

# Keith Sonnier

## Biography

1941 born in Mamou, Louisiana, US

1959-63 studies at University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, US

1965-66 studies at Douglas College, Rutgers University, US

2020 died in New York, US

Light was the preferred artistic means of Keith Sonnier who was one of the trailblazers towards a «new sculpture» in the 1970s. Until then, the neon tube was mainly known from advertising and the everyday life. Keith Sonnier though combined it with glass, fabric, latex or metal, in order to emphasize the sensual and emotional qualities of these materials. The artist also realized numerous projects of art in architecture, among which his work for Munich's new airport (1989-92) is a particularly important.

## Solo Exhibitions (Selection)

- 2024 «Keith Sonnier», Dia Art Foundation, Dia Beacon, New York, US
- 2021 «Keith Sonnier: Lightsome», Neues Museum Nürnberg, DE
- 2019 «Catching the Light: Sending and Receiving – Early Sculptures and Videos»,  
Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, CH  
«Until Today», NOMA, New Orleans, US  
«Keith Sonnier», Schloss Derneburg, DE
- 2018 «Keith Sonnier: Until Today», Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, US | New Orleans Museum of Art, US  
«Keith Sonnier Dis-Play II», DIA/Dan Flavin Art Institute, Bridgehampton, US  
«Keith Sonnier: Early Concepts/Recent Sculptures», Castelli Gallery, New York, US
- 2017 «Portal Series and Selected Early Works», Häusler Contemporary Zürich, CH
- 2016 «Light Works», Whitechapel Gallery, London, GB
- 2015 «Light Works», MAMAC – Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, FR  
«Portal Drone», Häusler Contemporary München, DE  
«Castelli Warehouse 1970/ Castelli Gallery 2015», Castelli Gallery, New York, US
- 2014 «The Collection», Häusler Contemporary Lustenau, AT  
«Keith Sonnier: Elliptical Transmissions», Tripoli Gallery of Contemporary Art, Southampton, New York, US
- 2012 «Cannes Series and Selected Works», Häusler Contemporary Zürich, CH
- 2011 «Modern Relics and Selected Works», Häusler Contemporary München, DE
- 2010 «Fluorescent Room», Art Club 1563, Seoul, KR
- 2009 «Keith Sonnier: Shelf Works 1975|2008», Häusler Contemporary Zürich, CH
- 2007 «Selected Works, 1969|1989|2005», Häusler Contemporary München, DE  
«Keith Sonnier: Early Works, Late Sixties», Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, US
- 2005 «Keith Sonnier: Transformer – Selected Works 1968–2005», Arts Club of Chicago, IL, US
- 2004 «Keith Sonnier» Häusler Contemporary München, DE
- 2003 «BA-O-BA Zeichnungen | Objekte», Häusler Contemporary München, DE
- 2002 «Keith Sonnier: Ba-O-Ba», Neue National-galerie, Berlin, DE
- 1999 «Keith Sonnier: Environmental Works 1968-1999», Kunsthhaus Bregenz, AT  
«Keith Sonnier: Lichtskulpturen 1969-99», Aktionsforum Praterinsel, München, DE
- 1997 «Alternating Currents», Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, US
- 1993 Kunstmuseum/Kunstverein St.Gallen, CH
- 1984 The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, JP
- 1979 «Porte Vue», Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR  
«BA-O-BA, SEL Series», Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, DE
- 1974 «Radio Mix», Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, US
- 1972 documenta 5, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, DE

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- 1971 «Projects», Museum of Modern Art, New York, US  
1968 Galerie Rolf Ricke, Köln, DE

### Group Exhibitions (Selection)

- 2024 «The Whole Palette. Works from the Hilti Art Foundation», Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, CH  
2020 «Dialog III: Licht», Häusler Contemporary Zürich, CH  
2018 «American Masters 1940–1980», National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, AU  
«Bending Light: Neon Art 1965 to Now», Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY, US  
2017 «Richard Artschwager, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Morris, Keith Sonnier», Castelli, New York, US  
«The American Dream: Pop to the Present», British Museum, London, GB  
2016 «Neon: The Charged Line», Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, GB  
2013 «Re-Making When Attitudes Become Form», Fondazione Prada, Venezia, IT  
«When Attitudes Become Icons», Häusler Contemporary Zürich, CH  
«Moving Sculptures», Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg, DE  
2012 «Neon. La Materia luminosa dell'arte», MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, IT  
«Jack Helgesen Family Collection / Archeology of the Image», Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, NL  
«Néon, Who's afraid of red, yellow and blue?», La Maison Rouge, Paris, FR  
«Arte Povera International», Museo d'arte contemporanea Castello di Rivoli, Turino, IT  
«GRID: works on paper from the 1960's», Leo Castelli, New York, US  
2011 «Segment #1A», Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, TR  
«Sommerausstellung», Galerie Thomas Modern, München, DE  
2010 «1. Biennale für Internationale Lichtkunst Ruhr 2010», Biennale für Internationale Lichtkunst, Unna, DE  
«Changing Channels - Kunst und Fernsehen 1963-1987», Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, AT  
2009 «Yellow and Green – Positionen aus der Sammlung des MMK», Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt am Main, DE  
2008 «Video déjà vu? – Die Anfänge der Videokunst im Spiegel der Sammlung», Museen Haus Lange | Haus Esters, Krefeld, DE  
2007 «Das Kapital, erster Teil - Bluechips & Masterpieces», Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
2006 Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, DE  
«LichtWerke – Kunst und Licht seit den 1960er Jahren», Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, AT  
2005 «Loveparade», Häusler Contemporary, München, DE  
«Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht», ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, DE  
«Sweet Temptations», Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, CH  
2004 «Visions of America», ESSL Museum, Klosterneuburg, AT  
«Der Videoessay», ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, DE  
«Stadtlicht – Lichtkunst | Illuminated Cities – Illuminated Art», Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum | Center of International Sculpture, Duisburg, DE  
2002 «Einfach Kunst. Sammlung Rolf Ricke», Neues Museum – Staatliches Museum für Kunst und Design in Nürnberg, DE  
«Claude Monet ...bis zum digitalen Impressionismus», Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, CH  
«The Magic of Light», Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, US  
1989 «Neon», Hirschhorn Museum, National Gallery, Washington, US  
1972 documenta 5, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, DE

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- 1969 «Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form», Kunsthalle Bern, CH  
1966 «Eccentric Abstraction», Fischbach Gallery, New York, US

### Collections (Selections)

Bates College Museum of Arts, Lewiston, US  
D.C. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., US  
Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, US  
FRAC - Bretagne, Châteaugiron, FR  
Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, JP  
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, US  
Kiasma – Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, FI  
Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, LI  
Lever House Art Collection, New York, US  
Miami Art Museum, Florida, US  
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR  
Musée Saint Pierre, Lyon, FR  
Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rovereto, IT  
Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona - MACBA, Barcelona, ES  
Museu Serralves, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto, PT  
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, DE  
Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, CH  
Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, DE  
Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, AT  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and San Diego, US  
Muzeum Sztuki Lodz, PL  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, AU  
Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam, NL  
New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana, US  
Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, US  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, US  
Sprengel Museum, Hannover, DE  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL  
Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg Museum Ludwig, Köln, DE  
Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, DE  
Tel Aviv Museum, IL  
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, US  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, US  
Zentrum für Internationale Lichtkunst, Unna, DE

### Prizes and honors

2020 Barnett and Annalee Newmann Foundation Award, US  
1981 National Endowment for the Arts Grant, US  
1975 National Endowment for the Arts Grant, US  
1974 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, US  
1974 1st prize, 9th International Biennial Exhibition of Prints, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, JP

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