

**Anne Katrine  
Senstad**

**Radical  
Light**

**26.01–  
26.04.2020**

**Kai** \_\_\_\_\_ **exhibition**

# Anne Katrine Senstad, Radical Light

Anne Katrine Senstad's *Radical Light* is a site-specific installation where abstract light sculptures, ambient sound and space filled with particles of white light produce a total environment, encompassing all the senses. Slender glass tubes filled with neon and argon, illuminate the space at color temperatures between 3500 to 8300 Kelvin, ranging from warmer satin and egg-shell whites to colder green and icy blue hues, indicating simultaneously the physical character of the color white as well as its culturally acquired connotations. The large hall at Kai Art Center has been divided into two matrices of light columns augmented by an intimate video installation, an "antechamber", where the hypnotic moving images have been projected onto a bed of white salt crystals. In dialogue with the light sculpture installation, composer J. G. Thirlwell has created a sound piece specifically for *Radical Light*, enveloping the viewer in an abstract aural experience.

In composing a sensory environment of pure light, Senstad is primarily examining the emotional and semiotic meanings produced by white as a color: bright white light as eternity, purity, perfection, a symbol of death and rebirth; or naturally clean white as something that departs from reality and approaches the surreal – the white tiger, the albino moose, the great white whale. On the other hand, Senstad's installation produces a separation between the light source as an information channel and its cultural meanings, demonstrating how various shades of white are nothing more than sensations of electromagnetic wavelengths that can be altered by changing the ratio of noble gases harnessed within the glass tubes. The

physical properties of neon and argon facilitate the transportation of electricity that produce luminal spectrums with a discrete durational hum. Light is physically present in space, just like the surrounding objects or enclosing walls. The use of light as material, its scale and the purity of the white hues, refer to a radicalization of space and color, striving towards their zero-degree, making it possible to pose questions on the character of the artwork and challenge its place within the gallery.

The idea of a white color on a white background, which enthralled avant-garde artists (e.g. Malevich, Rauschenberg or Cage), signified for them an endpoint for certain artistic developments and a transgression beyond the canonic rules of the artworld. But a white canvas was simultaneously a mirror and a blank slate, receiving signals from its environs and registering its temporary interventions. From that point, there was only one step towards art that undid the separation between the artwork and its surrounding space. Senstad's work is situated in the tradition of installation art, where the surrounding environment and the viewer become part of the work itself. By moving between the light columns, at different speeds, on different days or at different times, observing the change in light and shadow, the gallery space acquires an equal role with the installation elements and sounds. The scale of the space, its proportion and temperature, or the number of visitors at a particular moment (running children, art lovers on a guided tour) merge with the installation and alter its connotations over time.

In addition to its sensorial effects,

or relationship to the geographic location of Kai Art Center – beside the cold white hues of a northern sea – *Radical Light* produces connections to the history of the former industrial space. The Noblessner submarine factory, built at the beginning of the 20th century, was a milestone in the oil-based economic modernization process, where the rational use of space and time was in many ways made possible by electric light. A hundred years later, it is continuously glowing artificial light that has become one of the pillars of the globalized world order, where cyclical separation between night and day as well as the clear division between work and leisure has disappeared (the latter, with the help of increasingly brighter “personal” devices). Or even more importantly, where

electricity-dependent advertising screens occupy exceedingly larger surfaces, demanding constant attention and making commodified displays an unavoidable part of the public space. *Radical Light* in this context is a critical project that points to the instrumentalization of light in the service of a continuous cycle of production and consumption, and stands against a unified perceptual experience in the public space. By detaching light from the command to consume, the installation becomes a counter-environment that transforms the visitors' perception of space and provides the potential for a different kind of cultural experience.

*Andres Kurg*

*Anne Katrine Senstad*

*Anne Katrine Senstad is a transdisciplinary Norwegian artist whose practice lies in the intersections of light sculpture, installation art and immersive environments, photography and video, land and site-specific art. She was educated at the Parsons School of Design and at the New School for Social Research in New York. Senstad has exhibited at the 55th, 56th and 57th Venice Biennale, Bruges Triennial of Contemporary Art and Architecture, He Xiangning Art Museum and Zendai Moma, China. Her video work has been exhibited at Centre Pompidou in Paris, Haus Der Kultur Der Welt, Berlin, Beirut Art Center and at the Canadian Museum of Nature. Senstad's work is represented in private, institutional and private collections internationally.*

# Exhibition movie program:

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## Troublemakers

05.02 18:00

19.02 18:00

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## Spiral Jetty and Sun Tunnels

04.03 18:00

18.03 18:00

Exhibition supported by:



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**Kai\_\_\_\_\_cinema**