

Aspen Art Museum
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Educator Notes

Larry Bell: *Aspen Blues*

June 1–November 25, 2018



Installation view: Larry Bell, *Aspen Blues*, 2018. Photo: Tony Prikrýl

About the Artist

Larry Bell was born in Chicago, in 1939, and currently lives and works in Los Angeles and Taos. He studied at Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, and has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim. Recent exhibitions have taken place at: Orange County Museum of Art, CA, Frederick Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, Malibu, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Amarillo Museum of Art, TX, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Harwood Museum of Art, Taos, and Carré d'Art - Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes, France.

About the Exhibition

American artist Larry Bell is known for his large-scale glass cubes that reflect and absorb light. For his AAM presentation, Bell installed a new sculptural diptych, *Aspen Blues* (2018), in the AAM's Roof Deck Sculpture Garden. Consisting of tinted glass panels in four hues of blue—turquoise, lapis, lagoon, and sea salt—each cube is activated by the changes in light and “performs” for the viewer in an unlimited array of saturated color, patterns, and shapes across the Roof Deck Sculpture Garden.

Questions for Discussion

- I The artist has said that the right angle is the most common element in modern culture. Take a look around your classroom. Would you agree with the artist?
- I What is the difference between a color's hue, value, and saturation?
- I Consider how light and color affect your daily life. Can you show evidence of a personal relationship with light or a particular color?

Suggested Activity

Painting with Light

For this activity, you will need several clear mason jars, blue, red, and yellow food coloring, water, white paper, spoons, and a light source, such as a window preferably with a sill, or a flashlight. Essential oils are optional.

First, ask students to work in pairs. Give each pair three jars filled with clean water. Invite students to add at least three drops of red food coloring to one of the jars of water. Then, add at least three drops of yellow food coloring in another, and three drops of blue food coloring in the last jar. Stir in the food coloring with a spoon to ensure that all of the water is dyed. Carefully arrange the jars on the white paper near the window or by another direct light source. Observe what happens as light passes through the jars throughout the day and over many days. Reposition the jars, if needed, so that light can pass through two jars at a time. Notice how the light and color "paint" across the white paper surface. Record any findings in a journal.

For further exploration, refill the jars with fresh water. This time, create an analogous palette of either red, orange, and yellow or purple, green, and blue. Notice any changes in color saturation, as the light moves through at least two jars at a time.

Optional: to activate the sense of smell, add a few drops of essential oil in each jar, such as lemon in yellow, rose in red, tea tree in green, or lavender in purple.

Following page: Installation view: Larry Bell, *Aspen Blues*, 2018.
Photo: Tony Prikrýl

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