

## **Bill Dolson's *Rift*** **Evenings of March 7 - 21, 2006**

For the last six months, as part of my residency work here at Eyebeam, I have been preparing visualizations and studies for a synthetic meteor shower and other land art manipulating the urban landscape and night lights of the city. This work will be shown at Eyebeam in September or October. After six months of working on hypothetical studies I became very interested in completing a physical work. I have also been away from my studio for that long and wished to return to some bodies of work which I had put aside.

The *Trajectories* series and the companion *Intersections* series both use lasers as drawing tools and are intended to be viewed in near darkness. In *Trajectories*, lasers are used for making wall drawings; for the *Intersections* series, the drawings are done on the landscape. When the exhibition space at Eyebeam became available I approached Eyebeam Executive Director, Amanda McDonald Crowley, about doing an ephemeral *Trajectories* installation and she agreed. *Rift* is the result.

The piece exploits the two parallel walls of the exhibit space. The title refers to the two drawings being mirror images, suggesting a solid block of material which has been split open and then the halves moved apart, revealing hidden interior structure.

In the *Trajectories* series the light beams intersect the wall at very shallow angles, are reflected by mirrors, and are dispersed by diffraction gratings which create a highly textured light beam. A visual complexity is created, which together with the darkened viewing conditions, suggests a high-tech prehistoric cave painting.

The *Trajectories*' use of unusual drawing tools reflects my interest in mark-making with unconventional media such as meteors, clouds, dust trails, and wildfires. All of these media enforce a restricted marking vocabulary suggesting Neolithic prototypical or incipient art.

These pieces invoke the aesthetics of the physics lab. Experimental physics labs are often dimly lit and randomly illuminated by the lights of scientific apparatus. These laboratories possess an almost religious sense of place, comprising darkened churches of the scientific method while also having a more primitive and ritualistic cave-like atmosphere.

These pieces also evoke the ballistic trajectory of projectiles; bullets, artillery shells, and missiles. They conjure the incandescent trail of tracer rounds, the path of anti-aircraft artillery or "triple-A", or the luminescent trails of Iraqi Scud missiles and the American Patriot missiles arcing up to intercept them.

I have also been influenced by the Rayonists who were concerned with representing objects by the rays of light by which they make themselves visible. Drawing on their work for compositional strategies is an example of how artwork which is technologically based can employ discoveries made by prior generations of artists who were responding to scientific discoveries of their era.

In addition to *Rift* I have been doing other work independent of the Eyebeam land art studies. I have been recording images for the *Temporal Compression* series, HD time lapse videos of the evolution of the landscape through the course of a day. These videos will be exhibited elsewhere in a few months. I also hope to mount an *Intersection* piece in a public space in the near future.

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