

Meditations Exhibition Essay

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Ways of Perceiving (ADAD4019)

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Room 1
Birds in Space by Jean Pierrot

Link to Song

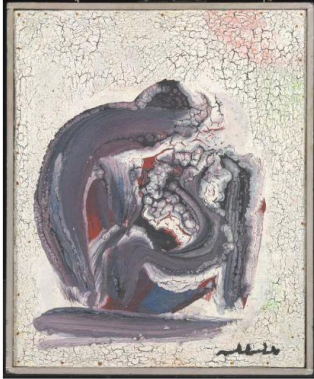
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V9FFaVgNvE>

Room 2
Giant Psycho Tank by Carsten Holler



Room 3

Meditations, 1969 Acrylic on board by Hamed Adballa



Capetians Everywhere, 1954 Oil on canvas By Georges Mathieu



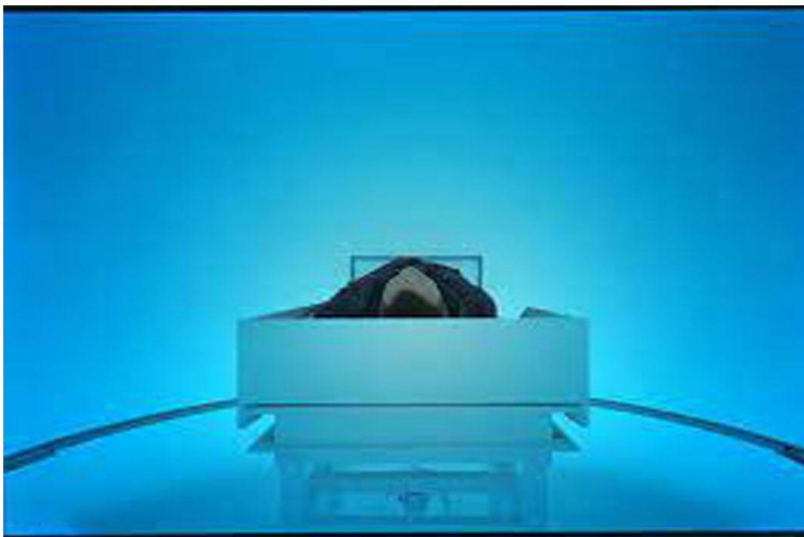
untitled, 1970 watercolor on paper by Henry Michaux



Blue Caterpillar, Oil on Canvas by Helen Frankenthaler



Room 4
Bindu shards by James Turrell



Room 5
The weather project by Olaf Eliason



Within the Webster dictionary there are two definitions of meditation, the first being “to engage in contemplation or reflection” and the second being “to engage in mental exercise (such as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness”. The primary goal of the “Meditations” exhibition will be to engage the viewer in these two different forms of meditation. Throughout all of human history humans have taken part in this act of concentration, whether it be through mantra, deep breath work, activity, or art. The act of meditation is deeply connected with the human spirit. Thus, the exhibition “Meditations” seeks to connect the viewer to this primal human experience. This exhibition will bring the viewer into a meditative state by immersing the viewer in different forms of meditation, showing work by artists that were created to create a meditative space and show the viewer different works created by artists who found themselves in that deep state of meditation whilst creating.

Chad Lieberman states in *The Bank of Knowledge* “Slowing down allows you to not only savor your experiences, but also it allows you to fully focus your attention and energy on the task at hand” (*Lieberman, 2008 P. 190*). In today's culture we are speeding through our days unaware of the world passing around us. Thus the first goal of this exhibition will be to reconnect the viewer to the act of slowing down and feeling, it will require the viewer to engage with at a piece of work for longer than seven seconds and it will allow the viewer to have time for internal reflection. The second goal of this exhibition is to bring the viewer into the conversation between the artist and the artwork. In an attempt to show the viewer how it feels for an artist whilst being in a truly

meditative state while also immersing the viewer in the work that is created whilst in a meditative state.

In our current society we are flooded with choices and stimulation, everything we look at is stimulating and designed to catch our eye, everywhere we go we are given endless choices of things to buy, we are shown ideas of how we should look, and we are given ideas of how we should act. Thus this exhibition will attempt to disconnect the viewer from that world of stimulation and endless choices and instead this exhibition will take them on a meditative journey, the goal of this journey is to slow the viewer down, and open the viewer up to internal dialogue and self reflection that is typically found in meditations. Through this exhibition I will attempt to display how artists express that internal freedom and dialogue that is found in Meditation through various different mediums as well I will also attempt to engage the viewer in a deep meditation. In an attempt to counter this idea of constant consumption and stimulation that we are all fed, this exhibition will be shown in completely dark rooms only lit by candles. These spaces will be lit by candles to create an atmosphere of comfort and relaxation for the viewers as well as attempt to deprive the viewers senses to ease anxiety and tension. The exhibition will be divided into five rooms which will vary in shape and size, but each room will be divided by walls and doors so the viewer will not be able to see what artworks might be ahead of them or what is behind them. This will then push the viewer to fully appreciate the room they are currently in and limit the choices the viewer has; *Alvin Toffler* states In the book *Future Shock* “We must consider the possibility, suggested here, that choice may become overchoice, and that freedom unfreedom” (*Toffler, 2022 P. 321*). It is this overchoice I am attempting to escape through this exhibition. Furthermore, In this exhibition viewers will have the choice to check their

phones in a coat check type room. They will be given this choice in an attempt to limit distractions and encourage the viewer to fully let go of the outside world around them.

The “Meditations” exhibition will show a total of eight pieces of art, the venue in which these art pieces will be shown is the turbine hall in the Tate modern museum. Within the first room the viewer will enter and find a dark black room, this room will only be lit by candles. Within the first room the only art piece will be the song *Birds in Space* by Jean Pierrot. This room will act as the barrier between the outside world and the microworld that will be created in the exhibition. *Birds In Space* is an ambient song featuring sounds of the natural world, and it will last twelve minutes and twenty four seconds. John Dewey States in, *Art as Experience* “In an experience, flow is from something to something. As one part leads into another and as one part carries on what went before, each gains distinctness in itself. The enduring whole is diversified by successive phases that are emphases of its varied colors.” (Dewey, 2022, P. 36) It is this experience I will be attempting to convey in this exhibition and I believe this song will begin this flow from “something to something” for the viewer. This time will be a time for the viewer to detach from the world they are constantly consumed in and disconnect from all worries or troubles outside of the exhibition Furthermore, It will be played on four large speakers in an attempt for the viewer to feel surrounded by the music and fully immersed within it. After the song has finished the viewer will then move into the next room. Within the second room the viewer will find the work *Giant Psycho Tank* by Carsten Holler. The work giant psycho tank is a sensory deprivation tank created in a gallery space. Holler created this space to allow the viewer to slow down and step away from the gallery space and float whilst also immersing themselves in the artwork. This is

the same reason I am going to show this piece. *Ambush Design* writes “Across his practice, Höller turns science on its head, deliberately upending expectations and causing confusion, to evoke associations of and offer adults experiences that are, objectively, filled with childlike fun. At the end of the day, his work, as Höller himself has said, aims “to escape...logic, to achieve a kind of extralogical uncertainty.” was created” It is this escape of logic and exploration of uncertainty I am trying to create in this exhibition. The *giant psycho tank* will be displayed in a completely dark room, with only candles lit to guide the viewer around the room. After this room the viewer will then move into the third room, this room will show four pieces. The first will be *Meditations*, 1969 Acrylic on board by *Hamed Adballa*. The second work will be *Capetians Everywhere*, 1954 Oil on canvas By *Georges Mathieu*. The third work will be *untitled*, 1970 watercolor on paper by *Henry Michaux*. The fourth and final work will be *Blue Caterpillar*, Oil on Canvas by *Helen Frankenthaler*. All of these artists come from different backgrounds and look at art differently, but within all of these works there are distinct elements of abstraction, minimalism and expression. The book *Art of the 20th Century* written by *Karl Ruhrberg* extensively discusses these works and the meditative state that artists find themselves in whilst making abstract art. “the regaining of a lost reality represented the certainty of salvation in the midst of a transient world. The form this reality took was the pictorial symbol. Painting thus became an act of meditation” (*Ruhrberg, 2000, P. 230*). This quote from *Art of the 20th Century* displays the meditative state that this work creates within the artist as well as the viewer perfectly. After looking at these works the viewer will then move into the next room. This room will be showing the *Bindu shards* a piece of work in the series of perception cells by *James Turrell*. *Hexagon Gallery* states “Turrell’s Perceptual Cells Series are enclosed,

autonomous spaces built specifically for one person at a time, in which one's perception of space is challenged by light". This piece is an immersive experience where the viewer is brought into a sphere of color and sound for fifteen minutes. The goal of this work is to put the viewer into a state of ecstasy caused by the deep state of meditation the viewer will be put into. It is this immersive state that I am attempting to tap into through this exhibition. After this room the viewer will go into the weather project by Olaf Eliason, This work is meant to relax and comfort the viewer after the long and possibly tiring journey of this exhibition. The weather project by Olaf Eliason was created to make the viewers aware of our current climate crisis and question our understanding of weather systems. In showing this work I am Interested in having the viewer question these things, but I am also interested in giving the viewer a place to lie in the sun and relax. I want the fake sunlight to come and shine upon the viewer as the first strong light they have seen since the start of the exhibition. In doing this I am attempting to slowly bring the viewer out of the meditative experience.

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