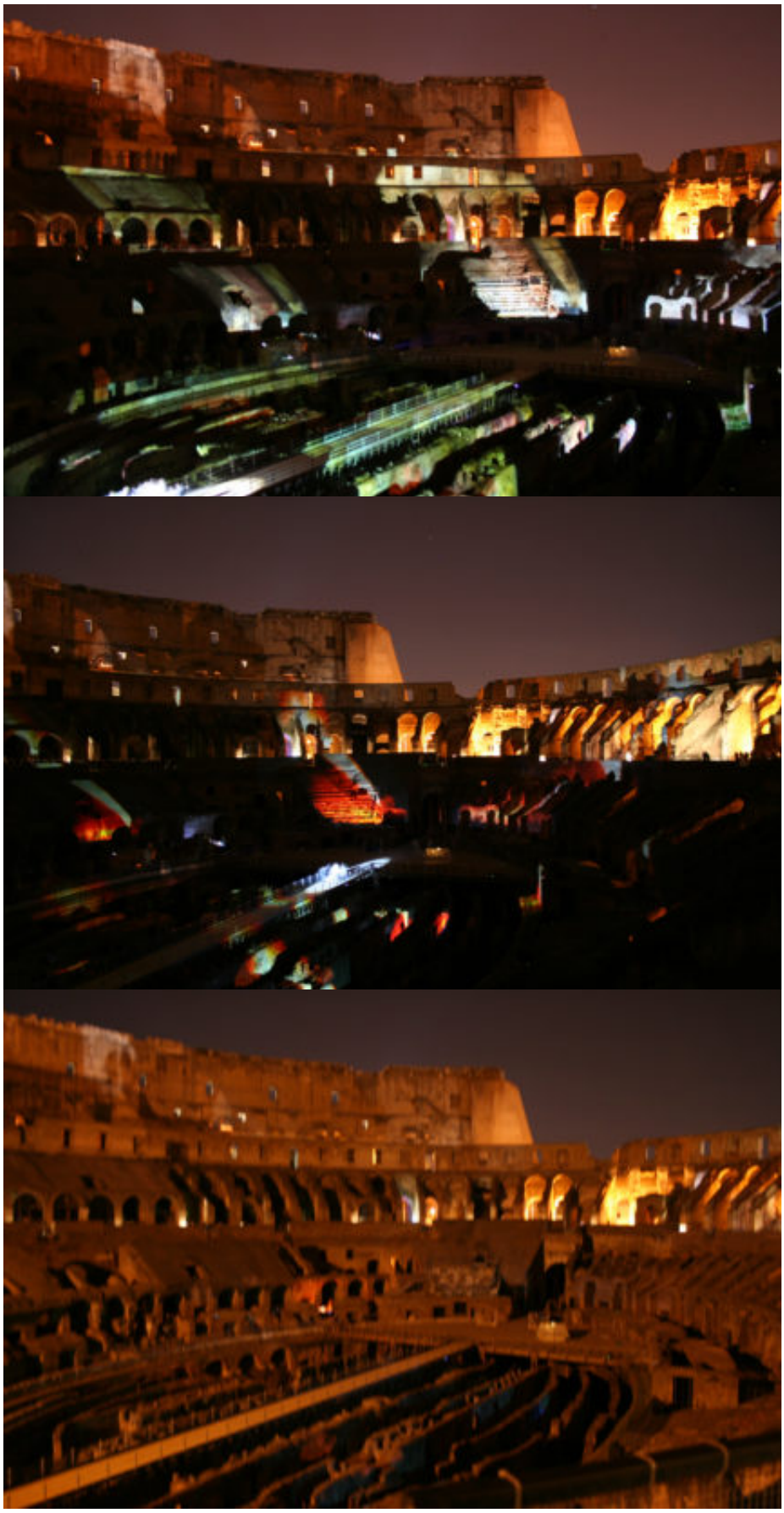




Title: Dark Resonances

Date:2005

Media:

Description:

In collaboration with Charles Stein and Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson, and with Christelle Fillod and Aaron Miller

Intermedia performance for multiple large-scale projection, digital video camcorder, four DVD players, video switcher, computer-controlled laser projector, headphone microphone, contact microphone, three infrared lights, two strobe lights, multi-channel sound system, two laptop computers with Max/Msp/jitter software, canvas, plastic pipe (fabricated tent), pomegranate seeds, motorized remote-controlled model airplane, fifty fabricated foam gliders, wooden cart with triangular wheels, two wooden pyramid frames, ten empty oil drums

In early 2005 the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma commissioned Gary Hill to produce an installation in the Fabian Amphitheater (Colosseum) in Rome, which was the first contemporary art work to be created for the Colosseum. This culminated in a one-night performance, *Dark Resonances,* which took place on the evening of June 11, 2005. The performance work was developed during a multi-month residency in Rome with almost daily visits to the Colosseum.

The implicit theme of the performance was the survival of “ruin” itself, as if the crumbling yet still-standing edifice of the Flavian Amphitheater were the architectural, historical, and perhaps metaphysical origin of the darkest aspects of western civilization now overwhelming the globe.

The performance used the multi-layered strata of the structure proceeding from the subterranean level (hypogeum) where the gladiators had been housed, the animals kept, and the various devices for Colosseum spectacles stored. This space could be thought of as a pagan/space-age Underworld; accordingly, Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson composed and sang a series of surreal songs partly based on the Persephone myth. Throughout the performance she appeared in the person of the Kore, though garbed in a wild costume she designed out of throwaway furs, doused in petroleum. Oil fumes emanated from her presence as she sang her haunting songs, wandered through the Underworld, and was carted on a wagon with “de-invented wheels”—triangles that thumped and lurched violently across the amphitheater. One of the working concepts was derived from diagrams of the Colosseum’s architecture—namely, that the Colosseum resembles a huge brain. Thus the events in the performance suggested the madness of history circulating around the “colossal” brain of Western man. The performance was dominated by sound amplified through an array of speakers around the amphitheater. Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson’s *a cappella* songs, palindromic spells (written and spoken by Charles Stein), a pre-recorded performance based on texts from Hill’s *Primarily Speaking*, 1981 – 83, in English and Italian—all culminated in a wild cerebro-sonic sound-poetry melt-down. This was followed by primal drumming on a pyramid of oil barrels at the “Gate of Death” (a reference to the tall arched opening at the end of the Colosseum where dead gladiators were once taken).

Bracketing the aural happenings were numerous projections directly onto the irregular walls of

the amphitheater consisting of multiple images, including computer-animated goats and sheep and a man standing in a book (later to become something of a continuation of Gary Hill's *Liminal Objects* series: respectively, *Church & State*, 2005, and *Big Legs Don't Cry*, 2005). A focal image was that of a large animated eagle trapped in an electric tower, on the basis of which the eagle was created for *Frustrum*, 2006. Massive images of burning oil fields were projected simultaneously all around the Colosseum. In a kind of post-apocalyptic silence some fifty white gliders with four-foot wingspans drifted in from the upper levels of the Colosseum spiraling down and softly crashing among the audience.

Quasha, George and Charles Stein. *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill's Works and Writings*. Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009, p. 575.

Spoken Text:

Bibliography:

Gary Hill: Resounding Arches / Archi Risonanti. (Catalogue and DVD.) Rome: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali Soprintendenza archeologica di Roma, and Milan: Mondadori Electa S.p.A., 2005. In Italian and English. Texts by Ester Coen and Giuliana Stella.

Turner, Jonathan. "Ferment and Creativity." *ARTnews* (January 2006), 90 – 97.

Quasha, George and Charles Stein. *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill's Works and Writings*. Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009, pp. 490 – 491, 575.

Exhibition History:

Colosseum, Rome, Italy, June 11, 2005.

Notes: