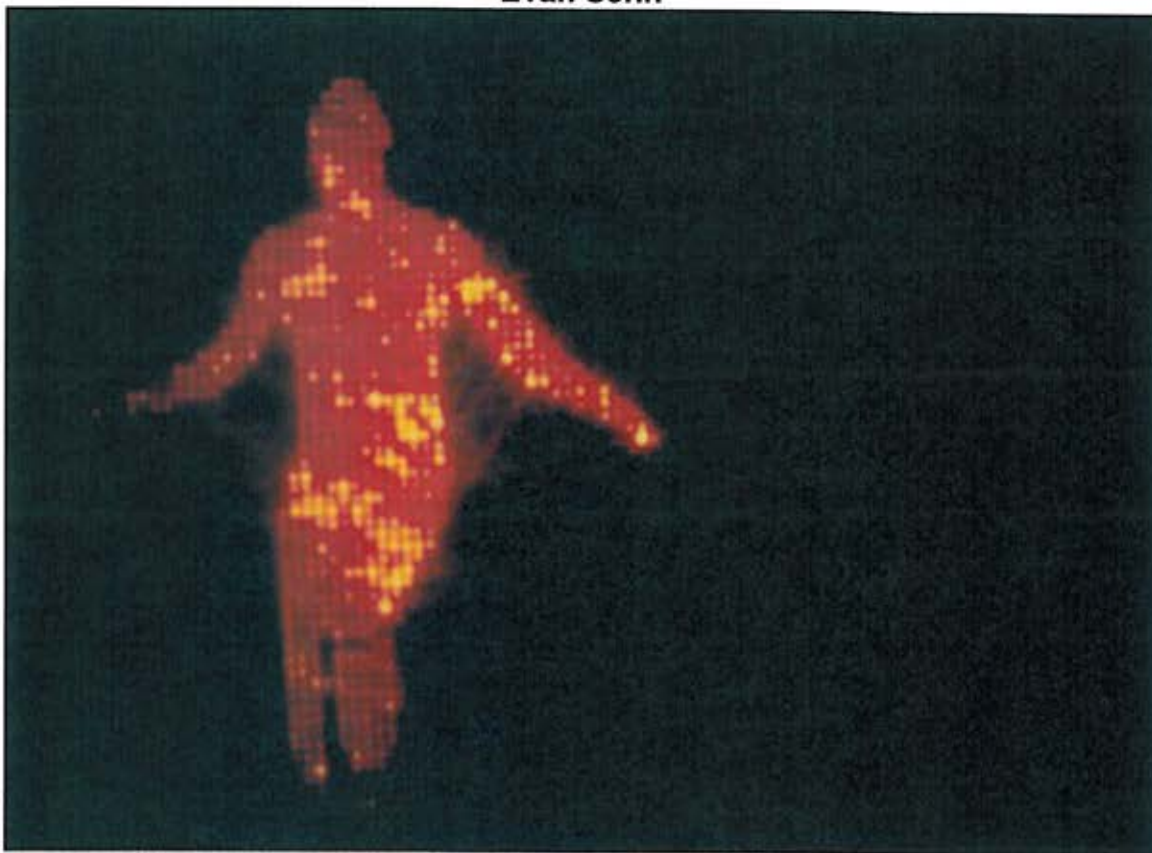


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# The Sound and Vision of Jack Goldstein

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Walking up to the galleries in the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), peaking from around the corner you can see the shimmering red figure made of light--twisting and diving, bending and swimming in the vast space of a single wall in a dark room. It is at this point where you feel the calm, comforting peace of Jack Goldstein's work. But that is not the true embodiment of Goldstein's work, and is only part of the effect of "Jack Goldstein X 10,000" on display at OCMA.

Goldstein's legacy is presented in drastically different ways in each room. One room with a large minimalistic wooden tower-sculpture and two projectors shouting with sounds and images, demands attention and calls visitors to stand and watch. These two projectors are like greeters of the Goldstein exhibition, or like guards standing watch outside a tomb. The first two videos in this room captivated my senses and froze me in position, mentally inquiring about this person, and about this work. The two projectors stood "shoulder to shoulder", projecting different films on neighboring walls. The films, "The Reading" and "Some Plates" provide an immediate sense of who Goldstein is. Intensity and clarity matched with ambiguity and compassion emanate in these works, simultaneously deconstructing the perception of the object and of the image. Goldstein's films in the meticulously curated exhibition by Philipp Kaiser provoke viewers in an unexpected way; the viewer

endures the passing of time and not just alluding to it. Goldstein's serious intention in these films and in this exhibit, seems to tinker with the notions of destruction and witness; eventuality and inevitability; and study and disregard.



*Some Plates*, 1972. 16mm film, color, sound. 3:36. Film stills courtesy of OCMA, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, and the Estate of Jack Goldstein.

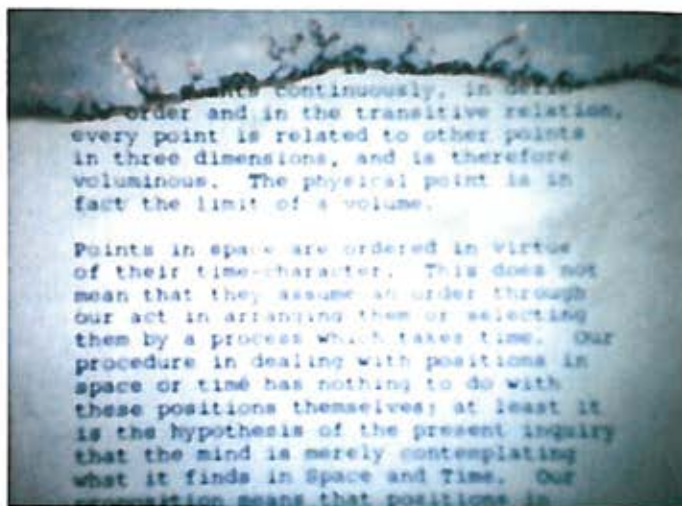
Having studied art history, I thought I knew and understood the work of Jack Goldstein: his importance in the Pictures Group of artists, his influence within our art historical trends, here in California's art scene and also internationally. But upon viewing his work in person, and hearing his voice, reading his text about his work, and physically experiencing artwork the way he intended--helped me to learn so much more. The first room of the exhibition set the stage for the insane clarity, detailed study, and utter calmness of Goldstein's work. As I moved through the exhibition even further, through the sound pieces, through the visual studies and concentrated films, the meaning and lessons of his work became clear without words. But Goldstein's words, about his work, about life--poetry and prose in one--exist as sensual tentacles, reaching out and magnetically aiding the onlookers in reflection on this work and on the world in which we live: "Appearance is not deceptive, only what desire desires of it. It is the rhetoric of an affirmation of life that embraces death as its condition of being. 'To be an individual without certainty.'"



*Some Plates*, 1972. 16mm film, color, sound. 3:36. Film stills courtesy of OCMA, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, and the Estate of Jack Goldstein.

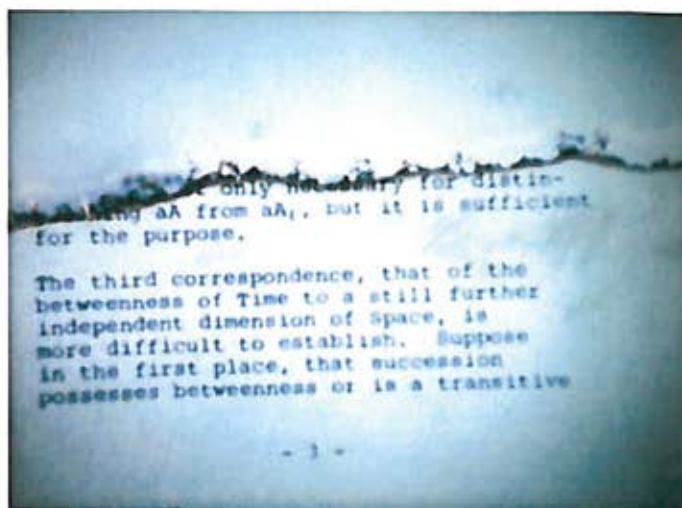
Honing in on the auditory recognition of sounds, focusing on the repetition of images, and using time as a material, Goldstein was an innovator during his time, and monumentally relevant today. His life and work were as story-book-awesome as you could imagine. His hay day crew, once titled "The Pictures Generation" contained such amazing artists as Cindy Sherman, Robert Longo, Sherrie Levine, and James Welling among

others, but it is Goldstein who is least likely to be remembered. Goldstein's artwork and story stand out as mesmerizing and pivotal in our artistic history, and according to "Jack Goldstein x 10,000" curator, Philipp Kaiser, "this retrospective of his work is essential to the larger re-evaluation of post 1960s American art."



*A Reading*, 1973. 16mm film, color, sound. 7:48. Film stills courtesy of OCMA, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, and the Estate of Jack Goldstein.

For the visual and auditory work, "The Planets," Goldstein writes a statement for the piece, as he does with many pieces. Writing was very important to Goldstein, and served as another creative outlet for him. Many people criticized his fluctuating medium-hopping, from performance to sculpture, to sound, to film, to painting and writing, but Goldstein refused to be bound by any material, and expressed his creativity in whichever material or medium fit that expression best. Goldstein writes, "These are images of an eroticism without the body, whose dismissal of the subject is both sacred and profane - sacred because it's uncontaminated by false icons of the other that drive us into the narcissistic dreams of omnipotence; profane because it marks the place of a divine absence, revealing the limits of what the self can know of itself - the impotence of desire that knows it's object only at the instant of the self's dissolution in death. If the image is the corpse of desire, the record is the distant murmur of desire's forgetfulness of an eternal past."



*A Reading*, 1973. 16mm film, color, sound. 7:48. Film stills courtesy of OCMA, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, and the Estate of Jack Goldstein.

The exhibition is flawlessly designed, organized, and executed, and though the paintings seem to dominate the exhibition, the films and the installations are still the most powerful of Goldstein's work in the show. "It's just a big part of his practice, painting," curator Philipp Kaiser says, "he uses it as backdrop for his spectacle. It doesn't matter if it's on canvas or on film." The running themes in Goldstein's work tie them all together.

Themes of vanishing, disappearance, feeling lost, the sublime, and authorship haunt these galleries, but also show the fluidity of expression for Goldstein. "The exhibition is shown chronologically", according to Kaiser, which gives the viewer a better understanding of the breadth of this artist's work.



*Sound Performance*, 1979. Image courtesy of OCMA, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, and the Estate of Jack Goldstein.



Image courtesy of OCMA and Chris Bliss Photography.

The installation, "Sound Performance," stands out as an all around experiential work, bridging the gap between his film pieces and his sculptural pieces. An isolated room painted all bright white, blinding blankness all around, with one anchor of deep, rich blue on the ceiling. No direct light, though fully lit, this room encapsulates its visitors with sound and a private experience designed by Goldstein. From above, you can hear

the planes fly by, something very characteristic of my California life, evoking childhood memories where I paid attention to the sounds that surrounded me, and reflected on why they were that way, and what it meant to me. From below, the sounds of trains fill the room with a specific setting, and perhaps imagined vibrations filling the air from the trains rolling by. The designed experiences of Goldstein's installations are meditative but not so abstract that the viewer can make up whatever they want.

It's a shame that MOCA dumped the Jack Goldstein exhibition plan, but what a gem for OCMA to be able to pick it up, along with the guest curator and exhibition designer, Philipp Kaiser. I am thoroughly impressed with this exhibition, and I feel a closeness and a connection to Jack Goldstein that I would not have known of otherwise. I only wish I would've been able to know him or have a class with him so that I might have been able to dive more deeply into this artist's psyche and artistic spirit. Maybe in another life.

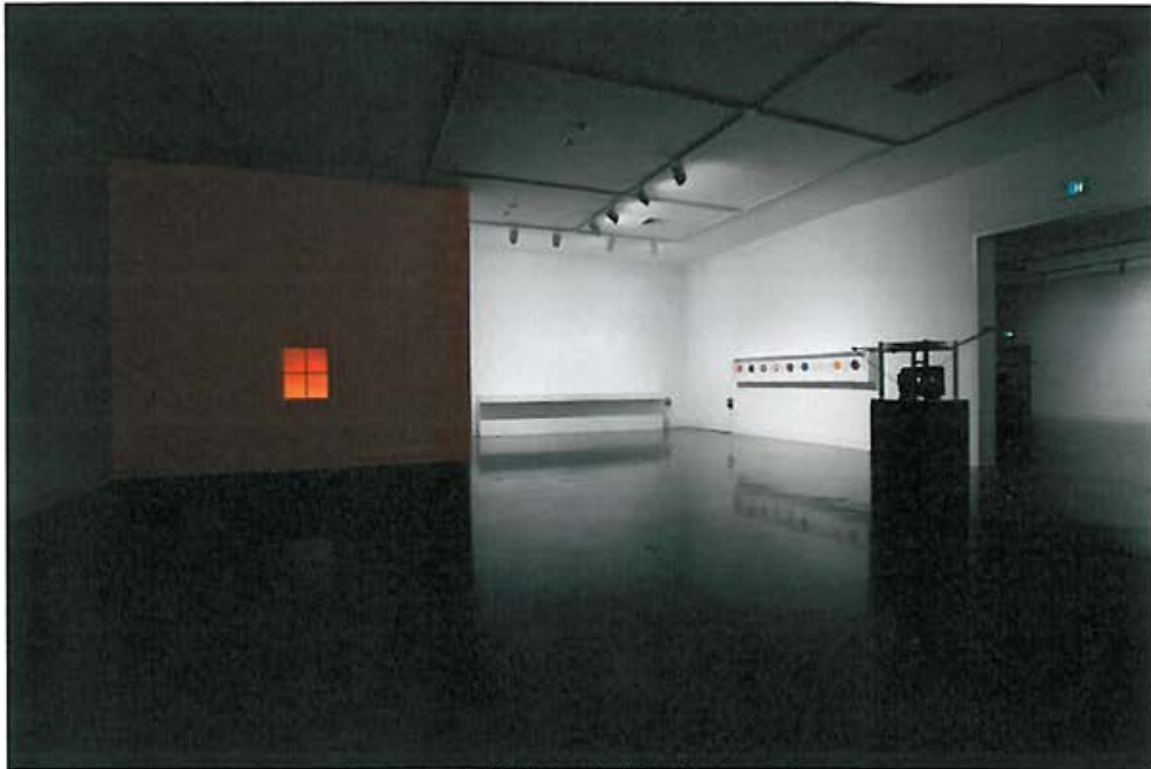


Image courtesy of OCMA and Chris Bliss Photography.



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For more information on this exhibition, visit [www.ocma.net](http://www.ocma.net)