

Art in America

Smith College Museum of Art. A 1975 publication from North Atlantic Books reproduced an abbreviated version of the text and a handful of black-and-white images on the front and back cover.

The gridded format of the photos in the installation invites viewers to read from left to right to trace each day's unfolding. And yet, to experience the installation is to drop in and skip around, to follow motifs, clusters, and repetitions, to hover over blurry or indiscernible subjects. *Memory* produces a sense of the present as technologized, externalized, and distanced. It is perhaps less about memory, in fact, than it is about recording—about experimenting with the conditions of writing under the requirement of constant, daily mediation.

Memory serves as an important contribution to the history of photo-conceptual practices and process-based writing from the early '70s. Even as it stages the experimental possibilities afforded by the technologizing of various creative processes, the work pushes back against a positivist approach to memory aided by data accumulation that feels all too familiar today. On view after nearly forty-five years in the archives, *Memory* insists on the importance of the personal from within the logic of the protocol.

—Rachel Valinsky

MARY CORSE Lehmann Maupin

While Los Angeles-based Mary Corse has exhibited regularly since the 1960s, she has spent much of her career far from the art world limelight. Her work has been visible in Los Angeles (due to multiple shows at Ace Gallery), but not so much elsewhere. Acclaimed appearances in significant museum exhibitions—including the 2011–12 Pacific Standard Time presentations “Crosscurrents in LA Painting and Sculpture, 1950–1970” at the Getty Center and “Phenomenal: California Light, Space, Surface” at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and the 2015–16 show “Light and Space” at the Seattle Art Museum—as well as solo exhibitions at Lehmann Maupin in New York in 2012 and 2015, have greatly contributed to burgeoning interest in her work.

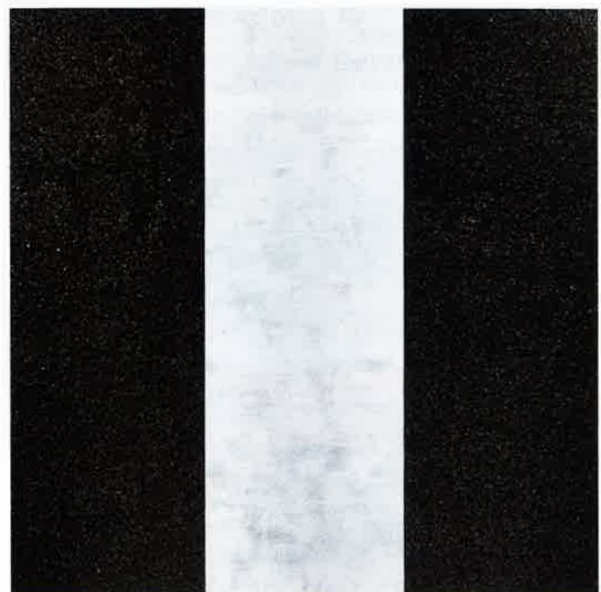
Corse is often linked with Light and Space art and described as one of its few female practitioners, despite her asserting that she was never part of, or influenced by, this loosely knit constellation of mostly male artists. She brings light directly into her work by mixing acrylic paint with prismatic glass microspheres (the tiny beads used to illuminate highway markings) and miniature, highly reflective acrylic squares. Her austere, yet lush, and precisely rendered paintings, which have roots in Minimalism and the monochrome tradition, sparkle and shine and are constantly in flux, changing with the viewer's eye movement.

One 1975 work displayed in her latest Lehmann Maupin exhibition inspired the new, related works on view (all untitled and from 2017). The older work, titled *Black Light Painting*, features a sizable black rectangle in the middle that sports four protruding black squares, two on each side, with white squares above and below them. Move up close and you are startled to discover that this black shape (which looks like pure paint from afar) is studded

with thousands of layered acrylic squares that make it look crusty, jumbled, brittle, and perhaps geologic, a bit like an obsidian field. The squares also reflect pinpoints of light. It's as if you are staring at the glittering night sky. The white-painted areas are also quietly eventful. The microspheres in the paint glint as you move about. Brushstrokes of different sizes, along with subtle streaks, splotches, and curves, add texture and complexity.

The new paintings feature between two and nine wide vertical bands of alternating black and white. These works, despite their reductive aesthetic, are astonishingly varied and adventurous. I gazed and gazed at one medium-size painting featuring a white column on the left and a black, bedazzling one on the right. Rendered in horizontal brushstrokes, the white column seems smooth, almost sheer in parts, especially in contrast to the acrylic-square-encrusted black column, yet it is anything but uniform. Slightly darker streaks command attention, as do billowing areas that loosely evoke passing clouds or rolling fog. When I turned to leave I noticed that the lower part of the white column, previously subdued in tone, suddenly appeared amazingly luminous, just because of my shifting position and perspective. A much larger painting features a sparkling black column on the left and a white one on the right. The black rectangle is magnetic and mysterious, like a segment of the cosmos. With the white one, composed of vertical brushstrokes, multiple tones and shapes almost cascade down the canvas, suggesting an abstracted waterfall. The largest work on view (nearly twenty feet across) is a total marvel juxtaposing black and white forms, opacity and luminescence. Corse's protean paintings are acutely involved with matters of perception. They are also enthralling, inducing rapt absorption and, at times, outright wonderment.

—Gregory Volk



Mary Corse:
Untitled, 2017,
acrylic with acrylic
squares and glass
microspheres on
canvas, 90 inches
square; at Lehmann
Maupin.