ANDREA BOWERS / NINA CANELL / CLAIRE FONTAINE / ADRIANO COSTA / MARTIN CREED / DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ-FOERSTER / ALFREDO JAAR / JOSEPH KOSUTH / TIM LEE / GLENN LIGON / ADRIANA MARTINEZ / STEVE MCQUEEN / JONATHAN MONK / PAULINA OLOWSKA / MAI-THU PERRET / JASON RHOADES / ANA ROLDÁN / NASSER AL SALEM / KEITH SONNIER / RON TERADA / CERITH WYN EVANS

An Illumination by Jens Hoffmann

Jessica Silverman Gallery
AS FAR AS WE CAN DISCERN, THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE IS TO KINDLE A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS OF MERE BEING.

Carl Jung
Ever since the Big Bang created our universe more than ten billion years ago, our Earth has been bathed in light coming from the sun. Light is mentioned in the third verse of the Book of Genesis—the first book of the Hebrew Bible (the Tanakh) and the Christian Old Testament—in which God creates the world and illuminates it by saying, “Let there be light.”

Light, and in particular sunlight, is an essential source of energy and has an incredible effect on how we wander through the world. Every schoolkid knows that thanks to photosynthesis, plants thrive and grow to serve as an essential part of the food chain, not to mention also producing the oxygen we breathe.

Ever since the Greek philosopher Plato proposed his famous allegory of the cave—that the world we see is not the real world, and that philosophers have an obligation to tell the rest of society about authentic existence outside the cave—light has also functioned as a metaphor for education, knowledge, spiritual and intellectual liberation, and hope. We are “illuminated” or “enlightened” with intelligence; light draws us out of
Over the centuries humans have conjured other sources of light. Fire was the earliest, used in the caves of our ancestors as well as in the candles and spirit lamps that were still the main generators of light after dark only one hundred years ago. Today we rely almost exclusively on light powered by electricity, which began with the invention of the incandescent bulb by Thomas Edison and progressed to fluorescent lighting and contemporary light-emitting-diodes, or LEDs.

We have also learned to control light, using it to illuminate our houses and city streets at night, as well as to communicate with one another, as in brightly lit advertising logos, glittering entrance signs to bars and restaurants, and dazzling theater marquees. More practical uses include lighthouses to help boats navigate, Morse code flashes between ships at sea, and the ubiquitous traffic lights around our cities.

One popular source of artificial light, whose heyday came in the mid-twentieth century, is neon. The French scientist, inventor, and engineer Georges Claude is widely considered the father of the neon tube; he was building on the inventions of Heinrich Geissler and other scientist-inventors such as William Crookes, Johann Wilhelm Hittorf, and Daniel McFarlan Moore. In 1910 Claude patented his discovery that neon produces light but (crucially, for its commercial applications) not heat when electricity passes through it. Bright, colorful, bended neon tubes soon began appearing in outdoor advertising of all kinds. One of the first and most celebrated instances was the large sign for the Italian vermouth manufacturer Cinzano, which starting in 1913 illuminated Paris above Boulevard Haussmann with white letters about a yard tall. The first neon signs in the United States arrived from Claude’s company in Los Angeles in 1923: a pair of signs for a Packard car dealership run by the American businessman and industrial pioneer Earle C. Anthony.

Let There Be (More) Light features twenty-one artists who use light as a medium, and who look to the early pioneers of neon and fluorescent art for inspiration. There are many connections between light and art. The most direct one is that they both enable enlightenment—one literally, by bringing light into a dark space, and the other intellectually and aesthetically. In Let There Be (More) Light the artworks on display are intended do both simultaneously. Indeed, it is difficult not to think of Plato’s allegory of the cave in the context of the exhibition, given the architecture of the darkness” by puncturing ignorance with bright “rays” of wisdom.
with neon lights and other materials such as glass, wire, latex, metal, and even bamboo. He radically reinvented the idea of sculpture in the late 1960s with pieces that, specifically because of his use of neon, can be seen as drawings in space, dialoguing with the architecture surrounding them. Joseph Kosuth is another artist who started using neon early in his career, often in sober and formally restrained ways related to his focus on text and language. He was trying to reduce the work of art to pure communication, information, or ideas, and rejected the traditional notion of the aesthetically elaborate, visually pleasing art object.

Both Sonnier and Kosuth present works as part of *Let There Be (More) Light* alongside a wide range of more recent works by artists from around the globe who all consciously reference the early creators of neon and fluorescent art and continue to pursue their concerns. In their hands, light is a vernacular medium producing bright communications and glowing forms, political manifestations and social critiques. They are renewing popular and critical interest in the history of art made with light and ensuring its continued relevance in the twenty-first century.

*Jens Hoffmann*
BRIGHT LIGHTS ARTWORKS IN THE EXHIBITION GLOWING SIGNS
ANDREA BOWERS

Community or Chaos, 2016

NINA CANELL

Yet Another Soft Corner, 2016
CLAIRe Fontaine

Untitled (Freedom), 2011

Adriano Costa

Decomposition, 2016
MARTIN CREED

Work No. 279: BABIES, 2002

DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ-FOERSTER

Exotourisme, 2012
ALFREDO JAAR

Be Afraid of the Enormity of the Possible, 2015

JOSEPH KOSUTH

‘R.O.C. No Number #4’, 1991
GLENN LIGON

Untitled (Orpheus and Eurydice), 2013

TIM LEE

ADRIANA MARTINEZ

TODO LO QUE BRILLA ES INFORMACIÓN
(EVERYTHING THAT SHINES IS INFORMATION), 2016

STEVE McQUEEN

Remember Me, 2016
JONATHAN MONK

*Fall*, 2011

PAULINA OLOWSKA

*Natascha*, 2010
MAI-THU PERRET

Uncle Toby (Yellow), 2015

JASON RHOADES

Light, 1997
ANA ROLDÁN

*Pyramid (blue)*, 2011

NASSER AL SALEM

*Arabi, Gharbi (Arabic, Western)*, 2016
KEITH SONNIER

Circle Portal A, 2015

RON TERADA

You & Us, 2006
CERITH WYN EVANS

Leaning Horizon (neon 6500 Kelvin, 2.1 m) &
Leaning Horizon (neon 6800 Kelvin, 2.1 m), 2015

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Andrea Bowers
Community or Chaos, 2016
Aluminum, cardboard, paint, and neon
37 × 48 × 7 in. (94 × 121.9 × 17.8 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York

Nina Canell
Yet Another Soft Corner, 2016
Neon, copper, cable, 5000 Volt
1 ½ × 27 ½ × 35 ¾ in. (4 × 70 × 90 cm)
Courtesy the artist and mother’s tankstation, Dublin

Claire Fontaine
Untitled (Freedom), 2011
Wall, window-mounted or suspended neon sign, ruby-red neon 10mm glass (tecnolux no. 18), filled with argon/mercury, back-painted, electronic transformer, cables, and framework
Approx. 6 ¾ × 21 ¼ in. (17 × 54 cm)
Edition 2 of 5 + 2 AP
Courtesy the artist

Adriano Costa
Decomposition, 2016
Neon
Approx. 4 ¼ × 39 ¾ in. (12 × 100 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo

Martin Creed
Work No. 279: BABIES, 2002
Orange neon
6 in. (15.2 cm) tall
Edition 2 of 3 + 1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Gavin Brown’s Enterprise, New York

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster
Exotourisme, 2012
Neon and paint
7 ¾ × 40 ¼ × 2 ½ in. (19.7 × 102.2 × 6.4 cm)
Edition 1 of 3
Courtesy the artist and 303 Gallery, New York

Alfredo Jaar
Be Afraid of the Enormity of the Possible, 2015
Neon
47 ½ × 72 in. (120.7 × 182.9 cm)
Edition 3 of 3 + 3 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York
Joseph Kosuth
*R.O.C. No Number #4*, 1991
White neon
8 ½ × 67 × 2 in. (21.6 × 170.2 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York

Steve McQueen
*Remember Me*, 2016
Acrylic paint on neon borosilicate tubes
5 × 39 ½ in. (12.7 × 100 cm)
Edition 1 of 1 + 1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

Tim Lee
Neon
17 ¼ × 23 ½ in. (43.8 × 59.7 cm)
Edition 1 of 5
Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco

Jonathan Monk
*Fall*, 2011
Neon
36 × 78 ½ in. (91.4 × 199.4 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

Ana Roldán
*Pyramid (blue)*, 2011
Neon tube
30 ¾ × 21 ¼ in. (78.1 × 55 cm), height variable
Edition AP of 1 + 1 AP
Courtesy the artist and David Zvirner, New York

Nasser Al Salem
*Arabi, Gharbi (Arabic, Western)*, 2016
Neon
25 ¾ × 83 ¾ in. (65 × 213 cm)
Edition 2 of 3
Courtesy the artist and ATHR Gallery, Jeddah

Tim Lee
Neon
17 ¼ × 23 ½ in. (43.8 × 59.7 cm)
Edition 1 of 5
Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco

Paulina Olowska
*Natascha*, 2010
White neon
78 ¾ × 51 ½ in. (200 × 130 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures, New York

Mai-Thu Perret
*Uncle Toby (Yellow)*, 2015
Neon
59 × 59 × 1 ¾ in. (150 × 150 × 4.4 cm)
Courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Glen Ligon
*Untitled (Orpheus and Eurydice)*, 2015
Neon and paint
10 × 30 × 2 in. (25.4 × 76.2 × 5.1 cm)
Edition 3 of 5 + 1 AP
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Paulina Olowska
*Natascha*, 2010
White neon
78 ¾ × 51 ½ in. (200 × 130 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures, New York

Mai-Thu Perret
*Uncle Toby (Yellow)*, 2015
Neon
59 × 59 × 1 ¾ in. (150 × 150 × 4.4 cm)
Courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Glenn Ligon
*Untitiled (Orpheus and Eurydice)*, 2015
Neon and paint
10 × 30 × 2 in. (25.4 × 76.2 × 5.1 cm)
Edition 3 of 5 + 1 AP
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Adriana Martinez
*TODO LO QUE BRILLA ES INFORMACIÓN (EVERYTHING THAT SHINES IS INFORMATION)*, 2016
Neon
22 × 39 ¾ in. (55.9 × 100 cm)
Edition 2 of 3
Courtesy the artist

Jason Rhoades
*Light*, 1997
Plastic bucket, fluorescent tubing, electrical wiring, and fluorescent light fixture
96 in. (243.8 cm) tall
Edition 26 of 42
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York

Ron Terada
*You & Us*, 2006
Neon
13 × 52 in. (33.3 × 132.1 cm)
Edition 3 of 3
Courtesy Cartriona Jeffries, Vancouver

Cerith Wyn Evans
*Leaning Horizon (neon 6500 Kelvin, 2.1 m) & Leaning Horizon (neon 6800 Kelvin, 2.1 m)*, 2015
Two parts, neon
82 ¾ × ½ × ½ in. (210 × 1.2 × 1.2 cm) each
Edition 1 of 3 + 2 AP
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Cologne, and New York

Nasser Al Salem
*Arabi, Gharbi (Arabic, Western)*, 2016
Neon
25 ¾ × 83 ¾ in. (65 × 213 cm)
Edition 2 of 3
Courtesy the artist and ATHR Gallery, Jeddah

Ron Terada
*You & Us*, 2006
Neon
13 × 52 in. (33.3 × 132.1 cm)
Edition 3 of 3
Courtesy Cartriona Jeffries, Vancouver

Cerith Wyn Evans
*Leaning Horizon (neon 6500 Kelvin, 2.1 m) & Leaning Horizon (neon 6800 Kelvin, 2.1 m)*, 2015
Two parts, neon
82 ¾ × ½ × ½ in. (210 × 1.2 × 1.2 cm) each
Edition 1 of 3 + 2 AP
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Cologne, and New York

Cerith Wyn Evans
*Leaning Horizon (neon 6500 Kelvin, 2.1 m) & Leaning Horizon (neon 6800 Kelvin, 2.1 m)*, 2015
Two parts, neon
82 ¾ × ½ × ½ in. (210 × 1.2 × 1.2 cm) each
Edition 1 of 3 + 2 AP
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Cologne, and New York

Cerith Wyn Evans
*Leaning Horizon (neon 6500 Kelvin, 2.1 m) & Leaning Horizon (neon 6800 Kelvin, 2.1 m)*, 2015
Two parts, neon
82 ¾ × ½ × ½ in. (210 × 1.2 × 1.2 cm) each
Edition 1 of 3 + 2 AP
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Cologne, and New York
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Let There Be (More) Light
October 13–November 19, 2016
An Illumination by Jens Hoffmann
Jessica Silverman Gallery
488 Ellis Street
San Francisco CA 94102

We are most grateful to all the participating artists: Andrea Bowers, Nina Canell, Claire Fontaine, Adriano Costa, Martin Creed, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Alfredo Jaar, Joseph Kosuth, Tim Lee, Glenn Ligon, Adriana Martinez, Steve McQueen, Jonathan Monk, Paulina Olowska, Mai-Thu Perret, Jason Rhoades, Ana Roldán, Nassir Al Salem, Keith Sonnier, Ron Terada, and Cerith Wyn Evans.

Thanks to the individuals and galleries who helped to make this exhibition possible: Afia H. Bin Taleb and Sawsan Lilish, ATHR Gallery; Angel, Andrea Bowers studio; Thor Shannon, Taylor Trabulus, and Zach Bruder, Gavin Brown’s Enterprise; Peter Currie, Galerie Buchholz; Sara Tardedo, Claire Fontaine studio; Rose Lord, Brian Loftus, Catherine Belloy, Marine Pariente, Aaron Stempien, and Elaine Budin, Marian Goodman Gallery; Beatriz Lopez and Omayra Alvarado, Instituto de Visión; Capucine Gros, Alfredo Jaar studio; Catriona Jeffries, Peter Gazendam, and Katrina Niebergal, Catriona Jeffries; Casey Kaplan and Jessica Lally, Casey Kaplan; Sean Kelly, Debra Vilin, John Haenle, Mallory Roark, and Gavin Runzel, Sean Kelly Gallery; Alexa Reid, Tata Hadibrata, Maisey Cox, and Hilary Pecis, David Kordansky Gallery; Andrew Kreps, Liz Mulholland, John Weisenberger, and Kathy Paciello, Andrew Kreps Gallery; Stephanie Schleiffer, Simon Lee Gallery; Bianca Cabrera, Galerie Lelong; Michele Maccarone, Julie Emerson, Kenzy El-Mohandes, Lane LaColla, and Sarah Muehlbauer, Maccarone; Juan Sebastian Pelaez, Adriana Martinez Studio; Felipe Dmab, Pedro Mendes Siruffo, Matthew Wood, Maria Eugénia Abâtyaguara, and Marcela Caruso, Mendes Wood DM; Carol Cohen, Margaret Zwiling, and Schuyler Volz, Metro Pictures; Finola Jones, mother’s tankstation; Jennifer Loh, Kate Crutsinger, and Matt Salazar, Regen Projects; Sarah Wiesendanger, Ana Roldán studio; Lisa Spellman, Anabel Wold, Jessica Heerten, and Robbie McDonald, 303 Gallery; Pascale, Cerith Wyn Evans studio; Bellatrix Hubert, Justine Durrett, Lucy Li, and Ben Berlow, David Zwirner.

Thanks also to Pocahontas + Zarathustra Fine Art Services, New York; Cari Ozehoski, Let There Be Neon, New York; ARTA Shipping; Denbigh Fine Art Services, Vancouver; Crater, Seattle; and Connect Art International, San Francisco.

Neon producers in San Francisco: Bill Concannon, Aargon Neon; Tom Quick, CAL-NEON

Many thanks to the following individuals who in other ways have contributed to this project: Noreen Ahmad, Kathryn Andrews, Fred Bidwell, Edoardo Bonaspetti, Elysia Borowy-Reeder, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Harrell Fletcher, Massimiliano Gioni, Liz Glass, Michelle Grabner, Maria and Federico Hoffmann, Sophia Hoffmann, Mary Jane Jacob, Kadist Art Foundation, Luisa Lambri, Pablo León de la Barra, Marsha Miro, Jessica Morgan, Julian Myers-Szupinska, Adriano Pedrosa, Courtney Plummer, Lisa Spellman, Emily Sundblad, Julia Reyes Taubman, Sarah Thornton, and Vincent Worms.

A very special thank you to Gillian de Boer at Jessica Silverman Gallery for all her hard work in coordinating the exhibition so impeccably and keeping the ball rolling at all times. Many thanks as well to the other individuals at the gallery who worked on the exhibition: Evan Reiser, Jennifer Bindman, and Beryl Bevilacque.

And finally, much gratitude goes to Jessica Silverman for the invitation to organize this exhibition at her gallery. I thank her for her curiosity, her generosity, and her adventurous spirit!
COLOPHON

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Let There Be (More) Light*, on view at Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, October 13 through November 19, 2016.

Editor: Jens Hoffmann  
Design: Stripe / Jon Sueda  
Copy editor: Lindsey Westbrook  
Printer: Folger Graphics

© 2016 by Jessica Silverman Gallery. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner without permission.

Essay: © Jens Hoffmann

All images are © the artists, reproduced with the kind permission of the artists and/or their representatives.

PHOTO CREDITS

Andrea Bowers: courtesy Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Nina Canell: courtesy mother’s tankstation; Claire Fontaine: James Thornhill, © Studio Claire Fontaine; Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster: © Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, courtesy 303 Gallery, New York; Joseph Kosuth: Jason Wyche, New York, courtesy Sean Kelly, New York, © Joseph Kosuth; Tim Lee: Kristine Eudey; Glenn Ligon: © Glenn Ligon, courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles; Steve McQueen: Rebecca Fanuele; Jonathan Monk: © Jonathan Monk; Mai-Thu Perret: Fredrik Nilsen.