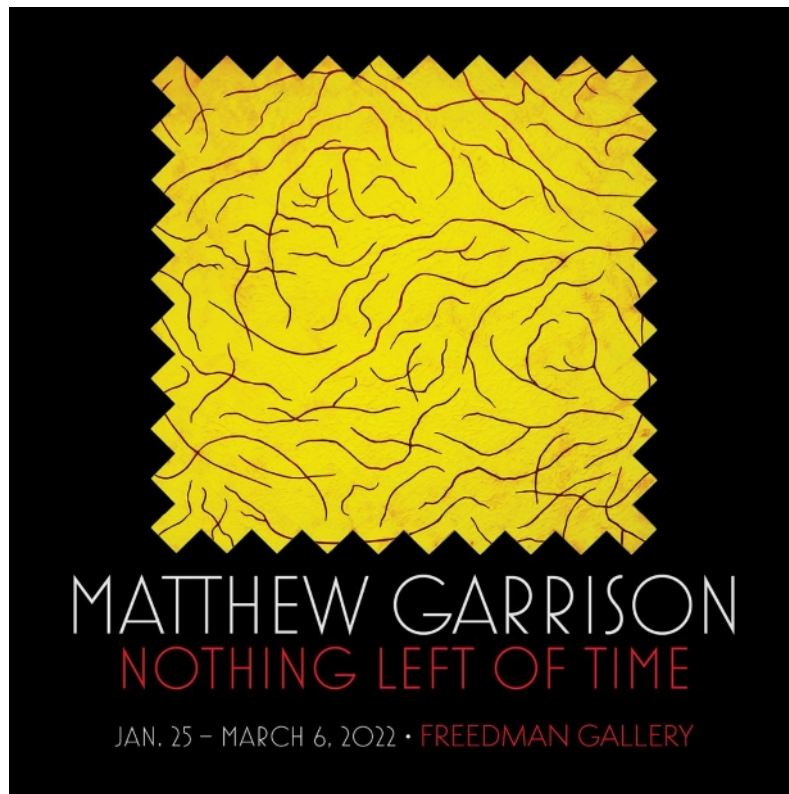




March 9, 2022

Garrison's "Nothing Left of Time" an Uncomfortable & Humorous Journey

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<https://www.bctv.org/2022/03/09/matthew-garrisons-nothing-left-of-time-is-an-uncomfortable-humorous-journey/>

It was a Wednesday afternoon when I entered the Freedman Gallery at Albright College. An array of vibrant yellows, cool blues, and bright whites surrounded me. There is the distant sound of nature and wildlife moving about the room. I instantly felt as if I walked into a whole new world, somewhere up in the clouds.

This is not a new realm, but a new art installation by Matthew Garrison titled, "Nothing Left of Time".

"Garrison's work takes us on a day's journey from interior spaces to exterior ones, examining how we try to manipulate nature," said Center of the Arts Director, David Tanner.

The current exhibit's title stems from a line from Wallace Stevens' poem, "Credences of Summer." The poem itself reads:

Now the mind lays by its trouble and considers.

The fidgets of remembrance come to this.

This is the last day of a certain year

Beyond which there is nothing left of time.

It comes to this and the imagination's life.

"I was reading a poem and this line struck me because it seemed to relate to one of the ideas of the exhibition," Garrison explained. "Time [is used] as a measuring device [with] no one here to remember or imagine the future."

Surprisingly enough, Stevens grew up on N. Fifth St. in Reading, Pennsylvania. Garrison quickly found out that the poet is a Berks County native, which finalized his decision to choose the installation's name.

"When I saw that connection to the show, I thought, that's it!" Garrison exclaimed.

Not only is Garrison an artist, but he is also an Associate Professor of Art and Digital Media at the college.

Tanner commented, "We typically host a show for a faculty member who has gone on sabbatical... For other disciplines, this may involve writing a book or journal articles, or concluding an experiment, but for the visual arts, it usually means creating a body of work."

This isn't the first time a faculty member at the college has had their own solo show. Over his 11 years, the Center for the Arts Director has seen three solo exhibitions. Albright College also hosts faculty art displays on occasion.

"I've been waiting a long time for Professor Garrison to take a leave so we could install his work in a solo show. Although we've seen some of his work in group faculty shows before, this is the first time he's been featured at the Freedman as a solo artist," added Tanner.

Garrison takes us along a methodological journey throughout the gallery. We begin in broad daylight, but as one moves through the installation, it slowly shifts into nighttime.

"You start on the left and walk to the right, you move from day to night. So, there's this compression of time in the space itself [which is] helped by [the] architecture," he said.

Garrison created the entirety of the artwork during quarantine, which is most prominently seen in his piece titled, *Be Right Back*. To make this image collage of sorts, he took screen captures of empty rooms via public video chat websites. It almost feels like an uncomfortable invasion of privacy, yet it is entirely public.

Tanner said, "Garrison is also known for his video/photography work that combines many images of interior spaces, vacant people, who are online in chat rooms and have left their

cameras running. Pieces like this are both fascinating and repellant and, I think, say something about the artist's introversion and keen intellect."

One of the centerpieces of the exhibition, named *Quarantine*, appears to be a mix between a minigolf course and a fishing hole. At first glance, it causes an uneasy feeling, but that is what Garrison intended.

His interpretation of *Quarantine* was quite literal-wanting to go outside and practice your hobbies instead of being stuck inside your home for months. However, others felt there was something more to the piece.

"It's a very frustrating place to be," Garrison explained. "I think frustration is a central feeling with quarantine."

While there is an element of awkwardness in his work, it also is meant to be somewhat humorous. The uncomfortable nature almost makes it impossible to look away.

"Garrison's concern for the environment certainly comes across strongly in this installation, but I was most surprised at the humor, which is subtle but also, not so subtle, in some of his pieces," Tanner recognized.

This indecisiveness of humor seems to be most present in his piece, *Astro*. This work takes AstroTurf, pastes it on a wooden background, and in the center is a photograph of a horse statue, who is almost smirking in the viewer's direction. The image is a bit unnerving, but it also has some sort of humoring charm to it.

Albright students have also admired Garrison's artwork and come up with their own favorite pieces and interpretations. Senior Kelsey Groff particularly enjoys *Hand Study 5*, a wooden square representation of the sun.

"I kind of see it as a clock. There's no certain frame for night versus day, it's all one constant cycle," she explained. "I like how the sun and the moon come together to show the 24-hour time span around the room."

In the latest art installation at the Freedman Gallery, "Nothing Left of Time" brings humor and humanity together. Everything Garrison creates is a subjective statement of the world around us. The uncomfortable nature of his artwork is sure to cause some chatter.

"A lot of my work has a repellent quality and that's a good thing."