

Tuesday 2 February 2010



Experience solid light

New York-based artist Anthony McCall is to transform the striking architectural spaces of Victoria University's Adam Art Gallery in an upcoming exhibition of 'solid light' installations.

As a headline event in the 2010 NZ International Arts Festival's visual arts programme, the Adam Art Gallery exhibition *Anthony McCall: Drawing with Light* is the first time New Zealand audiences will be able to experience his unique 'solid light films'.

"Simply you must physically experience the work of Anthony McCall. This exhibition will enable audiences here the opportunity to encounter the work of one of the most experientially enriching artists of our time," says Adam Art Gallery curator Christina Barton.

"There is no doubt that the labyrinthine spaces of the Adam Art Gallery will play perfect host to McCall's luminous projections".

McCall has been testing the limits of film for nearly 40 years, redefining cinema as an immersive experience of projected light in real space.

He began his career in the 1970s, making experimental films and performance works using simple elements such as fire, light, and smoke to map time and space. He was an active figure in the experimental art and film scenes in both London and New York.

After such critical acclaim and attention in the late 1970s McCall withdrew from making art, spending the next 20 years running his own graphic design business, which produced art publications.

It is only recently that he has returned to producing his 'solid light' art works, which have taken on new shape with the advent of digital technology and the availability of haze machines.

Along with staging McCall's major 'solid light' installations, the exhibition will also include drawings, notations and photographs to offer insights into the full range of his output and working process.

Anthony McCall will present a lecture on his work at the Denis and Verna Adam Auditorium, City Gallery, Wellington at 6pm on Wednesday 24 February 2010.

In conjunction with the New Zealand Film Archive, the Adam Art Gallery will also present a not-to-be-missed one-off opportunity to view McCall's first 'solid light film' *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) at the Wellington Town Hall at 7pm on Monday 15 March 2010.

"*Line Describing a Cone* (1973) is justly famous in the history of avant-garde film for its reduction of the cinematic experience to its core ingredients: projected light in physical space," says curator Christina Barton.

"For 30 minutes a beam of light from a 16mm film projector draws a perfect circle on a distant screen. In the space between a solid cone takes shape as light particles cling to dust and smoke in the atmosphere. Transforming the viewer's usual passive relation to the medium, this work invites active participation."

Anthony McCall will tour the country presenting lectures at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery New Plymouth on Thursday 25 February and at the University of Auckland on Tuesday 2 March. He will also speak at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane on 11 March 2010.

While in Auckland he will be undertaking a site visit towards developing a major permanent public art work sited at Auckland's most exciting long-term urban design project, the Tank Farm on Auckland's waterfront. This commission is supported by the Auckland City Council Public Art team.

You are invited to the Adam Art Gallery's official exhibition launch to be opened by Tyler Cann, Curator of the Len Lye Archive at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth on Tuesday 23 February at 6pm. The artist Anthony McCall will also be present.

Special media previews of the exhibition will be available during the day on Tuesday 23 February 2010 by appointment only.

The artist will be available for interviews in the morning of Monday 22 February 2010.

If you require further information or high quality images please contact: Laura Preston. Email: laura.preston@vuw.ac.nz Phone: (04) 463 5229

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Image caption: Anthony McCall, *You and I, Horizontal (III)*, 2007 Installation view at Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, 2007. Photograph: Steven Harris. Courtesy of the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Key information

The artist:

Anthony McCall was born in 1946 in St Pauls Cray, England. He currently lives and works in New York. He started his career in the 1970s making experimental films and performance works using simple elements (fire, light, smoke) to map time and space. *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) is a key work in this early phase. Made soon after he moved from London to New York in 1973 and screened for the first time at Artists Space in 1974, it is the first of his 'solid light films' in which he turned attention away from the normal function of film to deliver content to draw attention to the fundamental attributes of the medium. This had the startling effect of shifting film from its image-producing function in time to its sculptural possibilities in space; an achievement the consequences of which the artist is still exploring today. McCall was an active figure in the experimental art and film scenes in both London and New York showing his work at the London Filmmakers' Cooperative and at various venues in New York including: Millennium Film Workshop, the Collective for Living Cinema, Artist's Space, The Clocktower and the Idea Warehouse. He also participated in group exhibitions at the ICA and Serpentine Gallery in London, the Paris Biennale and Documenta VI, amongst others. In the late 1970s McCall shifted focus and started up his own graphic design business, which produced art publications. He took up art making again in 2000. This was enabled by the new technologies of digital animation and projection and the invention of haze machines. It was also given impetus by the inclusion of *Line Describing a Cone* as a gallery installation as part of the Whitney Museum of American Art's exhibition: *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977* (2001). Since this time McCall has produced new projected light works and these have been included in a number of major exhibitions, including: *Anthony McCall Film Installations*, Mead Gallery, University of Warwick, 2004; *Elements for a retrospective 1972-1979/2003*, Musée départemental d'art contemporain de Rochechouart, 2007, Serpentine Gallery, London 2008, and Utzon Centre, Aalborg, 2009; and *Anthony McCall Breath [The Vertical Works]*, Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2009. He is represented by Sean Kelly Gallery in New York, Thomas Zander, Cologne and Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris.

The curator

With more than 20 years experience Christina Barton has a formidable reputation in New Zealand as a writer, curator and art historian. She has held positions at Auckland Art Gallery (1987-1992) and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (1992-1994) and as Senior Lecturer in Art History at Victoria University of Wellington (since 1995). Key exhibitions she has curated include *After McCahon: Some Recent Configurations in Contemporary Art* (Auckland Art Gallery, 1989), *Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art* (MONZ, 1994), *Close Quarters: Contemporary Artists from Australia and New Zealand* (touring Australia and NZ, 1995), *Joseph Kosuth: Guests and Foreigners, Rules and Meanings (Te Kore)* (Adam Art Gallery, 2000), *The Expatriates: Frances Hodgkins and Barrie Bates* (Adam Art Gallery and Gus Fisher Gallery, 2004-5), *Four Times Painting* (Adam Art Gallery, 2007), *Hydraulics of Solids: João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva* (Adam Art Gallery, 2008); *I, HERE, NOW* Vivian Lynn (Adam Art Gallery, 2008) and *Billy Apple New York 1969-1973*. She has also published widely on contemporary New Zealand art and is co-editor of *Reading Room: A Journal of Art and Culture* (Auckland).

The gallery

The Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi is the purpose-built gallery of Victoria University of Wellington. Located in Wellington, New Zealand's capital city, it is a forum for critical thinking about art and its histories as well as the professional structure within which the Victoria University Art Collection is managed. It has built a considerable reputation for its exhibitions, performances, lectures and talks that explore the full range of media available to artists, which aim to test and expand art form and disciplinary boundaries. The gallery is a remarkable architectural statement that is a vital feature of campus life at Victoria and a major force in the artistic life of the city and beyond. Since opening in 1999, the Adam Art Gallery has presented a significant programme of exhibitions and events by local and international artists.

Highlights over this period include solo projects by Joseph Kosuth (USA), Joseph Grigely (USA), Fernanda Gomes (Brazil), Zhang Huan (China), Brett Graham (NZ), Destiny Deacon (Australia), Gunther Uecker (Ger), Mark Adams (NZ), Gavin Hipkins (NZ), Billy Apple (NZ), Darcy Lange (NZ), Joao Maria Gusmao and Pedro Paiva (Portugal) and Vivian Lynn (NZ). Substantial curated shows include *Face to Face: Contemporary Art From Taiwan*; *Play: Recent Video from Australia and New Zealand*; *Concrete Horizons: Contemporary Art from China*; *Breaking Ice: Revisioning Antarctica*, and *The Subject Now*. These exhibitions and performances were accompanied by a lively programme of talks and discussions.

In developing its programme and building the university's art collection, the Adam Art Gallery has established important relationships within the university and beyond, with artists, curators, writers, scholars, collectors, galleries, museums, cultural organisations and funding agencies in New Zealand and further afield. It has received support from the Asia-New Zealand Foundation, the Australia Council, Creative New Zealand, the Getty Foundation, Culture Ireland and the Mondriaan Foundation. It has built relationships with various partners, including the Goethe Institut, Auckland Art Gallery, The Gus Fisher Gallery (University of Auckland), City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand Film Archive, Alexander Turnbull Library, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Artspace (Sydney), the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (Melbourne), The Substation (Singapore), and the Ontario College of Art and Design (Toronto). The Gallery's first audience is on campus, where staff and students play an active role in the gallery's programmes. It is also visited by local, national and international audiences and its reputation extends further due to its active publication programme and website (www.adamartgallery.org.nz).

The Adam Art Gallery was designed by leading New Zealand architect Ian Athfield. It is the first custom-built gallery to have been constructed on a university campus in New Zealand. It offers a range of spaces over three levels that are adaptable to various uses. The gallery has been designed to meet museum standards of lighting, atmospheric conditions and security.

Where you can get more information:

A full outline of the project is available from the Adam Art Gallery.

You can also visit:

for information on the artist

www.anthonymccall.com

www.skny.com/artists/anthony-mccall

www.serpentinegallery.org/2007/04/anthony_mccalldecember_2007_ja.html

for information on the Adam Art Gallery

www.adamartgallery.org.nz

for information on Victoria University of Wellington

www.victoria.ac.nz

for information about the NZ International Arts Festival

www.nzfestival.nzpost.co.nz/

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