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**SFMOMA PRESENTS MEDIA WORKS BY ANTHONY MCCALL
AND IMI KNOEBEL**



Anthony McCall, *You and I, Horizontal*, 2005;
Collection SFMOMA; photo: Blaise Adilon

From June 9 to September 30, 2007, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present the exhibition *Project, Transform, Erase: Anthony McCall and Imi Knoebel*. Organized by Rudolf Frieling, SFMOMA's curator of media arts, the exhibition pairs two projected-light works—*You and I, Horizontal* (2005), an installation by Anthony McCall, and two versions of an historical video piece by Imi Knoebel: *Projektion X* (1971–72) and *Projektion X Remake* (2005).

McCall and Knoebel both explore the interplay of cinema, sculpture, and performance. Immersive and visceral, and yet highly formal, their works push the medium of film into a sculptural dimension and implicate the viewer, addressing the notion that light alters the surfaces it illuminates and is itself altered as figures move through it in space. Starting with a deceptively simple concept—an abstract or geometric shape projected as a beam of light—the works presented here investigate the nature of projection in a spatial environment and produce strikingly complex visual effects that call into question assumptions about spectatorship, architecture, space, and projected image. The exhibition title—*Project, Transform, Erase*—refers to video's early comparison to an artist's tool, like a pencil used to sketch. Immaterial and ephemeral, time-based media can quickly describe an idea and just as easily erase it.

You and I, Horizontal (2005), a digital projection—and recent SFMOMA acquisition—by pioneering British-born American artist McCall, draws on the minimalist forms of his 1970s-era solid-light film installations to create an ethereal and engaging experience of light as a three-dimensional beam and wall animation. *Projektion X* (1971–72), an early black-and-white video by German painter and sculptor Knoebel, features a continuous stream of nighttime streetscapes, illuminated only by a powerful X-shaped beam of light. While each artist's approach and aesthetics diverge, both emphasize the experience of abstract light projections continually intersected by figures moving in space.

The work of McCall, one of the most important of the Post-minimalists to pioneer the use projected film, creates expansive, experiential installations of light. His now famous *Line Describing a Cone* (1973)—the first of his “solid light films”—still stands as a milestone in the history of American experimental cinema. Gordon Matta-Clark acknowledged this work's influence on his *Conical Intersect* (1975), and McCall's installations are an important precedent for light installations by contemporary artists such as Olafur Eliasson. Developed from 1973 to 1975 and revisited since 2003 as a new series, McCall's solid-light works emphasize the sculptural qualities of a

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light beam as it comes in contact with particles in the air—here, vapor from a theatrical haze machine. Viewers become active participants in his work by interacting with the three-dimensional ray. The artist also draws attention to the projector itself and the evolving image—an ellipse, or a traveling wave animation—that it casts onto the wall of the gallery. *You and I, Horizontal* belongs to a recent series of installations that translate the vocabulary of McCall's early solid-light works in 16 millimeter film into a new medium: a computer script and digital projection presented as a continuous loop in the gallery instead of as a single screening in a room or theater.

Knoebel made several drawings, slide installations, and photographs on the subject of projection in the early seventies, including his only video, *Projektion X*. The video, produced by the pioneering television gallery Fernsehalerie Gerry Schum, documents an enormous X-shaped light projection against the nighttime cityscape of Darmstadt, Germany. Knoebel realized the work by mounting a powerful projector masked with a clear diagonal cross on the roof of a van. A video camera, fixed at a right angle on the roof, continuously recorded the van's tour through the streets. The projection's brightness and quality change depending on the types of surfaces illuminated, their spatial relationship to the projector, and the vehicle's speed and path. The video captures the overlay of Knoebel's geometric abstraction on an ever-changing succession of building facades, trees, and signs that briefly move into the light and dissolve back into darkness. *Projektion X Remake (2005)*, a color recreation of the original and a bold experiment in video preservation, was created by Knoebel in conjunction with *40yearsvideoart.de: Digital Heritage—Video Art in Germany from 1963 until the Present*, an exhibition and restoration project organized by Frieling at ZKM Karlsruhe prior to his tenure at SFMOMA. *Projektion X Remake* will play continuously throughout the day. The original black-and-white video, *Projektion X*, will screen once daily at 2 p.m.

McCall's recent installations continue to critically strip away narrative illusion from cinema, while creating a playful experience of light, space, and time. Knoebel's main body of work comprises paintings in the constructivist tradition, and his characteristic use of layered angular forms and crosses can be traced to *Projektion X*. The works presented in *Project, Transform, Erase* offer complimentary viewpoints of projection as an event. The artists' studies of shape, space, and duration distinctively highlight the specific properties of each chosen medium.

This is the first time these works are installed at SFMOMA.

SFMOMA's Education Department will present a talk with McCall and exhibition curator Frieling, as well as a related screening of John Cage's conceptual film performance *One 11 and 103*. In fall of 2007, Goethe-Institut and SFMOMA will collaborate to present several other works from *40yearsvideoart.de*, including pieces by Harun Farocki, Christian Jankowski, and Rosemarie Trockel. Dates and details will be announced at a later time.

The presentation of Imi Knoebel's work is made possible by the Goethe-Institut, San Francisco.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The Museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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