

## MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Exhibition:** Scott Lyall  
*Superstar*

**Location:** 88 Eldridge Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor

**Dates:** March 1 – April 21, 2019

**Reception:** Sunday, March 3, 6 – 8PM

*Color is hallucinations of skin.*

— Empedocles

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, of *Superstar*, Scott Lyall's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be on view at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

Drawing on a variety of recent work, Lyall continues to investigate links between technologies of the image and aesthetic experience.

Among the works included in the current exhibition are jewel-like pictures made with Nanomedia. Wafer-thin foils of cloned aluminum are altered at the level of their sub-visible particles, rendering structures that cannot be seen. But like certain plants and butterfly wings, these structures cause light to disperse and scatter. Whenever light encounters this exposed material, it shatters into billions of chromatic signals. The color is not derived from pigments or chemicals; it is the real-time appearance of the radiating light as it is scattered by the non-visible structures of the foil. This could be conceived as a performance by light. The scripts for such performances are made in a Clean Lab, but the works themselves are concrete, individual visibilities, or accidental masks of natural light. Crucially, as a structured material identity, the cloned foil is altered to become something new. To alter the informational structure of a substance is to give it the novelty of a changed identity. This is fabricated individualization. Taken as a group, the individuals make societies, groups of things inhabiting the province of our eye that offer support for observing and conceptualizing ideas about sameness, virtuality, and scale.

Lyall developed the *Nanofolds* during a year-long exchange with a team of optical physicists at Simon Fraser University. But he describes this relationship as post-scientific, and qualifies the theme of scientific collaboration. He notes that he was working with the scientific artefact, a so-called 'speculative' or 'new' material, at a point before its fixture as a useful technology, and before its commodity function was known. Thus he makes a case for the work's historicity, and seizes on a moment when its technical potential overlaps with a picture-making schema in art.

The sources of the images are renderings of the Cosmos, or digital visualizations of societies of stars. Because these renderings appear photographically, at rates of definition well below those of Nanomedia, which use a scale of many billions of pixels, algorithmic functions are used to multiply the lodes of information embedded in the foils. This results in real-time explosions of the stars and delivers the final works to an imaginative figuring, or to a hallucinatory poetics of the scientific Real. Colors explode as unique performances every time these works are in aspect with our eye. Passing through the retina into mental images, they provoke a fleeting drama of the deaths of tiny stars. Supernovas sparkle as a cognitive material we experience as feeling, conscious imagery, and thought.

Also on exhibit are larger pictures that reflect on and express broader attributes of color Lyall explored while developing the *Nanofoils*. Included is a set of modulated mirrors, called *Talents*, made of glass, printing ink, and a hand-mixed paint composition of varnish and gold Nano-particles. Hand-imprinted traces of the Nano-gold paint reduce the mirror's reflective quality. However, in containing gold, the paint also recalls the etymology of *talent* (in Latin, the amount of metal in a coin). Here another comedy of surplus unfolds: akin to golden backgrounds in Cimabue paintings, gold is the epiphany of an absent ground, the fundamental reality of abstraction itself. But it also introduces a surprising fugitivity: because of the intimate scale of Nano-particles, a quantity of the gold is absorbed into the pores of Lyall's hands as he rubs it into the mirror's façade. It is as if the painted talent was divided on a scale between a world-reflecting image and an adventure of embodiment. Art renders a talent to the liver of Prometheus.

Finally, on larger ink-printed canvases, Lyall makes pictures by layering colors that occur in photo-documentary images of the foils. The performances of light are impossible to capture, resulting in a blur of colored patches and flares. These accidents are gathered and preserved as fragmentary information patterns that he first extracts as color separations, reducing them to fixed compositions of data. Then by assembling them in printed layers, Lyall transfers them to a format used elsewhere in his work—the painting-object functioning as a screen or mask. Painting thus registers a final transformation. What was once sub-visual cloned aluminum has been passed onto canvases as mists and clouds. Color has transited from clone to individual, through performances of light and societies of stars, to explosions and atmospheric screens whose surfaces interact with ambient light. This total movement from latency to atmosphere is the dialectical passage of what the artist is calling *Superstar*. The subject is appearance, not from nowhere or the void, but from a scale of latent being once impossible to perceive.

*Scott Lyall (b. Toronto, 1964) lives and works in Toronto and New York. He earned his MFA from the California Institute of the Art in 1993. His solo and two-person exhibitions include Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto (2018), DRAGONS at Campoli Presti, London (2017), Dragons. SLStudio.clone 1/2/1 – SLStudio.clone 1/10/1 at Campoli Presti, Paris (2017), Black Glass at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2015), οἴνοπα πόντον [Winedark Sea] at Campoli Presti, London (2014), Indiscretion at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2013), Hasta Mañana at Greene Naftali (2011), An Immigrant Affection at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2010), The Color Ball at The Power Plant in Toronto (2008), the little contemporaries at SculptureCenter (2007), and an eponymous exhibition at Greene Naftali (1996), among others. In 2012, he participated in Anti-Establishment, curated by Johanna Burton, at the CCS Bard Hessel Museum. Previously Lyall's work was included in group shows internationally such as Ballistic Poetry, Hermès Foundation, Brussels (2016); Schnitte im Raum, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2011); Tentation d'Hazard, The Montreal Biennial (2011); New York to London and Back: The Medium of Contingency, Thomas Dane Gallery, London (2011); Collatéral, Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers (2009); The Lining of Forgetting, curated by Xandra Eden, Austin Museum of Art, Weatherspoon Art Museum; and SITE Santa Fe, 7<sup>th</sup> International Biennial (2008). Lyall's work is in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.*

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:

**Miguel Abreu Gallery**

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**Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 10:30AM to 6:30PM and by appointment**

**Subway: F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street; J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street**