
GARY HILL







Title:Happenstance (part one of many parts)

Date:1982-83

Media:Video (black-and-white; stereo sound); 6:30 min.

Video Link :<https://vimeo.com/5509624>

Description:

The opening sequence of this black-and-white work shows the square, circle and triangle as the basic elements of the formal repertoire. They are joined by letters and words, whose configuration suggests the shape of the triangle. Simultaneously sounds are linked to the visual elements: a bass drum to the square, crash cymbal to the circle and a kind of 'twang' sound to the triangle. After first concretizing themselves, amorphous electronic forms (almost like reading the stars, a bird, a fish, a snake and a frog seem to appear if for only moments) become lost in abstract structures as individual words and sentences play counter point. The interplay between language and image builds to a text filled page: "vanishing points" which shifts down the page into "points vanishing." The letters, which initially morph to a pyramid, now turn into the humus from which grows a letter tree whose leaves fall to the ground as characters, partially forming words there. Hill is creating a kind of choreography of thought, which as already seen in *Videograms* (GHCR 43) – gives rise to an area of tension between the images and the spoken or written texts. At the textual level, he addresses the ephemerality of linguistic meanings inside the 'nature' of language. Musical and sound elements underscore the character of the individual passages and the complex intertextuality of the work.

Broeker, Holger, ed. *Gary Hill: Selected Works and catalogue raisonné*. Wolfsburg: Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, 2002, GHCR 46, pp. 102 – 104.

Spoken Text:

Spoken text:

This, that and the other thing. Things. Things are going to happen. Happenstance. Standing in the thick of things like sticks in the mud.

Cross my heart, hope to die, I never dreamed the likes of this. That's beside the point, the issues at hand are other things. This is not going to be a song and dance, that's entertainment, another thing altogether.

This is something I came upon while walking in the woods, that's ground for thinking through other things.

Vanishing points.

Things. Things are going to happen. Happenstance. Standing in a mummy's tomb, thought provoked, dumbstruck by the momentum of a tree. The gnarled character of its being, the way it visits the temples and the groin teaching the body/mind to be taut – to talk with your mouth open.

The words are coming, listen to them. Nothing surrounds them. They are open, they speak of nothing but themselves with perfect reason. I am talking, I am talking them out into the open. They sit like deer in a field, if I approach them too quickly they fade into the quick of things. Silence is always there – there is silence when I stop to take a breath, when I see breathtaking things.

Written text:

(in triangle) The sound of one hand clapping in one man's mind. (bottom of screen) Not to be mistaken for the different drummer number....1, 2, 3, 4, so, on, and, so, forth.

(in triangle) One man's mind clapping in the sound of a closed hand.

(bottom of screen) At a certain point another point is noticed. At a certain other point a line of reasoning is drawn upon other things. Therefore, the other point is this....That the *raison d'être* draws from things on the wayside of vanishing points of view.

Nothing Talking Silence There

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7. Berner Poesietage 1987. Bern: Kunstmuseum Bern, 1987, p. 4.

2^e Semaine Internationale de Video. Geneva: Saint-Gervais Genève, 1987, pp. 32, 44, 63, 65, 66.

6. Erlanger Videotage. Erlanger, Germany: Erlanger Videotage, 1987, p. 86.

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Exhibition History:

Solo screening. Boston Film/Video Foundation, Boston, Massachusetts, March 24, 1983.

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

Videoart: IV Festival International d'Art Video de Locarno, Locarno-Ascona, Switzerland, August 1 – 5, 1983.

"Video Art: A History, Part Two," Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, December 1 – 22, 1983.

Solo screening. London Video Arts, London, England, December 8, 1983.

Solo screening. International Cultural Center, Antwerp, Belgium, December 9, 1983.

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“Video Art: Stockholm International Festival ‘85,” Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden, November 2 – 10, 1985.

Solo screening. 911 Arts Center, Seattle, Washington, November 9, 1985.

“Video d’artistes: Robert Cahen, Gary Hill, Jacques Louis Nyst, Dan Reeves,” Salle Patino, Geneva, Switzerland, January 31 and February 1, 1986.

“Collections Vidéo: Acquisitions Depuis 1977,” Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, March 5 – May 11, 1986.

Solo screening. Port Washington Public Library, Port Washington, New York, May 22, 1986.

Solo exhibition. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, May 24 – June 15, 1986.

“Meet the Makers/Video Vectors: Gary Hill,” Donnell Library, New York Public Library, New York, New York, October 9, 1986.

“Infermental VI,” Western Front, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Opened February 8, 1987 and travelled internationally.

7. Berner Poesietage, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland, April 4 – 12, 1987.

6. Erlanger Videotage, Erlanger, Germany, June 17 – 21, 1987.

“Computers and Art,” Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, September 17 – November 8, 1987. Travelled to: Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 27, 1987 – January 9, 1988.

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2^e Semaine Internationale de Vidéo, Saint-Gervais Genève, Geneva, Switzerland, November 16 – 21, 1987.

Solo screening. Western Front, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, April 16, 1988.

“Estetica de la Generacion Animacion por Ordenador,” Instituto de Estudios Norteamericanos, Barcelona, Spain, June 6 – 22, 1988.

“Carte Blanche à Georges Rey,” Musée d’art moderne, Villeneuve d’Ascq, France October 13 – 15, 1988.

Solo screening. Beursschouwburg, Brussels, Belgium, January 24, 1989.

1989 Salso Film and TV Festival, Salsomaggiore, Italy, April 19 – 25, 1989.

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39 Berliner Festwochen 1989: “25 Jahre Video-Skulptur,” Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany, August 27 – September 24, 1989.

Solo exhibition. “OTHERWORDSANDIMAGES,” Video Galleriet, Huset, Denmark and Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, April 20 – May 13, 1990.

“Passages de l’image,” Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, September 18 – November 19, 1990. Travelled to: Centre Cultural de la Fundació, Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona, Spain, February 11 - March 31, 1991; The Power Plant, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, May 10 – June 16, 1991; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, July 12 – October 27, 1991; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, February 6 – April 12, 1992.

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“16 Dagar,” Nýlistasafnid, The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik, Iceland, June 26 – July 11, 1993.

“Gary Hill: In Light of the Other,” Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England, November 7, 1993 – January 9, 1994; The Tate Gallery, Liverpool, England, February 25 – May 2, 1994.

“Gary Hill: Sites Recited,” Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California, December 3, 1993 – February 20, 1994.

“Gary Hill: Selected Videotapes 1978 – 1990,” Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, June 7 – August 28, 1994.

“Dekonstruktion Video – 11. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm & Videofestivals,” Kassel, Germany, November 17, 1994.

“Gary Hill,” Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California, December 19, 1994 – March 12, 1995.

Solo exhibition. Dia Center for the Arts, New York, New York, May 11 – June 25, 1995.

Sedicesima Biennale Internazionale del Bronzetto Piccola Scultura Padova, Padua, Italy, October 29, 1995 – January 28, 1996.

6^e Semaine Internationale de Vidéo, Saint-Gervais Genève, Switzerland, November 3 – 11, 1995.

“Gary Hill: O lugar do outro/where the other takes place,” Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 1 – 6, 1997 (not the full run of the exhibition); Museu de Arte Moderna

de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, October 3 – November 2, 1997.

“Gary Hill: Rétrospective de ses premières oeuvres mono-bandes,” Cinéma Lux, Caen, Basse-Normandie, France, December 11, 1997.

“Visual Utterance: The Works of Gary Hill,” Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, California, February 11, 18, 1998.

“Art Vidéo: catastrophe et nativité,” Musée Royal de Mariemont, Mariemont, France, February 15 & March 15, 1998.

Solo exhibition. Center for Contemporary Images, Saint-Gervais Genève, Geneva, Switzerland, September 9, 10, 1998.

Solo exhibition. Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark, January 17 – April 5, 1999.

“Gary Hill: Video Works,” NTT InterCommunication Center, Tokyo, Japan, February 16 – March 31, 1999.

Solo exhibition. Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 17 – June 4, 2000 (May 25, 2000 screening).

Solo exhibition. Museo Caraffa, Córdoba, Argentina, July 7 – 30, 2000 (July 15, 2000 screening).

“Hill(scape),” Extra Microwave Media Art Festival (organized by Videotage), Hong Kong Space Museum Lecture Hall, Hong Kong, January 14 – 31, 2001 (January 20 screening).

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“Gary Hill: A Personal Anthology / Video Works,” (video screenings) The Ossolinski National Institute, Wroclaw, Poland, December 1 / 2 and FAMU, Prague, Czech Republic, December 9, 2004.

“Videoformes 2005: XXth Manifestation Internationale d’Art Vidéo et Médias,” Clermont-Ferrand, France, compilation screening moderated by Rosanna Albertini on March 18, 2005.

“Black Maria Film Festival 25th Anniversary Gallery Retrospective,” Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, June 17 – 24, 2006.

“Signal Channel,” Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, Nebraska, June 9 – August 12, 2006.

“Du Sonore et du Visual, 2,” In Situ / Fabienne Leclerc, Paris, France, June 2 – July 28, 2007.

“Art of Limina: Gary Hill,” Slought Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 21 – May 1, 2009.

"Gary Hill: Between Word and Image," Headquarters of the Superintendence for the Archaeological Heritage of the Vento / Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Verona, Italy, October 14 – 16, 2010.

"The View from a Volcano: The Kitchen's Soho Years, 1971 – 1985," The Kitchen, New York, NY , June 29 – August 27, 2011.

Seoul International NewMedia Festival, Seoul, Korea, August 4 – 14, 2011.

"Moving Types," Gutenberg-Museum Mainz, Germany, October 20, 2011 – April 22, 2012.

"SCHRIFTFILME: Schrift als Bild Bewegung (TYPEMOTION: Type as image in motion," FACT, Karlsruhe, Germany and Liverpool, Great Britain, November 13, 2014 – February 8, 2015.

"Gary Hill," 37 Moscow International Film Festival/Media Forum, Cinema October, June 21, 2015.

"Gary Hill: Momentombs," Suwon Art Museum, Suwon, Korea, November 26, 2019 — March 6, 2020.

"Gary Hill: Continuous Happening," Art Museum of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Guangzhou, China, October 23 - December 8, 2024.

Notes:

Excerpting the Tree, 1985, is an excerpt from *Happenstance* (*part one of many parts*) that was exhibited at the First Tokyo International Video Biennale, March 29 – 31, 1985. The festival imposed a time limit of three minutes on each entry, thus the title was an ironic response to the structure of the biennale.