



Chimera  
Monographie  
Gary Hill  
Surfing the Medium  
int. w/ Stephen Sartazin

A DISCUSSION WITH GARY HILL Edition du  
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The following interview with Gary Hill took place in Paris, in February of 1992. It is essentially divided into several parts : a discussion of the evolution of his work within the context of the histories of video, the evolution of contemporary art and the possible affinities shared between Gary Hill's tapes and installations and the works of other artists ; a retrospective discussion of his tape production and of its relationship with language ; a general discussion of his installations. It is important to understand that Gary Hill did not experience a formal university training ; nor did he go through the process of having access to art history through academia. His experience of electronics developed as his tapes became more ambitious, while his encounters with language came out, for the most part, of chance meetings (individuals, books, etc.). It was clearly a didactic method, which removes him, in spite of the intensely cerebral nature of his work, from a generation of artists trained in art as well as in the business of art through the structure of a curriculum. The naturally accidental encounters with the art-market, via his installations, demonstrate how art which is made with video, is still very much perceived as a risk ; few galleries are willing to take this kind of gamble, although the number is rising. But recognition is now undeniably happening at a more balanced pace ; Nam June Paik was well into his fifties when he finally experienced the kind of financial independence artists of his generation had appreciated decades before. Nowadays, artists like Gary Hill, Bill Viola, Klaus Vom Bruch, Tony Oursler, and a few others, artists in their late thirties-early forties, are showing pieces in galleries, museums, major contemporary art exhibits. Nevertheless, the economy of this recognition radically differs from the one which surrounds painters, or other media artists. The case of Gary Hill is also of interest as it retraces the move from alternative exhibit spaces to larger venues, and how video participated in the latters' respective relationships with media based arts and new technologies. This artist is now working with sophisticated tools, such as a computer matrix for his installations. But prior to this, there is more than twenty

years of creative output, ranging from sculpture to sound experiments and music, to performance and video. This discussion takes into account the social-political context during which Gary Hill began working with video, and the various crossings of histories are retraced through the artist's recollections of them. All remarks in parenthesis are mine.

*Stephen Sarrazin. How did you first get involved in art? Were you still in your teens when you began making sculpture?*

Gary Hill. I was fifteen years old and I was doing a lot of drawing as well. I covered the walls of my entire room with intricate psychedelic drawings. My best friend, who turned me on to LSD -one always remembers who turned them on to acid- had a brother, Tony Parks, who made metal sculptures. This was like 1966-67 and there was a nice mix of music, drugs and surfing at least for a short time. I was really fascinated by this welding he was doing and eventually I got my own tanks and learned to weld. I pretty much took up his style and he was probably influenced by Giacometti, even though his work had this California psychedelic attitude to it. I don't think he was involved at all in mainstream contemporary art.

*SS. He wasn't aware of contemporary american sculpture? Smith, Di Suvero, Chamberlain...*

G.H. I don't know but it wasn't apparent. I certainly wasn't; I had no idea about Pop Art or Minimalism until a few years later when I moved to the east coast and then very quickly the world of art appeared, so to speak.

*SS. When you moved east, did you set out with idea that you would become a sculptor, that this would be the definite art form you would work in?*

G.H. Well I knew I was going to make art and at least for the time being that was going to be welded metal sculpture, but I also went you might say with an open mind. I mean I was 18 and incredibly optimistic and hungry for whatever.

*SS. So once you got there you began to spend more time looking at sculpture, instead of just wanting to make things?*

G.H. Going to the east coast was at first tied to this expectation that one goes to college after high school but I wasn't really sure about this. On the other hand I was 18 and ripe for the draft, in fact eventually I was number 35 on the lottery so it was a sure bet that I would be called up. I had seen something on the Arts Students League in Woodstock, N.Y. and I received a little scholarship to go there. Bruce Dorfman was my instructor and later he set up a small workshop for a handful of people. He was really instrumental in my decision to stay on the east coast. I also worked for him for a while in his studio. His neighbor happened to be Bob Dylan and I did some odd jobs for him: gardening, painting, mowing the lawn -and we're talking about a pretty big lawn (laughs)-. At one point Bruce took me to an exhibition at the Metropolitan in New York, called «New York Painting and Sculpture, 1940-1970». This was the first time I saw any of these artists. It simply blew me away completely.

*SS. Once you encountered these works, did you begin to lean towards anyone of the sculptors mentioned previously?*

G.H. No. My first enthusiastic reactions were for the paintings of Frank Stella and Morris Louis, who I don't like as much anymore. As far as sculpture goes, Giacometti, for me, was and is a much more interesting than the celebrated David Smith... The one sculptor I was looking at at the time was Robert Morris. Later on Robert Smithson was important to me.

*SS. What did this discovery do to your work?*

G.H. I went very quickly from figurative work into abstraction. I started using solid forms with paint, then I would layer these forms. That was the Stella influence. So the kind of abstract work I was doing had more to do with formalism than with representation. I was also quite attached to this material I was working with, copper coated steel rods, which I stayed with for some time (it's there as well in "Full Circle"). So that became my material, and it was raw, but I wasn't working from a minimalist perspective, the way Carl

Andre and Richard Serra did. It was still very compositional and then I got into wire mesh. This freed me up a bit, getting more and more construction oriented.

SS. *Were you aware of how sculpture had evolved, from the chisel, or the molding of clay, to the use of steel, the Constructivists, Picasso, the American artists... ?*

GH. No, not really. But I was in awe of Picasso for a while.

SS. *Did you ever want to go and live in New York City itself ?*

GH. No, but I would go there regularly. Overall I stayed in that general area (Woodstock, Barrytown) for about fourteen years.

SS. *Was there a lot of experimenting with drugs by artists who were there with you ?*

GH. By that time it wasn't so much about experimentation. It had really become part of the fabric of everyday life.

SS. *And do you think that played a significant role in your work ?*

GH. Most definitely. I would say that taking acid is one of the most important things I've ever done, in the sense that it changed my life. This went on for a few years until the time when we weren't sure what we were getting anymore.

SS. *Were you aware of a history of literature in which writers had experimented with drugs, from Baudelaire to Cocteau, or Michaux, Burroughs...? Was this at all a possible model or reference ?*

GH. No. I wasn't aware of those people at the time. For me it really started as a generational kind of thing a couple of years before moving east. You have to remember that I was only 15 when I turned on and it happened to be a good dose. Wham! life will not be seen the same way again. I mean, everybody wanted to turn everybody on. I wanted to turn my mother on. Instead of drinking and throwing up we were taking acid and smoking pot and going to human be-ins, surfing in the middle of the night and going

to see the Doors, Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead. It was a special time. In the middle of all that I started making art and I'm sure it was all very influential on my work. Jumping back and forth and trying to see how it all fits is difficult. But without a doubt LSD precedes deconstruction in the most profound sense.

SS. *You know that Timothy Leary is a now a spokesperson for virtual reality systems.*

GH. Yes I know. He's very sharp.

SS. *How influenced were you by music and television, growing up on the west coast on one hand, and on the other being part of that first generation of artists working the tools of TV and music ?*

GH. Music was very important. It was social too. I watched television, but I never bothered to think about it one way or another, including when I began to work with video. My tapes weren't about a position on television, locating myself for or against the language of television. Coming back to music, I remember walking in a record store and hearing something by Terry Riley ! Then I got very interested in LaMonte Young, Alvin Lucier... Other ideas of structuring sounds.

SS. *As you were discovering contemporary art, were you also becoming aware of film makers like Warhol, Michael Snow, or Godard ? Other ideas of structuring images...*

GH. No, not at that time. I wasn't thinking about images in that sense, and I didn't know people making films or who were film buffs in a big way.

SS. *If you weren't interested in television or in film, how did you connect with video ? Had you heard of Nam June Paik, Vito Acconci, or of Bruce Nauman's early tapes ?*

GH. I don't think so. Perhaps some of Nauman's pieces but I wasn't aware of video as an art form. There are two reasons why I started doing video : 1/ I had started doing some sound work with a little synthesizer and processing sounds made from my sculptures.

SS. *Derrida called them the singing sculptures.*

GH. Yes, in the *Passages de l'Image* catalogue. I liked the instantaneous results, the transformation of my relationship with time ; welding could be a very long process. 2/ Then Woodstock Community Video, which used to be the People's Video Theater from NYC, moved up to Woodstock. They were going to do community access television. They had their own local station. So I went to see them to find out if I could just make something with them, like a movie... This was in 1973, I was 22. What hit me immediately about video was that in looking at things with a video camera everything had a very intense presence. The image on the monitor has something to do with hyperreality, and with phenomenology, as Woody Vasuika explained. The other significant step for me -and there was nobody there to tell me to try this- was when I first recorded myself with a portapac. I asked if I could borrow another one in order to record myself in front of the monitor which was already playing back the previous image of me. This had nothing to do with the moving image, it had to do with the process and feedback. So naturally at that time I was not thinking about framing, or shot composition, nor about film and television languages. I was in this mode of self-consciousness. I first did a couple of tapes in which there was no editing, no effects. Then I did sort of a performance piece with a friend : we painted color rectangles all around the city at night. After three or four nights, there were a lot of them, but we got caught and were arrested. Then I did a documentary about it, asking people about what they thought of the rectangles : should we put more, should we take them off...

SS. *But what seems significant here is reproducing one shape in a space, the way you eventually structured various numbers of pixels within the geography of the screen, like in «Bathing», or «Electronic Linguistics».*

GH. Perhaps in retrospect but I don't really connect the two. I was just trying a lot of different things. Later on I tried a little narrative. It was a short piece called «Feathers» in which a friend and I improvised a story. It was very european, with Erik Satie music in the background and playing off some of Duchamp's ideas. But this was a coincidence because I had never seen René Clair's *L'Entr'acte*. I suppose I was just discovering a number of genres without really knowing what was going on historically.

SS. *Did you keep on doing those sound sculptures ?*

GH. Yes, I did both video and sculpture, for about three years, before dropping the welding completely. I didn't want to give up the sculpture because I was so attached to this material. I began texturing the copper into "moiré" patterns (there's a reference to this in "Videograms"), and besides, the copper rods were able to produce such incredible harmonics.

SS. *You had no formal training in recording and electronics ?*

GH. No, it was pretty much trial and error. It came to a point where I would have hundreds of tape loops on the floor trying different combinations, wiring the tape recorder differently, this kind of thing. At the time though, I didn't know a capacitor from a resistor.

SS. *But I've seen you time and time again taking monitors apart.*

GH. That's now. But I don't really know circuitry. And I'm not a computer programmer. A circuit board is no longer an alien thing to me, but if your television set was broken I'm not sure I could fix it. However, 50% of the time I could guess what's wrong with it. I was discovering technology as I went along.

SS. *Did you ever sell some of your sculptures ?*

GH. Yes, in fact some of the very early ones, when I was still in California, to a gallery in Los Angeles. But not a lot.

SS. *What about the California art scene ? Had you picked up on Ed Ruscha ?*

GH. Not at all. Although I like Ruscha very much now, and obviously I'm interested in how he uses idioms. But keep in mind that at that time I wasn't making contemporary art as we know it. I was welding patterns and pictures together, coming from what I knew : the drug culture and the music, skateboarding and surfing...

SS. *Keeping with the times, was your decision not to serve in the Army politically motivated?*

GH. No it wasn't. The only form of protest I did against the war was my own act of deciding not to go. In fact I wasn't that aware of all the political movements going on. The People's Video Theater were politically active, and I did encounter people from those various video collectives who were socially engaged in the early seventies. But I was focusing on my art.

SS. *In what type of context did you become a video coordinator for that TV Lab in upstate New York?*

GH. In the early seventies, funding became available for media projects and collectives started to get money. Groups like Raindance and TVTV. Then the Arts Council got mandated to have more projects dealing with art and I happened to be there, the sole artist working with video in Woodstock. So I became a coordinator for the TV lab, and that plugged me into government and grants which allowed Woodstock Community Video and myself to survive.

SS. *The earliest tapes that I've seen are "Bathing" and "Windows"; did these get made while you were in Woodstock or did you do them much later?*

GH. Some time later. I had invited Dave Jones to come live in Barrytown, build me some electronic tools and some collaborations. He created tools which made it possible to mix digital and analogue images together. I learned a lot from him. When you look at "Windows" now, it seems so primitive but at the time nobody, not even the Vasulkas, had done a tape like that, except perhaps the big corporate electronic laboratories. The Vasulkas didn't have a frame buffer yet, and the one that Jones had was primitive: 64 X 64 pixels. So I was examining what was going on behind the image, as in "Bathing" when I tried to play around with the use of colour through processing by welding and unwelding various circuits. I didn't become aware of video art per se until I started showing my work. I showed my very first tape as an artist at the Kitchen in 1973, and soon after at the Anthology of Film Archives.

SS. *This was relatively exceptional for the Anthology to show tapes of a young new artist, at the same period as the work is being produced. So right from the beginning your work in video enjoyed some recognition.*

GH. I suppose so. It was pretty informal. The atmosphere was one of sharing tapes and experiments.

SS. *Did you meet the Vasulkas, who you say had a considerably significant influence on you, as far as thinking about video is concerned, at the Kitchen?*

GH. No, but they were aware of my work. Later on we ended up teaching at the same place in Buffalo in 1979-80. This was where I did "Around and About" and "Commentary", "Processual Video", all in a matter of months. At that point I was really trying to break out of that image processing thing.

SS. *So what's the transitional tape? In which tape did you find your subject?*

GH. Well, in the tape which is now called "Full Circle". You begin to perceive how the sound and the voice are having an influence on the image itself. It also involved the idea of collapse and paradox which has carried over in later works.

SS. *A lot of people would have thought it was "Electronic Linguistics".*

GH. I never developed the notion of what that could be. It became the signifier of that possibility which materializes to some extent in a tape like "Happenstance". Whereas in a tape like "Around and About", the process was much more naive in that I was wondering what it would be like to match an image to a syllable as opposed to the linguistic connections of speech, sound, electronics...

SS. *It's once you begin seriously to write the texts which constitute the soundtracks to your tapes that the deconstruction process begins, the reversal of the image dominating the sound.*

GH. Yes, although there have been occasions in which other things were involved. In "Around and About" for instance, that was written very quickly and it was meant for one particular person.

SS. *Had you been writing prior to the tapes ?*

GH. At one point when I was 18 I'd decided I was going to write a book, and I remember it was going to be about everydayness. I did about two pages, on which I worked for a very long time, very hard, which is still how I write now. It's completely constructed a phrase at a time and has nothing to do with stream of consciousness writing. The first things I really did write ended up in "Videograms" and "Equal Time". By that time I had met George Quasha, a poet and writer, who did sound poetry performances, and was a publisher (Station Hill Press, which published two important anthologies of experimental American poetry). We became very close friends and this put me in touch with writers like Jackson MacLow, Franz Kamin, Charles Stein. I'm sure this had something to do with me beginning to write. Writing was a release from image processing and pure image image exploration, which was really getting boring. Speaking and talking became necessities. Finding a syntactical weave between speech and image signaled itself as a direction for me. Suddenly I had the feeling that I was doing something that nobody else was doing, in video anyway.

SS. *Were you looking at other forms of language art, conceptual art (Kosuth, Barry, Weiner...)?*

GH. By that time, certainly. I remember being impressed by a Sol Lewitt show at Castelli which included drawings on the walls with all the descriptions of the drawings; the artwork including in itself a commentary on the process. And I liked Acconci and Smithson, who was not per se a conceptual artist...

SS. *But the ephemeral nature of much of was land art is linked to the immaterial dimension of video. Did you ever do performances like Acconci, or other video artists who combined performance with video ?*

GH. I did, but not a lot. George Quasha had opened this place called the "Arrollini Art Center", which was a multi-media space and I did a few there. I didn't really follow what was going on in performance art. I would see a few at the Kitchen and those which came upstate. The ones I was really interested in were the ones in which the artists were alone and self-sufficient.

SS. *Like those performance videos in which Acconci, Jonas, Hoover, Wegman... were doing everything (performer, camera operator, editor... which meant turning the camera on and off).*

GH. Exactly. There's such an obvious difference between people who came out of art and started doing video, and those who had a film background.

SS. *This is something very difficult for film students to imagine or understand : that people working in video were not immediately concerned with mise-en-scène.*

GH. Which is something I only began exploring in 1984, more than ten years after my first tapes, when I started working on "Why do Things get a Muddle"; that was made in between two stays in Japan, the year I'd gotten a grant to go and work there. It was a very self-conscious work. The tape begins with two people reading books, as if they were reading their lines. So on one hand it looked very self-conscious, and on the other hand I didn't know how to direct these two persons. I'd never worked with actors. And I only had two lights and I didn't know anything about lighting; I had no assistants so I would run to the upstairs of the house to start the sound recording, then run back downstairs and pick up the camera. It was absurd. I was doing it like a one person video. It could have been a better looking tape if I'd had a crew, but it would have had nothing to do with the essence of what it was about: the breakdown of meaning, reversability, entropy and chaos. It was Paul Ryan who introduced me to the work of Gregory Bateson.

SS. *Let's go back to "Full Circle".*

GH. Which was called "Ring Modulation" originally. But I changed it because it sounded too much like electronics. This was in 1978, about two years after I'd met G. Quasha.

SS. What's the first tape in which you talked ? "Full Circle" is about sounds.

GH. So you mean with words which are recognizable ? I suppose it's "Elements", in which you hear portions of the words which make up the four elements : fire, water...

SS. We've talked about this before: at the time artists like Acconci, Wegman or Baldessari were doing video, there was an explicit concern with real time. Their tapes would last as long as the event which was being represented, as in Baldessari's "Trying to tune two glasses of water for four minutes", in which we see these glasses next to an alarm clock, and the tape is a 4 minute shot. The event was in the image. In your tapes, language becomes the event and the image is there as long as there is language ; it completely challenges the nature of editing.

GH. That's right, language allowed the image to exist. The image is more like a compass or a graph of the language. It's a measure which helps to center you within the space of language.

SS. At what point does this become a strategy for you ?

GH. I would say I felt I was on to something when I did "Processual Video" and "Black/White/Text" which has a very precise structure derived from a text that is a literal description of negative video feedback (the Sol Lewitt lesson). The text grows mathematically, based on the exact number of syllables in each additive phrase. In a sense it accumulates phrases backwards ; it backs up into time. The image is simply expanding and contracting video feedback that tracks the text. It's pretty static looking really. In the case of "Around & About" or "Primarily Speaking", the strategy changes significantly. The image's existence is directly tied to the speech ; unless I speak the image does not change or does not move. This really puts one inside the time of speaking since every syllable produced an image change ; suddenly words seem quite spatial and one is conscious of a single word's time.

SS. So these also function as representations of syntax through the editing process. Were you reading philosophers of language, linguistics ?

GH. No. This wasn't based on linguistics. I don't think of myself as a language artist, nor as a writer. My work doesn't come out of the practice of reading and writing. It's more about the web of re-reading and re-writing in the electronic domain. At some point the image is touched by language and this produces something physical. It's very much of an internal process where the structure of the work might be representing what's going on in my head, and this is why in some pieces you not only hear my voice but you see me appearing in the tape, like in "Commentary". In fact, in that tape my relationship to the things around me is similar to the one in "Crux". But if you take a work like "Incidence of Catastrophe", it's another thing. The choice for me to be in it had more to do with my own experience of reading "Thomas the Obscure". I didn't want to verbalize it ; I wanted to "be" this. I wanted to put myself against this text.

SS. I think that besides language, your work deals with themes of solitude and isolation. On one hand there's the solitary voice and the absence of what is termed figurative content, as in the processed image tapes. Or there are those tapes in which we find the closed-in spaces, as in "Around and About", "Primarily Speaking". And when characters begin to appear, we have this breakdown in communication, or at least this difficulty in reaching meaning, as it's represented by such figures as the muddle, the palindrome, the catastrophe... I'm thinking here also of Bruce Nauman's work which can also be discussed in terms of violence, of a very dark humor (Beckett, Borges).

GH. Yes. Well this difficulty of communication you've mentioned is not be restricted to an exchange between people, but should also include one communicating with himself. Obviously in "Muddle", it becomes a trick question : the text is not by me and it's more about not being able to reach a resolution in a narrative. Existence without resolution is also an existence of possibilities, as well as risks and uncertainty. In that tape there is an incredible display of the struggle to speak and to mean something. In "Muddle", you have two characters who are able to agree on something, then go off in different directions. "Primarily Speaking" anticipated this idea of a connection between sound and image which breaks off then connects again.

SS. *The idea of order within disorder. "Primarily Speaking" anticipates much more than "Muddle": there's "Crux", "Site Recite"... And there is also the construction of possible narratives through the use of such charges images of yourself in a foetal position, or the wine spilling on a table, etc.*

GH. Actually, I was trying to "recharge" such images. It also had to do with the sheer number of images which were necessary for the two channel exchange. You might think there is an infinite number of images, but at one point you ask: what can I do now? It becomes a collecting process. Like for the idioms: I just went through the dictionaries and phrase books and listed all the one which were acceptable to me. I eliminated those which were too figurative, like "you can't lead a horse to water", and focused on those like "point of fact". Glue phrases. Once I started putting them together, they would flow so easily. It was like putting a puzzle together.

SS. *Were you still working alone by that time?*

GH. Yes, the camera, the editing. Friends would come in, hold something up, etc. But that was all. There was no time code editing. "Around and About" was hand-edited by manually punching the record button.

SS. *What about now? Do you still shoot yourself or do you use a camera operator?*

GH. Generally I prefer recording myself, but sometimes that just isn't possible. When I first used someone else, Rex Barker in "Incidence of Catastrophe" (he was used to films, commercials), I had to fight with him: «just leave the camera on and get away from it». It came out of the need to have someone «with» the camera while I was working on the Thomas character in front of the camera. Now he's more familiar with what I do, but I still prefer to do it myself. For instance, it would have been a lot easier to do "Inasmuch As It Is Always Already Taking Place" with someone else, but it's such a private space. I don't want to talk while I'm doing it, so I prefer running back and forth and pushing a button. In "Muddle" I did everything, placed cue cards, set up props, did sound and camera... But that was also a matter of budget, and anyway I didn't know of a better way. That tape was done with no funding at all. I rented a camera with a credit card. Kathy, Chuck Stein and I were extremely committed to doing this. You're right, no

one asked me about mise-en-scène, but what I was doing there certainly addressed issues of film language, even if I wasn't reproducing or articulating that language. "Muddle" was shot from the end to the beginning in order to keep continuity. The script was basically the text and some scribbled pictures. And then we had backward phonetically written cue cards everywhere. This being the case, the sound of speech gets «worse» as one watches the tape, since the learning curve has been reversed. People don't pick up on the incredible amount of visual references to «Alice through the Looking-Glass». There's a lot going on. It ended up being shown on Channel 4 in England, and on Channel 31 in New York.

SS. *Did several of your tapes get shown on PBS?*

GH. Not really. In fact Channel 13 didn't want to show "Muddle" because it would not have been a «première» thing.

SS. *Channel 4 produced «Incidence of Catastrophe».*

GH. Right, but they did not show it. There was a change of structure and management; I guess they didn't care for the tape... I've never really done a big budget production as far as tapes go.

SS. *Was there a point when you felt people started recognizing you as an artist working with video, rather than as a video artist? Were you getting grants regularly?*

GH. Well it really took about eight years before I got my first video grant... Then six weeks later I got another one, and yet another one from PBS, from Channel 13. So three grants in a row, for a total of 10,000 dollars. With PBS I could have gone to their TV lab, but I chose to use the money. I made "Soundings" with it. But they never showed it. They thought it was too rough. All of this was still going within the context of video art.

SS. *What was your first installation?*

GH. It was something I made at the Woodstock's Artists Association, which really only supported painting and very traditional sculpture, but I managed to sneak in



a proposal... I brought in a camera and zoomed into an outside wall, and started cutting into the wall, and into that image of the cutting, until I hit the beams and couldn't go any further; it was like a Gordon Matta-Clark piece. It was called "Hole in the Wall". Then I did performances which included multi-monitor set-ups. But the next installations happened years later. «Mesh» in '79 and «Glass Onion» in 80-81. The later ones, like «IN SITU», «CRUX», «MEDIA RITE» were happening almost simultaneously.

SS. *What has been the evolution process, from 'Disturbance (among the jars)' to 'I Believe it is an Image'? Are installations no longer possible sites for narratives?*

GH. After making 'Disturbance' I was asked to do an exhibition at the Galerie des Archives in Paris, which is a very small space. I saw it as a limitation/opportunity that might derail me from my current thinking into something else. Although 'And Sat Down Beside Her' uses the stripped tube element like in 'Disturbance', a strategy I first used in 'In Situ' (1986) the object and narrative are much more embedded in one another. The pieces really function more as object narratives in a sense, whereas the narrative of 'Disturbance' is linked up with the «editing». I think that the metaphorical aspects of the object developed in 'And Sat Down Beside her' were carried over to 'Beacon' too. And then recently with 'Suspension of Disbelief' which is silent I can already see extended possibilities of woven narratives taking place over the whole line of displays which in certain ways returns to 'Disturbance' but meanwhile has picked up the «electronic linguistic» of computer controlled switching begun in 'Between Cinema and a Hard Place'. So it's apparent that there's no linear development going on here, that narrative by no means is an exhausted idea for me, and that my works tend to feed off one another.

SS. *How significant is Derrida's influence on your work and how explicit is your relationship to philosophy (and to Heidegger)?*

GH. Contrary to what many people might think, Derrida has had little influence on my work in any kind of «direct» way. First of all I am simply not up on his writings in that way. I've read a few books and parts of several more but I'm not a big reader and so I can't possibly follow all the references. Nevertheless I can easily hold inspirational thoughts derived from certain passages and there's no question that I play off some of these ideas, even single words that he lights up in certain ways. But it's not a case of

truly studying deconstruction, working out a parallel equivalent and doing it. I would say that Heidegger and even more so Blanchot have struck deeper chords within me and have certainly influenced my work explicitly. In general I would say that my work is closer to philosophy and epistemology than art and politics. So in that sense there is a circle of interrelated influences that is in constant flux.

SS. *Are you familiar with Heidegger's writings on technology, and his criticisms of modern art, in which he anticipates the issue of reproduction, crucial to video? What do you think of this question of reproduction in video; is making installations a way in which to define a position?*

GH. I'm somewhat familiar with his discussion of technology in the Nature of Language which I used passages from in 'Between Cinema and a Hard Place'. I try to explicate through the syntax of video certain things Heidegger talks about when he differentiates the neighborhood that thought and poetry share from parametric notions of time and space. I am using a particular technology that in ways contradicts but at the same time suggests a different kind of poetics, a kind of electronic linguistics, that plays directly into the reproduction question. Time is divided up so more images can exist however not at the same time. As far as positions go I just don't think of it that way. The issue for me is not literal in the sense that a videotape or a video image can be reproduced. The important thing is the fractal nature of the medium -its ability to disseminate an image as something that is not so much an object but rather something that permeates space...and then how does one delimit this illumination.

SS. *Could you comment, again, on the absent body in CRUX in light of a fragmented work like 'Inasmuch'?*

GH. It's interesting to compare the different ways the images were obtained in the two works. In 'CRUX' a camera without subjective control, that is, an image that is essentially an extension of my struggle, nails my extremities to a cross. Whereas in 'Inasmuch' a rather fixed gaze cycles through what is much more a collection of images that are sort of holding on for fear of disembodiment. In ways the pieces are almost inversions of one another. 'Inasmuch' seems apocalyptically pessimistic and 'CRUX', I think in an active way, gives the final testimony back to the viewer.

SS. You've been working with concepts of scale in recent works, from small pieces like 'The Core Series' to miniature works like 'And Sat Down...' What's your idea of video's relationship to space?

GH. Again I don't have a global notion or position regarding video's relationship to such things as space. It would appear that video can't have a relationship with space because it is already everywhere -the image is everywhere ; space is now image. If I have a position, it's to question the privileged place that image, and for that matter sight, hold in our consciousness.

SS. Will you keep on exploring computer sequencing in your work ?

GH. Well ' Suspension of Disbelief ' (1992) uses the same technology in such a way that the image never stabilizes. This is also true of the 'Core Series' but it's not perceived in the same way since there are only two monitors. They flicker continuously but they still define where they are. In 'Suspension of Disbelief', the image is much more of an ongoing trace that never remains long enough to constitute itself. I'm working on a new piece that will project images in rapid succession all over the space. As in the Documenta piece, 'Tall Ships', there won't be any video frame borders so that the images will be object-like and won't last but a few frames, leaving after images to pile up in dark space.

SS. We'll end with this question: what role has the body played in the installations?

GH. The body for me is a kind of built-in referent. It's important to realize that most of the time I work with my own body. It is close at hand, intimate and at different times annoyingly and pleurably real. When you turn the camera and the ideas back on yourself it's a way of not working with the subjective visuals of images because although you see your own body displayed you feel it being seen. It is always mediated by the skin that separates you from image.

**Paris-Seattle 1992**

## SELECTED VIDEO WORKS

1973-1992

- The Fall, 1973, black & white ; 11:00
- Air Raid, 1974, black & white ; 6:00
- Rock city Road, 1974-75, color ; 12:00
- Earth Pulse, 1975, color ; 6:00
- Improvisations with Bluestone, 1976, color ; 6:00
- Mirror Road, 1976, color ; 6:00
- Bathing, 1977, color ; 4:25
- Windows, 1978, color ; 8:00
- Electronic Linguistics, 1978, black & white , 3:45
- Sums & Differences, 1978, black & white ; 8:00
- Mouth Piece, 1978, color ; 1:00
- Full Circle, 1978, color ; 3:25
- Primary, 1978, color ; 1:40
- Elements, 1978, black & white ; 2:00
- Objects with Destinations, 1979, color ; 3:40
- Equal Time, 1979, color ; 4:00
- Picture Story, 1979, color ; 7:00
- Soundings, 1979, color ; 17:00
- Processual Video, 1980, black & white ; 11:30
- Black/White Text, 1980, black & white ; 7:00
- Commentary, 1980, color ; 0:40
- Around and About, 1980, color ; 4:45
- Videograms, 1980-81, black & white ; 13:25
- Primarily Speaking, 1981-83, color ; 18:40
- Happenstance(part one of many parts), 1982-83, black & white ; 6:30
- Why do things get in a muddle ? (come on petunia), 1984, color ; 32:00
- URA ARU(the backside exists), 1985-86, color ; 28:00
- Mediations, 1979-86, color ; 4:45
- Incidence of Catastrophe, 1987-88, color ; 43:51
- Site Recite (a prologue), 1989, color ; 4:00
- Solstice d'Hiver, 1990, color ; 60:00