

Modes of Departure Series, 2008

W. Benjamin Bray

Sound, video, glass

Artist Statement :

A transient state of mind is characteristic of contemporary society. In conversation, collaboration or simply perusing memories, we maintain an instinctual quest to find something different from - if not better than - what we have now. This cyclical, perpetual sense of departure, and its affect on our perception of where we are and what we are doing, is expressed via an array of translucent, and acoustically resonant glass bodies.

"Modes of Departure" belongs to a family of installations that present high-amplitude cycles of steady-state flux in coasts, airports, and society. Its predecessor, "Coasts" (2006), involved aircraft landing and taking-off from various airports while matter flows into, along, and away from coasts. The current installation focuses on emotional cycles inherent in a transient society, including episodes of nostalgia we experience when are about to leave a place, or when we long for something better or different in another place.

Airports are machined facilities for rapid exchange of people between communities within society. Coincidentally, the cycle of engine revving that occurs from when a plane leaves the gate to when it takes-off bears some resemblance to the emotional cycles of transience. In "Modes of Departure", sound of aircraft taxiing for departure is played from a speaker in each engine nacelle, while a video volume, comprised of still images representing one of the five distinct periods of transience throughout my life, is projected into the nacelle, where it reflects off a mirrored speaker cone and onto the interior wall of the nacelle. The energy and feeling of departure affects the perception of reality.

For secondary video reflectors, I used pieces of a brand new mirror. By the time this exhibit is over, these mirror parts will have witnessed more of my distant past than the relative present.

- W. Benjamin Bray, 8 Aug 2008