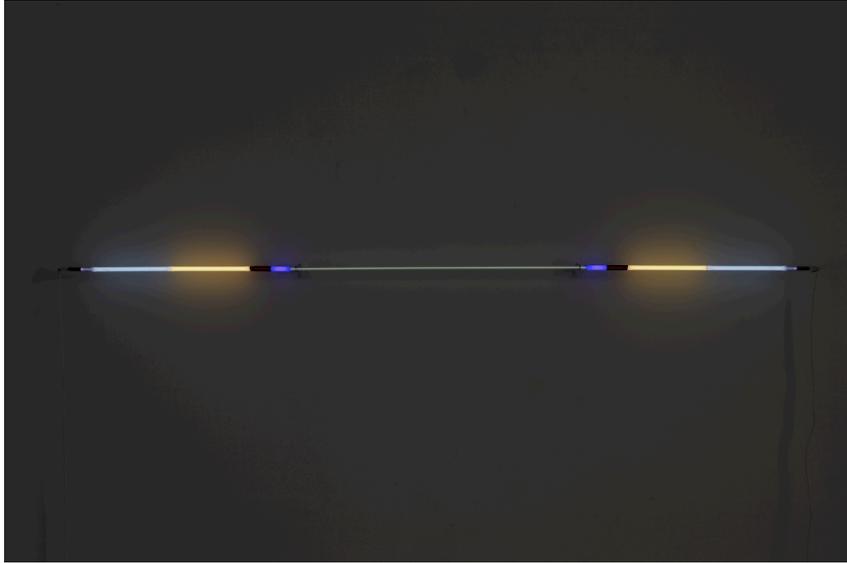


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FINE ART DEALERS SINCE 1974 IMPRESSIONISM MODERN CONTEMPORARY

BEHIND THE LIGHT Nov. 4, 2010-Jan.4, 2011



© Laddie John Dill, *Light Sentence*, 1973, Argon and blown glass, 77 x 1/2 inches, Courtesy Nyehaus

Behind the Light: Nov. 4, 2010- Jan. 4, 2011
Opening reception: **Thursday, Nov. 4, 6 - 8 pm**

Nathan Bernstein Gallery is pleased to present *Behind the Light*, a group show featuring the work of Nils Folke Anderson, Corey D'Augustine, Laddie John Dill, Spencer Finch, Dan Flavin, Antony Gormley, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Jenny Holzer, Anthony McCall, Erwin Redl, and Keith Sonnier.

Light is often the most beautiful thing that exists in nature. It reminds us of a larger existence that goes beyond humankind. Some light creates sensations of stillness, solitude and even meditation while other types radiate energy and spirit. Artists have been drawn to the sublime quality of light for centuries utilizing techniques such as chiaroscuro to emulate realism and drama. By the 1960s, artificial light allowed artists to construct three-dimensional installations that embodied some of the same ethereal qualities as natural light; however, the light was now used in abstraction. The luminous quality and changing material of light became a vehicle for investigating humanism and the infinite. Viewers' perception and consciousness were altered after an encounter with a light-based work of art. After all, these light works required significant viewing time.

Though we are continually immersed in light, we rarely stop to notice its inherent beauty. Our present day world is intellectually based, but the dialogue actualized between the radiance of light and the surrounding space requires us to return to our physical nature and be more present and aware. Hopefully as a result, once the viewer leaves the gallery and enters back into the real world, his/her relationship to light and space is changed, even heightened. For the works selected in this exhibition simplicity is key. By using linear forms and a restricted color palette, the quality and beauty of the light is accentuated creating a more intense viewing experience.

Not only does *Behind the Light* attempt to trigger a discussion of why artists choose to use light and what it symbolizes for them, but it also takes a closer look at the behind the scenes work that relates to a finished

light project the public viewer is most often not privy to. Photographs, maquettes, videos, and drawings are often a crucial part of the process. There is an interdependence that exists among these artworks that provides not only a glimpse into the process of the artist, but also the opportunity for a rare dialogue between the pieces. These smaller and subtler works can and should stand alone as innovative and intriguing in their own right. This exhibition attempts to introduce its visitors to the glory of the work *Behind the Light*.

For both **Dan Flavin** and **Keith Sonnier**, the color and composition of a light installation was meticulously laid out in preparatory drawings. While Flavin used commercial fluorescent tubes and Sonnier used neon, both artists selected a medium that the public is quite familiar with. Placing these lights in various combinations in an art gallery gives them a different meaning and weight. The hand of the artist is not present in the final product; the drawings, however, are less mechanized and more personal. In the same way that colors in paintings have a relationship with each other, the color in the two light works fills the space either through direct interface with the viewer or the glow of reflected light.

While we are subsumed by the atmospheric light of Flavin and Sonnier, **Laddie John Dill's** *Light Sentence* invites us to "read" the intimate work. The argon used in the work draws the viewer in while simultaneously giving him/her the urge to step back and take the piece in as a whole from a distance. **Anthony McCall** also favors subtlety in his light works. With a background in cinema and installation, he is best known for works in which darkened rooms are filled with beams of light that take on sculptural qualities when they interact with air particles. In *Miniature in Black and White*, McCall draws our attention to the projector itself by placing tempered glass in front of it; light in various forms emanates from 81 slides creating a visual experience that engages and intrigues. McCall's pencil drawings for his large-scale installations are powerful as a grouping, demonstrating his penchant for fastidious planning. They are an example of the merging worlds of the multitude of mediums he works in.

Antony Gormley uses ink and bleach on paper in his studies for *Breathing Room*, the gallery sized installation where a "drawing in space" is filled with bursts of light that plunge into darkness leaving the viewer to adjust to the glow of the structure that remains. The geometry of the work juxtaposed with happy bleach accidents that occur and hand drawn lines create aesthetically pleasing compositions with both depth and energy. The watercolor medium chosen by **Spencer Finch** records his documentation of the color of light at certain times in a poetic manner. His data gathering is scientific, but his creations delve into human perception in regards to the natural world.

Both **Erwin Redl** and **Jenny Holzer** have worked on large scale indoor and outdoor light installations using LEDs. Holzer uses language to make the viewer aware of information often hidden or unknown. By placing the text on a moving LED screen, the viewer is immediately confronted by colorful words compelling him/her to stay to get the gist of the text. Redl's work redefines space through the use of transitions of color. The video and accompanying photograph of **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's** *Pulse Park* document the tremendously successful public installation that took place in New York's Madison Square Park in 2008. Two hundred beams of clear light flashed and pulsated based on the recording of two hundred heartbeats from visitors, thus making the viewers an integral part of the piece. This work is a beautiful example of the movement and energy that light-based works generate.

A younger generation of emerging artists using light as a medium demonstrate the influence of the more established artists who paved the way for them. **Nils Folke Anderson** fabricates white neon maquettes for his room-sized square interlocking Styrofoam installations. Car parts and neon tubes make up a wall sculpture by **Corey D'Augustine** that illuminates unknown and unseen areas and details of a familiar object.

For additional information contact: Nicole Berry at 212.288.8970 or nicole@nathanbernsteinart.com

GALLERY HOURS: Monday-Friday 10 to 6 or by appointment

21 East 65 Street New York, NY 10065 tel 212.288.8970 fax 212.535.7299

info@nathanbernsteinart.com www.nathanbernsteinart.com