

ART DIGITAL CULTURE

# Trisha Donnelly and the Infinite Potential of Video Art

Awarded the 2017's Wolfgang Hahn Prize, Donnelly's video works catapult the viewer into a state of experiential suspension

Trisha Donnelly's marble sculpture paired with her ever-morphing digital video works invite glimpses into the perceptive unconscious. On show at Museum Ludwig in Cologne, her brittle works are also fluid, yet based in a indefinite photographed substance. What one sees is not so much determined by what Donnelly shows but by how one lets the mind wander, and the senses be moved in relation to her work.

*Donnelly demonstrates the infinite potential of video art and its capabilities for catapulting the viewer into a state of experiential suspension.*



- Gesellschaft Moderne Kunst am Museum Ludwig (GMK e.V.) - Köln - Wolfgang-Hahn-Preis 2017 - Trisha Donnelly - 24.04.2017 - Köln

The darkened space at the far corner of the museum's lower level where her works are shown might well be deemed the lower deck of a space station. The longer one spends time with her works and activates one's optic capabilities in constellation to them, the more liminal the encounter becomes. These videos in particular demonstrate the infinite potential of video art and its capabilities for catapulting the viewer into a state of experiential suspension.

On the occasion of being awarded the Wolfgang-Hahn-Prize 2017 by Museum Ludwig, the San Francisco-born artist (whose wide range of materials also includes drawing and performance) has arranged three video works in relation to a thinly sliced marble tableau propped up against the wall and taking on the role of a haptic gateway to her digital works. The only pointer about their making is the year of creation (2017). Besides this the works remain untitled as is customary for Donnelly who often conceives of a particular work as an extension of previous pieces.

Indeed, the monochromatic silver surface of the first video projection that is visible as one enters the show resonates an untitled video from 2014 played on loop at Buchholz gallery in Berlin this spring. The chromium surface carrying an industrial flair and morphing in and out of shape manifest itself here like an apparition on what was on view in Berlin – with added gutters and serpentine lines.

*In light of Donnelly's tactics, the realm of video art appears infinitely expansive*



Donnelly's video works are often based on digital photographs, analog re-workings of their printouts and further layers of processing of the resulting materials. This inextricable fusion of source codes through the electronic sphere of digital processing is palpably present in another projection: a green texture flanked by two vertical red lines. A white beam crosses the image from top to bottom, a kind of light-scanner extracting all color and absorbing it into brightness once it comes into contact with a particular section.

In light of Donnelly's tactics, the realm of video art appears infinitely expansive. She makes explicit the function of photographs as the basis of film's moving images only to twist this very foundation. It seems as if the presence of single takes is not hidden by adjusting their speed so that they appear as sequential movements. Instead, Donnelly alters their function, by not making many images move over progressing moments in time, but creating the impression of continuously stretching, folding and morphing a single image across the screen into infinite shapes. This process creates a sensation of walking deeper into layers of time, rather than following its chronological passing.

The effect of video appearing not *through* moving images but *as* moving image is aided by the way Donnelly cuts through the habits of projection and positions her works vertically. Movement enters the scene as the transformation of perceptual habits vis-à-vis the alternate arrangements and material energies manifesting themselves in these theatrical spaces.



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The third seemingly inconspicuous, small projection emanating from the base of the video projector is where the show becomes uncannily sublime. Here, a set of rings (perhaps from a binder) meet a bright white field. Staring at the projection for too long hurts the eyes – yet every time I moved my head to look away, bright colors appeared in the corner of my eye. Staring into the light as long as possible to determine whether I simply missed a frame in the projection was pointless.

And there I found myself in the midst of Spiritism, trying to use technology to capture the invisible. When photographing the screen, the pattern revealed itself again: crisscrossing pillars much like on test cards used in television and screen calibration to probe the spectrum of visible colors. “Spectrum” designates electromagnetic emissions including light or a complete subset of colors. Its etymological kin “spectre” however is an even better frame for describing what emanates from Donnelly’s work: an optical illusion or – a ghostly presence. This is one that activates the senses including the infamous sixth one.

“Trisha Donnelly: 2017 Wolfgang Hahn Prize” is at Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany until 30 July 2017

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Noemi Molitor

#noemimolitor