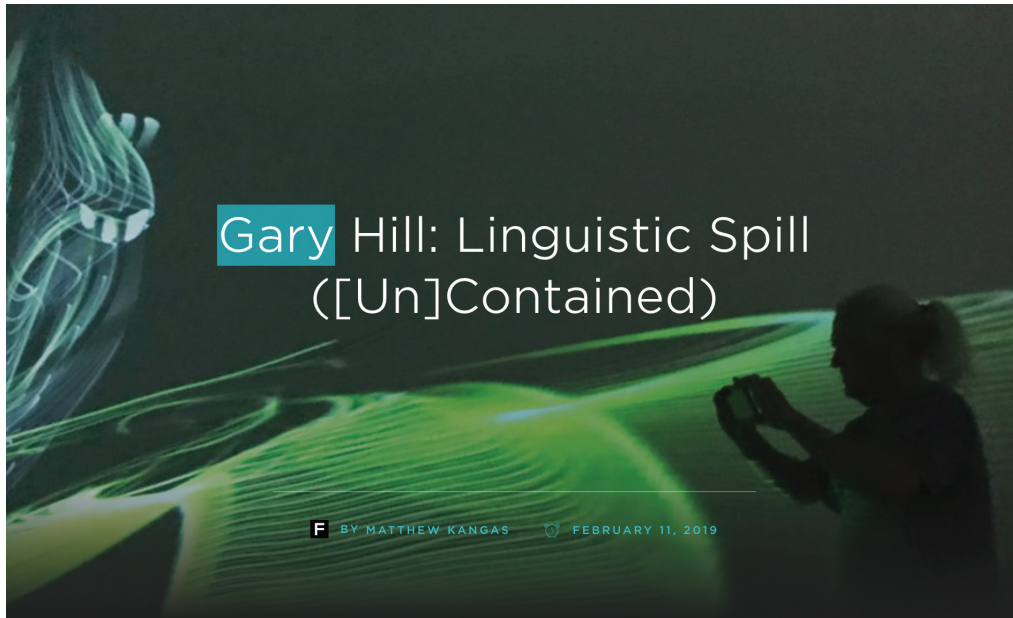


Kangas, Matthew. "Gary Hill: Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained)," *Fabrik*, February 11, 2019

FABRIK

Gary Hill: Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained)

by Matthew Kangas



Center on Contemporary Art (CoCA)

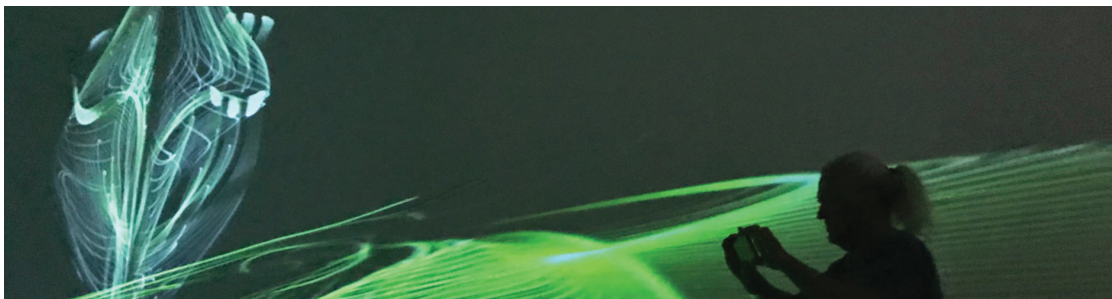
Gary Hill:

Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained)

July 26—September 29, 2018

Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained), exhibited last summer through early fall, was connected to a similar concurrent project of Gary Hill's at the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT) in Lisbon, Portugal. Meanwhile, Hill's Seattle Central Library work *Astronomy by Day* (and other oxymorons) (2003-05), commissioned for the Rem Koolhaas-designed building, was removed due to faulty equipment and other technical glitches.

Visitors entered *Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained)* through CoCA's unusually narrow, deep space, triggering lights and floor-and ceiling-based video projectors. Accompanied by audio, numerous projectors transmitted wildly gyrating, green linear patterns onto the ceiling and walls. Proceeding further into the space without obvious pathways, viewers created their own meandering performance in the midst of flashing green lights, laser-like, exploding networks and blaring, crackly electronic static.



Gary Hill, *Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained)* installation view at Center on Contemporary Art (CoCA).

Photo by Joseph C. Roberts. Courtesy of the artist.

Contemplating any broader potential meaning of a piece ostensibly titled to draw attention to language, one thinks of the remarks of the late Robert Morris who said he wanted to make art that “does not seek control through explanation.” Leaving interpretation in the hands of the visitor, Hill’s installation is among his most self-contained and concise. As in the best of his works, such as “Tall Ships” (1992) (a darkened corridor with a phalanx of electronic equipment on either side), the human body, not technology or critical theory, is the recurrent element in Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained). As one navigates in the flickering darkness, various routes of access or exit are illuminated, demarking a newly found theatrical dimension or coerced choreographic movement. In this sense, Hill is perhaps the most choreographic of video sculptors.

At the same time, Linguistic Spill ([Un]Contained) grows out of Hill’s earliest developments in expanding sculptural space with different media elements such as video, sound and light. Free of words, the work could yet symbolize the sensory overload made so common today by the instant accessibility of social media and other vehicles of information reception.