

Wednesday 6 October at 7.00pm

LONDON GALLERY WEST presents

GEORGE BARBER "SHOUTING V LISTENING"

George Barber in Conversation with Gareth Evans, critic and writer.

To coincide with his solo exhibition at London Gallery West, George Barber will present a selection of his single screen videos and discuss his body of work with Gareth Evans, critic and writer for Time Out and Vertigo magazine.

Programme

A pioneer of video art, once described by Art Monthly as "the Henry Ford of independent video art, George Barber quickly gained an international reputation with "Scratch Video", an original fast-cutting, multi-layered rhythmic genre of work. This video programme ranges from early scratch classics to more recent and personal work.

1) BRANSON/ TILT, 1983, 6 mins

Branson is one of the earliest 'scratch' pieces. Barber observed that in the 1980's Branson repeatedly 'um and aared' on television when he should be getting on with it and making his point. So the artist decided to do something about it and ended up making music from other people's speech impediments too.

2) ABSENCE OF SATAN, 1984, 4 mins

This is one of the artist's personal favourites. The door slamming incident with the helicopter is probably one of the most beguiling scratch combinations ever. Mike O'Pray, the critic, was particularly drawn to this piece and in Art Monthly reflected on its ability to deconstruct Hollywood narrative and put it together in a new and hypnotic fashion.

3) YES FRANK NO SMOKE, 1984 - extract 4 mins

Here Barber achieved an unusual degree of sophistication using one of the earliest sampling devices. This is a symphonic moment in scratch. David Hall liked this piece a lot.

4) REFUSING POTATOES, 2004, 6 mins

This piece introduces the monologue technique which the artist has used regularly throughout his career. Here, the story concerns a Christmas lunch with Alan Rickman where the artist's father takes exception to the actor's preference for not eating potatoes.

5) WALKING OFF COURT, 2003, 11 mins

"Walking off Court" is the story a professional tennis player's nervous breakdown due to a motorway being built outside his home. In time, the tennis pro spends hours just walking in circles on the edge of the motorway. The video chronicles his growing inability to find tennis partners. They just stop ringing back. The film is created using huge sweeping pans, over which, in voice-over, we hear the answer-machine messages that the tennis pro leaves in his desperate search to find partners. The work won Grand Prix at the 2003 Split Festival.

6) SHOUTING MATCH, 2004, 11 mins

"Shouting Match", which is also the main installation at LONDON GALLERY WEST, is a powerful performance piece in which a series of shouting matches take place in an abandoned ex-London supermarket. Pushed and pulled on a small track, each participant has to fight to stay on screen. The louder you shout the more you are in the picture, the quieter, the more you are withdrawn. The Shout is the most elementary form of human vocal expression and the tone of the work is reminiscent of early video art. Raw expression, free of inhibition. The piece works both as a metaphor for current political dialogue as well as stripping down language to its one basic component. Vocal Noise.

7) QUIET LISTEN, 2004, 4 mins

Barber doffs his cap to the 20th anniversary of SCRATCH VIDEO and shows us his latest scratch work, "Quiet Listen?". It is a mesmerizing montage of questions, answers, and the cries and screams of people caught in a disaster movie. The work uses as its starting point, the film 'Airport '77' where, improbably, a jumbo jet sinks to the bottom of the sea. Here again, is a clever amalgamation of absurd linguistics, cries and shouts, the artist shows his permanent fascination with speech and human reaction to out-of-the ordinary situations.

Running time: 46 mins