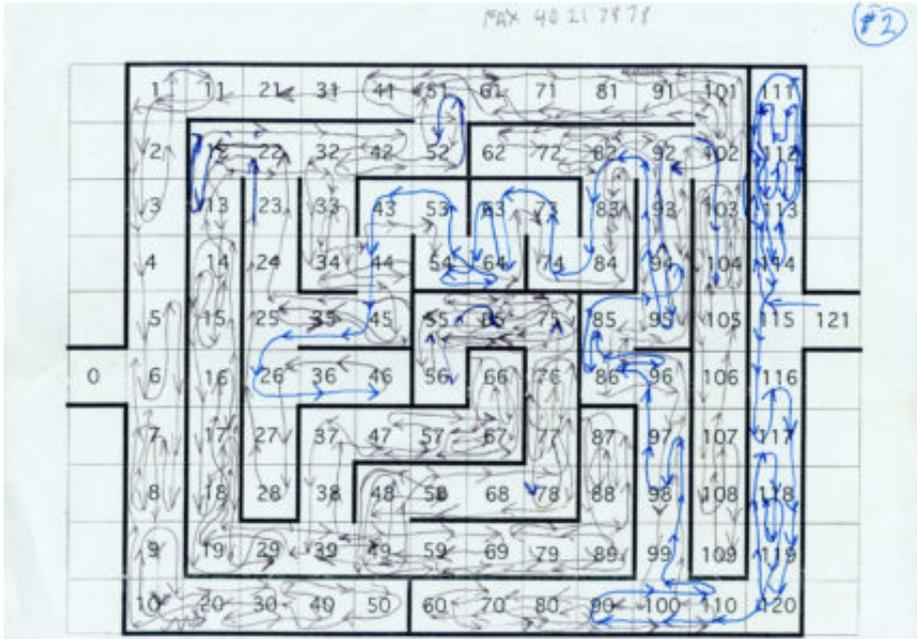


GARY HILL





Title:Withershins

Date:1995

Media:Mixed media installation

Description:

Floor maze constructed from 2-inch x 4-inch (5 x 10 cm.) aluminum rectangular tubing, pressure-sensitive switch mats, two video projectors, four speakers, carpet, two computers with multi-channel interface and sound cards and controlling software written in DOS, two computer-

controlled quad audio panners, two-channel synchronizer, two laserdisc players and two laserdiscs (color; mono sound)

Dimensions of floor maze: 25 x 35 ft. (7.62 x 10.67 m.)

Edition of two and one artist's proof

Withershins is an interactive work based on a highly self-reflexive text about left and right handedness and bicameralism in relation to movement, symmetry and asymmetry. The text is structured with overlapping, enfolding, mirroring and word play. It is continuous with acceptable syntax (as opposed to a series of non-sequiturs) no matter where the viewer goes in the maze. In some places the text is as many as six layers deep, so even if the persons being tracked go back and forth along the same section of the maze, their steps will continue to unfold new spoken passages. The triggered phrases are spoken by a man and/or a woman, depending upon which side of a large maze the viewer enters. The maze structure is built from 2 x 4-inch (5 x 10 cm.) aluminum rectangular tubing and covers an area of 25 x 35 feet (7.62 x 10.67 m.). As one moves within the labyrinth spoken phrases are triggered every 30 inches (76 cm.) along the way. Two people can be tracked at any given time, simultaneously generating two texts that suggest the possibility of interchange between the participants. Occasionally, one person will end up controlling both texts, and one will hear the voices going in and out of unison creating subtle delays. Two independent quad panning systems track the two active viewers amplifying the sound wherever they go. Additionally, two video projections on opposing walls show the front of a man's torso and back of his head as he signs a specific text (or "path" through the maze) selected/written by the artist – a text or "path" which is only one of an infinite number of possibilities.

Spoken Text:

The text below is the signed text that is seen in the two video projections. Whenever a viewer enters either side of the maze, the signing begins. If the maze is left entirely, the images reset to the beginning and wait for the next entrant. The signed text is one of "infinite" possibilities derived from a list of 420 phrases that are accessed via computer that tracks the viewers' location. The spoken text is generated in real time from the same list depending on their movement in the maze.

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
quicken 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
quicken 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

was ingrown

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Exhibition History:

An example of this work was first exhibited at the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy from June 8 – October 15, 1995 as part of the exhibition "Identità e Alterità."

"Gary Hill: Withershins," Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, February 10 – April 14, 1996.

Group exhibition. Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany, May 25, 1996 – January 1, 1997.

Solo exhibition. Museu d'Art Contemporain, Barcelona, Spain, July 16 – September 27, 1998.

“Glossodelic Attractors,” The Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA, March 30 – September 16, 2012

Notes:

Winner of the Leone d'Oro, Prize for Sculpture at the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 1995.