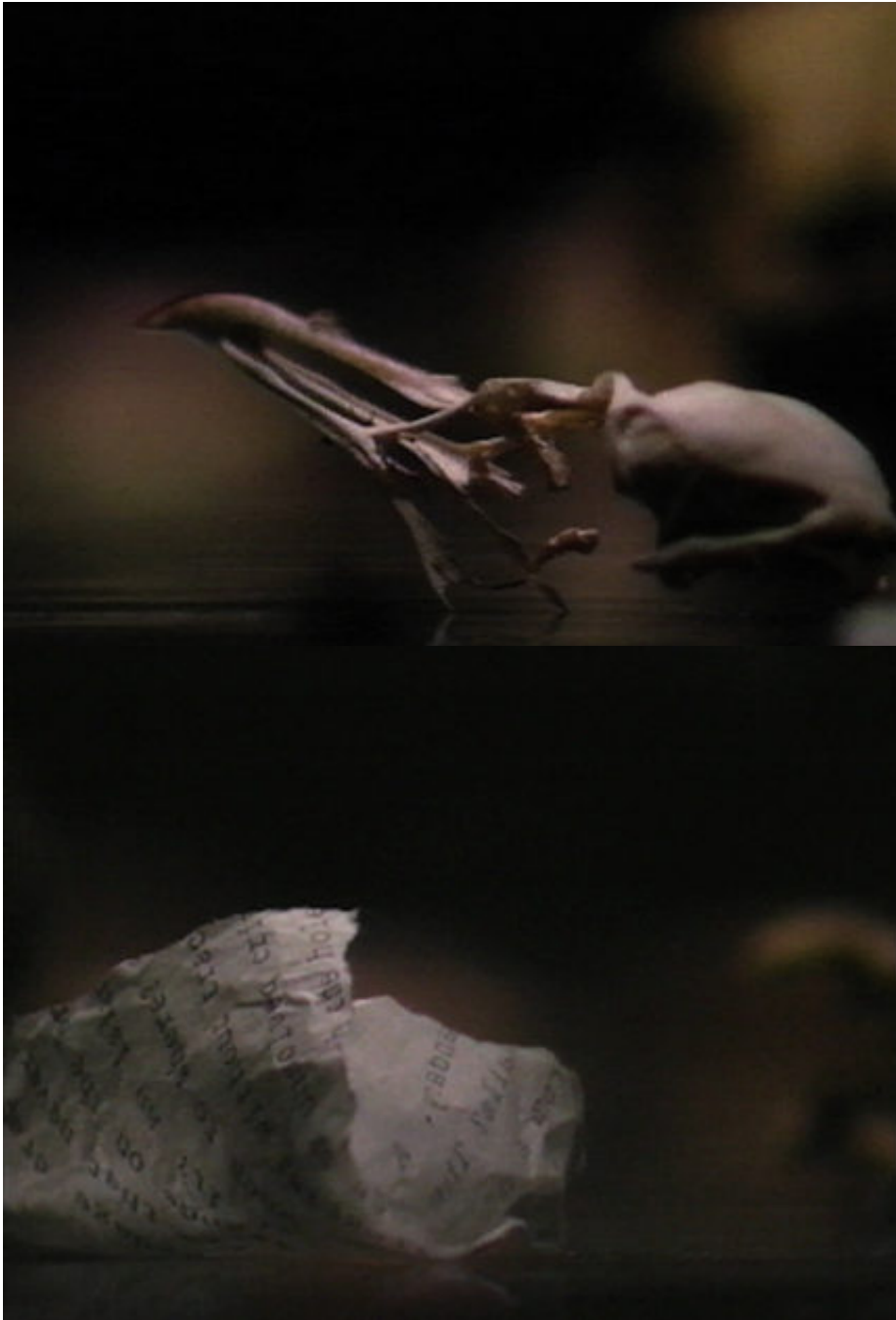

GARY HILL







Title:Site Recite (a prologue)

Date:1989

Media:Video (color, stereo sound); 4:00 min.

Video Link :<https://vimeo.com/5513020>

Description:

Appearing as a hazy horizon laden with strange objects, the scene comprises bones, skulls of small mammals, butterflies, nuts, and other botanical “finds” spread out on a round table. These are objects of the kind that one might collect on a nature trail in a forest—but also shells and crumpled notes. They are relics that suggest the cycle of life in a way familiar to us from vanitas still life painting and natural history collections. The camera moves around the table, picking out objects which, because of the shallow depth of focus, stand out one after another from the panorama of the jumbled collection. A bird’s skull, a piece of bark, or a crystal appear needle-sharp in the picture, whereupon the focus changes and the contours of a shell emerge from the nebulous background. In this way the camera discloses the transient beauty of the items one after the other, capturing the beauty of each for a fraction of a second before focusing on the next object. This precise focusing/unfocusing continues for the duration of the work, while a narrator explores his momentary state of consciousness and relationship with the world, verbalizing his own thoughts as transient objects in an ontologically focused vanitas of mind. The rhythmic vocalized syllabics synchronize with the focusing and blurring of the image. And the final tableau places the viewer inside the mouth of the speaker looking out. Just as the narrator opens his mouth and speaks, light enters the speaking cavity, the tongue moves, and the teeth masticate the last words of the work: “imagining the brain closer than the eyes.”

“A prologue to *Which Tree*, an unrealized interactive videodisc that later morphed into *Withershins*. Using a track and dolly system, the camera was set at table top level from where thirteen circular tracking shots were made, each at a set focal point across the table. Additionally, the camera was ‘locked down’ at sixty-four points equal distance around the track from where the camera was rack focused through an extreme shallow depth of field. The thirteen rings and sixty-four points create the possibility of eight hundred thirty-two ‘match points’ toward seamlessly editing the rings and intersections together, as if one camera in continuous motion. The initial idea was to have the viewer/participant navigate a circular two-dimensional map representing the description given above—thirteen concentric circles with sixty-four intersecting diameters. As one walked the pathways, a spoken text would be heard spatially in relation to one’s location and change as one continued through the path. The prologue/text was produced as a representation of a single walk suggesting a myriad of other ‘walks’ and other ‘texts.’”

Quasha, George and Charles Stein. *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill's Works and Writings*. Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009, p. 591.

Spoken Text:

Nothing seems to have ever been moved. There is something of every description which can only be a trap. Maybe it all moves proportionately, cancelling out change and the estrangement of judgement. No, an other order pervades. It's happening all at once; I'm just a disturbance wrapped up in myself, a kind of ghost vampirically passing through the forest, passing through the trees.

A vague language drapes everything but the walls — what walls? The very walls that never vary — my enclosure, so glorious from a distance, stands on the brink of nothing like a four-legged table. What is it? An island with a never-ending approach? A stopgap from when to where? Something to huddle over with my elbows like trestles without tracks, the bases of which are scattered with evidence of unsolved crimes? The overallness of it all soaks through, runs through the holes in my hands and continues to run amok, overturning rocks that should not be overturned, breaking bread that should not be broken.

The sun will rise and I won't know what to do with it. Its beak will torture me as will its slow movement, the movement it invented that I can only reiterate. The quieter and stiller I become the livelier everything else seems to get. The longer I wait the more the little deaths pile up. Bodily sustenance is no longer an excuse. Too much time goes by to take it by surprise.

So much remains. No doubt it can all be counted. Starting with any one, continuing on with any other one until all is accounted for, a consensus is reached. That it can all be shelved in all its quantized splendor, this then is the turf.

These sightings. This scene before me made up of just so many *just* views (nature's constituency) sits with indifference to the centripetal vanishing point that mentality posits so falsely. Brain, minding business, incessantly constructs an infinite series of makeshifts designed to perpetuate the picture--the one like all others that holds its breath for a thousand words, conversely exhales point zero zero one pictures. This insidious wraparound, tied to the notion "I have eyes in the back of my head," binds me to my double, implodes my being to a mere word as it winds the world around my mouth. A seamless scroll weaves my view back into place--back to back with itself--the boomerang effect, decapitates any and all hallucinations leaving (lo and behold) the naked eye, stalking each and every utterance that breaks and enters the dormitories of perception.

I must become a warrior of self-consciousness and move my body to move my mind to move the words to move my mouth to spin the spur of the moment.

Imagining the brain closer than the eyes.

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“Passageworks,” Rooseum, Malmö, Sweden, April 27 – July 25, 1993.

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"S1 / salon 2005," S1 Artspace, Sheffield, England (screenings), January 20, 2005.

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"Image, Body, Text: Selected Works by Gary Hill," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, March 24 – May 30, 2005.

"Temps de video, 1965 – 2005," CaixaForum, Barcelona, Spain, September 28, 2005 – January 8, 2006.

"New Media Collection, 1965 – 2005: Centre Pompidou," Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, April 29 – July 23, 2006.

"On History," Fundación Santander Central Hispano, Madrid, Spain, February 6 – Spring 2007.

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

"The 2008 Centre Georges Pompidou Exhibition: 'Heaven for Artists'," Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA), Seoul, Korea, November 22, 2008 – March 22, 2009.

"Gary Hill: Voice Grounds," St Paul Street Gallery, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand, March 12 - April 25, 2009.

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

"The Estrangement of Judgement," Jensen Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, July 21 – August 29, 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.

"Glossodelic Attractors," The Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA, March 30 – September 16, 2012

"Beyond Belief: 100 years of the Spiritual in Modern Art," Contemporary Jewish

Museum/SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA, January 28 - October 27, 2013.

"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.

"Sums & Differences," Listasafn Árnesinga LÁ Museum, Hveragerði, September 17 – December 18, 2022.

"Sums & Differences," House of Art, Brno, December 12, 2023 – March 3, 2024.

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

"Gary Hill: A Question of Perception," Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, November 30, 2024 - March 16, 2025

Notes:

This four-minute tape was commissioned and produced by Imatco-Atanor for broadcast on Television Española as part of the 14 episode series El Arte del Video.

Voice: Lou Hetler

Camera / Lighting: Rex Barker