

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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GARY HILL

APRIL 3 – MAY 10

Opening Reception Thursday April 3 6 - 8

With the inauguration of our new space James Harris Gallery is also pleased to host four works by intramedia artist **Gary Hill**. For the last 35 years Hill has pushed the limits of our experience with his work making him one of the most important contemporary artists investigating an array of issues ranging from the physicality of language, synesthesia and perceptual conundrums to ontological space and viewer interactivity.

The four videos – which are making their Seattle debut with this exhibition – exemplify just how and why Hill is such a key figure in the genre. Relating to Hill's earlier series entitled *Liminal Objects*, in which black-and-white, computer-generated images are coupled in continuous, interactive motion, the works in this series are rendered in color and created specifically for a wide-screen format, flat-panel LCD screen. These seductively rhythmic animations depict objects that seem to violate one another's borders. In "Spoonful," a spinning golden coin and silver spoon gracefully float and dance on top of a dark screen. On occasion the two meet, bouncing off one another. At other times, the coin passes through the spoon without disturbing it. There's an air of mystery and magic in the work – the silver spoon appears to be moving on its own. While the spinning coin, on the other hand, sends a strong message about chance and luck (how many times have you flipped a coin?).

With these enigmatic and unpredictable layers, the animations have an unsettling and irresolvable quality. Hill denies us tidy ending through small interactions and with movements that possess a circular logic. As such, what are relatively simple and meditative loops become complex multifaceted narratives in which we become involved with the visually animated image and balance its original meaning with open interpretation.

In "Big Legs Don't Cry, a man stands on top of an open book. The pages flutter back and forth through his brown-slacks. Only the pages and the fabric of his slacks move in the wind, while the Man remains completely static. In "Attention" and "Church and State" Hill uses imagery connected to the landscape and the outside world. A balsawood airplane flies above a tent. As the plane circles in a gentle wind, it passes over the tent and then miraculously sails through it.

With "Church and State" Hill imbues the animation with humor. A sheep and a goat trot around the screen bleating. One follows, one leads or vice a versa. At one point they merge with one another and then separate. Like the other pieces, one can construct multiple readings. Whether the goat is church and the sheep state doesn't much matter. But the two characters are definitely taking on an air of power; albeit a preposterous one.