

Kerry Tribe explores time, space and memory through film at Camden Arts Centre

By Mark Sheerin Published: 25 May 2011

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*Kerry Tribe, Milton Torres Sees a Ghost (detail), 2010.
Installation view: Arnolfini*

© Jamie Woodley (photo). © Kerry Tribe. Courtesy Kerry Tribe and Camden Arts Centre

Exhibition: Kerry Tribe: Dead Star Light, Camden Arts Centre, London, until July 10 2011

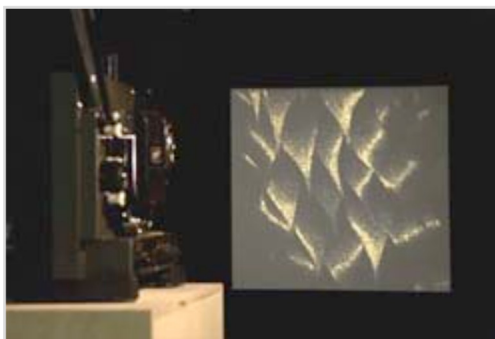
To begin at the beginning, a reel-to-reel player, speaker and oscilloscope stand by the entrance to Kerry Tribe's show. The green wave is more or less dead, the sound is the hiss of empty tape and the tape machine, it transpires, is busily erasing.

In a show about passing time, this set up industrialises forgetting. So the rest of the work in *Dead Star Light* has the flavour of something salvaged from the past.

First there is the 50-year old testimony of fighter pilot Milton Torres; then there is an archival video about a cosmonaut whose record-breaking mission outlasted the Soviet Union; and then in a dark room built at the heart of the gallery, visitors will find a filmed close up of a butterfly named after a mythological personification of memory.

The cumulative effect is as murky as those microscopic cells and different elements of Tribe's work interrupt the smooth running of our own memories, like the many bursts of static in video piece *The Last Soviet*.

So one may be confused by redacted correspondence between Torres and the MoD and faked footage of leaves floating in Mir Space Station. Or wonder why the butterfly wing appears on a strip of film twisted Möbius-like from floor to ceiling.



Kerry Tribe, Parnassius mnemosyne, 2010. Installation view: Arnolfini

© Jamie Woodley (photo) © Kerry Tribe. Courtesy Kerry Tribe and Camden Arts Centre

It may have been said before that our powers of recall are unreliable, vertiginous and occasionally suppressed, but the three-part work blends all three with a touch of cosmic nihilism. Stars are perhaps just memories with lost origins. The dim light of enquiry sweeping the butterfly wing may as well come from several hundred light years away.

Thanks to these leaps into outer space, *Dead Star Light* provides an infinite backdrop to an everyday concern. It offers thrills, where some might find only frustrations, the difficulties of living with imperfect access to our own pasts.

At the other end of that reel-to-reel, the pilot describes the day a UFO showed up on his flight radar. Airforce jargon fills his account, adding realism to his narrative.

But one term, referring to a false image on radar, stands out; Tribe calls the work *Milton Torres Sees a Ghost*. Erasing his words twice over, she seems to celebrate our blanks.

- ***Open 10am-6pm Tuesday-Sunday (9pm Wednesday). Admission free.***

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More on the venues and organisations we've mentioned:

- Camden Arts Centre

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