



MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

For immediate release

GARY HILL: WORKS BY ONE OF THE TOP INTERNATIONAL VIDEO ARTISTS AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

Montréal, January 22, 1998. From January 30 to April 26, Hydro-Québec and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal are presenting an exhibition by American video artist **GARY HILL**, which features six major video installations along with a selection of five videos. The exhibition illustrates the luminous, inquisitive and evocative nature of Gary Hill's poetic world, and offers an overview of the last 10 years of an exceptional body of work.

A video pioneer

The work of American artist Gary Hill encompasses considerable scope and resonance. One of the pioneers of video art, along with Nam June Paik, Bill Viola and Thierry Kuntzel, Hill has demonstrated a passion for experimentation and a technical mastery, since the early seventies, which go beyond the framework of video as a medium. To date, he has produced more than 30 videos and some 40 installations.

***Dervish*: A highlight of the exhibition**

The exhibition offers six installations, one of which is *Dervish* (1993-1995). Acquired by the Musée in March 1997, this work is a highlight of the exhibition, according to curator Josée Bélisle. First shown "in progress" at Site Santa Fe, New Mexico, then at the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh and at the Museum für Gegenwartkunst in Basel, *Dervish* "pulverizes in darkness and sonic vibration any conventional notion of language and communication. As its title implies, *Dervish* (whirling around in incantatory rituals) seems like a spinning centre in the midst of a massive centrifugal movement that breaks down into a rapid, staccato series of images and sounds."

The curator adds, "Projected in random, destabilizing bursts, these images — of an airplane in flight, hands covering a face, rows of books, a man lying on the ground — are literally penetrated and permeated with deafening noises (mainly the acceleration and deceleration of a turbine engine). The result is a nearly physical blending, which

might reveal the possible meaning of the trance-like states induced by the freneticism of our contemporary world.”

Two video installations, *Reflex Chamber* (1996) and *Midnight Crossing* (1997), are being presented for the first time in North America, while this is the first Canadian showing of *Dervish* (1993-1995) and *HanD HearD* (1995-1996). Just for this occasion, Gary Hill also will produce the French version of *Remarks on Color* (1994) here in Montréal. The sixth installation in the exhibition, *Disturbance (Among the Jars)* (1988), will be the subject of a multimedia performance. The selection of five videos includes the works *Incidence of Catastrophe* (1988), *Site Recite (A Prologue)* (1989) and *Solstice d'hiver* (1990). It will be recalled that the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal also presented video works by Gary Hill in 1992, in the exhibition *Eye for I*.

Gary Hill: Strong images and words

The curator sums up Gary Hill's work in the following words: “Focusing his gaze — his vision — literally on reality and appearances, being and language, Hill pictures silence, familiar or disconcerting. He challenges existential chaos and confronts form, colour and theory. But above all, he seeks a setting for light and its absence in evanescent and spectacular projections, persistently invoking and illuminating various philosophical and literary writings — even certain extracts from Gnostic texts.”

Meeting and multimedia performance

In conjunction with his exhibition, Gary Hill will meet with the public on Thursday, January 29 at 5:30 p.m., when he will discuss various aspects of his artistic approach. In addition, in a world first, the Musée will present the multimedia performance **Two Ways at Once / Deux sens à la fois** by artist Gary Hill and American poet-artists George Quasha and Charles Stein. This new work, created especially for the **GARY HILL** exhibition, will be performed on Friday, January 30 at 6 p.m. Admission to the performance costs \$8 and includes entry to the exhibition galleries. Information: (514) 847-6226.

Gary Hill catalogue

The Gary Hill catalogue, produced by the Musée, contains essays by George Quasha, Charles Stein and the exhibition curator. This 56-page publication is illustrated with 29 colour and black-and-white photographs. It may be purchased at the Musée's Olivieri Bookstore and at major bookstores throughout Québec for \$25.95.