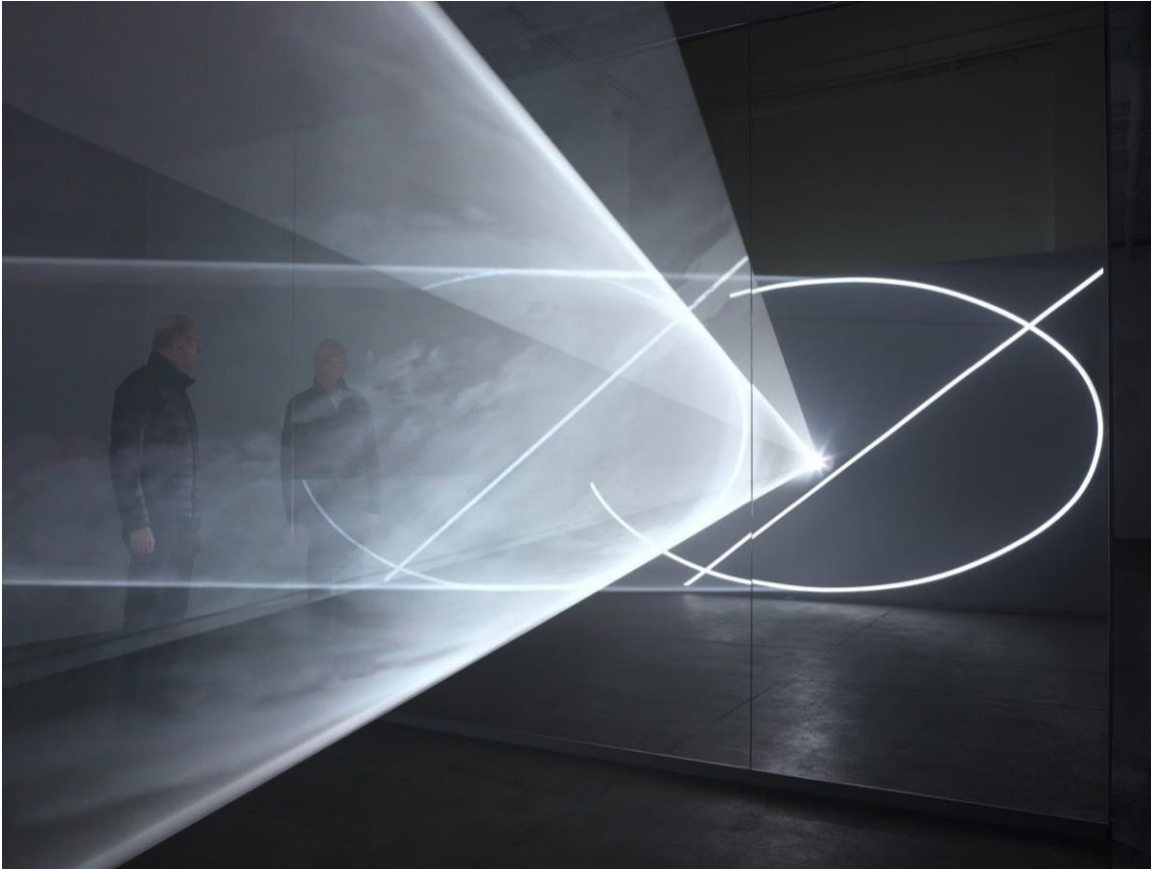


SEANKELLY

Ables, Kelsey. "Anthony McCall Creates Transcendent Sculptures with Light and Mist." *Artsy Magazine*. October 24, 2019.

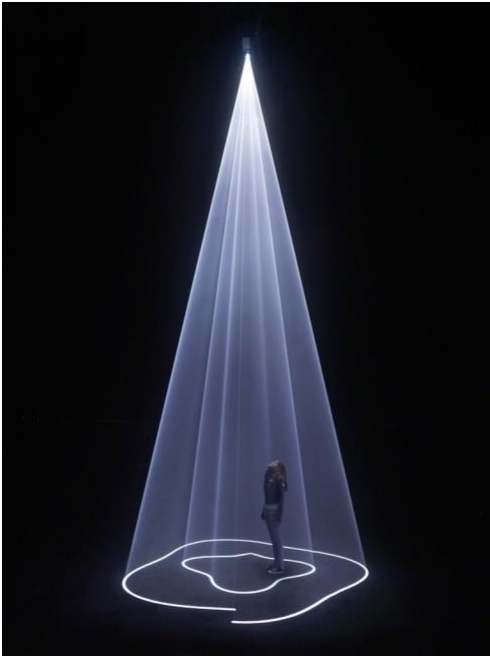


Installation view of Anthony McCall, Split Second (Mirror), 2018 at Sean Kelly, New York, 2018. Photo by Dan Brandica. Courtesy of Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

Cocooned inside a blanket of light, a misty haze swirls at your waist, while all directions of your peripheral vision are illuminated. Look toward the light, and a vanishing point appears like a distant, unexplored horizon. From the inside of Anthony McCall's solid lightwork *Threes II* (2011), light feels tangible, space malleable, time immeasurable. You feel transported.

McCall creates illusions of solid light by projecting simple two-dimensional shapes through a thin haze. Plunging down from the ceiling or stretching out from one wall to the next, the works are comprised of hardly more than light and mist. But grounded in this simplicity is inexplicability. The light work is simultaneously a film without content, a room without walls, and a sculpture without mass.

SEANKELLY



Anthony McCall. Coupling, 2009, Sprüth Magers

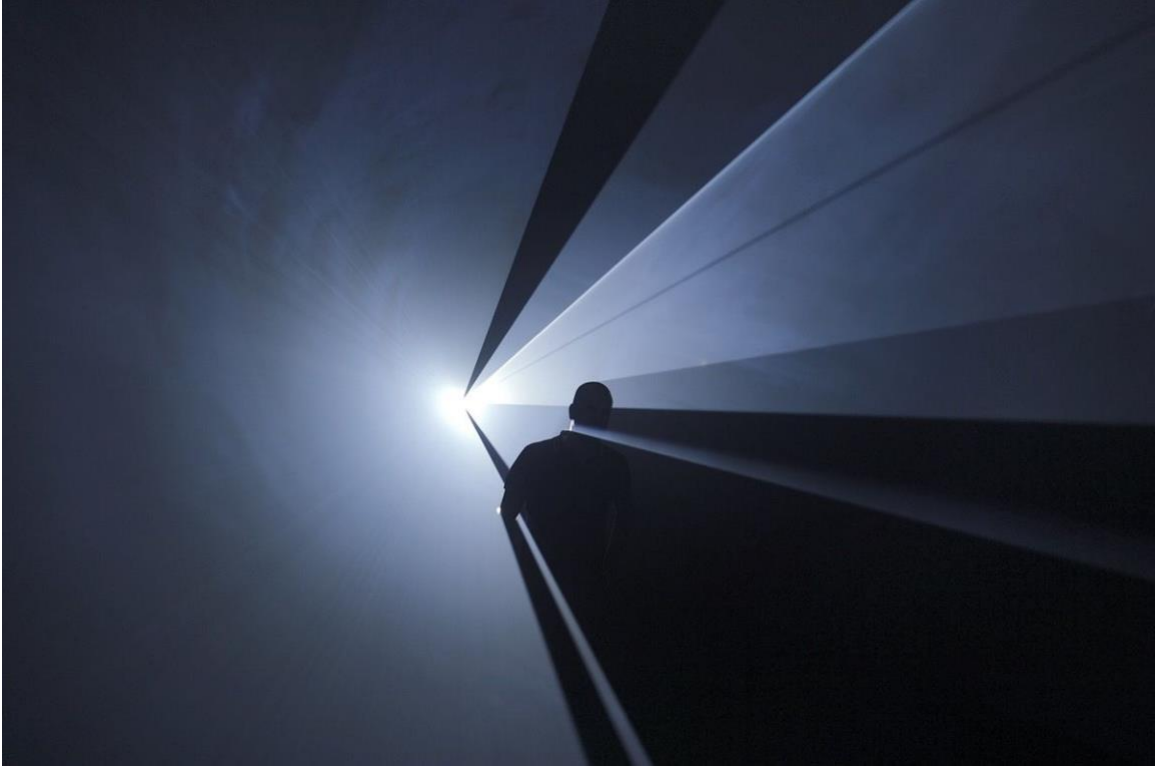


Anthony McCall. Installation View, 'Five Minutes of Pure Sculpture. ... Sprüth Magers

“Only as your body goes through the space, as you interact with the sculpture, does that first encounter start becoming something that you can comprehend,” explained Cathleen Chaffee, chief curator at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. “You make sense of it with your body—with your arms and hands as you start moving around it and experiencing it.” And while art museums typically operate under the assumption that art is seen, not touched, such rules dissolve in the galleries of Albright-Knox’s “Dark Rooms, Solid Light,” an exhibition devoted to McCall’s works, on view through November 3rd.

As you walk through McCall’s show, light collects on your body sending a cascade of shadows through the work, and altering the shapes projected onto the walls. Countless dust particles swarm in different directions, galvanized by every motion. For Chaffee, this is what makes McCall’s light works uniquely compelling: “They don’t just give you something to observe, you’re implicated.”

SEANKELLY

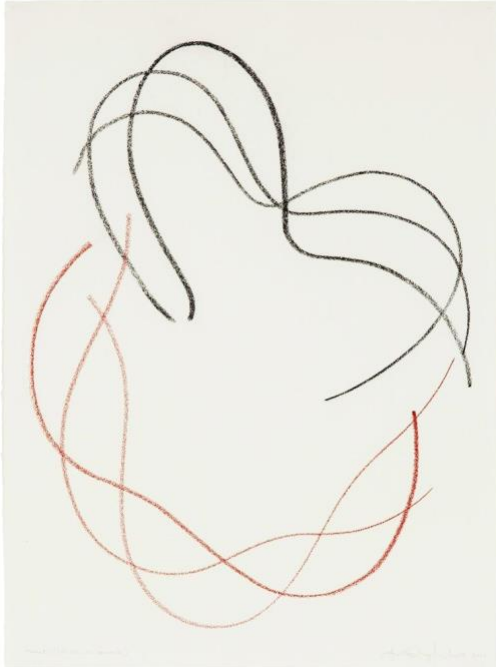


Installation view of Anthony McCall, You and I Horizontal, 2005 at Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne, France, 2006. Photo by Blaise Adilon. Courtesy of Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

McCall's light works developed from what Chaffee calls a "simple inversion." The artist was involved in avant-garde film circles in the early 1970s, but beyond creating images to watch, McCall repurposed cinema equipment to create a "film" that is also a sculpture and an installation. Turning the viewer away from the projected image and toward the projector itself, he transforms the space in between into an immersive experience.

When McCall started making these works, shortly after moving to New York from London, he relied on the dust and smoke of New York City lofts to make the light visible. Today, swapping cigarette smoke for carefully formulated haze, McCall is showing five of his works in galleries at Albright-Knox that, he noted, were intended for art that hangs on the wall. The light sculptures throw crown moldings into deep contrasting shadows and bring forward the fine details of Grecian colonnades, dramatizing the Albright-Knox's neoclassical interiors.

SEANKELLY



Anthony McCall, Throes: 700seconds, 2012, EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam



Anthony McCall, You and I (II), 2005, Spruth Magers

McCall sees the works as multiple mediums. They're sculptures because they "can only really be understood as three-dimensional forms that you move around and through to understand" he explained, adding that they're also cinema, "because the pieces are very importantly structured in time." At their most basic, the works might be considered drawings, or "footprints," that lay out the two dimensional shapes that will be projected to form the work.

The artist draws on a wide array of influences, from expanded cinema to installation art to Minimalist sculpture. Materially, he has pushed Minimalism to

SEANKELLY

an endpoint—his intangible materials, light and haze, make the weighty works of Donald Judd and Richard Serra feel almost indulgent.

McCall's works come into clarity like an idea—first appearing as a loose outline, before evolving into a full-fledged, complex thought. The first work in the show, *Throes II*, introduces itself as a line drawing on a wall. Then, as you round the corner, the shape appears in its three-dimensional form. As the projection moves, two ellipses gradually merge. The works provide “an alternative temporal experience,” Chaffee offered, encouraging viewers to linger.



Installation view of Anthony McCall, Doubling Back, 2003 at Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Switzerland, 2015. Photo by Stefania Beretta. Courtesy of Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

From afar, McCall's works might evoke a lighthouse beacon stretching through a foggy night; spotlights on a stage; a light beam beneath a hovering spacecraft; or a portal to another world. In this regard, McCall diverges from his Minimalist peers—he encourages these free-flowing associations, in a way that a staunch Minimalist, striving for a purely aesthetic experience, would not.

“I’ve noticed how many different ways individuals react to the work,” he said. “Some find spirituality in it, some find science fiction, others find other kinds of mysteries.”

It's fitting that McCall's first solo museum exhibition in North America is in Buffalo, one of the cloudiest cities in the country. Like an elusive ray of sunlight sneaking through the heavy winter clouds, McCall's light works, as solid and

SEANKELLY

concrete as they appear, can never quite be grasped. Their warmth is never quite felt. And that is among their mysteries.