



KEITH SONNIER

Demi-Lune Early Neon Works

22 October – 30 November 2013

Opening : Thursday October 24

JGM. Galerie has the pleasure to announce the third solo show of American artist, Keith Sonnier.

On the occasion of this new exhibition, JGM.Galerie brings together a group of 5 major neon works produced between 1968 and 1970. Sonnier's early use of neon as a central material was essential to his practice and later to the development of a broader contemporary art practice. It was from these early works that Sonnier went on to investigate large scale installations in which spacial perception relative to the environment reached its zenith. The work *Dis-play II* (1972) exhibited as part of Sonnier's preceding show at JGM. Galerie and the installation *Mirror Act III* (1969), recently presented in the Grand Palais as part of the "Dynamo" exhibition are exemplary in their use of light to push the boundaries of the volume and the space they inhabit.

The title of this new show references the work *Demi-Lune* (1968), in which another version of the work was reconstructed for Harald Szeeman's seminal exhibition, "When Attitudes Become Form" at the Kunsthalle in Bern in 1969 (and redisplayed this summer at the Prada Foundation in Venice). The evocative title and the materials used; a combination of neon and netted fabric and metal mesh, reflect and address Sonnier's background in Louisiana and the relevance of the culture that he grew up in. The narrative aspect, or at least the suggestive, inherent in this work, marks a turning point from his predecessors of minimal art but also signals how Sonnier's background would play an integral role in the process of his practice.

Contoured neon works such as *Neon Wrapping Incandescent* (1969), however, then address the line in space, the 3-d object acting in a 2-d way such as drawing out volume and space and pushing into space. A kind of irony in Sonnier's work is the introduction of industrial materials and their interaction with each other but that are still an exploration of light going back to the primordial; moonlight, candlelight, cave light, movie light and contemporary theater light and of course how it is reflected in a cultural and anthropological context. It's along these lines that in 1969 the body of work, *Ba-O-Ba* was originated and which to this day remains one of his most celebrated series of works. The expression, *Ba-O-Ba* comes from Haitian French and roughly translates to 'bath of light' evoking the reflections of moonlight on the skin. *Ba-O-Ba VI*, shown in this exhibition is composed of two large glass sheets, one square and the other round, leaning against the wall. These two geometric forms are connected by colored linear neon tubes and electrical wires.

Keith Sonnier was born in 1941 in Mamou, Louisiana. His work has been the focus of a number of exhibitions in France and throughout the world. Recently his work has appeared most notably in exhibitions such as *When Attitudes Become Form* at the Prada Foundation in Venice, *Dynamo* at the Grand Palais and *Neon -Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue* at the Maison Rouge in Paris, as well as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome.