
GARY HILL





Title:Mind on the Line

Date:2004

Media:

Description:

Gary Hill, George Quasha, and Charles Stein, in collaboration with Dorota Czerner and Aaron Miller

Intermedia performance for computers, Max/MSP/jitter, 3D Studio Max and Reaktor software, two video projectors, digital video camcorder, two DVD players, microphones, sound system, video mixer, selected texts, and wooden sticks.

Mind on the Line's development as an improvisational work paralleled that of both *Two Ways at Once* and *Spring from Undertime*. Commissioned by the WRO Art Center in Wroclaw, Poland, the work evolved over a ten-day tour that produced four performances, three in the Polish cities of Wroclaw, Posnan and Lodz and ending with a final performance in Prague. A composite description (pertaining especially to the final performance in Prague, the most accomplished version of the work) can serve to represent the four performances, although each performance had unique qualities.

A long string of cloths and other “found” materials from the streets was assembled by volunteer art students in Wroclaw, creating a long heterogeneous “line,” which was recorded in video close-up. It appeared as a slowly extending, horizontal projection during the performances. The notion of *line*, conceived of as a principle of division, separating above from below, inside from outside, sense and nonsense, and other conceptual dualities, became a conceptual object with complex content in itself; the “dividing line” became a substance with multiple divisions in its own right and an object of reflection. (It became, in short, a limen in the sense developed throughout this book.)

The performance space was framed by two walls at right angles that served as projecting screens for video material. At the beginning, Charles Stein walked into the performance area backwards clutching yard-long dowel sticks. After a few moments, he broke the sticks in half one by one and dropped them on the floor, allowing them to fall where they might. They lay there until the end of the performance, though Charles Stein picked up and “wielded” a few of them during his sound-poetry “address” to the audience.

Gary Hill, George Quasha, and Dorota Czerner performed various gestural, yet only seemingly symbolic, actions immediately projected on two large screens and combined with pre-recorded material; one such image of incongruity was Hill shaving his face and brushing his teeth at the same time. Other projections included axial texts, “Preverbs,” by Quasha, read by him in English and by Czerner in her Polish translation, while connecting with video material (by Hill and Quasha) which was projected. At other times Quasha performed “axial drumming”—unpredictable rhythmic cluster events—at particular points joining oddly self-interrupting body-centered performance. Computer-generated images of a drum and sticks behaving in strange ways conversed with the live drumming. Aaron Miller processed live video using the computer program Max/Msp to create moments of “granular time delays,” smearing

time of the just past in various convoluted ways.

Stein delivered an extended sound poetry “address” to the audience while an image of him from Seattle (*Spring from Undertime*) was projected on screens. The address seemed to be commenting on his own projected image, in a continuously varying panoply of rhetorical and self-reflective modes. At the end, a reversed video of the opening was projected on the screens: The broken sticks came back together and flew up into his hand and he walked off the performance area, in an apparently “forward now.”

Quasha, George and Charles Stein. *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill's Works and Writings*. Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009, p. 585.

Spoken Text:

Bibliography:

Mind on the Line: Gary Hill, George Quasha, Charles Stein, Aaron Miller and Dorota Czerner. Wrocław: WRO Art Center, 2004. In English and Polish.

Quasha, George and Charles Stein. *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill's Works and Writings*. Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009, pp. 522, 585.

Exhibition History:

The Ossolinski National Institute, Wrocław, Poland, December 4, 2004.

Theatre 77, Łódź, Poland, December 5, 2004.

U Jezuitów Gallery, Poznań, Poland, December 7, 2004.

Skolska28, Prague, Czech Republic, December 10, 2004.

Notes: