

Javier Martin - INFINITE LIGHT

Exhibition Title | INFINITE LIGHT

Artist | Javier Martin

Dates | October 4 – November 2, 2019 *Exceptional closure of gallery on 22 Oct. (Tue.)

Location | MASAHIRO MAKI GALLERY, Tokyo



Javier Martin, *Blindness Infinite Light*, 2019, collage, acrylic, oil color and neon light on wood, 200.0x200.0x5.0cm

MASAHIRO MAKI GALLERY is pleased to present *INFINITE LIGHT*, the first solo exhibition to be held in Japan by Spanish artist, Javier Martin. Martin works in a variety of artistic mediums and since 2007, has continued to engage with the theme of 'blindness', exploring the oftentimes elusive and vague ideas associated with beauty and value, and their recognition in contemporary society, through his own unique mode of expression. We invite you to take this opportunity to view this exhibition, featuring works from the *Blindness* series that have been created especially for the occasion, as well as an interactive installation.

Martin's works aim to question the truthfulness and accuracy of messages communicated by objects, services and commercial imagery commonly found in our everyday life. There

is a tendency to prioritize visibility, outward appearances over content, in contemporary culture: images uploaded on social media that represent success and power are immediately applauded and reactions multiply, without the truth of their content being called into question. These images, whether on social media or in advertising, act as symbolic capital and carry messages that exert an influence on our consciousness. It is precisely this process of influence that lies at the root of Martin's engagement with the theme of 'blindness'.

Turning his attention to representative stereotypes found in contemporary culture, such as the extreme pursuit of beauty and the worship of wealth, Martin created a series of collage works in which bank notes appeared to form part of the clothing worn by female models. From 2011

onward, he began to include neon lights in these collages. In these works, the eyes of the models are hidden by the bright lights of the neon, recalling the novel, *Blindness*, by the Nobel prize-winning author, José Saramago. The novel follows the escalating conflict and egoism that spread like a pandemic, and the eventual breakdown of the social order, caused by the outbreak of a contagious disease in which a pure whiteness washes over the victim's vision and renders them blind. The title itself is a metaphor for the current state of contemporary society, whose members, dazzled by and accustomed to the consumption of massive amounts of information, have lost sight of the true essence of things – an idea expressed not only in Martin's works, but perhaps increasingly relevant to our own day-to-day existence on a global scale.

For the current exhibition, Martin has elevated his *Blindness* series to a new dimension. For us, the concept of 'the infinite' is connected to ideas of everlasting youth and beauty. The cut-outs of commercial imagery, brand logos, mirrors and neon lights which have been intentionally appropriated in the *Blindness* series are emblematic of the desires and aspirations of

contemporary society. Martin has likened the bright light that emanates from these objects and the light of our pure desires to two circles which together form an infinite loop, capturing with acute insight, the ways in which through following this loop, we come to lose ourselves in the stereotypes and the circles begin to merge. His works thus invite the viewer into a state of even more profound 'blindness'.

-Javier Martin

Born in 1985 in Marbella, Spain, Javier Martin began painting in oils from an early age and held his first exhibition at the age of eight. A self-taught artist, the perceptiveness that lies at the foundation of his current creative output, enabling him to identify symbolic relationships amongst the various paraphernalia of daily life, has been honed through his travels in Europe, as well as South Korea, Hong Kong and the United States. In April 2019, Martin held his first solo museum exhibition, *Blindness*, at the Seoul Museum. Recent exhibitions include *Plan B*, David Zwirner Gallery (New York, 2019); *Convergence*, Galerie Art District (Paris, 2018); and *LIES & LIGHT*, Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville (Jacksonville, 2017).

ARTWORKS



Left: Javier Martin, *BLINDNESS YUAN III*, 2014, digital stamp and mixed media on arches paper, 133.0x97.0x4.0cm



Right: Javier Martin, *Cut simply*, 2014, cut photo paper on plexiglass 120.0x93.0x4.0cm

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