

## Robert Irwin in Los Angeles

April 5 – June 7, 2025

1201 South La Brea Avenue

Los Angeles



Robert Irwin, detail of *Untitled (Acrylic Column)*, 1970-1971 © Robert Irwin/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Los Angeles – Pace is pleased to present *Robert Irwin in Los Angeles*, an exhibition of work produced by Robert Irwin between 1960 and 1971, at its Los Angeles gallery, marking the first exhibition of Irwin's work mounted by Pace since the artist's death in 2023 and his first posthumous presentation in California. On view from April 5 to June 7, the show will shed light on the most prolific period of Irwin's career—during which he began moving away from object-based art, setting out to create non-representational works centering on questions of perception—and celebrate his many contributions to the arts in Southern California.

*Robert Irwin in Los Angeles* is presented on the occasion of Pace's 65th anniversary year, during which the gallery is mounting exhibitions of work by major 20th century artists—with whom it has maintained decades-long relationships—at its spaces around the world.

A foundational figure in the California Light and Space movement, Irwin was a serial innovator across painting, sculpture, and installation over the course of nearly seven decades, expanding the contours of the canon and continually pushing the limits of what art can be. Through his influential and experimental practice—marked by both scientific and philosophical rigor—he proposed a new kind of art making, which revolved around phenomenology and the subjectivity of the viewer. Through his profound artistic inventions, which used light and space as primary materials, Irwin cultivated a reputation as a visionary figure, defining the vanguard of what is known today as experiential art.

The gallery's upcoming presentation in Los Angeles will bring together historically significant paintings and sculptures created by Irwin in the 1960s and 1970s—the years that would come to define the Light and Space movement. Among the works on view will be major paintings from Irwin's early Line and Dot series of the mid-1960s, in which he pushed the medium to new conceptual territories. These works will be in dialogue with his celebrated Discs of the late 1960s, which further obscured the boundaries between the physical and the sensory. The exhibition will also include a rare, twelve-foot-tall acrylic column that appears like a ripple in space—this sculpture is among the last physical objects that Irwin made before turning toward an entirely ephemeral and installation-based practice in the 1970s.

Born in Long Beach, California in 1928, Irwin began his career as a charismatic painter in the Los Angeles “cool school” scene, presenting his first monographic exhibition at the city’s Felix Landau Gallery in 1957 and then showing at Ferus Gallery in subsequent years—Ferus artists like Craig Kaufman, Billy Al Bengston, and Ken Price were influential on Irwin’s practice. By the early 1960s, his work became increasingly attuned to illusory and perceptual effects. It was during this period that he began his Line paintings—guided principally by questions of structure, color, and perception—and, soon after, the Dot paintings, works composed of fields of tiny painted dots in complementary colors on gently bowed supports, which are invisible at a distance but give the painting a sense of perceptual instability. A few years later, in 1966, Irwin started producing his celebrated series of curved aluminum and acrylic Discs, which dissolved the distinction between painting, sculpture, and environment.

After 1969, Irwin abandoned his studio practice entirely, dispensing with traditional modes of making to embark instead on a decades-long investigation into the relationships between light, space, and perception through site-specific and often ephemeral installations. In this pursuit, he took up what he termed a “conditional art,” growing his practice of creating installation-based works that intervened into the broader field of architecture. He became known for using various media—including fluorescent lights, fabric scrims, colored and tinted gels, paint, wire, acrylic, and glass—to create site-responsive works whose very materials are the specific contexts in which the viewer encounters them. “Catching lightning in a bottle” was the artist’s favored metaphor for his practice.

Irwin’s first permanent museum installation was *1° 2° 3° 4°* (1997), which he created for the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. He also produced permanent site-conditioned landscape works over the course of his career, beginning with his design of the Central Garden at the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles in 1997. Other landscape projects include his palm garden for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, completed in 2016.

Irwin first exhibited with Pace in 1966, presenting his Dot paintings at the gallery’s East 57th Street space in New York. He would go on to mount some 20 solo shows with Pace over his lifetime, maintaining a close friendship with the gallery’s Founder and Chairman Arne Glimcher for almost 60 years.

*A Desert of Pure Feeling*—a feature documentary about Irwin, directed by Jennifer Lane and co-produced by Arne Glimcher—premiered in 2022, and, in recent years, the artist has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Judd Foundation and Dia Beacon in New York.

To mark the opening of *Robert Irwin in Los Angeles* on Saturday, April 5, Pace Live will present a conversation between Pace CEO Marc Glimcher; Michael Govan, Director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and philanthropist, collector, and President Emeritus of NPR Jarl Mohn, who, with his wife Pamela, recently gifted 300 works by local artists to LACMA, MOCA, and the Hammer as part an initiative called MAC3, the Mohn Art Collective. This event will take place in the courtyard of Pace’s LA gallery, and further details will be announced soon.

Throughout 2025, Pace is celebrating its 65th anniversary year with 16 exhibitions of work by artists who have been central to its program for decades. Presented around the world, these exhibitions are odes to some of the gallery’s longest-lasting relationships. Over the course of their careers, these figures, with Pace’s support, charted new courses in the history of art. Pace’s 65th anniversary presentations are listed chronologically below:

**Joel Shapiro** — Tokyo, January

**Louise Nevelson** — New York, January; Seoul, April

**Kenneth Noland** — Seoul, January; Tokyo, March

**Sam Gilliam** — Seoul, January; Tokyo, March

**Jean Dubuffet** — New York, March; Berlin, May

**Robert Indiana** — Hong Kong, March; New York, May

**Robert Irwin** — Los Angeles, April

**Robert Mangold** — New York, May

**James Turrell** — Seoul, June

**Claes Oldenburg** — Tokyo, July

**Agnes Martin** — New York, November

**Robert Irwin** (b. 1928, Long Beach, California; d. 2023, La Jolla, California) was a pioneering figure of the Los Angeles-based Light and Space movement of the 1960s. Beginning his career as a painter, Irwin later began exploring perception and light with his acrylic columns and discs. In 1969, he gave up his studio and began what he termed a conditional practice, working with the effects of light through subtle interventions in space and architecture. Irwin employed a wide range of media—including fluorescent lights, fabric scrimms, colored and tinted gels, paint, wire, acrylic, and glass—in the creation of site-conditioned works that respond to the context of their specific environments.

**Pace** is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential artists and estates of the 20th and 21st centuries, founded by Arne Glimcher in 1960. Holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko, Pace has a unique history that can be traced to its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery continues to nurture its longstanding relationships with its legacy artists and estates while also making an investment in the careers of contemporary artists, including Torkwase Dyson, Loie Hollowell, Robert Nava, Adam Pendleton, and Marina Perez Simão.

Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher and President Samanthe Rubell, Pace has established itself as a collaborative force in the art world, partnering with other galleries and nonprofit organizations around the world in recent years. The gallery advances its mission to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences and collectors around the world through a robust global program anchored by its exhibitions of both 20th century and contemporary art and scholarly projects from its imprint Pace Publishing, which produces books introducing new voices to the art historical canon. This artist-first ethos also extends to public installations, philanthropic events, performances, and other interdisciplinary programming presented by Pace.

Today, Pace has eight locations worldwide, including two galleries in New York—its eight-story headquarters at 540 West 25th Street and an adjacent 8,000-square-foot exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. The gallery's history in the New York art world dates to 1963, when it opened its first space in the city on East 57th Street. A champion of Light and Space artists, Pace has also been active in California for some 60 years, opening its West Coast flagship in Los Angeles in 2022. The gallery maintains European footholds in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where it established an office in 2023. Pace was one of the first international galleries to have a major presence in Asia, where it has been active since 2008, the year it first opened in Beijing's vibrant 798 Art District. It now operates galleries in Hong Kong and Seoul and opened its first gallery in Japan in Tokyo's Azabudai Hills development in 2024.

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