

*Ether Schipper*

ANN VERONICA JANSSENS  
NOVEMBER 26, 2011 - FEBRUARY 12, 2012  
AUSSTELLUNGSHALLE ZEITGENÖSSISCHE KUNST MÜNSTER

### Lightworks in the Shadows of Placelessness

One enters the large, completely darkened Room (Room 2) of the Ausstellungshalle, illuminated only by a flashing light. Various abstract patterns, created by intense light sources, appear suddenly in the distance. Their intensity blinds, makes one dizzy, dislodged and dislocated. Their view affects one physically. The act of viewing moves us not only emotionally, it creates an experience of biological sensitivity. Paradoxically, the viewer senses the immaterial light as an opposing force within the room. There are light patterns that lead, like corridors, into nothingness. Or strobe-scope effects, that bring the eye and along with it one's physical perceptions to a state of dance. The narrative of time appears broken. One moves instead within an endless fluidness of space and time. But Ann Veronica Janssens is not concerned with an existential disturbance in perception, rather much more with the opposite: with sensitizing our absolute ability to perceive. Janssens work produces an atmospheric focusing of experiences—experiences often released through visual effects that unify the viewer's physicality with the surrounding space. Her art visualizes a sometimes forgotten knowledge, namely that we do not exist only cognitively and should (or want to) understand the world as subject to our own curious observations, rather that in the end we remain one with this world through the ability of our own perceptions.

In another completely darkened room of the AKZM (Room 1) are six projections, varying in size, showing difficult to define phenomena. These appear as cosmic clouds: clouds appearing in a diffuse spray of nebulous water particles and falling starlight—light that radiates from distant planets into a stitched drawing within the exhibition space. An extreme fish-eye lens camera scans across an uneven floor and simulates a fantasy like Google Earth perspective, drawing the viewer into this indefinable slipstream. One looks not only at and through these weightless pictures of light and movement, rather one feels himself sucked into this indefinable space.

A film is projected onto a wall of a small room in the Ausstellungshalle (Room 3). With its lens a hand-held camera scans over the floor and walls of an empty room. But who holds the camera? Which place is actually being filmed? The viewer has the feeling of gradually becoming a participant, as if the camera is filming the exact space within which the viewer stands. This perception becomes a subtle point of departure for reflecting the parameters of space-logic seeing, detracting from one's own condition and reigniting the dialog between viewer and object in a new way.

Placed in the Ausstellungshalle's entryway is a cube filled with liquid and a colored projection film. The special effect of this entity occurs through light, refraction and reflection. This object, playfully titled "Acapulco Kiss," is, however, an experiment with color, surface, and volumes of varying thicknesses.

Ann Veronica Janssen's artistic practice can be understood as a research expedition into the sensory experience of reality. The artist, who lives in Belgium, uses various artistic techniques and disciplines—installations, projections, urban interventions, photographs and sculptures—and invites the viewer to enter new frontiers of perception that shift between dizziness and blindness. Her minimalist works emphasize the fleetingness, transience and impermanent character of the visible. The all-encompassing light, blinding colors, and translucent, reflective surfaces reveal the unstableness in the recognition of time and space and the destabilization of materiality. In her often-jarring installations, Janssens finds conceptual approximations to ideas such as perception, emptiness, materiality/immateriality and the infinite.

In order to make the essence of seeing tangible the artist reduces our possibilities of visual perception to a minimum. The viewer experiences the artwork as a place of placelessness, in a place where he feels his own perceptual experience. The power of light and its opposite, darkness, are implanted so completely in these works that the sensory conditions for seeing are experienced in their most intense forms.

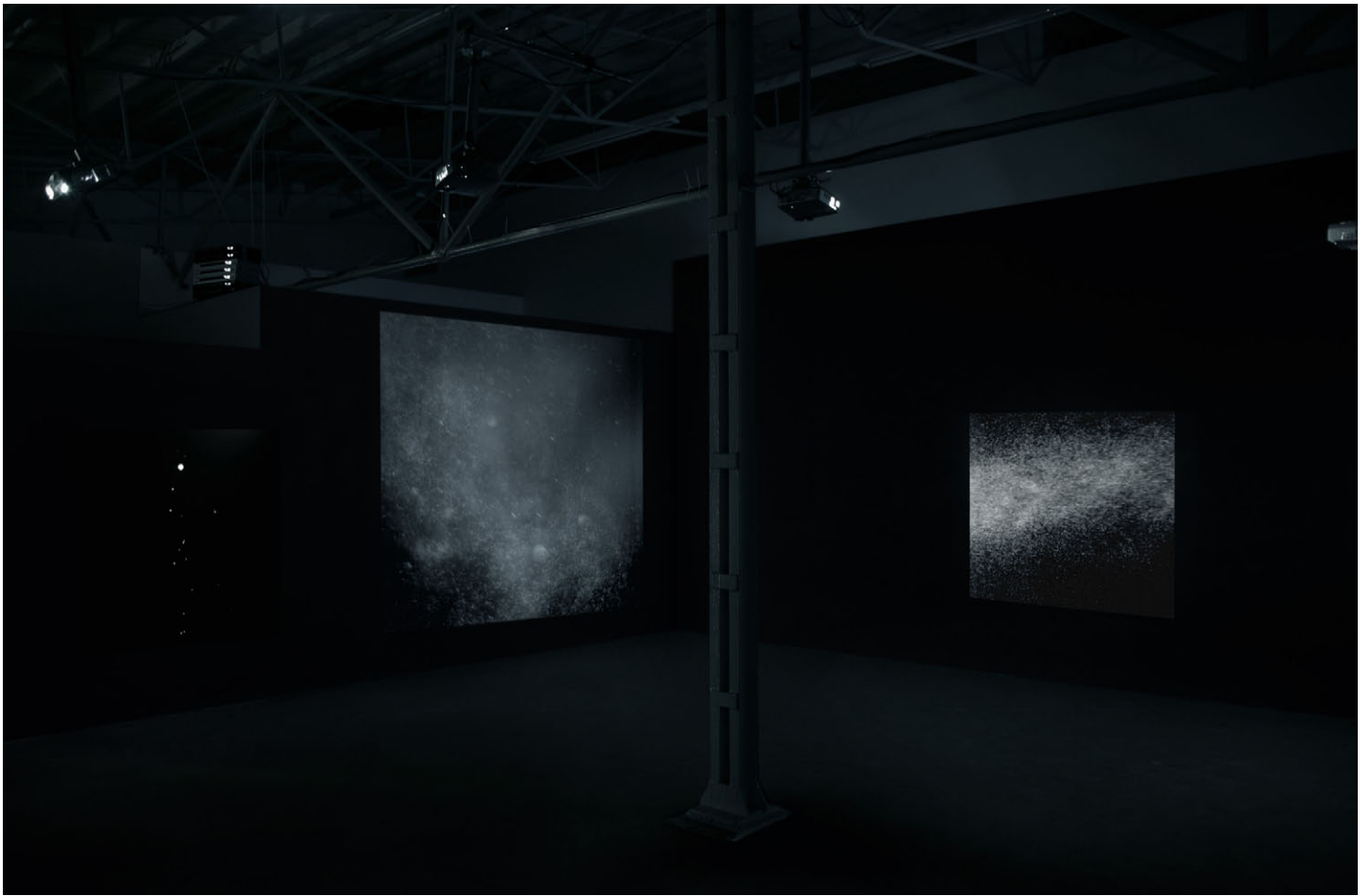
The space and absolute terms of the building's architecture, within which the artist's illuminative spatial strategies occur, catalyze this search for the essence of seeing. These are visual processes that grope towards the very meaning of reality. Seeing becomes an aesthetic experience, through which questions of orientation within space and time are raised—not only optically but as physical, bodily experiences. Because the “visual” remains so elusive in Janssens' installations, the act of seeing becomes instead a moment of contemplation and raises questions about the essence of cognition. Although one could argue that the light and clouds in Janssens' work are reminiscent of natural phenomena, the sublimeness of a sunrise or the seemingly romantic aura of a cloudy landscape rarely appear in these installations of light. Ann Veronica Janssens' works evoke no resurrected memories of aesthetic experiences; rather they point towards intelligence as an intensive form of research and as direct reflection of perceived phenomena.

Ann Veronica Janssens was born in 1956 in Folkestone (GB) and lives in Brussels. She has participated in numerous international exhibitions, including Unexhibit at the Generali Foundation in Vienna, Manifesta 8 in North Africa, the 1st Biennale for International Light Art in Unna, Museum Morsbroich in Leverkusen, and in UN-SCR-1325 at the Chelsea Art Museum in New York. In 1999 she represented Belgium at the 48th Venice Biennale. Her work is represented in numerous international collections in Spain, France and Austria. In Germany she is represented by the Gallery Esther Schipper, Berlin. Ann Veronica Janssens recently completed the lighting design for the newly celebrated production “Cesena” in collaboration with the Belgian Choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaekers.

Ann Veronica Janssens' exhibition is generously supported by the Kunststiftung NRW and by the Freundeskreis der AZKM.



Installation view



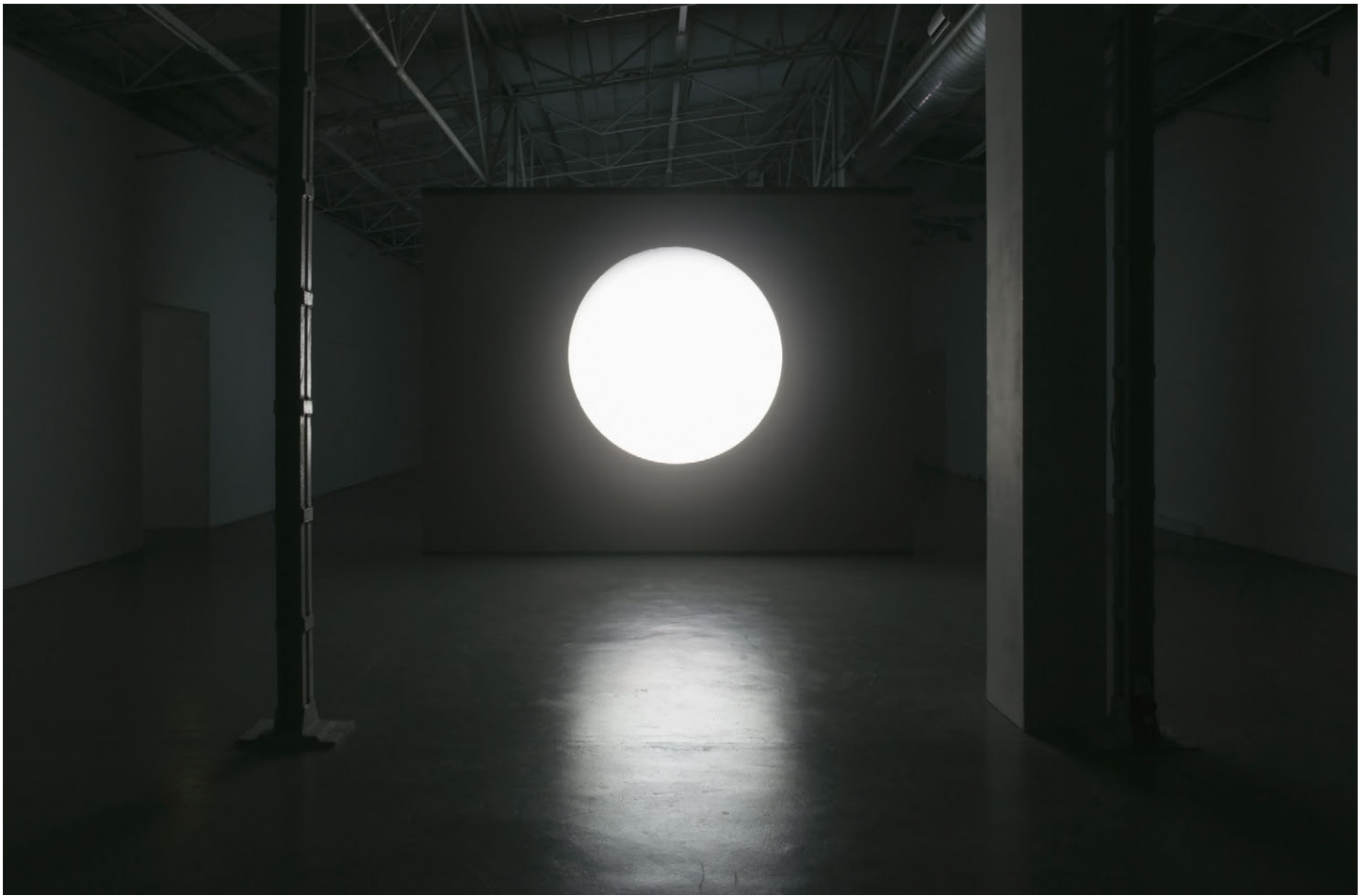
Installation views



Aquarium, Acapulco Kiss, 2011  
Glaswürfel, gefüllt mit Paraffinöl, Neo-Magic-Spiegelfolie, Holz farbig (gelb/pink)  
100 x 50 x 50 cm  
(AVJ 070)



Aquarium, Acapulco Kiss, 2011



Martin (Mac 2000 performance), 2009-2011

Rückwandprojektion, variable geometrische Lichtflächenmaße

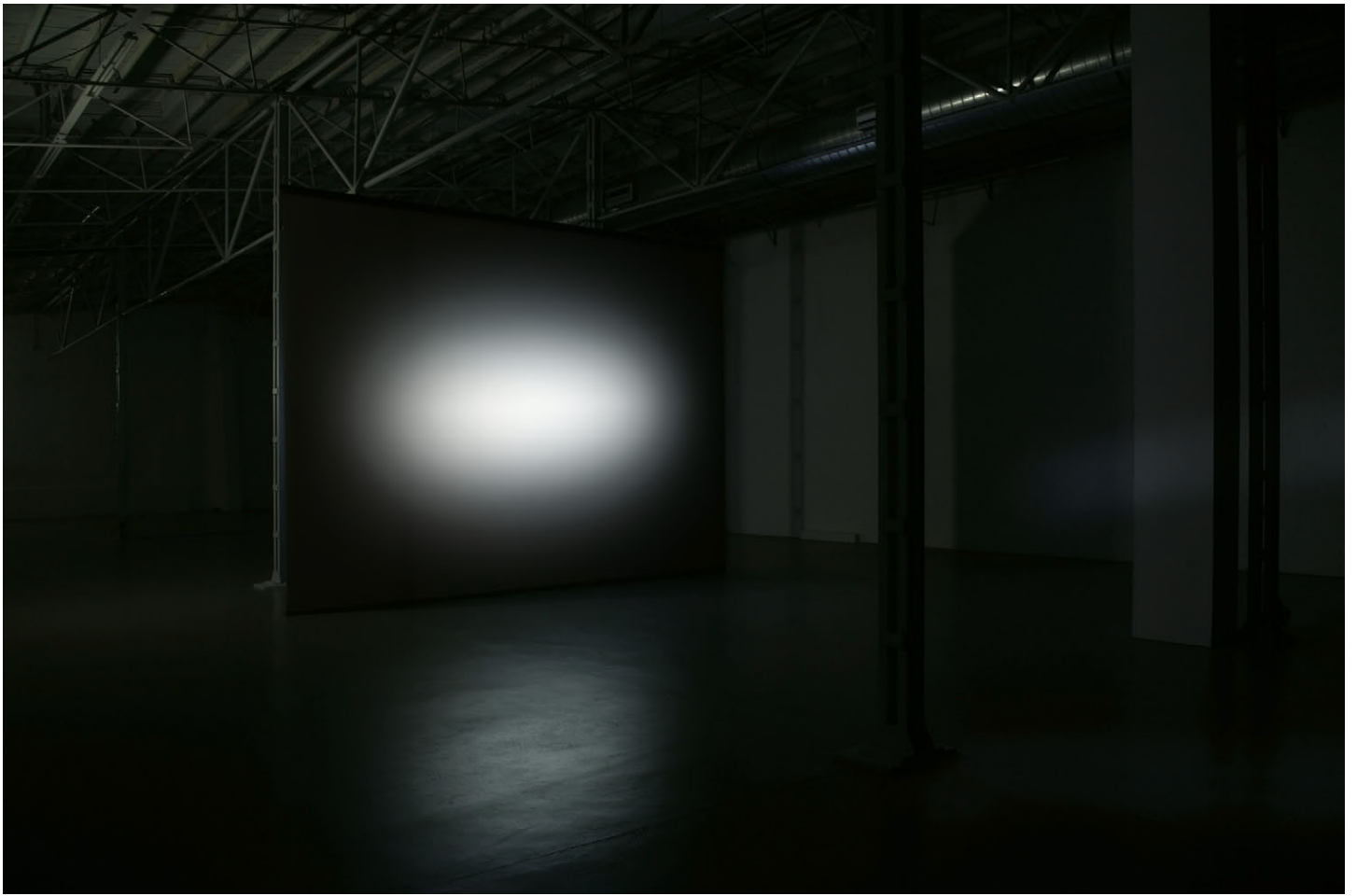
Beamer Martin, Mac 2000 performance, DMX recorder, Projektionsschirm, transparent grau, RetroScreen Grey relast, PVC

Variable, duration: approx 9'

(AVJ 076)



Martin (Mac 2000 performance), 2009-2011



Martin (Mac 2000 performance), 2009-2011



Untitled, 2011  
Cut steel bar  
8 x 8 x 130 cm  
(AVJ 077)

IMPRESSUM

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ESTHER SCHIPPER  
SCHÖNEBERGER UFER 65  
D-10785 BERLIN  
TEL: +49 (0)30 374433 133  
FAX: +49 (0)30 374433 134  
WWW.ESTHERSCHIPPER.COM  
OFFICE@ESTHERSCHIPPER.COM