

Mike Stubbs and Omar Kholeif, FACT, Liverpool 2011

“Abandon Normal Devices”

ZEE is an artwork that invites the gallery visitor to enter a space, which is both immersive and abstract.

As the viewer has very little to ‘view’ in the traditional sense - there are no points of reference, nothing representational, no object - the viewer becomes a participant in an experience that is stimulated by light. By creating this condition and controlling the spatial environment, the artist Kurt Hentschläger gives us the opportunity to feel ‘being’ in ourselves - bringing our consciousness to the fore.

Kurt Hentschläger has been fascinated with creating immersive and overwhelming experiences since the early 1990s, experimenting with extreme sub-sonics and large video projections. In 1998 Granular Synthesis, Kurt’s partnership with Ulf Langheinrich, performed Modell 5 a monumental multi-screen audio-visual performance at Liverpool’s Cream as part of ISEA (International Symposium of Electronic Arts).

Following an abstract tradition, ZEE might even be said to reference one of the most important abstract painters, the early twentieth century Russian artist Kazimir Severinovich Malevich, whose best-known paintings *White on White* or *Black on Black* confounded audiences in denying representational forms. At the time, the work was highly political as it rejected previous narratives, which had either been romantic or propagandistic. One of Malevich’s famous quotes flamboyantly dismisses colour. His work deployed an ultra - minimal style and a palette restricted to black and white in the period leading up to the Russian Revolution.

“I have established the semaphore of Suprematism. I have beaten the lining of the coloured sky, torn it away and in the sack that formed itself, I have put colour and knotted it. Swim! The free white sea, infinity, lies before you.” - Malevich  
In the context of ZEE, Malevich’s statement encourages the abandonment of assumptions and normality - wholly appropriate for the context of *Abandon Normal Devices*, which this year is themed around the complexities of personal and institutional systems of belief.

What is belief? It can be a documentary view of a fledgling reality – or even a life, or in the case of ZEE, a confrontation that strips away our sense of comfort and reference. It is a potent reminder that when the identifiable is removed the only thing that we are left with is ourself.