

**Press release**

**Munich, October 19th 2020**

**ROMs**

**Lou Jaworski | Michael Venezia**

**11 November 2020 – 16 January 2021**

The *ROMs* exhibition with artists Lou Jaworski and Michael Venezia presents sculptures, paintings and works on paper that show, in a very individualistic way, the evident interest in material qualities and formal-processual reduction. In the dialogue between these two artistic positions, the rational balancing of compositional elements with and against each other becomes obvious. Beyond dealing with geometric abstraction and grids, the exploration of color by Michael Venezia or Lou Jaworski's ferrite magnet, further identifies the physical independence of the materials as an essential facet of the conceptual basis of these works.

The exhibition presents three separate work groups by Lou Jaworski, consisting of one magnetic installation, several magnetic sculptures and offset prints, all conceptually interacting with the architecture of the space. The sculptures and installations of splintered or geometrically formed ferrite magnets are enhanced by the interaction between material autonomy, ephemeral abstraction and physical laws. Within this minimalist dictum of the expansion of pictorial space, Jaworski's works exemplify the relationship of individual structures with each other, towards the space as well as toward the viewer.

The two-part floor work *AIRLINES* (2020) shows a magnetic field of steel grids, on which ferrite magnets of various shapes are placed, depending on their polarities. Jaworski's works utilize the existing architecture and lighting, expanding the gallery space by drawing an additional level through the grid, in which the sculptures seemingly float. *I* and *A* (both 2020) are dynamic sculptures of charged ferrite parts, modifiable depending on the physics of attraction and repulsion. On a metaphorical level, these sculptures not only refer again to the relations of all objects and things to one another, they also illustrate the idea of change or – even more fundamentally – the idea of the sculpture that is not bound to any stable form. The works of ferrite magnets challenge the human perception by demonstrating a degree of abstraction based on material properties that can never be fully controlled.

The artist's intense preoccupation with perceptual mechanisms in the grid structures, comparable to a moiré effect, also continues in the offset prints on newspaper *SUNDAY* and *JUNE* (both 2020). The distances between the small black dots increase towards the center of the image until the arrangement reverses itself and the white spaces become the dots. On closer inspection, this structure appears abstract and synthetic, while at a distance, a uniform overall picture emerges. Jaworski questions the classic concept of the pictorial landscape format as well as the bichrome gradient, by simultaneously reducing of all other pictorial elements otherwise represented in a classical landscape.

Michael Venezia, one of the protagonists of Minimal Art, revolutionized the medium of painting by intensively exploring the independence of the canvas and the application of paint. The exhibition focuses on a series of his iconic *Spray-Paintings* on canvas and paper from 1969 to 1972, in which he applied liquid acrylic emulsion and metal pigments to the canvas using a spray gun. For this, the artist chose silver pigments, which changes in the ambient light and which, through their reflective properties, intervene with the viewer's space. The preference for metallic acrylic

emulsions is consistent with the increasing use of industrial materials and production techniques during this era.

Venezia created the large-format, black canvas from 1971 from the edge with repeated, uniform markings, further reduced to a metallic pigment haze, resulting in the center of the picture surface remaining monochrome and deeply dark. The proportional relationship between the individual surfaces and the overall format is based on a conceptual system, reinforced by the mechanical transfer of painting by spray gun and thus fundamentally calling into question the personalized, painterly stroke. The creation process and the resulting image quality lead to a perpetual encounter with the unpredictable. The works from this period are characterized by their material autonomy and abstraction and underline Venezia's interest in the process-based nature of painting.

The *Spray-Paintings* on paper are among the rare works on paper ever created by Venezia and are more experimental in character than the canvases. The canvas' surface is processed with grid-like test arrangements of individual bursts, some of which are tagged with numbers and markings. In these irregular structures, Venezia explores the theme of repetition and the proportionality of spray markings in relation to one another. In addition to their visual quality, they examine the spraying process itself, the angle of impact, the spray duration and the formation of the shape in order to analyze the irrationality and variability of this paint application technique.

The title of the exhibition is an abbreviation for *Range of Motion*, describing the actual radius of motion, as well as *Read only Memory*, describing certain data storage or material storage methods. This ambiguous legibility reflects the interplay between material memory and the expansion of the pictorial space and the relationship between individual parts and the whole.

Text by Madeleine Freund

### About the artists

**Lou Jaworski** (\* 1980 in Warsaw, Poland) studied sculpture and installation at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich under Prof. Gregor Schneider and received his diploma with distinction in 2016. Since 2017 he has been working as an assistant of Prof. Gregor Hildebrandt's class. Jaworski works with magnetic materials, iron, silver, graphite or meteorites for his installations and sculptures. His works of splintered or geometrically shaped ferrite magnets are characterized by the tense interaction of material autonomy, ephemeral abstraction and physical laws. Most of his works are concept-based and implemented in a site-specific manner. The artist deals with metaphysical questions associated with formal reduction as well as with the phenomena of human perception.

His works were u. a. exhibited in Phingyao (China), New York, Munich and Tel Aviv. In 2017 Jaworski was part of the Festival of Future Nows at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, under the direction of Udo Kittelmann. In 2016 he received the debut award from the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture and in 2017 the studio grant from the City of Munich. Lou Jaworski's works are part of the Bavarian State Painting Collections and are represented in private collections in Germany and Switzerland.

**Michael Venezia** (\*1935 in Brooklyn, US) has been developing simplified paintings since the 1960s, inspired by the art of Abstract Expressionism and created simultaneously to Minimal Art. While artist friends such as Dan Flavin and Sol LeWitt developed a sculptural oeuvre, Venezia devoted himself entirely to painting and was thus formative for the New York art scene of the

1960s. He recognizes the material quality of color, which he explores by means of juxtaposed color strips. The relationship between the colors consistently accompany his work and he thus is able to develop his own combination systems. In the course of his work he continuously reduces the pictorial surface towards a clear horizontal plane and begins using wooden beams as a base for painting, which he individually processes and subsequently composes into paintings. Venezia's interest also focuses on the reduction of gestures in painting to its bare essentials, and as early as the 1960s he developed pictorial techniques with spray cans, for which he is considered a pioneer.

Michael Venezia has been involved in group exhibitions at the MoMA, New York, in 1971 and 1974. Most recently, the Josef Albers Museum in Bottrop (2009) and the Kunstverein Heilbronn (2016) both presented comprehensive exhibitions of the artist's work in German-speaking countries.

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