

Infinity and beyond: Ivan Navarro's installation throws light on Masterpiece London

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Impenetrable Room, 2017, by Ivan Navarro, commissioned by Paul Kasmin Gallery at Masterpiece London.
Photography: Andy Barnham

INFORMATION

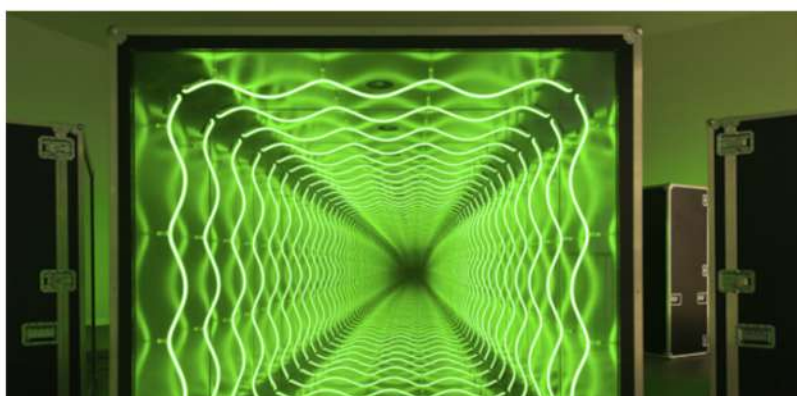
Masterpiece London runs from 29 June - 5 July. For more information, visit the [website](#)

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Luminous, illusory, monolithic: Ivan Navarro's latest installation summons the enigmatic energy of prehistoric monuments like Stonehenge and Avebury – with a twist of fluorescent lime and 1970s psychedelia.

Impenetrable Room (2017) greets visitors to Masterpiece – the art fair opening today in Chelsea that brings together everything from antiquities to contemporary art and design. The beguiling boxes fitted with undulating neon tubing and mirrors create an infinity effect, but unlike other infinity installations, you're kept on the outside of Navarro's work. It gets at the very nature of creation. You can stand back and marvel, but you can't fully grasp it.



Impenetrable Room, 2017, by Ivan Navarro. Photography: Andy Barnham

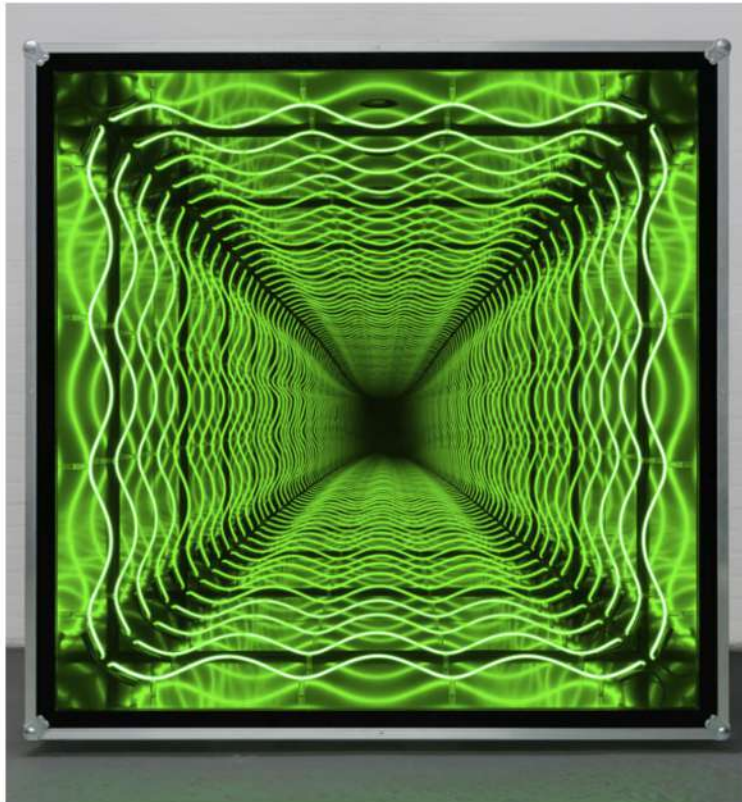
‘I think of this almost as a fourth dimension, that is reflection or fiction,’ Navarro told us ahead of the fair. Unlike other works where he has mounted to the floor or wall, here ‘it was important to achieve this connection between illusion and the real space’. He explains, ‘That’s one of the reasons the pieces are freestanding, and you can tell that it’s a real volume and the effect of the mirror is a trick.’

The six identical, six by six foot containers – originally used for transporting musical instruments – have appeared in Navarro’s work before, but this new site-specific installation, commissioned by the fair and presented by Paul Kasmin Gallery, creates new resonances.

The works seem to resemble shipping containers, and their playful attitude could be taken as poking a little fun at the way of viewing art at a fair—walking around artworks to try to size them up. ‘One idea I like about this work is that you can show it in different configurations,’ he says. ‘Each box is independent from each other, so every time it’s shown in different places you can create different environments.’

Navarro, who grew up in Santiago during Pinochet’s rule, is known for his interests in socio-political themes and interests in perception – but another inspiration is furniture. He used to work as an antique restorer and cites furniture as source for his shapes and forms, such as his series of electric chairs in 2005. ‘I’ve always been interested in furniture. I did some pieces connected to Rietveld, and I like Bauhaus and modern German and Dutch design.’

Impenetrable Room is a centrepiece of Masterpiece. And no doubt it’ll be a popular spot for selfies too. ‘Yes, that always happens,’ Navarro concedes. ‘But I don’t make it to be engaging. I make it as a visual experiment to play with different ideas and materials.’



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