

Video installation, Gary Hill: Tall ships opens Sept. 26 in the University Art Gallery at UCSD

September 8, 1997

Media Contact: Kathleen Stoughton, University Art Gallery, (619) 534-0419, or kstoughton@ucsd.edu, or Jan Jennings, (619) 822-1684, or jjennings@ucsd.edu VIDEO

INSTALLATION, GARY HILL: TALL SHIPS OPENS SEPT. 26 IN THE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY AT UCSD

Gary Hill: Tall Ships, an interactive projective video installation, will be on view Sept. 26 through Dec. 13 in the University Art Gallery at the University of California, San Diego. A reception for the artist, open to the public, will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Sept. 25.

The installation consists of a 60-foot long corridor which is completely dark. The movement of a viewer through the corridor triggers the emergence of projected images of people of varying ages, gender and ethnic origin on the walls of the corridor. The light from the projected videos provides a minimal light in the installation space and creates silhouettes of other viewers in the space.

"You begin to see the shapes and shadows and light cast by the figures onto people's faces," says Hill. "It's very subtle, but the viewers begin to mix with the projections."

For Hill, the choreography of dark space, visions, and silence creates a meditative space for the viewer to interact with the images (both video and real) to connect with them or to feel isolated. Hill's idea is to compel the viewer to explore his or her responses to others.

Hill says the title for the installation was inspired by an old photograph taken in Seattle around 1930 of a tall ship: "I associated those huge masts and full sails with people standing...the thought of that kind of ship on the high seas that frontal view of extreme verticality coming towards you. There's a majestic quality to it that when applied to the human figure projects a kind of power and grace. That person, however vulnerable, will come forth no matter what. It's the simplicity of the idea humans approaching humans in the space of a work that is always slightly haunted by the notion of 'ships passing in the night.'"

Hill was born in Santa Monica in 1951 and currently lives in Seattle. Originally trained as a sculptor, Hill has been working in video for more than 20 years. Each of his installations incorporates visual images, sound or silence and the viewer's time to explore relationships.

Hill has exhibited in numerous museums and galleries abroad and in this country, including the Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; the Musee d'Art Contemporain in Lyon, France; the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, England; the Galleria Lia Rumma in Naples, Italy; the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; the Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia; the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York, and the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle.

The artist will be at the Sept. 25 reception at the gallery. It is free and open to the public.

Kathleen Stoughton is the director of the University Art Gallery. The gallery is located at the west end of Mandeville Center on the UCSD campus in La Jolla. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For information, call the gallery at 534-0419.

(September 8, 1997)