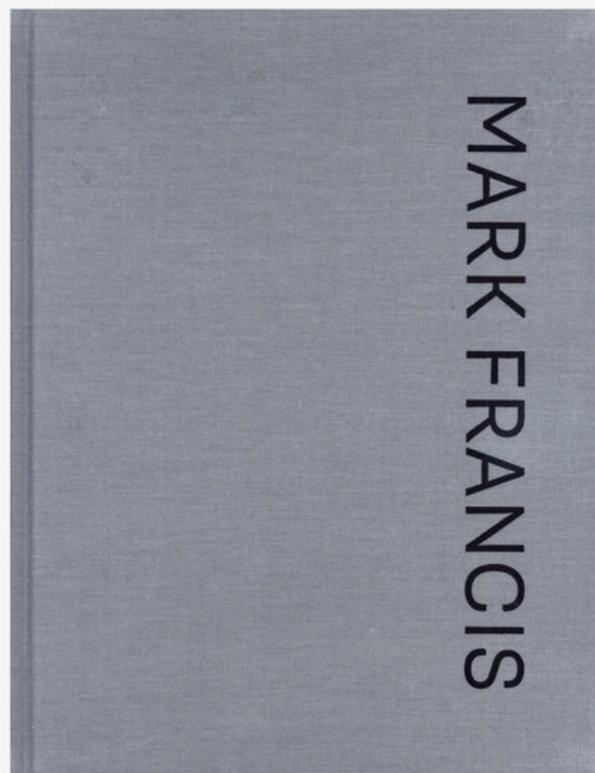


**Mark Francis**

Mark Francis Catalogue Release  
17.12.2021  
Bernhard Knaus Fine Art, Frankfurt, DE

The new extensive monograph on Mark Francis' work is now available upon request and directly at the gallery.

[Find the catalogue here](#)



## In Conversation

with Barry Phipps

**MARK FRANCIS:** The paintings that you create are not produced in isolation, though you are alone in the studio when you paint them. They are part of the world in which they are produced and refer to the world. To this end I would like to begin our conversation by considering a few overarching themes: light, landscape, abstraction, and sound. These themes will inevitably lead into other topics but can serve as guides for talking about your practice in the past decade or so.

Perhaps we may begin by talking about your relationship to light. This is different to the usual way one thinks about painting and luminosity, that of 'capturing' light or the 'inner' luminosity of paintings. Light, in this sense, refers to the titles you have chosen for your works.

**MARK FRANCIS:** The light that I am interested in is very different to what you might observe when looking at a portrait in the National Gallery. In most cases, the light is observed and what we might see on a day-to-day basis, even allowing for artistic intervention to achieve the desired result. My interest in light is different - I see it as a form of energy, which is in a continual state of flux. It is constantly moving through the life cycle of birth, being and eventually death, only to be recycled and the process to be repeated infinitely. This hypothetical light, which as a force evades even the most sophisticated technologies, helps me to see what is invisible to the naked eye and focus on the networks and fields I like to believe makes the universe tick. Titles like *Auric Field* (2018; page 114), *Lumen* (2018; page 115), and *White Light (Spectral Dimension)* (2018; page 119) help to convey this. It is important to remember, however, that the end result is simply oil paint on a piece of canvas.

**MARK FRANCIS:** Might we say then that your interest in light is, in part, derived from science, as you say, "a form of energy"? Although you add that it is a form or force that exceeds contemporary scientific understanding. Perhaps, it is more specific to say that it exceeds measurement by the methodologies of physics? This brings us very quickly into your dialogue with the sciences - can you tell us how that interest, as a basis for your work, began?

**MARK FRANCIS:** I think the numbers in science are an important part of my interest. When you look at a star in the sky, the distance does not seem so great but once that distance has been measured, the figures become incomprehensible. Millions of miles suddenly mean nothing - they are just too big to imagine - which explains the introduction of the light-year as a unit of measurement. One light-year is approximately six trillion miles. Then there is the possibility that you could be looking at a star that doesn't exist anymore. The time that the light takes to reach earth is so long that the star could have extinguished itself in the meantime, and that fascinates me.

My interest in science dates to before my practice, right back to when I used to look at the pictures in my brother's *Knowledge* magazine in the 1960s. We shared a bedroom, and he had all sorts of sciency things on his side of the room. One of my most significant memories as a child was worrying about falling into space in my pyjamas, and my bed and toys flying past me. I often wondered why, if the earth was round, I did not fall off. Years later this question was answered by learning about gravity at school.



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