

ENGLISH VERSION

# ANTHONY McCALL

*Between you and I  
and other solid light films*

## Anthony McCall

Anthony McCall is a New York-based British filmmaker who came to notice in the 1970s, by way of his «solid light» films, as one of the leading figures in the experimental film arena. After a 20-year period in which he made no films at all, Anthony McCall returned to film-making in the early years of the 21st century, and more specifically for the exhibition *Into the Light* organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2001. The IAC at Villeurbanne is holding a solo show of Anthony McCall's work, which is representative of a shift from creative film-making to the contemporary art scene.

During the 1970s, Anthony McCall made a series of «solid light» films, laying the foundations of a new cinema, and ushering in experimental activities fuelled both by the art scene and by film-making.

*Line Describing a Cone*, produced in 1973, is symbolic of this artist's research. With this first *Solid Film*, and complying with a principle based on minimal wherewithal, Anthony McCall asserted the specific quality of film within its own component parts-to wit, the phenomenon of projection itself-and showed a preference for an at once performance-related and process-oriented dimension (the work is stated as is, and is shown the way it turns out).

In 1974 and 1975, McCall devised and produced a series of film variations about the figure of the cone; these continued to deconstruct the cinematographic device, explore the plastic properties of the beam of light, and transform light projection-rendered tangible by the use of smoke-into a sculptural environment.

Since he resumed his cinematic activities from 2000 on, Anthony McCall has introduced new types of works.

The first "solid films" were drawn directly on the film's surface using a ruling pen, white gouache, and a compass.

Nowadays, Anthony McCall's films have a technological dimension. The artist uses design software: films and 16 mm projectors have been swapped for digital files, computers and video projectors. The adoption of a new method of projection goes hand in hand with a switch of motif.

So, unlike the early films, Anthony McCall's recent installations are made no longer on the basis of simple geometric forms, but using combinations of wavering sinusoidal lines and curves. Just as the smoke used by Anthony McCall would develop and change, depending on whether he gradually got rid of the random parameters of his pieces, but also with regard to the hygienist upsurge of contemporary society. So the smoke from onlookers' cigarettes and the loft dust of the 1970s are replaced by fog machines, right down to present-day «environment-friendly» hazers.

In Anthony McCall's works, the «spectator» undergoes the physical experience of light; he is invited to brush against the beam, walk around it, pass through it and even venture right into its centre. For the experience to be total, it must be both internal and external, somewhere between imperceptible movement, contemplative vision (almost in the sense of «clairvoyance»), and meditation.

So Anthony McCall's films cannot be scaled down to an explanation of their formal property; rather, they turn the projection device into an event: an event involving light and space-time, which comes as much from film as from sculpture, and which involves visitors in a phenomenological approach. The artist thus re-introduces that old issue of the whole of art history, aimed, as it is, at turning matter into light. In the contemporary art scene, Anthony McCall's work is part of a context of experimental work which broadens the onlooker's perceptive thresholds, deals with the duration of his experience, and creates spaces of immersion. Anthony McCall renews creative film work and the sculptural space at one and the same time, and he achieves a kind of squaring of the circle: rendering the immaterial solid, and inventing an imageless cinema.

## **Exhibition *Between You and I and other solid light films***

At the suggestion of the IAC, Anthony McCall is, for the first time, showing three films simultaneously, thus developing a line of thought about the very issue of the exhibition.

*Doubling Back* (2003), *Turning Under* (2004) and *You and I, Horizontal* (2005) are the outcome of works from the 1970s—real time and space, projections made in an evanescent mist, 20-30 minute cycle—and call them once more into question. Less in the manner of a traditional trajectory than based on a principle of distribution, Anthony

McCall gets these three works to respond to one another in the space provided by the Institut d'Art Contemporain.

*Doubling Back* (2003) is the first film in a new series of neo-geometric works, no longer made on a silver surface but digitally, and also replacing the traditional theatrical smoke machine by hazers. «Based on a principle of equivalence between internal and external surfaces, it is made up of two waves which slowly merge, then separate in 30-minute cycles»(\*). So two identical undulating waves gradually merge into a single form, where the notions of inside and outside are capsized and blurred.

*Turning Under* (2004) «associates the interaction of a wave and a plane of light with a 90° rotation.»

*You and I, Horizontal* (2005) borrows the form of the cone and this time combines it with a sinusoidal line. Unlike the earlier works, whose titles state the formal process, *You and I, Horizontal* suggests otherness and connection, in addition to presence. It is this work which, in 2006, has given rise to *Between You and I*, regarded by Philippe-Alain Michaud as «the most complex and monumental of Anthony McCall's pieces to date» (this work was shown by the IAC at the opening at the Transbordeur in Villeurbanne).

\* Philippe-Alain Michaud, 2006.

## Around the exhibition

### Publication

The IAC is jointly publishing a special issue of the magazine *Semaine* devoted to the recent works of Anthony McCall with an essay by Philippe-Alain Michaud (Film curator at the National Museum of Modern Art, Georges Pompidou Centre, Paris).

Publication date: Friday 1 December 2006

### Lecture-cum-screening, as part of the IAC's

#### Rendez-vous satellites

#### Philippe-Alain Michaud

#### *film attitude (for a broader history of film)*

As part of the Anthony McCall exhibition, the IAC has invited Philippe-Alain Michaud, film curator at the National Museum of Modern Art, to open a cycle devoted to experimental film with a lecture-cum-screening on Thursday 14 December 2006 at 7 pm - admission free.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Exhibition

from 16 November 2006  
to 7 January 2007

Open from Wednesday  
to Sunday from 1-6 pm,  
late opening on Thursdays to 8 pm.

### How to get there

bus no.1 (Cit -Nouveau Mus e stop)  
metro line A (stop: R publique)  
velo'v station one minute away on foot  
The Institut d'Art Contemporain is situated  
near the TGV station at Lyon Part-Dieu



### Institut d'art contemporain

11, rue Docteur Dolard - 69100 Villeurbanne  
t l phone 04 78 03 47 00 - [www.i-art-c.org](http://www.i-art-c.org)



rh ne-Alpes villeurbanne



[le.trans@ndeur](mailto:le.trans@ndeur)