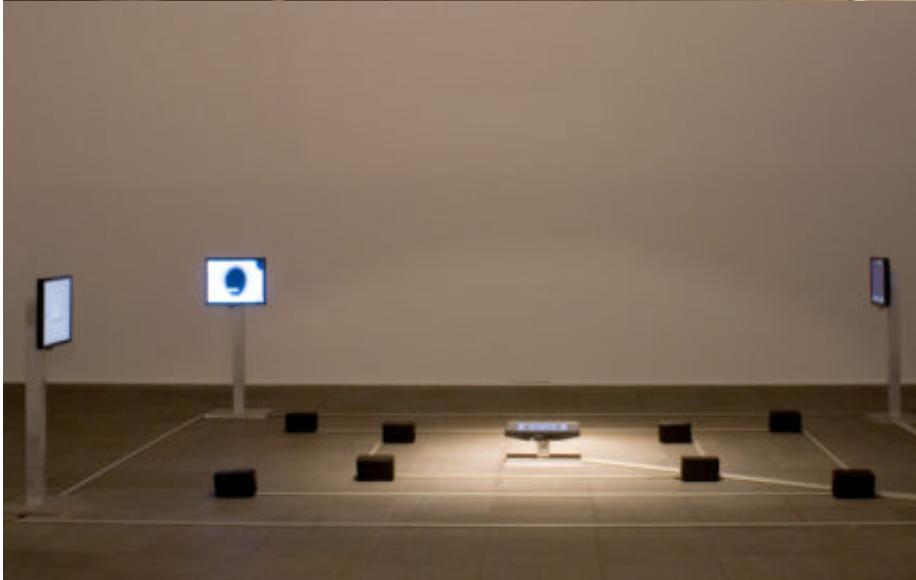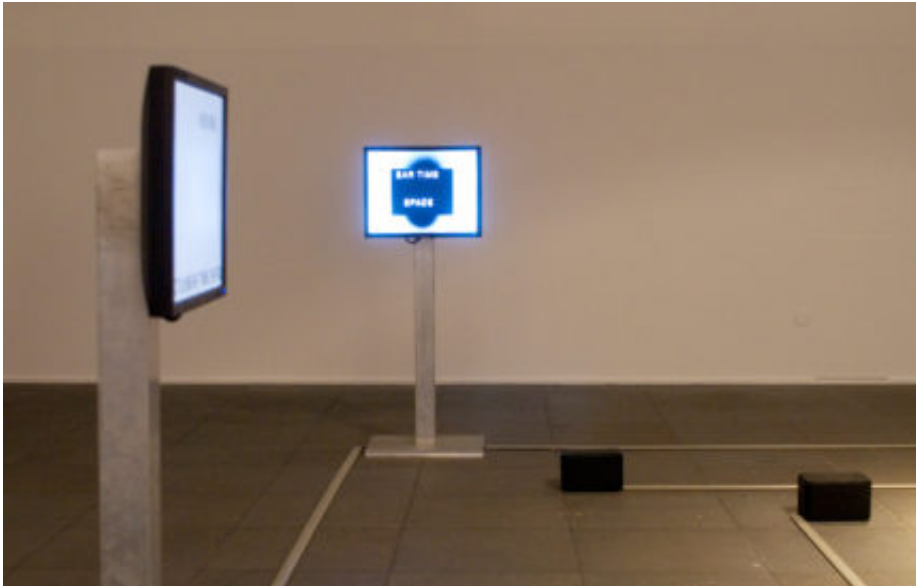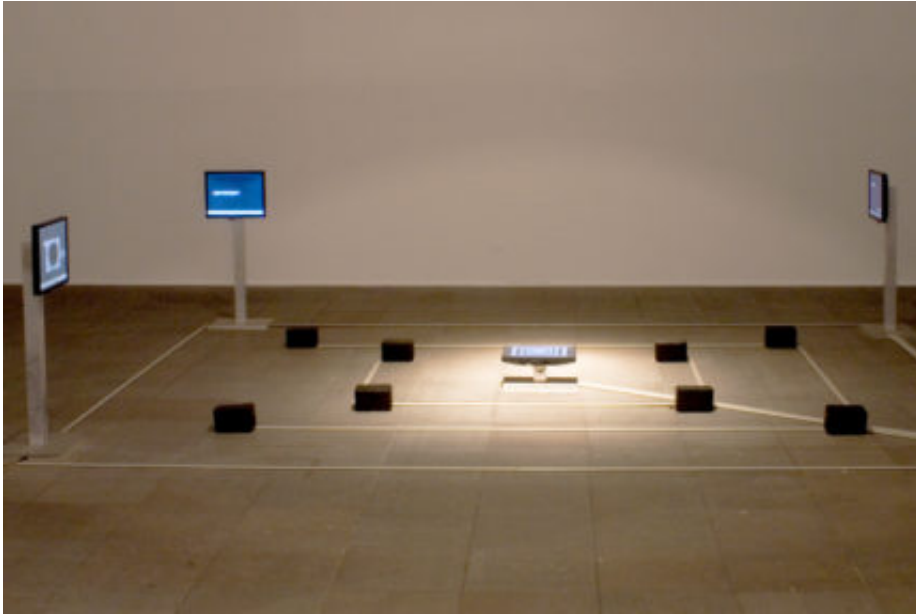**Title:** Glass Onion

Date: 1980-81

Media: Mixed media installation

Description:

Five 20-inch LCD displays, five aluminum stands, live camera with remote-controlled zoom lens, eight amplified speakers, analog to digital converter, firewire audio interface, and computer with Max/Msp/jitter software (2 source channels of video: Quicktime, black-and-white; stereo sound)

Dimensions variable

Edition of two and one artist's proof

Note: The work was refabricated in 2007.

The positions of the five monitors and eight speakers in this work define three concentric rectangles and their center. Four monitors define the four corners of the parameter of the outside rectangle. Moving inward, four speakers are at the corners of the next concentric rectangle and four more speakers at the innermost concentric rectangle. In the center is one monitor facing up, as are all the speakers. Facing down from the ceiling is a camera with an automated zoom lens that ranges from all the way in (filling any of the outer monitors with the image of the central monitor-screen) to all the way out (filling any of the monitors with the image of the whole installation from the outer rectangle to the center). The central monitor displays a prerecorded loop (variation of *Black/White/Text*) of negative video feedback (alternating black-and-white rectangles enfolding and transforming continuously).

These expanding and shrinking recorded rectangles (like the real time image from the overhead camera displayed on the outer four monitors) expand and shrink in general sync with the seven sound tracks. These tracks form the score of the spoken text. The text describes the process of feedback and is structured reflexively, mirroring the principles of feedback itself. The first voice/track sets the measure for pulsating changes with the rhythmic pacing of "*rec—tan—gle*" and embeds progressively larger phrase units from the verbal text (noted below) in each of the six other tracks, proceeding backwards in multiples of 3 syllables (i.e., 3, 6, 12, 24, 36, 48, 96) from the end-word "rectangle." (For example: first track: 3 syllables = "rectangle," second track: 6 syllables = "within a rectangle," third track: 12 syllables = "the frame of reference within a rectangle," etc.) The live camera image alternates on the four monitors defining the outer perimeter, changing from positive to negative. The text scrolls across the bottom of all four screens, repeatedly moving from right to left, beginning to end. Occasionally written words derived from the scrolling text float up the screen in various ways forming other word couplings and word play.

Spoken Text:

Note: This text is also used in the single-channel video work Black/White/Text*, 1980, and in the performance of the same name.*

A texture is drawing a continuum from one voice to another differentiated by measuring the distance between sending and receiving messages voicing the following: rectilinear time enfolds the negative and positive spaces expanding the image that text occupies the space before and after the frame of reference within a rectangle.

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Exhibition History:

An example of this work was first shown in the exhibition "Glass Onion, Installation for Video, Sound & Text: A Topological Mapping" at And/Or Gallery, Seattle, Washington, January 9 – 24, 1981.

"Art & Technology: Electronic Visions," Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, July 24 – September 4, 1983.

"Gary Hill: *Glass Onion*," 911 Media Arts, Seattle, Washington, August 3 – September 25, 2007.

"Gary Hill: Strange Trajectories," NRW-Forum / IMAI (Inter Media Art Institute), Dusseldorf, Germany, September 15 – October 28, 2007.

Notes: