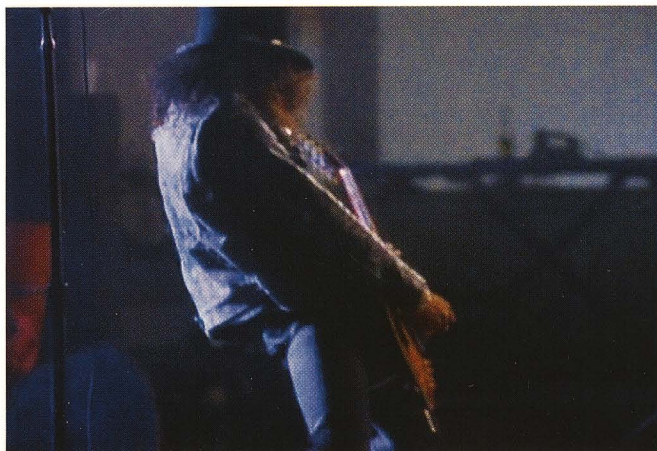


GENEVA

## Cory Arcangel GALERIE GUY BÄRTSCHI

Slash's famous guitar riff from the 1987 Guns N' Roses song "Sweet Child o' Mine" follows you throughout this solo exhibition by New York artist Cory Arcangel, whose work *Sweet 16*, 2006, floods the exhibition space with sound. The piece underscores that Arcangel has expanded his focus beyond the manipulation of old computer-game systems. Three of the six works here revolved around music, making it the thematic linchpin of the exhibition.

Over the last several years, Arcangel has developed a reputation for his hacked computer games—he reprograms their consoles and alters the graphics. For his video installation *Super Landscape #1*, 2005 (not included in this show), Arcangel took Nintendo's *Super Mario Brothers* and eliminated all the graphic elements, leaving



Cory Arcangel, *Sweet 16*, 2006, still from a digital video projection, 17 minutes.

behind only the landscape in the background. Among other things, this structural simplification refers back to several art-historical genres, such as landscape painting, abstract art, and minimalism. Likewise, in more recent works, Arcangel—who once studied classical guitar and composition—displays a pronounced interest in the history and theory of twentieth-century music, particularly minimalism, which appears in various forms behind his work's pop-culture facade. *Sweet 16*, for instance, is an homage to Steve Reich. In a side-by-side double projection, two loops show the opening guitar solo of the original music video for "Sweet Child o' Mine"; the two channels start off in unison both acoustically and visually, but because a single note is omitted from one of them, they gradually diverge, one sixteenth note at a time, until seventeen minutes later they are synchronized again. This intervention creates a new composition that stands in contrast to the simpler rhythms and harmonies of the original. This use of canon technique and minimal variation to achieve complex audiovisual effects is something Arcangel has learned from Reich's work.

Music remains at the forefront in Arcangel's project *The Bruce Springsteen "Born to Run" Glockenspiel Addendum*, 2006. Springsteen's original album is brimming with the dulcet notes of the glockenspiel. For those songs on the album not already employing this instrument, Arcangel composed a new glockenspiel part, which he then played himself, recording the music on vinyl. When you listen to Arcangel's version with headphones, however, you hear only the minimalist glockenspiel sequences and, at the end of the last track, the crackling sound of a spinning LP record. The famous "wall of sound"

arrangement of the album is thus transformed into a hyperminimalist composition.

The artist's newest work neither focuses on rock music and popular culture nor provides nostalgic views of older technological media; *Panasonic TH-42PV60EH Plasma Screen Burn*, 2007, has as its theme the fetishizing of technological "must-haves." Plasma screens are known to possess an Achilles' heel: Anything that stays still too long on-screen can get "burned" into the monitor, leaving behind a ghostly afterimage. This work displays its own label—artist, title, date, dimensions, and "courtesy of" credit—as a still frame on the flat-screen monitor. Thus, the artist offhandedly declares himself the author of every potential image that might follow, self-critically thematizing his own carefree attitude toward preexisting material, the lightness with which he casually inscribes himself into things.

—Valérie Knoll

Translated from German by Susan Bernofsky.