



Press Release

## ***Gary Hill. A Question of Perception***

November 30, 2024 – March 16, 2025

Press conference: Thursday, November 28, 2024, 11:15 am

Gary Hill (b. 1951 in Santa Monica, lives in Seattle, USA) is considered one of the pioneers of media and conceptual art. Since the 1970s, he has played a key role in transcending the boundaries between video, performance, and conceptual art within contemporary art. For over five decades, Gary Hill's work has explored the intersections of perception and cognition. Through his installations, he creates immersive experiences that draw viewers into complex and poetic experiential worlds.

The Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg holds the largest collection of works by the American media artist pioneer in Germany, with 46 pieces in its possession. Featuring a selection of 15 representative and partially never-before-exhibited installations, the exhibition spans the central themes in the artist's oeuvre. *Gary Hill. A Question of Perception* is not organized chronologically but instead unfolds across nine exemplary thematic fields, offering an insightful journey through the diversity of Gary Hill's body of work:

### **Cognitive Processes and Knowledge - Experiment(al) – Technology – Body - Language/Text – Color – Sound – Time - Spatial Contexts**

These terms form the thematic framework of the exhibition, showcasing how the American video art pioneer reveals the essence of image and language through electronic media. Long before media manipulation became ubiquitous, Gary Hill continuously combined moving images, language, and text in new ways, fostering a deeper understanding of how we perceive and process information.

For Gary Hill, video serves as a medium that can act as a mirror of consciousness. His works challenge our habitual patterns of perception and judgment, extending far beyond mere image or media critique. With an unmatched sensitivity to the conceptual possibilities of video as a medium, Hill creates awareness of the reciprocal relationship between image and sound, while rendering temporality in unique and tangible ways. His works stage experiences and phenomenological phenomena that simultaneously expand our consciousness and evoke deep skepticism about the construction of perception, meaning, and reality.



Gary Hill's art draws on everyday, personal, literary, scientific, and philosophical experiences and themes. Yet, the medium is never merely a tool for representation; it is always an occasion for reflection. As art historian Gottfried Boehm aptly puts it, Hill demonstrates "that images are not simply there but are created every moment through light."

All of Gary Hill's video works are marked by their intense presence and striking intimacy. In their dynamic interplay of media, they never aim for quick resolutions or climactic moments. Even his early works reveal the virtually limitless creative potential inherent in this medium since its inception. Beyond highlighting this artistic potential, Hill's works consistently encourage critical engagement with mass media such as television and video. Today, his works hold particular relevance in light of issues like AI and fake news.

In 2024, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg celebrates its 30th anniversary. Following *Worlds in Motion: 30 Years of the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg* and *Firelei Báez: Trust Memory Over History*, which was also dedicated to an artist in the museum's collection, *Gary Hill. A Question of Perception* concludes the anniversary year. This is especially fitting, as Gary Hill has been closely connected to the museum and its collection since its beginnings. The first work was acquired in 1997, with further additions following, including generous donations from the artist and his collectors. In 2002, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg published the Catalogue Raisonné in conjunction with the exhibition *Gary Hill: Selected Works*, establishing an innovative and precise system for publicizing his complex works. More than 20 years later, and particularly in light of the evolution of mass and social media, a renewed look at Gary Hill's work is particularly appropriate.

The Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg is deliberately presenting *Gary Hill. A Question of Perception* alongside *Leandro Erlich: Weightless*. While these two artists approach the questioning of visual and perceptual habits through differing formal methods of illusion and their deconstruction, their works intersect, complement, and enrich one another in addressing fundamental artistic questions.

Curators: Holger Broeker und Elena Engelbrechter