

Ron Cooper: In a New Light

March 6 – May 15, 2021

Los Angeles, CA. Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present *Ron Cooper: In a New Light*. Ron Cooper's early *Light Trap* works are on display alongside his newest explorations – his *Corona Bar* series, created, as their titles suggest, in quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic. This exhibition surveys the artist's inventive use of unconventional materials throughout his career, deployed in novel ways that defy expectation, to investigate the interplay of light, surface, and perspective.

As a member of the Southern California Light and Space Movement, Cooper (b. 1943) has long been a pioneer in the development of techniques and use of materials designed to capture, manipulate, and alter the viewer's perception of light. His early *Light Trap* works are formed from many layers of polyester resin and fiberglass, sprayed onto and later released from a waxed glass mold. Light pouring into these constructions is made substantial by the refraction between the layers, transforming the captured light into both medium and canvas. This process of creating these works is, in the words of the artist, "the closest thing to painting on air."

Cooper's *Corona Bars* revisit his earlier *Vertical Bar* series and are the product of a long stretch of uninterrupted time during lockdown, which offered the artist an opportunity to experiment with new materials and surface finishes. The first *Vertical Bars* were made in 1965 and executed with natural lacquer and pigments derived from pearly Swedish fish scales; the *Corona Bar* works on display play with the dizzying spectrum of synthetic pigments on the market today. Suspended in a transparent acrylic medium, the pigments are sprayed in layers onto the faces of slim rectangular boxes made of transparent plexiglass. Light slices cleanly through the plexiglass and splinters in all directions when it meets the layers of suspended particles, creating riots of opalescent color that morph, blend, disappear and reappear as the viewer moves around the work.

As the day advances and the light evolves, the opacity of the *Corona Bars* waxes and wanes: crystalline in the morning, diaphanous in the afternoon, sharp and solidified in the evening. Cooper has added an additional dimension by encouraging a variety of textures to form on the surfaces. Whether softly gritted, bubbly, or pebbled like raindrops on dry soil, these surfaces also transform as the viewer's shifting perspective causes light to pool, reflect, or glide straight through the shallow ridges and dips. Never the same day-to-day or even instant-to-instant, each work contains infinite singular experiences, a continuum of kaleidoscopic moments in space and time.

Educated at Chouinard Art Institute, Ron Cooper has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions since the late 1960s. Works by Cooper are included in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among numerous other public and private collections in the United States and abroad. In addition to his art practice, Cooper is known for popularizing craft mezcal in the United States through his highly successful brand, Del Maguey. Cooper lives and works in Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico and Oaxaca, Mexico.