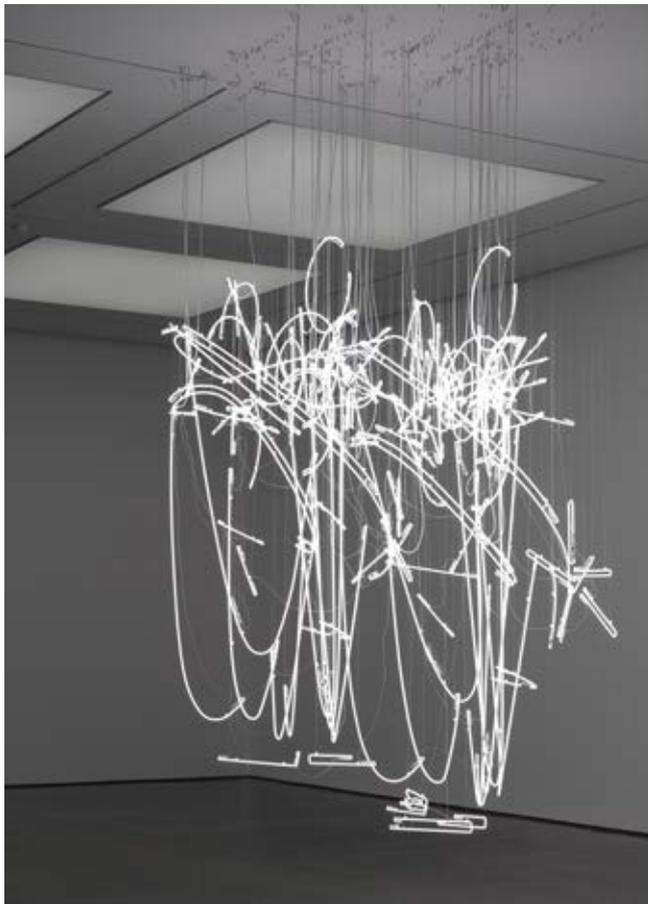
as “Témoins oculistes” (literally “oculist witnesses”), recall devices used in optics. While Duchamp placed them one above the other in *The Large Glass*, Cerith Wyn Evans appropriates these forms by transposing and suspending them vertically in the space, and altering the point of view from which they are seen. Whilst with the wording ...*the Illuminating Gas*—part of the title of work—the artist recalls one of the elements included in Duchamp’s installation *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d’eau, 2° le gaz d’éclairage...* (Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas...), in which it is possible to glimpse a diorama through a peephole and see a female figure holding the gas lamp that illuminates her body, thus placing the viewer in the role of a voyeur. According to Evans’ words: «The Oculist Witnesses by Marcel Duchamp, to a certain extent, is his poetics because he allegedly derived this image from a test card that an optician or an ophthalmologist would use to measure how good your eyesight was. It stems from this notion of lifting something from its trajectory, in relation to an optic, and then considering it seen from a slightly different angle and then skewing it into this obviate reflective, two-dimensional aspect of what it is to look at these radial forms as if they have been slanted through an axonometric projection.»

#### **4 Neon Forms (after Noh), 2015–2019**

This series of neon works appears as an intricate set of straight lines, curves and complex geometric forms of different sizes, evoking ideal flows of energy. As suggested by the title, the sculptures are related to Noh, the traditional theatrical form in Japan based on a repertoire of codified gestures in which

the bodies of the actors are immersed in a ritual dimension. The choreography unrolls according to scenic movement patterns which are synthesized in the so-called “kata diagrams” (*kata* can translate as method in Japanese). Using these forms of notation, which in themselves represent a graphical depiction of movement, Cerith Wyn Evans transposes Noh gestures into abstract light designs: steps, turns of the head, the beating of feet on the floor, the positions in which a fan is held, or the rolling up of a kimono sleeve.

The artist often draws on notions from Japanese aesthetics and culture, such as the use of asymmetrical forms, chance, limit as a compositive element and *ma*. A significant feature of the dramaturgical action, *ma* (Japanese for suspension, emptiness, pause) is conceived as the spatio-temporal dimension that embraces the moment of creation as an epiphany. He integrates these notions throughout the exhibition, by using suspension as a way of displaying the artworks in the space and by evoking the dissolution of a univocal perspective. The choreology—the notation of the movements described by abstract forms—is not simply reproduced in the sculpture but subjected to another editing process that compresses, distorts, inverts, expands and folds the forms, as it occurs in many works in the show. This expedient is notably present in two new works in this series—*Neon Forms (after Noh VI)* and *Neon Forms (after Noh VII)* both created in 2019—which, as in a polyphony of light, Evans has inserted as a “coda” to *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)* in the current exhibition.



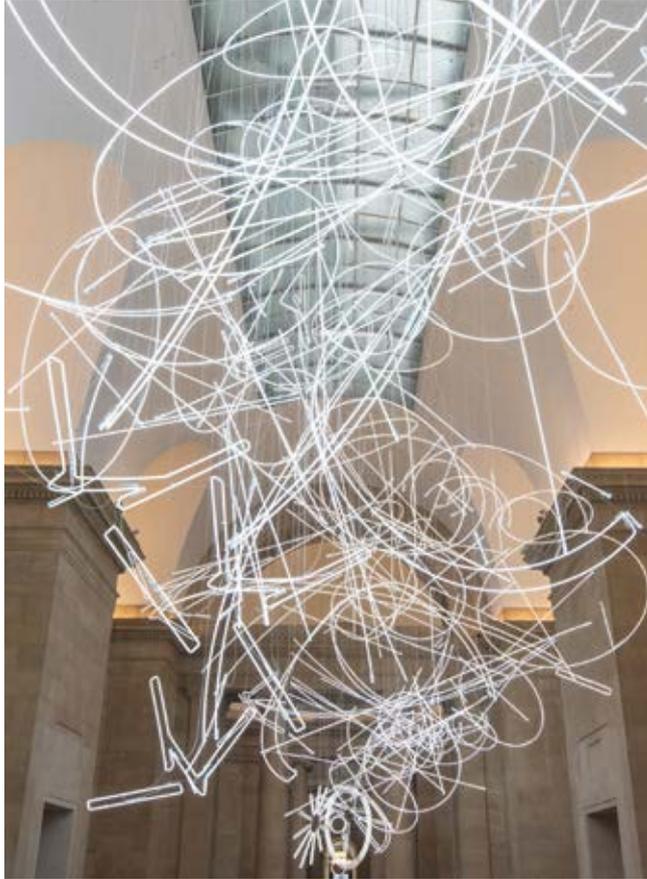
*Neon Forms (after Noh I)*, 2015. White neon, 353 x 302 x 212 cm. Installation view, White Cube, London, 2015. Photo: George Darrell

## 5 *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*, 2017

Commissioned by Tate Britain in London in 2017 for the Duveen Galleries, *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)* is composed of kilometers of neon tubes hung from the ceiling in a series of curves and straight lines, abstract forms and more recognizable shapes that are three-dimensional transpositions of drawings and gestures throughout the exhibition space. The work was reconfigured for Pirelli HangarBicocca and becomes the axis around which all the other works gravitate in constellation.

Originally structured in three sections, with its intricate tangle of motifs, geometries and arabesques suspended in space, the installation combines abstractions and elements present in other works in the show. The first section, at the entrance to the aisle, is a translation of the forms seen in *Radiant Fold (...the Illuminating Gas)*, recognizable for their orbital appearance. The next section of the work takes inspiration from the codified movements in Noh theatre represented by *kata* diagrams, as in the adjacent sculptures *Neon Forms (after Noh)*.

For the version in Pirelli HangarBicocca, Cerith Wyn Evans has added to the complex sculpture a fourth part made of two more neon works taken from the series *Neon Forms (after Noh)*, which he describes, alluding to musical language, as the “coda,” namely the selection of notes used to conclude a movement with the purpose of lengthening the passage. These two sculptures relate to one another inasmuch as one is the elevation of the other but turned over and then again mirrored. Moreover, the “coda” is the compression of the cen-



*Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*, 2017. Installation view, Tate Britain, London, 2018. Commission for the Duveen Galleries, Tate Britain. Courtesy White Cube. Photo: Joe Humphreys © Tate, 2018

tral section of *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*, and inside it is also possible to see the structural formula of the molecule of LSD, which was synthesized in 1938 by the Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann (1906–2008).

The title conveys the essence of the work—forms that employ light inside space and through time—as in Evans' words: «There are many layers to it and multiple points of entry. Very importantly, my viewpoint is not the only take on it. If anything, it's a type of zone for meditation and a place for reverie on the transference of energy. I feel there's an insufficiency of means to come to even a conventional description of what it is to live through a revolution in information technology and to look at the exchanges of energy that go across the surfaces of the Earth, let alone what fantasies we might have about parallel realities. I want people to be in a place where they might be able to cohabit with some of these things.»

## **6** *C=O=N=S=T=E=L=L=A=T=I=O=N (I call your image to mind)*, 2010

Suspended close to the entrance to the Cubo, this installation is a large polyphonic mobile composed of directional speakers with reflecting surfaces. Its sixteen mirror disks slowly rotate in the air and transmit sound tracks by industrial music legends from the 1970s Throbbing Gristle, combined with the artist's field recordings including some of his own piano compositions and sounds captured by radio-telescopes across the world. These "sonic flares" are transmitted within an ultra-directional acoustic range, in which encrypted messages and musical



*C=O=N=S=T=E=L=L=A=T=I=O=N (I call your image to mind)*, 2010 (detail)  
3 mobile, 16 mirrored Holosonic speakers, audio sound track, variable dimensions.  
Photo: Todd-White

fragments produce a constellation of frequencies that dialog with perspectives and reflections generated on the reflective disks. The viewers are attracted towards the movement of the disks and find themselves in an individual experience, as each sound is perceptible to only one person at a time. *C=O=N=S=T=E=L=L=A=T=I=O=N (I call your image to mind)* stimulates a combination of refractions, juxtapositions, superimpositions, overdubs, occlusions and revelations that challenge the parameters of human cognition.

The letters of the first part of the title, as in those of other works, are separated by the “=” symbol. The inclusion of un-

pronounceable graphical signs is an expedient Evans often uses to create suspensions and distort language, directly referencing the Language poets, an avant-garde poetry movement that emerged in the late 1960s in the United States.

## 7 *E=C=L=I=P=S=E*, 2015

Depicting an imaginary horizon, this work features a neon text suspended diagonally in the Cubo. The writing describes a solar eclipse and the trajectory followed by the phenomenon as it passes through various geographic regions at different hours of the day, beginning on the northern coast of Spain, passing across Iberia and North Africa and coming to an end in Somalia. Reflecting the artist’s sensibility, the language used to describe this passage merges a poetic tone with scientific terminology.

In order to read and understand the text, viewers have to walk along the work. *E=C=L=I=P=S=E* involves the notion of movement in all its different aspects: the passing of the Moon across the Sun’s surface, the movement across the Earth’s surface from which the full eclipse is visible, and the possibility to walk around the work. Moreover, the light emitted by the neon tubes enters into a relationship with the sunlight that fills this area of the building during daytime. In the artist’s intention, «This piece it’s just a small footnote to something which is happening in the building already. It is just an observation, which

Following pages: *E=C=L=I=P=S=E*, 2015. White neon, 266 x 1484 cm. Installation view, MUSEION, Bolzano, 2015. Fondazione MUSEION. Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea Bolzano

There's a newspaper under my arm. I look at the sky... daylight is fading  
On Monday, October 31st, an annular total eclipse of the Sun will be visible from the western coast of Africa to the eastern coast of Asia.  
It is now dark outside, and neon strip lighting illuminates the room with the same periodicity of light as the Sun.  
A partial eclipse will be seen all in the mid-latitude regions of the North and South Poles.

The path of the annular eclipse begins over the North Atlantic at 08:31 UT. Pushing southeast, the totality path reaches the western coast of Africa at 10:00 UT, which lies near the central line. The annular phase will last 04m 17s over the equator at 10:54 UT and continues down the west coast of Africa to the southern tip of the continent, and will experience a totality of 18m 56s.

Following a southeastern course, the totality passes through southern France and enters the Mediterranean Sea at 12:50 UT. The central line crosses the Indian Ocean at 14:00 UT and reaches the southern tip of Africa at 15:00 UT. The totality path crosses the Indian Ocean at 16:00 UT and reaches the southern tip of Africa at 17:00 UT.

The annular duration 4m 31s, the Sun is 71° above the desolate desert landscape. The central line crosses the Indian Ocean at 17:50 UT and reaches the southern tip of Africa at 19:00 UT. Southernmost Somalia is the eclipse's final landfall (17:50 UT) and the last place where the Sun will be visible (19:00 UT).

strangely happens through this kind of parallel time, moving across the surface of the globe.»

The horizontal feature of  $E=C=L=I=P=S=E$  recalls the traditional proportion of landscape painting, while the dimension of time is fundamental to the experience of the work, as it is a reflection on language. The words generate a sort of paradox between the subjective viewpoint from which the narration occurs, and the impossibility that the eclipse, which is visible across different areas of the Earth, is witnessed by a single individual. Furthermore, the text is a citation adapted from an essay written by Dan Fox on the occasion of an exhibition by the artist Marc Camille Chaimowicz.

**8** *Mantra*, 2016

**9**  $S=U=T=R=A$ , 2017

The works are both composed of two pairs of chandeliers more than two meters tall that are suspended from the Cubo's ceiling and are made from blown Murano glass to a design by Galliano Ferro, a long-established glass workshop in Venice. Both configurations come from Galliano Ferro's historic archive: *Mantra* is formed by hanging floral motifs, while  $S=U=T=R=A$  is composed of linear and geometric elements according to a design originally conceived for a mosque in Iran in the 1970s. The lamps turn on and off to a rhythm given by a music piece written by Evans that fills the surrounding space, thus transforming sound into light. The installation includes a complex mechanism that regulates one of the lamps to flash first, which in turn triggers the illumination of the other



$S=U=T=R=A$ , 2017. Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, 2019.  
Photo: Francesco Margaroli

lamp. Both works are composed of two pairs of almost identical and symmetrical elements, though different in proportion since one of the two is imperceptibly larger than the other. The lamps perform a duet: one of the two musical scores is shorter than the other and creates a slight asynchrony, thereby the viewer experiences a different sound and light composition each time. The dialog between the two works activates a binary exchange between two entities and alludes to the dialectics between subjectivities and machines.

A “mantra” and a “sutra” are both speech acts. A mantra is a formula that is repeated innumerable times with the purpose of helping the speaker to concentrate during meditation; in the Indian tradition, a sutra is an aphorism or set of aphorisms. Like warnings, these two works communicate a message, a code whose meaning for now remains concealed.

*Mantra* and *S=U=T=R=A* belong to a series of works identified as *Chandeliers*, created by the artist over the last decade. All chandeliers are inspired by well-known designers such as Castiglioni or Venini, and often translate Morse-code texts into flashes of light. Each one is related to different texts, such as excerpts by Madame de La Fayette, Judith Butler or William Blake, among others, that a computer codifies letter by letter and transmits to the chandelier.

#### **10** *Still Life (In course of arrangement...)*, 2019

The installation consists of palms and other plants placed on turntables that revolve at slightly different speeds, while two

spotlights direct their beams of different intensity attempting to create a film which is happening in real time. The slow and almost imperceptible movement of the plants and the projection of the resulting shadows on the walls recall the *son et lumière* shows that became widespread during the second half of the 19th century, thus evoking the imaginative potential of cinema and going beyond the limits of film projection.

Through this work Cerith Wyn Evans makes explicit reference once again to the practice of Marcel Broodthaers and his reflection on the colonial history of his home country, Belgium, through the use of exotic plants in works such as *Un Jardin d'Hiver* (1974).

#### **11** *T=R=A=N=S=F=E=R=E=N=C=E (Frequency shifting paradigms in streaming audio)*, 2009

Standing on the floor of the Cubo, *T=R=A=N=S=F=E=R=E=N=C=E (Frequency shifting paradigms in streaming audio)* is composed of a circular directional speaker that generates a real “column of sound” vertically expanded in the space. The frequencies can only be heard close to the work and transmit extracts from recordings made by a radio-telescope. The intangible column manifests sounds arriving from planets, stars and other astrophysical bodies from an extra-terrestrial dimension, and is related to the structures in *StarStarStar/Steer (totransversephoton)*, presented at the beginning of the exhibition, thereby creating a (short)-circuit between them.



## 12 TIX3, 1994

In Cerith Wyn Evans' work, small or imperceptible temporal, spatial or textual displacements powerfully affect the perception of reality and how this is revealed to the viewer. *TIX3* arose in the occasion of the projection of an Hollywood film in a cinema in Leicester Square in the West End of London, which Evans was watching with Leigh Bowery (1961–1995), an artist, fashion designer and performance artist who contributed significantly to issues related to gender-identity in the late-1980s underground music scene. During the film, Evans walked out of the auditorium and, trying to find the emergency exit, found himself in a small room with no way out. Caught in this situation, he suffered an alienating experience contributed to by three levels of perception: the reflection of the emergency exit sign that, seen backwards, appeared as "TIX3"; the sound of the film coming from the auditorium; the image on the screen that he could see through the glass pane of the door. «The work—the artist recalls—is about being in a space you are not "meant" to be in. It came to represent that space of looking over your shoulder, like Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt for looking back at Sodom and Gomorrah. The idea is that you don't normally see this because you are not looking for it. This was one of the first pieces of work that I made as what people curiously refer to as "Cerith Wyn Evans, Artist" rather than "Cerith Wyn Evans, Filmmaker".»

Previous pages: *Still life (In course of arrangement...)* V, 2017. Turntable with *Phoenix roebelenii*, variable dimensions. Installation view, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, 2017. Photo: Stefan Altenburger © Museum Haus Konstruktiv



*TIX3*, 1994. Green neon, 14 x 34 x 2 cm. Courtesy White Cube. Photo: Stephen White

Placed on a wall outside the exhibition space, *TIX3* deals with the translation of words or extracts from texts into forms of light to which the artist conveys a sculptural quality.



*And if I don't meet you no more in this world then I'll, I'll meet you in the next one and don't be late, don't be late...*, 2012. Installation view, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on Sea, 2012. Photo: Martin Everett

## Selected Exhibitions

Cerith Wyn Evans (Llanelli, Wales, UK, 1958) lives and works in London and Norwich. His works have been exhibited in numerous solo shows at international institutions, including: Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2018); Duveen Galleries, Tate Britain, London, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2017); MUSEION, Bolzano (2015); Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London (2014); Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2013); Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin (2012); Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2011); MUSAC, León (2008); Kunsthau Graz, Graz (2007); ICA – Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, ARC/Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (2006); MIT Visual Arts Center, Boston (2004); Center for Contemporary Art CCA Kitakyushu, Japan (1998). Cerith Wyn Evans has also taken part in major group shows, including: 14th Lyon Biennale, Skulptur Projekte, Münster, 57th Venice Biennale (2017); 4th Moscow Biennial (2011); Aichi Triennale, Nagoya, 12th Venice Architecture Biennale (2010); 9th Istanbul Biennial (2005); documenta 11, Kassel (2002).

In 2003 he took part in "Utopia Station" on the occasion of the 50th Venice Biennale, where he also represented Wales in the same edition. He was awarded the Hepworth Prize for Sculpture in 2018.

**This publication accompanies the exhibition  
“....the Illuminating Gas” by Cerith Wyn Evans**

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## List of the Exhibited Works

- 1** *StarStarStar/Steer (to)transversephoton*, 2019  
Metal frame, glass, LED strips, dimmer unit  
7 columns: 1850 cm (columns 1, 3, 5), 1950 cm (columns 2, 4, 6, 7) x Ø 50 cm  
Courtesy White Cube  
Produced with the technical support of INELCOM, Madrid
- 2** *Composition for 37 Flutes (in two parts)*, 2018  
37 crystal glass flutes, breathing unit and valve system, plastic tubes  
477 x 355 x 300 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- 3** *Radiant Fold (...the Illuminating Gas)*, 2017-2018  
White neon  
403 x 475 x 398 cm  
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society and the Artist through Great Works, supported by the Sfumato Foundation
- 4** *Neon Forms (after Noh)*, 2015-2019
- A** *Neon Forms (after Noh I)*, 2015  
White neon  
353 x 302 x 212 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- B** *Neon Forms (after Noh II)*, 2015  
White neon  
311 x 334.5 x 171 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- C** *Neon Forms (after Noh III)*, 2015  
White neon  
332 x 251 x 106 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- D** *Neon Forms (after Noh V)*, 2019  
White neon  
270 x 240 x 200 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- E** *Neon Forms (after Noh VI)*, 2019  
White neon  
300 x 600 x 300 cm  
Courtesy White Cube  
Produced by Pirelli HangarBicocca  
Coda to *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*
- F** *Neon Forms (after Noh VII)*, 2019  
White neon  
300 x 600 x 300 cm  
Courtesy White Cube  
Coda to *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*
- G** *Neon Forms (after Noh VIII)*, 2019  
White neon  
183 x 140.5 x 85 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- H** *Neon Forms (after Noh X)*, 2018  
White neon  
135 x 163 x 116 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- I** *Neon Forms (after Noh XII)*, 2018  
White neon  
236 x 212 x 116.5 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- J** *Neon Forms (after Noh XIII)*, 2018  
White neon  
209 x 158 x 220 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- K** *Neon Forms (after Noh XIV)*, 2018  
White neon  
194.5 x 200 x 92 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- L** *Neon Forms (after Noh XV)*, 2018  
White neon  
264.5 x 25.1 x 242 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- M** *Neon Forms (after Noh XVI)*, 2018  
White neon  
206.9 x 197.4 x 82.1 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- 5** *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*, 2017  
White neon  
I (Single circle): 75 x 75 x 3 cm  
II (Oculist Witnesses): 350 x 320 x 300 cm  
III: 1000 x 1100 x 3100 cm  
IV (Coda to *Forms in Space... by Light (in Time)*):  
*Neon Forms (after Noh VI)*, 2019  
*Neon Forms (after Noh VII)*, 2019  
Courtesy White Cube
- 6** *C=O=N=S=T=E=L=A=T=I=O=N (I call your image to mind)*, 2010  
3 mobiles, 16 mirrored Holosonic speakers, audio sound track  
Variable dimensions  
Maja Hoffmann / Luma Foundation
- 7** *E=C=L=I=P=S=E*, 2015  
White neon  
266 x 1484 cm  
Fondazione MUSEION. Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea Bolzano
- 8** *Mantra*, 2016  
2 Murano glass chandeliers by Galliano Ferro, dimmer unit and 2 control tracks  
First chandelier: 250 x Ø 80 cm  
Second chandelier: 220 x Ø 80 cm  
Courtesy White Cube
- 9** *S=U=T=R=A*, 2017  
2 Murano glass chandeliers by Galliano Ferro, dimmer unit and 2 control tracks  
First chandelier: 250 x Ø 106 cm  
Second chandelier: 230 x Ø 96.5 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- 10** *Still life (In course of arrangement...)*, 2019  
Turntables, plants, 2 spotlights  
Turntables: Ø 45 cm each  
Courtesy White Cube
- 11** *T=R=A=N=S=F=E=R=E=N=C=E (Frequency shifting paradigms in streaming audio)*, 2009  
Holosonic speaker, audio sound track Ø 45.7 cm  
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London
- 12** *TIX3*, 1994  
Green neon  
14 x 34 x 2 cm  
Courtesy White Cube



3205, Tokyo, 2019. Photo: Cerith Wyn Evans

Pirelli HangarBicocca is a non-profit foundation, established in 2004, which has converted a former industrial plant in Milan into an institution for producing and promoting contemporary art.

This dynamic center for experimentation and discovery covers 15,000 square meters, making it one of the largest contiguous exhibition spaces in Europe. It presents major solo shows every year by Italian and international artists, with each project conceived to work in close relation to the architecture of the complex, and explored in depth through a calendar of parallel events. Admission to the space and the shows is completely free of charge, and facilitators are on hand to help the general public connect with the art. Since 2013, Vicente Todolí has been the foundation's Artistic Director.

The complex, which once housed a locomotive factory, includes an area for public services and educational activities, and three exhibition spaces whose original twentieth-century architectural features have been left clearly visible: *Shed*, *Navate*, and *Cubo*.

As well as its exhibitions program and cultural events, Pirelli HangarBicocca also permanently houses one of Anselm Kiefer's most important site specific works, *The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015*, commissioned for the inauguration of Pirelli HangarBicocca.



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