
GARY HILL





Title:Poor Man's Guilt

Date:2007

Media:Mixed media

Video Link :

Description:

Five silver coins, speaker, electronics, and painted MDF board

Dimensions of box: approx. 11 ½ h. x 13 x 13 inches

Edition of fifteen and three artist's proofs

Housed within a white frustrum-shaped box with a hinged lid are five silver coins with selected images or “snapshots” of the artist beating himself up stamped on their surfaces. The front side of each coin depicts a detailed relief of the artist's angst-ridden face as it is being punched with a fist. Each image is different and is encircled by one of five Latin phrases suggesting individual as well as collective guilt (TEMPUS IN MANIBUS NOSTRIS SANGUIS EST IN MANIBUS NOSTRIS: *Time on our hands is blood on our hands*; FI ALIQUIS ALIUS ET CONSEQUENTER PROCEDE: *Become someone else and proceed accordingly*; EXPRESSIO UNIUS EST EXCLUSIO ALTERIUS: *The expression of the one is the exclusion of the other*; MUNDUS VULT DECIPI ERGO DECIPIATUR: *The world wants to be deceived, therefore it is.*) The reverse side of all the coins completes the self-infliction with an image of the artist's buttocks being whipped by a laurel branch and is again encircled with Latin: *Ars est corpus vile: Art is a worthless body.* English phrases further convolute possible meanings: A stone's throw away from a whirlpool of errors and In wonder we wonder, perhaps an inference to “IN GOD WE TRUST” as seen on American coins and legal tender.

When the box is open, a spoken text can be heard. The artist's voice/text attacks, abuses and ridicules himself, the complicit viewer at a distance, and the ‘powers that be,’ arriving at the notion that we are at ‘peak time’ (a reference to peak oil, perhaps suggesting we have limited time to change our course lest we make ourselves extinct, hence the guilt factor of ‘spending’ time making art verses direct engagement with the matters at hand – and all the ambiguity and complexity that emerges from said sentiment).

Spoken Text:

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What's this? Do YOU know what this is? Not gettin' it, I don't get it. Am I supposed to get it? Help me out. What's it for? Who? Is it for me? Does it make a difference—a difference that makes a difference? Does it relate to some—thing? Are you related...to anything? What do I get? Do I get something from this? Show me, show me what it's about. Give me something I can sink my teeth into. I need to chew or I get nervous. I see no connections, no currency—no value what-so-fucking-ever at all. You need to suffer. You need to wake up next to death gasping for air that's not there. All I see is surface noise. I know you got a little nag that gnaws and grows. Rhyme and reasons don't help a fucking thing. Push comes to shove you're a selfish fucking prick. Anybody in this game is no different. It's all consummation in the fires of illusion. You're going to have to learn the hard way. You want to play with images? HERE, what do you see? You see nothing. You're blind white, fucker of all fucks, bar none.

Well, what do you think about it so far? You've been waiting for it without knowing it. Like you always say, “this is it.” Damn fucking right this is it. Get it? Take your head out of your ass and look around. Go on, check it out. Do what you have to do to convince yourself that this *is* it. No one's going to tell you otherwise, it's all up to you here and now. You can eat, drink, smoke, watch that fucking box, draw, read or write; go for a ride, fuck your brains out or just plain think. But you're here *with* it, displaying all your variability and all your possibilities and

messages you've collected along the way. On or off the beaten track it all leads back to here before branching out when once again you can point, choose, have, love, suffocate, hate, like, be counted, talk, scream, kick, shit, vomit, eat, drink and be merry; talk about death, art, politics, flesh & blood, machines, and don't forget money. Sure you know what I'm talking about. You've heard it before, you've read it before, but never while you were here with it...and I stole it. It was here for the taking, wasn't it? Everybody gets it sooner or later. This is it. You've had your little talk in every other room. Now it's my turn. Now it's your turn. And now mine. Time to turn the record over...

Statistics? You got statistics? You want statistics, stats, data? Something to rifle through; something you can get your head around; something to make sense out of it all?

Numbers, disfigurements, tortures, rapes, mutilations, decapitations, collateral damage, disappearances, human slaves, human shields, numbered bodies, numbed minds, bloodied cherished documents, laws, memos, acts gone awry, crimes against humanity, nasty roadside attractions, emaciated bloated beings, terminations, secret cells, bunker busters, warheads, warlords, genocide machines, treasury notes afloat; poppy fields, tonnage, the distinct extinction possibility. What do you want? Victims, witnesses, perpetrators, names places times, names places times, names places times...

Are we there yet? Peak oil et al? That's history, we're at Peak time! This is the time. Time is rolling over for the come what mays. It's mayday. Fucking mayday. Close the hatch, we're going down. The walls are melting up and the sky doesn't give a rat's ass. Take a side. Stand the fucker down. "You're either with us or..." a tourist. Sound familiar? Do you like familiarity? Do you like your home? Do you like your children? Do you like your bed? Tell me something...do you like YOUR MIND? Does it feel right? Does it feel like a right mind? Maybe it's reeling—really getting ready to rock; maybe you're going to play dead when the donuts finally roll. No turning back now. Better lay down, lay it down low. Get down, way, way down...

You want him dead don't you—all of them. Vaporized. You want him gone. Take your best shot—watch it, live it, be it. One golden esoteric round enters the smirking mouth, finds its way through the veritable rot of tissue, shattering the skull every which way, switching sides, exiting one eye and entering the other, ricocheting through the labyrinth of the left ear finding its spent self on a grassy knoll. Mission accompli. No, too quick, too easy. You want to make it last, wallow in the mire a bit... Maybe you want to fuck him in the ass with a baseball bat. Maybe you want to grind its testicular parts to paste and rub its face through the so-called manhood. I get it, torture as a tool for the greater good! He's on the world's back and you want him off—him and his minions, the wannabes' and the has-beens, all the players and their reserves, the PTBs and the PPT. A fucking pipe dream; a pipe bomb away. Bombs away, all the way, all around, all fucking out—out of bounds of imagination. Got to dream, dream on. Give us a drum roll—get barreling. Back up the truck for god's sake. Fuck god, fuck gods, fuck 'em all. Turn the page over and take your turn, now it's my turn, now it's your turn, it's time to turn the record over.

Bibliography:

Simonini, Ross. "Hill Marks the Intersection of Image, Object and Sound." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (May 2, 2008).

Exhibition History:

ADAA Art Show / Donald Young Gallery, New York, New York, February 22 – 26, 2007.

FIAC 2007 / In Situ / Fabienne Leclerc, Paris, France, October 18 – 22, 2007.

James Harris Gallery, Seattle, Washington, April 3 – May 10, 2008.

"Gary Hill – Patrick Tosani," Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, Germany, January 14 – February 19, 2011.

"Gary Hill," James Harris Gallery at Pier 94 — The Armory Show (Contemporary), Seattle, Washington, March 5 — 8, 2015.

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