

Hannah Rickards

No, there was no red. (2009)

Hannah Rickards is a conceptual artist who uses the mediums of sound, video, text and installation. Nature and fiction are closely woven in her art; often her work is a sort of translation of a natural or atmospheric occurrence which is reinterpreted either in language or in music. Thus, natural phenomena or events become the starting point of a much deeper research into the perception of images and sounds through language.

Rickards' previous works have shown a strong tie with 1970's conceptual art (Douglas Huebler, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner), with language at their centre; in her latest work ***No, there was no red.*** spoken language becomes the work in an ideal continuity with previous pieces.

The starting point of this work – a 23-minute two-screen projection – is the phenomenon of superior mirage: in this case a displaced image seen from the shore of Lake Michigan. Due to a specific natural phenomenon of airflows with a particular relative density, a displaced image could be seen refracted from far beyond the visible horizon. The shore of the lake becomes the vantage point from which the analysis of a projected image could be explored through first-hand description by those who had witnessed the image. From this the verbal representation of a visual image becomes a more general foray in to the concept of perception.

As in a “polyphonic” structure, the artist has examined its diverse and mutually relating elements: words, gestures, described forms, the geometries of the room and the layout of chairs. Subjective differences, affinities, echoes and counterpoints emerging through these stories become the centre of the work, opening towards the exploration of the way the atmospheric phenomenon is perceived and described: through the body in contrast with images, thus fostering an analysis of gestures made by a group of people and the interaction.

Finally, what truly interests Rickards is the way an image is described, so that in a sense it turns into “the right image, but in the wrong place”: a contingent image which is not still, without a specific place, and can establish just a fleeting contact with us.