
GARY HILL





Title:23:59:59:29 - The Storyteller's Room

Date:1998

Media:Mixed media installation

Description:

Twelve modified 4-inch black-and-white monitors (cathode ray tubes removed from chassis) with projection lenses and mounts, ten strobe lights, multiple loudspeakers, foam, rope, miscellaneous cabling, strobe controller, computer with controlling software written in DOS, twelve-channel synchronizer, twelve laserdisc players and twelve laserdiscs (black-and-white; mono sound)

Dimensions variable

Edition of two and one artist's proof

Excerpt from: Mary Ceruti, Program notes, CAPP Street Project, San Francisco, CA:

"Opening a door into absolute darkness, we struggle to make our way a few steps into a space of undetermined proportions. The flash of a strobe light allows us to get a momentary glimpse of an empty room. Accompanying the flash is a male voice speaking a single word or a brief phrase: "a swarm of particulars" ... "gathering" ... "appearances." It is perhaps ten, twelve or even fifteen minutes before we begin to see what seems to be a glow, a slight illumination of the walls. The flashes continue at intervals, somehow regular yet impossible to predict, each one obliterating the silence. We move into the space with caution as we are unable to see the support columns or whether there are other people in the room. Another few minutes and we begin to comprehend the illuminations as images. But they are like chimeras, appearing first on one wall, then on another. Just as we begin to see them clearly, the flashes wipe them out and replace them with after-images of the architecture which subsequently mingle with the projections. It is not clear whether what we are seeing is really visible or merely exists on the back of our eyelids....[The work uses] strobe lights in conjunction with video projections to create a place where image and text intertwine and we as viewers are made aware of the physical aspects of our looking. It is a meditation on time and the nature of the image. [It] is a work that exists in the gaps between lightness and darkness, sound and silence. It probes the edges of seeing, asserts the materiality of sound, and plays with the experience of memory."

Spoken Text:

Note: Each line of spoken text is heard at 30 second intervals.

There

apart

and yet from

a swarm of particulars

gathering
appearances
between slippages
moments
drawing near
making up for lost time
a disturbing act
I thought
imagining another
moving
across the room in cold silence
I kept reading
and
I kept from reading
the words
each one
one after another becoming
a single word
perhaps "perhaps"
the story may have begun
decidedly
under the influence of an image
lodged
in a shadow

worthy of darkness
I remember the face
a perfect decoy
positioned in space
as if separated from its body
brittle with certainty
the dryness of the eyes
so unbearably dry
I watched tumbleweed blow through the two empty cinemas
turning away
eliminated
the chance of questions
in return
I didn't expect a single utterance
somehow
the whole rigmarole of this face
its way with the world
registering...
that it all had to take place
in time

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Exhibition History:

An example of this work was exhibited for the first time at Capp Street Project, San Francisco, California, May 15 – June 20, 1998.

Notes: