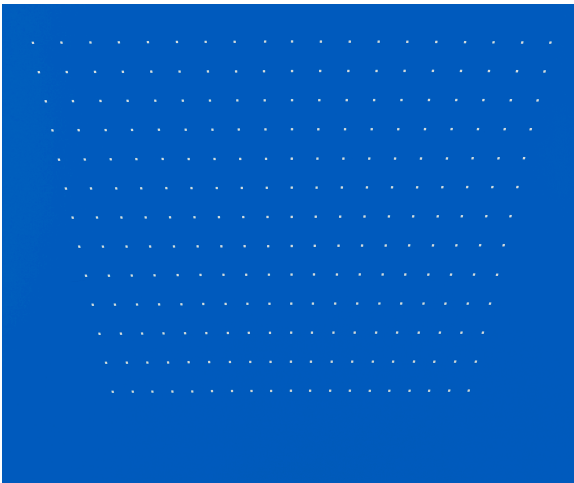


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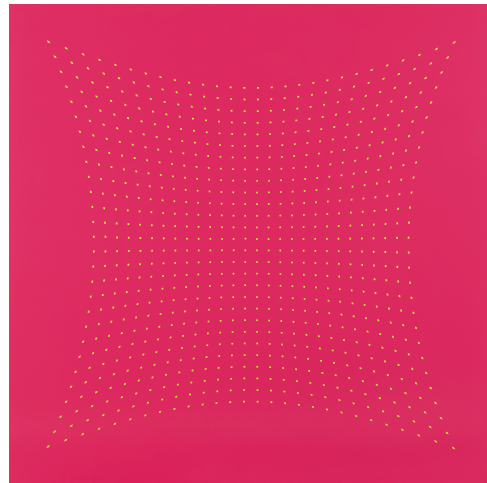
Albertz Benda Presents
TESS JARAY: THE LIGHT SURROUNDED

On view April 20 – May 25, 2017
515 West 26th Street, New York, NY

Opening Reception:
April 20, 6pm – 8pm



Azure Blue, 2001
Oil on linen
39 3/8 x 47 1/4 inches



Galla Placidia - Pink, 2005
Oil on linen
44 1/4 x 44 1/4 inches

New York, NY, February 22, 2017 - Albertz Benda is pleased to present *Tess Jaray: THE LIGHT SURROUNDED*, the artist's first solo show in New York, on view from April 20 to May 25, 2017. Featuring paintings from 2001 to 2012, this recent body of work reflects the artist's quest to distill her compositions to a degree of geometric purity. Through her mastery of line, color, and pattern, Jaray's work expresses the intangible spaces that exist between forms and interior and exterior worlds, using repetition as a means to artistic originality and personal discovery. According to Jaray, "manipulating simplified colors and shapes on a canvas shifts them and changes them and moves them until something happens – something asserts itself, asks to be born... and at its point of completion, there seems to be no space between the image and myself."

Jaray has always been fascinated by space and the relationship between an image and its surroundings. Growing up in the English countryside, she first began to explore the 'geometry of nature' in drawings of fields and hedges. In her early twenties, during a four-month traveling scholarship to Rome, Florence, Siena, and Venice, she experienced the impact of early Renaissance painting which left her with an enduring appreciation for the interaction between color and light. Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), the Florentine architect had an especially profound impact on Jaray, as his concern with space, pattern and design in structures taught her to see that architecture and painting did not have to be distinct disciplines.

The interplay of surface and depth, architectural decoration and perspectival space were brought together in diamonds, squares, parallelograms, rectangles, and triangles. Jaray then started arranging patterns of varying complexity; repeating, varying, and mirroring them. This continuous process of refinement through drawing resulted in a gradual simplification of patterns. This breakthrough in her practice allowed her to focus on just the essentials, picking out and concentrating on small geometric elements of her earlier paintings.

In subsequent decades, Jaray was exploring how she could hold forms in space rather than creating space. The works were comprised of basic geometric shapes that seemed to be influenced by an invisible force,

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with playful and visually challenging elements as a byproduct of experiments with space and shape.

Over the past twenty years, Jaray has begun to question perspective's inevitable linear progression from the space of the viewer to the vanishing point. Forms are now suspended in a space that is neither foreground nor background, but a fusing of the two. Spatial ambiguity causes the colors on the canvas to exist in a state of optical flux. The shapes in works such as *How Strange – Bright Red* (2002) and *Window Turquoise* (2008) jostle with each other, shifting between foreground and background, seemingly at once solid and insubstantial. Like mirrors, the colored planes reflect and return the viewer's gaze.

Jaray's recent use of laser cutting the edges of her paintings intends to minimize the evidence of the artist's hand. As she explains "there's still the mystery of how the color at the edge of an area affects the center...I see this as being somehow analogous to the written expression of something that is apparently retrieved before it disappears into the unconscious, something at the edge of thought, something that most of us can't quite put our finger on until it's done for us, as in a great poem."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tess Jaray RA (born in Vienna, 31 December 1937) is a British painter and printmaker. She studied at St Martin's School of Art (1954 – 1957) and the Slade School of Art (1957 – 1960). Between 1985 and 2000 Jaray devoted much of her time to working on public commissions, applying her understanding of architectural space and pattern to large-scale projects in public spaces. Major public commissions include a terrazzo pattern design for London Victoria train station (1986); Centenary Square, Birmingham (1988-92); Wakefield Cathedral Precinct (1989-92); Jubilee Square at Leeds General Infirmary (1995-2008); and the forecourt for the new British Embassy in Moscow (1999-2001). Her work is included in numerous public collections, among them The Tate Collection, London; The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA; Sundsvall Museum, Sweden; and The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Jaray taught at The Slade School of Fine Art, UCL from 1968 until 1999. She was made an Honorary Fellow of RIBA (Royal Institute for British Architects) in 1995 and a Royal Academician in 2010. Having written extensively throughout her career, she published a book of her collected writings, *Painting: Mysteries and Confessions* in 2010. She currently lives and works in London.

About Albertz Benda

Albertz Benda opened in fall 2015 and is devoted to a contemporary visual arts program focusing on rediscoveries as well as new introductions — from seminal figures in their field whose work warrants further exploration to debut presentations of artists that are new to New York.

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