

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MEL BOCHNER**



OPENING 29 NOVEMBER 2021  
BLANC INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

On the occasion of its second exhibition at Blanc Art Space's pop-up project space in Beijing, Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present Mel Bochner's *Blah, Blah, Blah* (2011), a monumental eight-part canvas that represents the apex of his eponymous body of work. The painting acts as an altarpiece in the darkened exhibition space, as though a chapel of *Blah Blah Blah*, inspiring such spiritual associations as the 15th-century polyptych Ghent Altarpiece painted by brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck, or the more contemporary Rothko Chapel in Houston. *Blah, Blah, Blah* is infused with a sense of ritual and drama inherent to many forms of worship and that invokes connotations of artistic pilgrimage, bringing to mind seminal destinations including Bochner's contemporary Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in Utah's Salt Lake. As an icon of the artist's most renowned series, *Blah, Blah, Blah* invites the viewer to experience a total immersion into Bochner's central doctrine: the intersection of linguistic and visual representation.

Bochner's powerfully graphic *Blah Blah Blah* series tracks the artist's ongoing fascination with language and colour. The phrase 'blah blah blah' is a linguistic shorthand in the English language that acts as a substitute for words in contexts where the content is felt to be too tedious or lengthy to recapitulate. In *Blah, Blah, Blah*, Bochner combines both the visual and the verbal in a muted palette, recalling the hushed tones and low lighting of sacred spaces. Yet in this context the phraseology of Bochner's painting contrasts with the devout language of religious scripture, with its dogmatic emphasis on faith and truth in meaning. Acting as both idea and image, Bochner's word paintings explore the cognitive links between looking at and reading a painting, reinforcing the ambiguity of everyday language, which can be just as impactful as devotional verse. The artist's *Thesaurus Paintings* are just one of many rationalising systems that he uses to question and explore our irrational trust in language and the world around us, directing this enquiry into the blind faith we put in the sacrosanct with his 'chapel of Blah Blah Blah'.

12 BERKELEY STREET  
LONDON W1J 8DT  
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100  
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200  
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

SIMON LEE GALLERY LTD  
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND 4316341  
GB 788 061 692

**NOTES TO EDITORS****About Mel Bochner**

Mel Bochner was born in Pittsburgh, PA in 1940 and lives and works in New York, NY. He received a BFA degree with a major in painting and a minor in philosophy from the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, PA in 1962. He taught aesthetics, art history and sculpture at the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY from 1965-1972 and in 2001 he was the Adjunct Professor at Yale University, New Haven, CT. His first one-man exhibition was held at the School of Visual Arts Gallery, New York, NY in 1966. In 2018 he participated in the 57th Edition of the Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, PA. His work has been the subject of many solo museum exhibitions, most recently, *Amazing! Mel Bochner Prints from the Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer and his Family Foundation*, Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OH (2018); *Mel Bochner: Illustrating Philosophy*, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, MA (2015); *Mel Bochner: Strong Language*, Jewish Museum, New York, NY (2014); *Mel Bochner: If the Colour Changes*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2012), which travelled to Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2013) and Fundação de Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2013) and *In the Tower: Mel Bochner*, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (2011). His work is included in major public and private collections internationally, including Tate, London, UK; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Städel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Canada; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, CA and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA.

**About Blanc International Contemporary Art Space**

Blanc Art Space officially opened the Blanc International Contemporary Art Space on 23 October 2021 in building D7 of the National Foreign Cultural Trade Base in the Shunyi District of Beijing. The inaugural exhibition brings together 14 world-renowned galleries from nine countries, with artworks ranging from oil painting, print, installation, sculpture, ceramics, and other art mediums. Bringing together both international and regional galleries, the space highlights participating galleries' artistic diversity and global vision while jointly offering a rich visual feast to the audience.

**Blanc Art Space**

Building D7, Yard3, East Jinhang Road  
Shunyi District, Beijing (Tianzhu Comprehensive Bonded Zone)

October 23, 2021–January 23, 2022  
Tuesday–Sunday, 10 AM–6 PM

**About Simon Lee Gallery**

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery  
www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Mel Bochner, *Blah Blah Blah*, 2011. Signed and dated verso in Sharpie on stretcher. Oil on velvet in eight parts, 284.5 x 431.8 cm (112 x 170 in.) Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

For further press information, images and requests please contact Zoe Gorell: [zoe@simonleegallery.com](mailto:zoe@simonleegallery.com) / +44 (0) 207 491 0100.

12 BERKELEY STREET  
LONDON W1J 8DT  
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100  
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200  
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

SIMON LEE GALLERY LTD  
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND 4316341  
GB 788 061 692