

ARTFORUM

David Hartt

LAXART AT THE BONAVENTURE HOTEL

404 South Figueroa Street, Second floor storefront Suite 201A

March 7–April 11

Washed-out color shots of sagging architecture fill the windows of a storefront at the Bonaventure Hotel, a fitting advertisement for David Hartt's "Interval." Inside, a pair of monitors mounted to black poles screen lush, near-static grayscale footage—on the left, Siberia; the right, Alaska—set to a skittering, plunking sound track by Mitchell Akiyama. Stateside, for example, a balletic shot of helicopter gunships taxiing on some remote tarmac, while opposite, Russian kids hanging out in a parking lot throw their sports car into donuts. Somewhere in the Yukon, a silvery-gray fence hems in a dry stack of lumber, which is accompanied, on the left, by plenty of meadows with back-, mid-, and foreground plants shimmying in the breeze. The monitors sync every minute or so, with a shot of DJ gear, disco balls, or a projector lens, as if to say that dancing might transcend cultural divides—the way, perhaps, these diptychs span the Bering Strait.



David Hartt, *Interval*, 2015, two channel HD video, fifteen minutes, eight seconds.

The show occupies an old stripped-down flower shop—empty green plant displays serve as benches; bare walk-in fridges are still lit—in a hotel that is itself a proposition past its prime, a paragon of postmodern architecture extolled by Fredric Jameson. Its pricey, curved rooms are still anchored by six floors of liminal retail: a mall scattered with souvenir and jewelry shops, a weird brew pub, and now a pop-up art show—a setting that fundamentally resonates with the show's theme of international decay. Yet Hartt's quaint postindustrial RU/US travelogue is more in line with the humble defoliated florist's of suite 201 than the building as a whole, which, while grandly confused, is also prepossessing—the turreted glass-and-concrete disco to end them all.

— Travis Diehl