

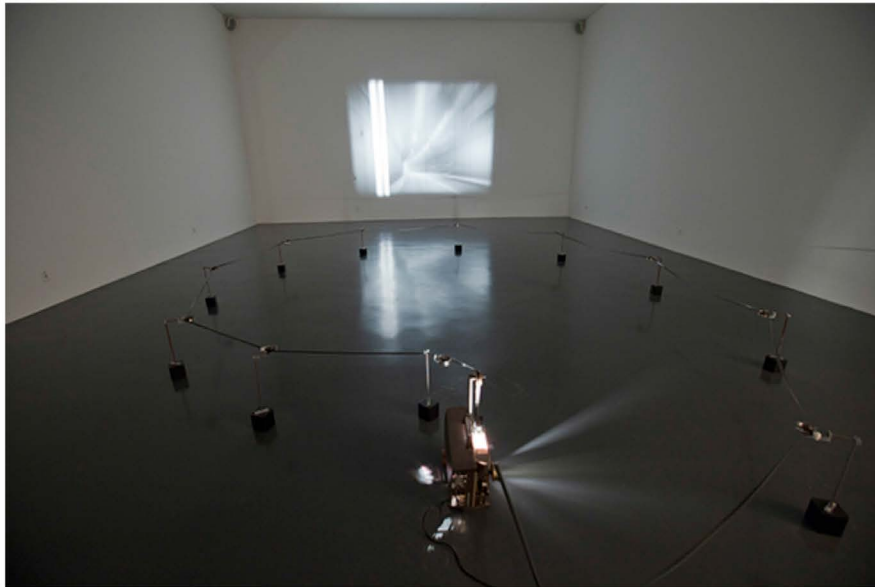
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Tunga's Eternal Minute

by Paul D'Agostino



Tunga, *Æo*, 1981. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

The Brazilian artist Tunga's film installation, *Æo*, on view at Luhring Augustine Bushwick (through August 29), duly transports you, with unjarring immediacy, elsewhere: to a technically tautological realm that cannot exist bereft of artificial lights; to a form of near-emptiness made perceptible via cyclic illuminations of shadows of the essentially unseen; to a binary sphere that cannot but reflect back on itself, both visually and physically; to a space whose mixed acoustics are verbally and mechanically reiterative—and hypnotically self-reflexive.

Yet this elsewhere, both materially recognizable and alluringly other, might also be considered a nowhere. Its most theatrically centerpieceed subject, that which is projected, might be described as almost nothing. Even its emission of limited sound is more than minimally pared down. For you are passing through a curved tunnel, apparently, but the curve meets not its end; the tunnel never reaches its proverbial terminus of light. A circular path is thus created in this looped arc, which lasts only about a minute, making the full circuit fully subterranean. Like any lighted tunnel, its resident lights seem mostly to hint at potential dark. Do note, though, how they illumine watermarks, mildews and other such stains cycling along on the tunnel's ceiling; they amount to an indirectly animated filmic strip of abstract contemporary cave paintings. The physical stuff of all this, then—the 16mm projector and the reel of film ribboning around a circular track of bearings atop stands—reads like more than merely revealed apparatus. It becomes the subject, almost inversely, of the projection. Each endless loop—that *in* the film, that *of* the film—is infinite on its own, yet here the physio-conceptual links that merge them lend the work *in toto* an air of exhumed mysticism in the form of an infinity symbol. As such, the brief soundtrack crooning about the space, a snippet of Frank Sinatra's "Night and Day," is on the one hand a bit too literal; on the other hand, it's almost all one might have to say. Either way, it is noteworthy that you glimpse never the one nor the other.

One might liken *Æo*'s doubled-up loop-de-loop to a particle accelerator of sorts, but viewers here are unlikely to feel self-annihilatingly sped up. This splendid nowhere-space, rather, is one of deceleration. All is amber-clad darkness and light, a measure of sound, a lot of naught. Outside, as it were, is where hyperactive places called cities cycle objects called people through race-like collisions called lives.

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