

“Kelly Mark Marks Time” by Dan Adler

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What does it mean to mark time? Is it what we do while waiting for something consequential to happen? Such idle pursuits are frequently frowned upon, as they fly in the face of behavioural norms bound to the efficient use of time and labour. We are conditioned to question the conviction of dawdlers. A lack of productivity is associated with an absence of marketable skill. The extent of this lack is often measured and timed by straight authorities: parents, educators, bureaucrats. Indeed, short stints of idleness, customarily condoned as momentary lapses, might blossom into an alternative lifestyle that is deemed suspect, or at least eccentric, by the majority.

Time and again, Kelly Mark shows us that just marking time is both a means and an end. A number of tasks and interventions that Mark performs are, conventionally speaking, lacking in specialized skill. A case in point is her devotion to the dull process of dulling points: in the *Graphite Drawings Series*, Mark covers objects with pencil strokes. *Bouquet* (1998) features six wooden tulips in a cylindrical vase. These have been blanketed with scores of sinuous lead lines. Perhaps her activity is the product of simply finding a way to fill up the day, while questioning what constitutes (artistic) labour: *Bouquet* does indeed operate in tension with widely held assumptions about what it means to skillfully draw. But this is not some dry Conceptualist exercise. Rather, it registers as a seductive sculptural statement: its heavily worked metallic surface shimmers, suggesting a materially grounded, craft-based consciousness.

Mark rightly considers still life a suitably sedate subject: it doesn't distract from experimentation with what work can or should be. Her practice recalls monochrome Analytical Cubist paintings, with each of the *Graphite Drawing Series* a performance of erasure, a suppression of illusionistic uses of colour and shading. Mark chooses neutral objects to perform her singular task, while subtly playing with the concept of verisimilitude: already a simulacrum (wooden tulips), she darkens the thing, twice distancing it from its referent. The accumulated nature of her labour encourages us to consider how Mark's utterly mundane objects—a table, a chair, plates, a bowl of fruit, framed pictures—function as signs. (1) As such, Mark's practice recalls historical gestures that perform a dance between repetitive, unskilled exercises—often absurdly or laconically confined to a single task—and a Conceptualist reduction to a single procedure (covering objects with graphite). (2) In particular, I am reminded of Andy Warhol's *Paint by Numbers* series, of the early 1960s, which, in place of bearing authentic brush-strokes, comprises matching pigments in coded areas. But while Warhol's series resists the neat categorization of Pop art (its stereotypically smooth surfaces identified with machinic mark-marking), it results in a tactile thing that can be appreciated as the product of just marking time.

Mark's act of erasure also recalls Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953). Committing to a job of decomposition, Rauschenberg performed his task of obscuration, applying the same amount of pressure throughout, and arriving at a delicately bruised and decidedly seductive surface. (3) Mark, like Rauschenberg and Warhol, provocatively stretches the bounds of what it means to be devoted to an expressive end. Yet, she arrives at a material object that is still capable of being

fetishized, one that has obviously been worked with diligent care, and registers as a record of activity—one which may have been the consequence of having nothing consequential to do. (4)

Part of the *Glow Video Series*, Mark's installation *Commercial Space* (2007) consists of a pile of plugged-in TVs, some turned on their sides, others facing upwards. As with the *Graphite Drawing* works, the monitors all offer the same image of slate monochrome blankness. And yet, I am seduced by the material presence of the screens' fluttering faces, knowing that staring at them may just be a way of passing time. They play silent video footage of reflections cast on the wall by commercials. These ads—the trash of TV—have been muted and abstracted, perhaps the result of sustained slacking—merely staring (un)productively at the reflected patterns, which are just as worthy of (in)attention as the products peddled onscreen. Normally, ads permit one to let the mind and body wander, to space-out. But circling this refuse pile of electronics, I notice that the flicker on every screen is occurring at a precisely synchronized pace. Here is a medium-specific discourse: these machines fluctuate according to the ad trade's editorial process. Normally employing an especially dynamic torrent of shots—accompanied by a sales pitch, naturally—here, however, the ads are reduced to silent, shiny, vibrating rectangles of light. Sometimes there is an emphatic rupture, corresponding to the end of a thirty-second spot. Mark is providing the index of an industry, one that minutely assigns minutes and seconds of airtime, so that programming is cut and contorted according to the dictates of advertisers and executives. She raises awareness of such surgery by performing the singular task of suppressing the television's conventional function: she turns TVs into lamps.

Mark has long investigated the light emanations of various film genres. Take for example the installation *Horror/Suspense/Romance/Porn/Kung-Fu* (2005), which features fifteen monitors installed in a ring on the gallery floor. (5) On the day I encountered it, porn was the main event, offering me an opportunity to ruminate on its distinctiveness. Like TD advertising, porn is a truly pervasive media phenomenon, generating billions annually. As with ads, the industry cultivates the appearance of novelty, but profits precisely because its products are, in truth, remarkably alike and formulaic. Compared to other genres, adult videos are edited in highly regulated ways. They function like clockwork, with formulaic narrative structures which provide predictable sequences of shifting positions, quickened paces, and increasingly elaborate (and climactic) scenarios. Such a medium can indeed be converted into a vehicle for just marking time. Not pursuing a directly expressive goal that would lead to a properly "composed" video, Mark again does the job of capturing the projected light given off by these "blue" movies. Mark favours a palette of flickering orange, pink, and red, the vivid shades of porn, which signify its flesh and genitalia. (6) Mark abstracts from porn's abstraction, however, providing silent footage that flashes with bodies banging each other. As Mark's video progresses, the plot thickens, the intensity builds, and the darkened gallery begins to rhythmically pulsate and throb. A public venue becomes a provocative site for recasting a typically private product.

The Kiss (2007), another installment in the *Glow Video Series*, features a pair of monitors—similarly synchronized to play a porn-derived light show—positioned on white pedestals so that their rounded faces touch each other. (7) I briefly marvel at the portly bodies of these appliances, which harken back to when television always functioned in domestic settings as three-dimensional personages from whom messages were received. The TV here embraces its own kind. This is not a husband-and-wife marriage diptych, but rather a broader allusion to affectionate exchange that references same-sex coupling. This recalls Félix Gonzáles-Torres's *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)* (1991), in which white clocks—

devices that regulate our perceptions of what it means to mark time, or even when we should express affection—are set to the same temporal frequency and hung side-by-side, unexpectedly exuding intimacy. (8) In *The Kiss*, the matching luminosity of these objects also strikes an unexpected note of lyricism. On the same wavelength, literally, this couple is apparently open to the idea of shagging—but it chooses, or is programmed, to express (and broadcast) this exchange in an abstract and sublimated form.

In some sense, Mark's approach in the *Video Glow* works is akin to that of structural filmmakers in the 1950s and 60s, who used abstraction to deconstruct the mechanics and devices that supported the illusionary fictions of the film industry. Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) especially comes to mind: in this installation, a projector stood in an open space that was darkened and filled with smoke. A beam of light emanating from the projector gradually diminished to a cone, flickering myriad tones of white, grey, and black; here, film morphed into a sculptural being. Like McCall, Mark's brand of deconstruction is relatively dependent on the transfer of screened imagery from conventional venues—the movie theatre or living room—to the gallery, arranging the monitors as a kissing couple, a pile, or some other configuration, so that visitors are free to materially interact with them, as sculpture. (9)

But perhaps the most relevant historical source for the *Glow Video Series* is Nam June Paik's mid-1960s works based on gestures that involve screwing with onscreen imagery. Using electromagnets and a Degausser, (10) Paik generates wave patterns on a standard cathode-ray TV tube, masterfully manipulating the received broadcast imagery into abstract and dynamic electronic patterns, emerging in part from the unique properties of each TV set. As with Mark, Paik's converted uses for monitors focus on the idle pursuit of marking time, as in *TV Clock* (1963), which repetitively applies the same basic gesture of compressing the video image into a single band of light cutting across the screen. A series of monitors arranged in a row—each placed atop a pedestal and on its side—emanate light bands which rotate slightly around the axis at each screen's centre. Each of the twenty-four monitors broadcasts a different static yet flickering image of time that unfolds through the installation over a twenty-four-hour period. The medium here becomes an elegant commentary on the television's regimentation of time. (11) Indeed, in the *Glow Video Series*, Mark subversively updates Paik's practice of using TVs, radically reducing onscreen imagery into meditative forms that function as critiques of mainstream media, while serving as sculptural sites for sensory experiment. (12) Paik's effort to individualize reception to the extent that content was no longer functional in any conventional sense is remarkably akin to Mark's project, which critiques conformist ideologies about how broadcast information and entertainment should be understood and consumed—and to raise awareness of the creative potential of using TV in wrong ways.

Mesmerized by Mark's monitors, I am reminded of Timothy Leary's contributions to the acid subculture. Leary strove to generate new forms of perceiving and acting, particularly those directed at loosening the commodity's regulatory hold on experience, so that an artist's living and working spaces melded and became a kind of laboratory in which consciousness could be radically e-conditioned. In the writings of Leary, Aldous Huxley, and others, acid experience is characterized by the dissolution of ordinary objects and imagery into waves or pulsations, a continuous field of sensory stimulus. (13) This dissolution is comparable to Mark's prolonged observation and isolation of reflected patterns derived from conventional movie genres—horror, suspense, porn, kung-fu—that are resituated in the gallery for viewers to interact with, passing time in a space analogous to the artist's own studio/residence. For Mark, both of these spaces are derived

from everyday realities, and yet she alters them perceptually so as to encourage a critical distance from more temporally regimented contexts. As with Leary, I associate such meddling with media and the abolition of commodities as they are conventionally used: transforming, but never replacing, the endless streams of commodified broadcasting, exposed to us practically everywhere on a daily basis. (14)

Mark is fond of subjecting movies to the combined procedures of fragmentation and reintegration. For works such as *Horridor* (2010) and *REM* (2007), she assembles mash-ups of clips from film and television reruns, which she recorded at all hours from a wide range of cable networks. (15) In *Horridor*, a vast series of movie fragments—all completely divorced from their original (conventional) functions and contexts—are strung together, featuring actors screaming. Categories of imagery begin to assert themselves, with fragments grouped according to specific emotional states and accompanying their cries: fear, frustration, physical agony, madness, and so on. *Horridor* was exhibited in a highly public setting—Toronto’s major transportation hub, Union Station—on multiple screens located in a corridor. Indeed, public places, such as train stations (habitually used by commuters according to regimented schedules), are often furnished with TV monitors that broadcast textural facts from news and business channels, supporting an aesthetic of information barrage. These screens normally require only a minimal emotional investment: they may easily integrate into the comings and goings of public space. With *Horridor*, Mark supplies a different sort of repetitive barrage, one that signifies emotional excess, but denies a discernible narrative progression in any traditional sense. She broadcasts a seemingly endless series of fragments with no obvious beginning or end, and implies a sense of the arbitrary or the redundant, allowing viewers to enter in at any point. Accordingly, she enacts an effective critique of how entertainment industries relentlessly maintain “normal” linear ways of understand time. (16) Her work also engages with another major public TV tendency: trivia has a widely recognized consumerist value, working to direct attention toward a screen during a period of transit or idleness. Mark taps into this conditioning for trivia, as viewers of *Horridor* are compelled to identify the sources of individual clips, She succeeds in complicating, while never eliminating, the underlying commercial purposes of her material. (17)

In contrast with this highly dynamic work, Mark’s work *Hiccup* began as a thirty-day performance by the artist, who appeared at the same public location on successive days, wearing the same clothes, performing the same mundane actions at precise times, for a fifteen-minute period. This intervention—which has thus far been enacted at nondescript sites in Birmingham (UK), Houston, and Toronto—is about marking time and offering a representation of Mark as landmark, one that is static and stable within a constantly shifting urban environment. Mark’s daily repetition of her self was a sight that may have been slightly confusing to passersby, but not distracting enough to draw attention in an obvious way. The Toronto version of the work (2000) was displayed on seven monitors in a gallery, with screens simultaneously showing footage—always recorded from the same out-of-the way, stationary position across the street—of the same actions performed in the same order on seven successive days, from 9:00-9:15 am. (18) Installing herself on the steps of a high school, Mark became a living sculptural object, an egoless mirror reflecting the surrounding, utterly mundane environment (people congregating before class, everyday traffic, weather, and light patterns). Wearing headphone, which helped to enhance her anonymity, Mark listened to a pre-recorded audio track that provided cues to switch activities: smoke a cigarette, look to her left, scratch her right ear, take a sip of coffee, stretch her leg, and so on. She plays (with) the role of anthropological researcher, observing less-than-conscious reactions—the sorts of overlooked behavior that social

scientists would not likely consider worthy of study—to a temporal hiccup that she introduces into public space. Among other things, she uses video in a repetitive way to demonstrate that the one who habitually just marks time, day after day—seated on some stairs, or in an infinite number of other sites, like the corner of a coffee bar—may very well affect and condition the behavior of others in ways that are not explainable or consciously felt. Mark becomes a marker generating the mild discomfort associated with *déjà vu*. Through subtle means, she explores the border zone between subjecthood and objecthood, between being consequential and being ignored.

One of TV's regular tasks outside the home is to guide us through periods of waiting—morosely inhabiting the lounge of an auto-repair shop; staring exhaustedly at monitors while expecting a delayed flight. (19) The practice of charting time's passage often affects how and why we receive TV imagery, to the degree that it interweaves on a less-than-conscious level with onscreen content, and with the rhythms of the surrounding environment. (20). Indeed TV imagery is a habitual backdrop in public spaces, from the bar to the barber. The seven video screens of *Hiccup* portray Mark simply stationed there, working as a performer. Myself stations before them, waiting for something to happen, I being to wonder what, or whether, she might be anticipating. Then I consider whether this activity is worthwhile, how (much of) her time (or mine) is being (mis)used. By representing—like the daily installments of a weeklong mini-series, presented on multiple monitors—the acts of waiting around, of performing a repetitive job, and of minutely and strictly following a timeless, Mark draws attention to the cultural conditioning of regular folks who mix labour, leisure, and the passive reception of messages. (21) Her project derives its power in part from the ways that she blurs boundaries between active, performing subjects, and inert, abstract objects. In the form of *Hiccup's* seven monitors, she becomes something akin to signage. (22)

The single-channel video, *33 Minute Stare* (1996), presents the artist looking into the camera until she can no longer focus. The growing levels of discomfort on her face help cast the performance as an endurance piece; but the manner of documentation, with a stationary camera focused solely on her face, helps to emphasize her objecthood and stillness. (23) For the most part, Mark is part stationary presence, presiding over us. Ego-boosting, mythologizing, and dramatic devices are absent from Mark's work, which contrasts well with full-body image of Marina Abramovic, for instance, famously performing a staring contest (*The Artist is Present*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010) with a succession of individual museum visitors lucky enough to bask in her presence. But Mark is now staring at me. I stand in the gallery, instinctively anticipating some sort of narrative event, a revealing gesture of some kind, aside from her eventual failure to focus. As in the case of *The Kiss*, which represents two people as monitors, Mark's work stretches the bounds of self-portraiture, with few character traits explicitly featured: here no vulnerabilities are exposed, no confessions are made. The reductive emphasis on the singular activity of staring makes "Kelly Mark" a blank, an abstract screen that waits projection by me. Her presentation of inactivity as work is radically laconic—using a minimum number of terms, concisely to the point of seeming either rude or mysterious. (24) There is indeed a vague element of the anti-social operating here, associated with a sheer lack of articulation, an absence of detailed social or personal identity with which (TV) viewers may identify. However, there is an earnestness to the work, too, the result of a sustained commitment to a cause that may seem stupid in its blankness, but still manages to impress, given its status as sheer accumulation for a single gesture. This is comparable to Bruce Nauman's bodily and facial gestures—in works such as *Lip Sync* (1969) or *Walking with Contrapposto* (1968)—executed for the camera, and

for audiences not accustomed to focusing on a single gesture for such extended periods, which barely any variation or incident aside from the gradual onset of fatigue. Nauman performs in a non-heroic, workman-like manner, perhaps because he had nothing better to do that day. (25) In comparable ways, Mark stubbornly resists making myths. She simply stares and gets the job done.

In myriad guises and varying degrees of absurdity, Mark has consistently and fruitfully returned to the premise of playing the role of the blank. For the performance work, *Demonstration* (2003), Mark enlisted colleagues to perform a protest without a narrative. Stationed outside Toronto's Power Plant art gallery on the evening of a fundraiser, the demonstrators greeted party-goers. Somewhat disorienting to the arriving guests, who mostly resorted to nervous smiles, it initially seemed like a genuine protest or strike, with the familiar structures of placard-pacing, slogan-recital, and handing out leaflets. All of this was captured by cameras that would normally provide (media) legitimacy to their cause, perhaps involving a labour dispute or some other disagreement derived from exploitation of a particular group, like artists. But then the laconic humour began to register, as the signs and flyers were white and empty, statements of monochrome abstraction—and hence relatives of the reductiveness enacted on flickering screens in the *Glow Video Series*—accompanied by repeated sayings like “What do we want? Nothing! When do we want it? Now!” or the simple declaration “Hell no, we don't know!”

But Mark presents this event in a video form, detaching it from the drama of the actual intervention (which, anyway, was experienced mostly by an elite crowd of museum patrons), so that the work becomes an abstract structure that more indirectly, and allegorically, reflects real-world realities, like understanding TV by viewing its projected light on a wall. As the evening progressed, the social or political purpose of the demonstration never becomes revealed. But, as with all of Mark's work, critical qualities are eventually detectable. The video subtly stages inequities: at one point protests gather around a fire in a garbage can, and party patrons exhibit their conditioned responses—never engaging directly, mostly just walking on by—entering the secluded, private space of the building to schmooze with their own kind, and snack on hors d'oeuvres. Despite the lack of a specific plotline underlying the protest, this demonstration footage demonstrates how folks may, on TV or computer screens, become reduced to objects, to stereotyped signs for the have-nots or discontented. They may be identified all-too-easily with the notions of stirring up trouble, of being suspect, of not applying or “composing” themselves in a worthy or worthwhile way. To some extent, it does not matter to folks that the signs are blank.

I would suggest that for Mark, it is never a matter of merely twiddling her thumbs or pacing about. She is a worker, committed to a lifestyle of applying herself, and sometimes others, to tasks that are insightful and subversive partly because they do not start with objectives that are tied to a lofty and coherent cause. She plays wonderfully with the notion of avoiding a “goal-oriented” practice that is properly rewarding and responsible, and that signifies sophistication. Consequently, there will always be those who judge all of the blank placards, the pencil marks, the fragmented clips, the flickering screens—as mere filler, as suspicious stuff made during intervals between what is generally said to matter. But this is precisely the reason why I will never see Kelly Mark as just marking time.

(1) For comments on working-class identity and mundane objects in Mark's work see, for example, Ivan Jurakic, “The Buddha of the Banal,” in *Kelly Mark*, exh. cat. (Hamilton and

Vancouver: Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton Artists' Inc., and Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, 2000).

(2) The *Graphite Drawing Series* is typical of Mark's earlier career, in that there is tendency to fully formulate a procedure for executing the work prior to its production. Perhaps the fullest expression of this preconceived, rule-bound labour is Mark's *In & Out* (begun 1997, continuing until she reaches the age of sixty-five or until she passes away), in which the artist punches in-and-out of the studio with an aged time clock; she performs this tasks whenever doing certain studio-based activities. Mark's more recent projects are relatively open to the notion of revision or change after work commences.

(3) For a particularly important discussion of Duchampian and Conceptual artistic traditions that question preconceptions about artistic labour, see Helen Molesworth, "Work Avoidance: The Everyday Life of Marcel Duchamp's Readymades," *Art Journal* 57 (1998): 50-61; and Molesworth, ed., *Work Ethic*, exh. cat. (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press and Baltimore Museum of Art, 2003). Molesworth deals with communities of artists who engage in pioneering Conceptualist practices, and yet resolutely resist trends toward managerial experiments, such as those which require turning over the execution of their work to paid assistants or fabricators. It would be a worthwhile project to examine the nature of Mark's relationship to a close-knit group of Toronto-based artists, those with comparable interests in labourious, studio-based processes which employ humble material that is simply at hand. This relationship has yet to be treated with the attention it deserves, but I cannot do so here.

(4) Mark challenging assumptions about what it means to be expressive is, in part, identified with craft-based traditions, as craft is stereotypically associated with something that was mastered in the hands, not in the mind. There is a consistent trend in the literature comparing art and craft that I feel is relevant to Mark's project, as craftspeople traditionally have been considered lesser by learned (fine) artists, as producing work that lacks integrity or purpose. According to Theodor Adorno and other highbrows, craft cannot function as the vehicle for self-doubt and rigorous internal analysis that true art can. For helpful treatment of these issues, see Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2007).

(5) This exhibition was held at YYZ Artists' Outlet in Toronto. Mark's other *Glow Video* works include the popular *Glow House*—which has taken on various incarnations in several cities—featuring multiple TV sets installed in the front rooms of a house, all playing the same synchronized video footage of reflections. Seen in the evening by pedestrian passersby on the street below, this luminous work encapsulates Mark's recurring dialogue between private and public everyday behaviours.

(6) As such, Mark's work functions in conflict with primary and secondary definitions of pornography, including the depiction of sensational acts, in order to arouse a quick and intense emotional reaction.

(7) Mark is paying homage to Constantin Brâncuși's legendary sculpture of the same name (1908).

(8) González-Torres's work differs from Mark's in that his clock-lovers becomes less and less synchronized over time—hence incrementally growing apart—while her monitors remain perfectly in tune with one another.

(9) Although in the service of more expressionistic goals than Mark, Stan Brakhage also worked to free the imagination from the formulaic confines of conventional narrative exposition, the deterministic logic of "professional" movie production. Brakhage's cinematic works, such as *Anticipation of the Night* (1958), are silent and abstract, the result of reflexive dialogue with the film medium; with Brakhage, this is the consequence of a skillful, poetic play with the processes of editing, framing, camera movement, recording speed, filters, and focus. Mark is more inclined toward the unskilled and sustained implementation of one basic task, like recording reflections on a wall.

(10) The Degausser is a device normally used by electronics engineers to eliminate electrostatic charges.

(11) See, for example, John G. Hanhardt, "The Cinematic Avant-Garde," in Hanhardt, ed., *The World of Nam June Paik*, ex. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000). Paik produced a body of drawings, including *TV Scan Line* (1981), employing the paper surface to depict raster lines, the basis of imagery on the surface of the cathode-ray tube. The drawings use the form of the TV screen as a template to explore patterned surfaces. This ongoing effort to shift between sculptural and pictorial media is often ignored in the Paik literature, and is also crucial to Mark's practice.

(12) Also relevant is Paik's *Zen for Film* (1962-64), in which viewers watch and interact with an hour-long blank film, featuring only the projection of clear film leader onto a screen, a work that may really seem like a vehicle for passing time, but which unexpectedly draws attention to other incidental perceptual occurrences, including those caused by particles of dust and dirt caught in the projector's gate and illuminated by its beam of light. Mark does not subscribe to the mystical beliefs that motivated Paik—or to the machismo of oppressive and hallucinatory structural film experiments such as Tom Conrad's *The Flicker* (1965)—but does have to air her own network of meditative programming; Mark's broadcasts do play with perceptual and cognitive expectations, and yet ultimately reside in the mundane, everyday world.

(13) For excellent discussion see David Joselit, *Feedback: Television Against Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 43-84. See also Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 21-22: For Huxley, a table, chair, or desk is rendered as something without depth, as something to project one's mind onto or into, to share one's identity with, thereby giving up a part of one's ego, facilitating an object-person fusion, a "Not-self." This sentiment strikes me as being relevant as well to Mark's labourious, lengthy engagement with ordinary objects, by covering them with glowing graphite to the extent that the artist and object may rub off on each other. It is worth noting that Mark is committed in her daily life to performing such ego-suppressing activities herself, alone. In her case, however, this activity has little to do with belief-systems derived from Zen-Buddhist or other spiritual traditions. I am grateful to Kelly Mark for her comments.

(14) Leary often used the metaphor of TV to describe his LSD hallucinations, frequently implying that it is an ideal vehicle for transforming an object into "patterns of light waves, in which one 'hears, not 'music' or 'meaningful' sound, but acoustic waves." See Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1964), 61. Also useful in this context are music lyrics describing drug-related meditative states that are expressed in

relation to conventional TV programming, including Lou Reed's repetitive references to a love of watching TV, satellites, and parking cars on the moon in *Satellite of Love* (1972). Among other things, the song is very much about just whiling away the hours.

(15) For discussion of *REM*, a two-hour film mash-up that is one of Mark's most celebrated works, see Christina Ritchie's contribution to this catalogue, and my review in Artforum (December 1007). Like Andy Warhol, Mark tends not to watch primetime network programming. Warhol took pride in being a member of the "fringe time" audience—an industry term used to refer to late night and early morning viewers—when stations traditionally air reruns or old movies, his preferred fare. For comments about queer or alternative relationships to TV, those that may entail lifestyles outside, or on the fringes, of conventional work-leisure patterns and nine-to-five schedules, see Lynn Spigel, TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 251-78.

(16) For theorizing discussion of these issues see, for instance, Christine Ross, "The Temporalities of Video: Extendedness Revisited," Art Journal 65, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 82-99.

(17) For example, Planet Hollywood bars have screens with trivia questions that address customers, testing folks' movie knowledge, asking customers waiting for tables to name the actor originally cast as Indiana Jones. Such quizzing is meant to distract from waiting by facilitating social interaction, while promoting media consumption.

(18) For further discussion of this work, see Sara Krajewski, Kelly Mark: Thanks Everyone for Everything (Seattle: Henry Art Gallery, 2006), n.p., and James Patten, "Important Instructions for Changing the World," in Kelly Mark: Important Instructions for Changing the World (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2001), 32.

(19) For insightful commentary see Anna McCarthy, Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001). See also the classic study by Raymond Williams, Television: Technology and Cultural Form (New York: Schocken Books, 1975).

(20) In its staging of silence, Mark's work may function like a reflective surface, akin to Robert Rauschenberg's monochrome *White Paintings* (1951), which faintly mirrored their urban surroundings, and John Cage's *4'33"* (1952), which demonstrated that there is no such thing as complete silence. Cage's piece is a physical, rather than Conceptual work; it is about the materiality of overlooked sounds, shapes, and bodies. For helpful comments see Dieter Daniels, "John Cage and Nam June Paik: 'Change your mind or change your receiver (your receiver is your mind)'," in Sook-Kyung Lee and Susanne Rennert, eds., Nam June Paik, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf and London: Museum Kunst Palast and Tate Liverpool, 2010), 107-26.

(21) This content comes from a variety of media "providers," and is consumed often within cognitive conditions that are uncritical and unaware, according to a regular, cyclical programming schedule. Questions of when, and for how long, we watch monitors at home and elsewhere directly relate to the issue of how to define our relationships between work and recreation. TV makes routine tasks, or just passing time, easier; it is a means of maintaining control, allowing folks to manage their time, moving from one portion of the (work)day to the next. By repetitively isolating such activity on multiple TVs, Mark draws attention to repressive uses of media.

(22) I would suggest that the notion of signage—whether expressed in the form of human performers, computer screens, or some other material—is a key thread running through much of Mark’s oeuvre. Her well-known series of *Neon* works are one of several series that I cannot touch on here. In this regard, Mark’s *Hiccup* is reminiscent of video footage of Ken Lum’s performance *Entertainment for Surrey* (1979), in which he stood—for four consecutive days during the morning commute—beside a suburban stretch of highway, staring expressionless at the oncoming cars of commuters. With differing motivations, Mark and Lum both play the role of stoic statues, of roadside anti-monuments. Unlike Mark, on the fifth day Lum replaced his body with a cardboard silhouette self-portrait: the work culminated in a self literally becoming signage. In *Hiccup*, Mark deliberately avoids such hints at narrative incident.

(23) For some perceptive, theorizing treatment of the notion of performing stillness, and the staging of silence, see Emma Cochur, “Performing Stillness: Community in Waiting,” in D. Bissell and G. Fuller, eds., *Stillness in a Mobile World* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 87-106. Cochur deals well with the enactment of stillness as a mode of resistance against increasingly legislated conditions of urban existence, especially pressures toward speed and efficiency. Particularly relevant to Mark is that act of focusing on singular actions—like sitting around or staring—as a means of testing the temperature of behavioural permissibility in a given context, potentially causing glitches or jolts, or subtly drawing attention to unnoticed rhythms and patterns.

(24) For philosophical treatment of types of humour expressed in conceptualist art practices, see Simon Critchley, “Laughing at Foreigners: A Peculiar Defense of Ethnic Humour,” in Mami Kataoka, ed., *Laughing in Foreign Language*, exh. cat. (London: Hayward Gallery, 2008), 17-23. In particular, Critchley expands on the key point—applicable to much of Mark’s work—that humour depends on maintaining a distance or sense of removal from detailed social realities. Humour is an “oblique phenomenology of ordinary life,” providing an alien perspective on mundane practices and routines: in Mark’s case this perspective often may seem absurdly anthropological. See also Jennifer Higgin, ed., *The Artist’s Joke* (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2007), and Critchley, *On Humour* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

(25) While not enacted for the movie camera, another relevant historical example would be still photographs documenting Robert Morris performing as sculptural object, in a stationary, standing position, staring outwards from within a coffin-like box turned upright. Perhaps in *Untitled (Box for Standing)* (1961), he was simply marking time waiting for death, while deliberately avoiding the temptation of providing character traits with which audiences might identify or mythologize.