

Kerry Tribe's conceptually robust and rigorously crafted film and video installations form an ongoing investigation into memory, subjectivity, and representation. Tribe often invites actors, crew members, and technical specialists to participate in her work, which frequently mimics conventions in television and documentary film. Through her mastery and manipulation of the medium, she exposes its artifice and influential power on collective consciousness.

*Northern Lights (Cambridge)* (2005) is the first in a trilogy of works that probe the malleable and elusive character of memory. Tribe employs an early 1980s low-tech light-art apparatus found in her parents' Cambridge, Massachusetts, home to simulate the appearance of the aurora borealis (a celestial event also known as the northern lights). Slowly moving, ghostly wisps of colored light are accompanied by an eerie soundtrack made on an obsolete synthesizer of the same vintage and from the same city to fabricate the sound sometimes said to be experienced during a northern lights display. Second in the trilogy, *Near Miss* (2005) presents three slightly different takes on a car accident that Tribe actually experienced in a blizzard ten years prior. Textual accounts of the accident written by members of her production team are displayed alongside the film, as well as a photograph of the vehicle and film equipment on set, in a haze of artificial snow and fog. The trilogy concludes with *Episode* (2006), a thirty-minute mock television talk show featuring a discussion with Tribe and two childhood friends as they recall their sighting of mysterious lights in

the night sky in 1991. Their unscripted speculations and impressions of the phenomenon underscore the range of memory permutations that can result as a function of the passage of time and the individuality of the observers.

Tribe's recent two-channel film installation, *H.M.* (2009), employs a documentary format to recount the case study of "H.M.," who underwent experimental surgery in the 1950s to cure his epilepsy by removing part of his brain. After his treatment, H.M. suffered from severe amnesia, with his short-term memory restricted to events of the prior twenty seconds. Tribe's film weaves touching interviews and reenactments with scientific animation, text, and archival images of iconic events from recent history that H.M. cannot remember. The single film is threaded through two adjacent projectors with an interval of twenty seconds between them, evoking H.M.'s condition and challenging the viewer to reflect on the provisional and fragile nature of human perception. MN

*H.M.*, 2009 (installation view at 1301PE, Los Angeles) / Double projection of a single 16mm film, color, sound; 18:30 min. / Collection of the artist

