<Abstract>

Gary Hill's Video Art in 1980's as destructive Execution of Image and Text

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In the history of visual art, the images were often combined with linguistic text, exemplified by the early Egyptian mural, medieval religious painting with biblical quotations and the cubist paintings in 20st century. In those works, images and texts cooperated complementarily each other, pursuing the representation of the real.

However in the second half of the 20st century, poststructuralists proclaimed that the real doesn't exist at all and it is no more than the construction pursued by the signs such as language and image. Facing the 'crisis of representation', the role of image and text in the visual art had to change as well.

One of the leading video artists, Gary Hill explored in his single channel video works in 1980's the working mechanism of image and text and their interaction. He treated them as open signifiers, which can be related to numerous changeable new meanings. He also concentrated his inquiries on the role and meaning of language within our culture and destructed the existing mechanism of representation, which was based on the solid relationship between signifier and signified. So, in <Why Do Things Get in a Muddle> he suggests a paradox of logic, which produced the meaning of the world. In <Incidence of Catastrophe>, he showed that no metaphysical basement of our experience can be real by itself, but it is just constructed through the semiotic process of images and words.

These aspects of his arts are in some degree influenced by the intellectual disposition of conceptual art in 1970's years, which revolved around the language instead of images. However, his works explored not only language but also image as sign. Therefore, his approach differs from the conceptual art, which eliminated the retinal aspects from its work. His works also set themselves apart from the provocative work in 1980', which criticize established ideology. As he reaffirmed, his work focused on semiotic process and revealed unreliability of the working mechanism of logic, on which the value system in our world is based. In this regard, his work in 1980's can be called meta-semiotic work.