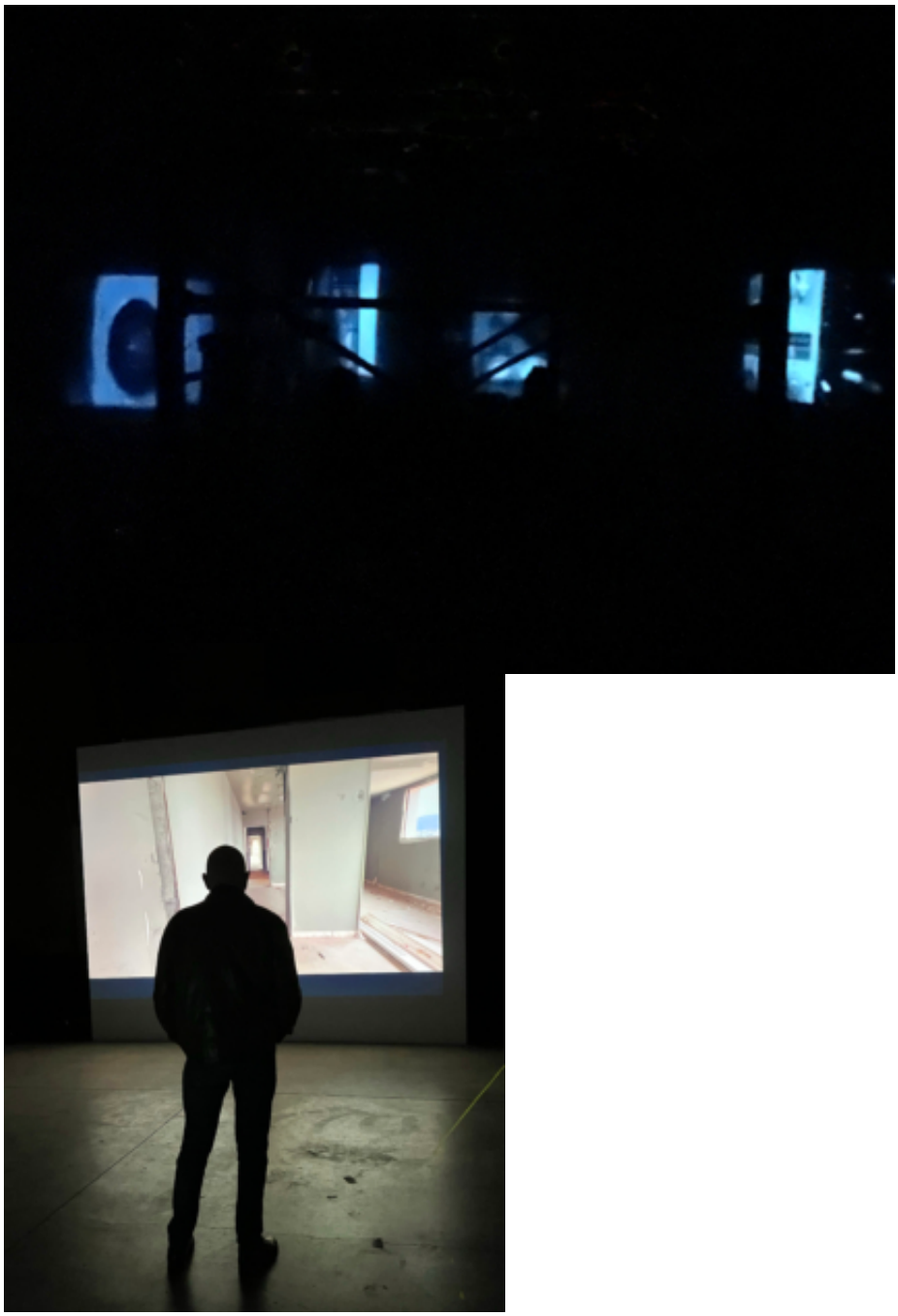
G A R Y H I L L













Title: Afterwards

Date:2023

Media: Mixed-media

Video Link :

Description:

Four 4” black & white CRTs with 5” angled projection lenses attached, four amplified speakers, one color video projector, 1 in-4 out demultiplexer, four strobe lights, four tone decoders, three media players, various ladders, scaffolding, stones, assorted metal parts, wire and cabling.

Dimensions variable.

Continuing with a thread of works dealing with a kind of commingling of language, memory and vision between extremities of light and darkness (*Midnight Crossing*, 1997 and *The Storyteller's Room*, 1998), *The Slow Torque of Bonsai*, 2017), *Afterwards* utilizes considerably more found objects—debris, surplus, and that having to do with the particular site, in this case, various ladders and scaffolding that are consciously setup to generate overlapping vague narratives. These are activated similarly as in the previous works mentioned using singular pulses of extreme light (harnessing the instant on capability of strobe lights) coinciding with speech acting as the trigger.

Once seated, a dim light fades and the space becomes pitch black. After several seconds a faint image begins to appear but is not discernible for several more seconds. Just about the time one can discern an image a voice speaks a singular word or phrase and at exactly the same time a momentary burst of blinding light obliterates the image and produces an afterimage of the objects/architecture in/of the space which too fade putting the viewer back into pitch black space. The process continues—images emerge, are slowly recognizable (or not quite) and the voice/light "resets" the space at varying intervals. The maximal experience involves a process of slow accumulation of narrative strands. Viewers are made acutely aware of the neurological and physiological processes taking place over time.

Spoken Text:

Note: each spoken paragraph is separated by approximately 2-30 second intervals

I arrived Just a short time ago. No complaints. After a few customary greetings and basic logistical planning, with little pause, I began to eke out a point from which to begin. Having been recently stricken with gut-wrenching grief I had to keep moving…remain occupied. My nerves were raw and no doubt my condition was apparent to the naked eye.

That it was a kind of abstract grief made it far more difficult to overcome. I hadn't lost a loved one, no one around me had been in an accident or become terminally ill. I hadn't awakened from a nightmare and nothing earth-shattering had taken place to speak of. Nevertheless, I struggled to stay on track. I became hyper-fixated on my breathing, had I just exhaled or inhaled? Was I a fish with gills and didn't know it? Am I swimming in dark waters unaware of what I actually am?

The full splendor of an arcane night had begun, or so I thought. The velvet moment was once again deferred by the blossoming of a full moon. I sat, accompanied by the peaceful sound of light rainfall, my saving grace had been delivered—perseverance.

Whatever I was to build now would be from scratch— no hidden stones to turn or otherwise. Admittedly, deep down I remained skeptical. I couldn't help myself from secretly wanting to hold back…something. Whatever that "something" is may very well be the impulse I'm looking for. And yet, in that instant, I wasn't prepared to give myself away.

Before me were less than ambitious beginnings seemingly left behind—small, incomplete structures—strange shrines, discarded debris playfully arranged by wandering minds; a pile of old stones carefully balanced—an act that could pass someone's entire day.

I longed to find a momentary refuge where time virtually stops.

Anything to avoid what I knew were necessary decisions without which I would have a catastrophe on my hands.

All it would take could literally be a single word—one word that flickers and awakens others hovering close by as if in waiting.

Of course, it would only be in hindsight that it would seem to have originated from one bit of the logos and yet in the thick of it I couldn't deny that its subsequent quickening of a linguistic swarm didn't give hope of a beginning.

I was desperate for release—something out there without question would speak to me in a singular way, an exquisite way. Damn it, a perfect way, that I can't explain nor do I want to, nor would I if I could.

Hesitantly, I proceeded to cordon off a selected area to activate. I tagged a few things that might be useful interventions, prompts, triggers, and other inklings that could finally set an undeniable course.

Once I had entered a certain modality I realized I had done a terrible disservice to the uninitiated. What was I thinking? What were they thinking? "What *is* thinking?" I muttered to myself…Abruptly, my already fragile state was shaken to the core as I sensed my own comprehension being turned inside out. What is it?

If I were within arm's length, Would my words absorb more of the space? I felt compelled to reach out, anxious for common ground. I yearned for contact, the startle of human warmth in a vacated intimate gathering. The touch of a hand, arm, a gentle face, fallen hair, and fleshy body parts all began morphing quicker with more extreme juxtapositions, refracting, spinning kaleidoscopically until all went black.

*I hit the ground. I wait for the earth to quake. Starfish hands suck a grip from tiny crushed rocks. There I am eye level with a dead rodent annihilated by invention, singled out by the giant movements of coincidence. Its body made abstract, unrecognizable save for the eyes, glazed over with the last shutter of life.**

I lost track of my whereabouts. I thought I had counted each turn whether left or right, the degree of angle, and the number of steps of each segment—like playing blind chess—keeping track of all the moves. If one is dropped the entire strategy evaporates.

I tried retracing my steps and recalled two additional rooms I had overlooked, or for reasons that don't come immediate~~ly~~ to mind, I purposely avoided. In one case, as strange as it sounds, I'm not at liberty to say—anything. As I passed by the second I could hear a murmur of voices. I resisted the temptation to press my ear to the wall and regretted it for the rest of the afternoon.

There was one free-standing wall that blocked my way and forced my directional hand... I'm not entirely convinced it was a wall; it appeared to be more like a reflection from elsewhere. A closer inspection revealed a meticulous arrangement of defect-filled mirrors. I couldn't fathom what the purpose might be. Perhaps it was built by some industrious children with no specific results

in mind.

I couldn’t help but stare into the sun of the day. A path of diamond-like sparkling entities danced before it to what one could only imagine—a song of the sirens.

Another day passes while another awakens, a field of shimmering mirages evokes cinematic nostalgia and one smeared dream of your own.

Abruptly, eyes about-face.

* Previously utilized in the performance *Splayed Mind Out*, 1997

Bibliography:

Exhibition History:

Notes: