

## **Artinfo**

### **February 21, 2012**

#### **19 Questions for Light and Space Artist Mary Corse**

By Chloe Wyma

Name: Mary Corse Occupation: Artist City/Neighborhood: Los Angeles-Topanga Canyon

What project are you working on now?

Painting.

Your new show at Lehmann Maupin — your first at this gallery — includes five new paintings. How do your more recent paintings develop or build on your earlier work?

Each painting leads to the next development, which had always been the case in my work.

You originally studied as a painter at the Chouinard Institute, now called CalArts. Why did you decide to abandon traditional painting for reflective materials like Plexiglas and microspheres?

For me painting has never been about the paint, but what the painting does. I didn't want to make a picture of light; I wanted to put the actual light in the painting so I searched for materials that would do this. I wanted to make a painting that would depend on the viewer's perception, so I used this medium to create change in relation to the viewer's position.

You and artists Doug Wheeler, Craig Kauffman, and Larry Bell are often associated with the "Light and Space" movement, which developed in Southern California the 1960s and explored the environment, sensory perception, and time through industrial materials. Were you a tight-knit group? What did you learn from each other?

At the time, I was not part of this group nor was I influenced by their work.

In addition to being an artist, you are also a student of quantum mechanics. How does physics influence your work?

I think the evolution of physics and the evolution of art parallel each other, each coming from opposite sides of the brain.

You've spoken before about your interest in Zen Buddhism. In a nutshell, what has the combination of Zen and physics taught you about the universe?

We live in an abstract perceptual multiverse.

How has the recent surge of interest in Californian art spurred by the Getty's postwar

art history initiative, Pacific Standard Time, changed the way people see your work?

They see and experience my work today as they have in the past. The Getty's exhibition has simply brought the work to more people's attention.

What's the last show that you saw?

"Surface, Support, Process: The 1960s Monochrome" in the Guggenheim Collection, in which I have a "White Light" painting from 1970.

Do you make a living off your art?

Yes.

What's the most indispensable item in your studio?

The light.

Where are you finding ideas for your work these days?

Inside my being and in my own work.

Do you collect anything?

No, I leave that to the collectors.

What's the first artwork you ever sold?

I sold my first painting when I was 15 for \$30.

What's your art-world pet peeve?

Meaningless exhibitions.

Do you have a gallery/museum-going routine?

I go to see specific exhibitions; no routine.

Know any good jokes?

Yes.

What's the last great book you read?

"Physics and Philosophy" by Wolfgang Pauli.

What work of art do you wish you owned?

A Cezanne mountain painting.

What international art destination do you most want to visit?

Brancusi's "Endless Column" in Romania.