Kiyoshi Nakagami, *Untitled*, 2012, acrylic, Chinese ink, and mica on canvas, 75½ x 76½".

which he has "enriched" with mica. The resultant works—filled with meticulous ripples and evoking cascades of light—bear no trace of the paintbrush. This absence of painterly gesture is also suggestive of Newman's work, recalling the means by which he attempted to unencumber the experience of pure color. Likewise, for Nakagami, the removal of the maker's hand is meant to facilitate meditative contemplation.

In all of the works in this show—which featured two grand diptychs, five large paintings, and five smaller paintings (all 2012), and coincided with an exhibition of related work at this gallery's Paris branch—the paint appears suspended in space. There is no physical ground toward which it falls. It billows in a pitch-black and densely material void. (The artist has described the "molecularity" of space.) A profusion of meticulously drawn marks seem etched into the light and form a continuum of perceptions within the cosmos, sectioning the changing illumination into regions that subtly, intimately overlap one another. One of the most striking works is made on a square canvas. An explosion of light at the top center, seeming to emanate from nothing, sends wispy strands down to the bottom right of the painting.

Nakagami says that his works depict the big bang, insisting that they represent that cosmic moment in various explosive stages. He has also stated that his works convey a "moment of enlightenment." One might interpret this assertion in gnostic terms, which would imply that the "heavy" darkness suggests lack of enlightenment, that the light and dark are in conflict, and that the individual is "saved" when he or she "knows" the light and with that becomes conscious of "God." This may explain why Nakagami's paintings are endlessly fascinating, like all art that seems miraculous because it dwells on miracles, with religious zeal.

—Donald Kuspit

Alix Pearlstein

ON STELLAR RAYS

In a video projected wall-size, people come and go. They meet, part, walk toward one another, and run away. They confront the camera or they ignore it. The only sounds are of footsteps, quickening and slowing. Facial expressions are for the most part neutral, although some of the performers occasionally exhibit a wider range of emotion, in particular a handsome dark-haired fellow who glowers and flirts, his posture looser than the others'. At one point, he and an older woman press their cheeks together, and she smiles rather radiantly—an understated emotional peak.

This is Alix Pearlstein's *Moves in the Field* (all works 2012). Despite the austerity of the characters' actions, which bring to mind both contact improv and the task-based performance of Yvonne Rainer, the video has the gloss of a studio film, featuring seasoned performers with engaging faces and vivid, high-definition footage. The camera constantly moves, showing the action through a variety of angles and distances, sometimes moving in a way that suggests it has a personality, that it is acting in the scene rather than simply recording; it lingers, as if interested, or flits by, as if bored. The randomness of the characters' behavior, too, constantly subverts our expectations. Every attempt to construct a narrative—as ordinary movements begin to look more like chasing, rejecting, beseeching; as the studiously neutral expressions, examined closely, reflect curiosity, distaste, disappointment—is thwarted, pulling us back to an experience of pure movement. The camera is occasionally complicit in this effect, as when it depicts a person in close-up staring pensively offscreen, evidently at nothing, only to reveal that he is nose to nose with someone else.

Our ambiguous status as spectators—as both watchers and collaborators—is brought to the foreground in the other work on view here, *The Drawing Lesson*. That video begins by focusing on a pair of women who sit, upright and very still, across from each other. They are a pair of temporal bookends, one an older version of the other. The camera circles them, coming closer and closer, until by virtue of some imperceptible movement, the two women are suddenly looking at it, at us. Then, as the camera circles the pair ever more tightly, they begin to whip their heads about to meet it, like dancers tracking during fouettés.

Alix Pearlstein, *Moves in the Field*, 2012, HD video, color, sound, 20 minutes.

After the camera has gotten extremely close, after we can't stand another second of the women's searching stares, the video suddenly cuts to a group of three performers, and the cycle repeats again. Throughout the piece, the performers' expressions are as neutral as they were in *Moves in the Field*, but they register as defensive, as if the arrangement of their bodies were akin to a closed system upon which we have intruded by watching.

Both videos challenge our habits of viewing, and in this way they again bring to mind Rainer (also because the older woman in both works is Valda Setterfield, a Merce Cunningham dancer who frequently appeared in Rainer's works). But whereas Rainer's performances from the 1960s stripped away every element that would identify them as such, Pearlstein's tease us with the possibility of narrative, even if that narrative never takes shape.

—Emily Hall

Leandro Katz

HENRIQUE FARIA FINE ART

A series of images produced according to preset constraints, Leandro Katz's *S(h)elf Portrait*, 1972, recalls, at first glance, the Photoconceptualism of Ed Ruscha or John Baldessari, yet close inspection reveals