



David Hartt “Interval” at Bonaventure Hotel, Hollywood  
 March 31~2015

David Hartt creates artwork that explores how historic ideas persist or transform over time.

Situated in a street level suite of the Bonaventure Hotel, *Interval* contains a two-channel film work on LCD monitors, including original music by Mitchell Akiyama accompanied by seven photographs laminated as decals on the storefront of the space. A final element on the checklist is the building itself, which the artist sought out and made clear was the preferred installation site.

In *Interval*, Hartt unites otherwise unapproachable locations to make very remote places a singular geography. The northern Canadian town of Whitehorse and the island of Sakhalin (a part of the Japanese archipelago but belonging to Russia) are the settings for his two-channel film work. Bridging Siberia and the subarctic, with the Bonaventure as a portal, *Interval* takes root in peripheral locations to present a meditation upon vanishing distinctions that formerly separated the center from the periphery. This includes nations from their own internal frontiers and countries from one another.

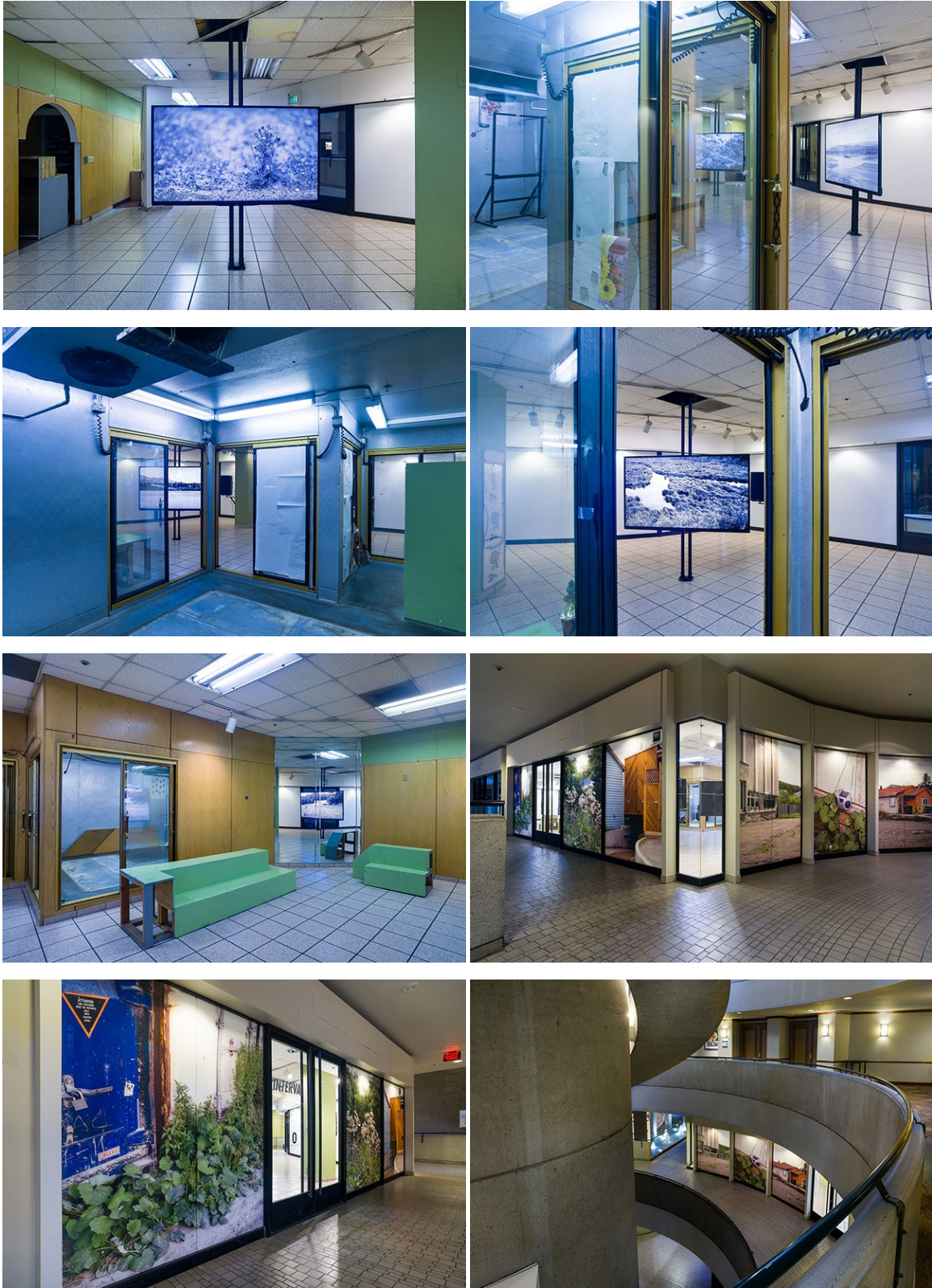
If our era has been called the end of history, it is so through interconnectedness. *Interval* positions Sakhalin and Whitehorse as terminal stops along a trail of interconnected communities that make a global picture. Sakhalin and Whitehorse can serve as the image of sameness or as the rupture—places in the system where life becomes atomized and micro-national and yet still bears a resemblance to the market, anywhere. *Interval* traces the intersection of competing forces, where the strategies of dominant cultures meet the tactics of local inhabitants.

*Interval* sympathizes with what others might call wasteland conditions — where people live on the margins of borderlands. This is the artist’s means to comment on the center. It proceeds in the footsteps of Russia’s Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) and Canada’s Glenn Gould (1932-1982). Chekhov wrote on Sakhalin Island in 1891. His goal was to complete an expository census on the inhumane conditions of Siberian prison camps. As Chekhov’s only work of nonfiction, it is now considered a masterpiece of investigative journalism. Conversely, an artist known best as a pianist, Gould made “The Idea of North” as an experimental radio-play for the CBC in 1967. This tapestry of testimonies recasts isolated workers as explorers in their own right. Travelers, whether laborers or academics, paint a picture of the arctic in real yet poetic terms of those who have endured extended periods away from the center and are wiser for it. Both Chekhov and Gould followed western civilization to its periphery and found there an end to its reason.

Likewise, *Interval* has an ethnographic character. In his own words, Hartt chooses “subjects and sites [as] reflective of an attempt to represent a full spectrum of ideological potentials.” However faceless or nameless the present authors of globalization may be, as compared to Chekhov and Gould’s time, the images in *Interval* capture imperial divinations that ensure a Sakhalin or a Whitehorse not an expression of insularity or arctic propinquity alone. They are scenes invested in the ends of empire.

*Matthew Schum*

by Laxart, Hollywood  
 until 11 April 2015



David Hartt "Interval" installation views at Laxart, Hollywood, 2015

Courtesy: Laxart, Hollywood.