



ISA KAREN
GAGARIN WIRTH



Nothing Staid, single channel video, copier printed bound book, 20" x 30" x 10", 2011.
Photo credit: Erik Shero.

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Nothing Staid, 47-second video loop, Cape of Good Hope / Park Avenue Armory, NY, Ryoji Ikeda, 2011.

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I hear nothing.
That is only the murmur of the waves in the air.

I often fall down into nothingness.
I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall off the edge of the world into nothingness.

There is nothing settled in this universe.
All is rippling.

I do this, do that, and again do this and then that.
Meeting and parting, we assemble different forms, make different patterns.

Tuesday follows Monday; Wednesday, Tuesday.
Each spreads the same ripple.

Nothing Staid, sequence repeated for 100 pages, 2011. Text from Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, 1931.

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ARTISTS' STATEMENT

Based on Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, *Nothing Staid* articulates the repetition of life experience. *The Waves* delves into individual consciousness over the course of life; it is internal, reflective.

The novel's structure couples long narrative with short interruptions full of simile and description. We followed that rhythm in editing the video, while in the accompanying book we provide a continuous, contemplative commentary. The meditative quality of repetition is a form of emptying out: nothingness can be meaningful.

The forty-seven-second video loop cycles through footage that is quiet and repetitive, interrupted abruptly by patterns. A black book sits just below, with a hundred pages of sparse white hand-traced text. Repeated lines from *The Waves* cause a rhythmic loss of self, while creating a chant-like poem that is both Woolf's and the artists'.

Collapsing our personal identities with Woolf's writing and the figures in the text with multiple points of experience. Who is the speaker? Is it the reader of the text? Where is the "I"? Is it in the handwritten type, or is it the occasional figure in the video?

The lull of the wave gives way to moments of sharp recognition. The piece invites immersion at the same time that it positions the viewer as an observer.

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COLLABORATION STATEMENT

The process of developing this project began with expanding from a central notion of waves and contracting back to a focused concept. We collected visual and written sources, accumulating a constellation of interests related to all things "wave."

Reading Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* led to homing in on forms and ideas in our collection that related to the text. Similar to the way the novel quietly advances through the lives of its subjects, our discussions of our own life stages helped us identify common ground.

The novel also formed underlying structures for *Nothing Staid*. The first-person voice in *The Waves* becomes subjective in *Nothing Staid*—who is the "I"? The artist? The reader? Similarly, the cadence of the novel informed the editing of the video. *Nothing Staid* replaces linear narrative with rhythmic sequences.

We developed a collaborative process to cultivate the vast range of information we accumulated into a refined, concerted piece. Taking away information proved to be a more challenging and stimulating process than the initial activity of collecting.

Learning from each other's life perspectives and aesthetics, we developed a project that does not reflect one individual more than the other, but bears a quality that is both shared and personal.