

'Behind the Light'

Nathan A. Bernstein

This fascinating show was devoted to the ways artists use technology to create and manipulate light. Works here by eleven "luminaries" were cozily crammed into the domestic-scale gallery, creating a sense of intimacy that was enhanced by the inclusion of preparatory drawings among the finished objects.

Many of the usual suspects were represented, including Dan Flavin, Jenny Holzer, and Keith Sonnier, and their work looked fresh in this modest-size space. Sonnier's neon and aluminum *Cross Station* (1991), for example, is 48 by 48 inches but seemed much smaller here, while his two 1990 studies on graph paper lifted the pieces into the imaginary space of Cubist multiperspectivism.

Anthony McCall's two contributions demonstrated the evolution of the artist's experiments in light technology over the past four decades. His *Miniature in Black and White* (1972) consists of an old-style carousel projector loaded with 81 black-and-white slides that are successively flashed onto a small Plexiglas screen. Viewers looking through the Plexiglas were bombarded with image after image, their visual faculties so saturated that retinal afterimages competed with successive projections. The violence

of this rapid-fire slide show gives way in McCall's two studies for a huge gallery installation, *Leaving* (2006), which have the tranquillity of pure geometry.

There were other exciting pieces here, including Nils Folke Anderson's tangle of multicolored neon squares, Spencer Finch's ideogrammatic watercolor, Laddie John Dill's argon-and-glass *Light Sentence* (1973), Erwin Redl's LED panels, and Antony Gormley's stark ink-and-bleach drawing. Blazing new trails in manipulating technology, these artists appeal to our emotions and intellects—and enthrall us. —**Alfred Mac Adam**



Anthony McCall, *Miniature in Black and White*, 1972, 81 slides, Plexiglas screen, and Kodak carousel projector, 11" x 24³/₈" x 61³/₈", installation view. Nathan Bernstein.