Title: Goats and Sheep

Date: 1995/2001

Media: Video (black-and-white, sound); 11:50 min.

Video Link: https://vimeo.com/111244710

Description:

Goats and Sheep uses the source material of the installation Withershins, 1995, consisting of two simultaneous views of a person signing: the hands and arms are framed in one, and the back of the head and top of the shoulders in the other. This latter view catches the hands when they refer to the head during signing.

For Goats and Sheep, Hill changed the color image into black-and-white, re-recorded his own voice and “re-synchronized” it to the original signing. The stereo field is used to double the voice with about a second of delay added to the sound. This doubling mirrors the hands and numerous references and repetitions heard in the text.


Spoken Text:

Goats and Sheep and Twofold (Goats and Sheep) uses the audio and video source material of the installation Withershins, 1995, consisting of two simultaneous views of a person signing: the hands and arms are framed in one and the back of the head and top of the shoulders in the other. This latter view catches the hands when they refer to the head during signing.

The text, which is written by the artist and ‘signed’ in the video(s), represents one possible text derived from a total of 420 phrases that may be accessed by the viewers’ footsteps in the installation of Withershins.

Spoken text:

And if

The right hand

was ingrown

backhandedly

and what if

The left hand

knows

that the right hand

knows

what the right hand

is doing?
is the left undone
and what if
The left hand
was ingrown
deep in the mind
speaking in
many handed ways
growing old in a maze
from one word to the next
questions arise
and eyes inflict words
and right inflects left
from one word to the next
left inflects right
and this inflicts that
hand back and forth
and that inflects this
and words reflect back
from one word to the next
questions arise
in many handed ways
Is the left hand?
and so the logos goes
And if
The left hand
knows
what the right hand
is doing?
thrown as it is
the right
wrote the left
a hand written hand
blown
across the flesh
and if
a hand written hand
folded inside
hand held thoughts
a number of instructions
lost between hemispheres
left for dead
the other
mind
beside yourself
and if the left hand
has a hole
would the right hand
then know?
when a hand
is the other hand
which hand is back and forth

two nodal hemispheres

play havoc

in your skull

the mind can’t

help but mince

and suddenly you are

beside yourself

entertaining a party of two

only to fall back

a few words

a few steps gone by

a number of instructions

on the way language moves

from point A to point B

proceed accordingly

inside a book

outside a hand

swept mind

laid bare

and if

the written word

left the last word

in the palm

of one hand clapping back
and the right hand

was an ear

out of the other’s mind

the left hand spoke

and the right hand

opens the books

laid bare

the left hand does not know

what the right hand
did not know

hands divide

and word by word

language moves

begins to circle

over the book

he writing is

on the wall

and the left is not

reading it
to its next

reflexive moment
to its next

reading

in a way

side ways
way inside
positioned in prayer
the right hand
swallows its palm
and the left hand
swims back
and forth and back
for everything
which is visible
is a copy
of that which is hidden
in every step
and the left hand
is a copy
of that which is hidden
positioned in prayer
way inside
the right hand
stops writing
the left hand
stops to write
the first hand
for the last time
the hand unhands itself
beheads its double
and the left hand is
not the right
the hand unhands itself
and left reflects back
the right hand
the hand left
the right hand
going mad
a house of hands
plays havoc
shaking Matthew's mind
for the last time
the hand unhands itself
beheads its double
and the left hand is
in the root
reflected back
way inside
its handness
that is to say
reflects upon
what the right hand is
and will be done
on earth as it is
what then?
when the word
“hand” moves
happens to skip
walks on water
that is to say
meets its own reflection
in a way
that propels it
to its next
reflexive moment
between hands
out of hand
the mind eats
reflexive moments
echoing thought
across the abyss
and word by word
hands divide
the prong of duality
impales the mind
to unhand itself a logic
and if
parity
folded in the word play
of parity
and if
laid bare
the left hand does not know
what the right hand
is doing
and the lamb said:
be passerby
reflect
between hands
the misgivings of two
hand apprehends hand
right within the mirror
out of hand
as the right reflects
left within the mirror
quickening the eye
ahead
of one hand clapping
bleeding
and the right hand
left a sound
in a hole
that bleeds the left hand
back into the sound
of a hole
in a hole
that bleeds the left hand
back and forth
the logos moves
back into the sound
and left to die
where hands are tied
behind the mind
hidden within
a few steps
into asymmetry
of mind
and the left hand
of the right hand
the mind can’t know
what hand is left
passes through
a hand
that goaded the gods about
what hand
did what
before hand
and if
the right mind
did not know
what the left hand brings forth
and back to
doubling its reflection
of differences
and if left
in a symmetry
and if left
did not know
the left hand
cannot know
the left hand
and if
the left hand
did not know
what the right hand
held out
in the mind of Matthew
who goaded the gods about
a hand
passes through
what hand is left
sided handedness
and one remains roaming
between hands
and forth and back
dividing

two nodal hemispheres

that play havoc

in your skull

are only copies of

two hands

that play havoc

in your skull

the mind can’t help

and suddenly you are

reminded

of the right hand

the mind can’t know

and suddenly you are

left beside yourself

entertaining a party of two

only to fall back

words into hands

laying upon hands

speaking in many ways

right beside yourself

entertaining a party of two

only to fall back

a few steps

a few words
instructions on how to move
thoughts in the body
behind the mind
where hands are tied
and left to die
by the hand that feeds
and if the left hand
has a hole
would the right hand
then know? when a hand
is the other hand
which hand is back and forth
two nodal hemispheres
play havoc
in your skull
the mind can’t
help but mince
and suddenly you are
beside yourself
left hidden
and the right hand
left a sound
of one hand clapping
ahead
quickening the eye
left within the mirror
as the right reflects
back-words
right within the mirror
hand apprehends hand
the misgivings of two
escaping handedness
and the lamb said:
to become someone else
proceed accordingly
from point A to point B
hand held thoughts
folded inside
a hand written hand
blown
minds
folded inside
a hand written hand
blown
across the flesh
of symmetries
a hand unhands itself
hands itself back
words into
The left hand
Bibliography:


Exhibition History:


“Media Connection,” Palazzo della Triennale, Milan, Italy, October 12 – November 24, 2001. *Note: The work was exhibited as an installation consisting of two side-by-side simultaneous projections.*


Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, March 7 - 13, 2002 (entire program February 28 - March 24, 2002). *Note: The work was projected as a video screening.*

“Sahte / Gerçek (Faux/Real),” Borusan Art Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey, April 6 – June 1, 2002.

“Gary Hill / Bruce Nauman: International New Media Art,” National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia, December 14, 2002 – March 9, 2003. *Note: The work was shown on a
single monitor per the artist's request to differentiate this single-channel work from the projection version, Twofold (Goats and Sheep).

"Transmit + Transform," Santa Fe Art Institute, Santa FE, New Mexico, July 2 – August 13, 2004.  Note: The work was shown on a monitor.


“Power & Imagination: Conceptual Art,” National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, August 11, 2018 - May 19, 2019

“Joyful Frictions,” Musée d’Art moderne et contemporain – Musées de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, October 5, 2018 – May 26, 2019

Notes:

The work has been configured as an installation entitled Twofold (Goats and Sheep), 1995/2002, using two projectors with the two channels of sound being split and fed to separate speakers. The same video is seen on both projections.