ALMINE RECH

James Turrell
Light, Space and the Art of Perception

Dec 7, 2023 — Feb 17, 2024 | CICA Vancouver, Canada

"We eat light, drink it through our skins. With a little more exposure to light, you feel part of things physically. I like the power of light and space physically because then you can order it materially. Seeing is a very sensuous act - there's a sweet deliciousness to feeling yourself see something." - James Turrell ("James Turrell: A Retrospective", LACMA, 2014)

Vancouver is set to pulse with the rhythm of radiant luminance as CICA Vancouver (Vancouver Centre of International Contemporary Art) unveils the exhibition *James Turrell - Light, Space and The Art of Perception*. A titan in contemporary art, American artist James Turrell's (b. 1943) works redefine the interaction of light and human perception, and have been nothing short of revolutionary. This eagerly anticipated immersive exhibition promises to be a visual delight, bringing together a comprehensive collection of his works that have enthralled audiences worldwide. From December 1st, 2023, through February 18th, 2024, the city will witness, for the first time, the celestial choreography of this master of illumination.

Informed by perceptual psychology, Turrell's journey began in the 1960s in his Ocean Park studio in California. Here, groundbreaking works like Afrum-Proto (1966) and Mendota Stoppages (1969–74) emerged, utilizing planes of light in intricate dialogues with architecture. These pioneering concepts paved the way for his present-day masterpieces, where light stands not just as a medium but as a message, an entity with form and structure.

Central to the CICA exhibition is Turrell's most recent "Glass Series," which he embarked upon in 2001. Evolving from his "Shallow Space Constructions" from the late 1960s and early 1970s, where he created architectural space that doesn't exist with light and plain museum walls, this series melds the latest LED technology with his longstanding fascination for sensory experiences. These installations serve as luminous labyrinths, interplaying depth and flatness, challenging and reshaping our spatial perceptions. The "Glass Series" also incorporates a temporal aspect which invites visitors to bathe in a slow gradual change of gradient colours, and to witness a seemingly two-dimensional plane metamorphose into a depth so profound that one's gaze may get absorbed into infinity.

Supplementing these "Glass Series" installations, the exhibition casts its net wider into the vast ocean of Turrell's practices, featuring selected two-dimensional works and drawings that underscore Turrell's multifaceted exploration of light across diverse mediums. A notable highlight will be the documentation of his monumental "Roden Crater" initiative. Commenced in the late 1970s, this 20-chamber masterpiece, constructed inside a volcano in Northern Arizona's Painted Desert region, epitomizes Turrell's lifelong investigation of light, seeing and psychological perception. While the crater remains a work-in-progress and is currently closed to the public, exhibition visitors will get a glimpse into this monumental endeavour that bridges earthly realms with the celestial.

"Turrell's philosophy and methodologies challenge us to confront and understand our own processes of perception; he proposed 'a way of seeing' that you have to experience and breathe in yourself. Hosting this exhibition is an immense honour; it's a commitment to reshaping the discourse on contemporary art in Vancouver." - Curator, Viahsta Yuan