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TIME OUT NEW YORK
[Steven Stern, Time Out
New York](#)
December 4th 2003



Steven Stern, *Time Out New York*, December 4 - 11, 2003

Jonathan Monk,
"Time And or Space"
Swiss Institute, through Dec 20

In Jonathan Monk's *Big Ben Piece*, 42 slides, all of postcard images of that London landmark, fill a slide carousel. Each is projected once a day, for exactly one minute—the minute when the clock depicted shows the correct time. It's a witty and resonant conceit; as if brought to life, the clichéd tourist image is made seemingly functional, a picture of a famous clock becoming, briefly, a real clock. The projected image embodies what all souvenir postcards aspire to say: This is where I am right now.

Yet there's an obvious catch. As a work of art, this piece is more or less invisible. Encountering it in person—at Monk's current show at the Swiss Institute—you will likely see a nonfunctioning slide projector pointed at a blank wall. Unless you happen to be around for one of those 42 minutes, you might assume that somebody simply forgot to plug the thing in. Only on consulting the gallery checklist does it all come clear.

Without recourse to the notes, the static slides and film loops that make up this exhibition are similarly hermetic. This is a show in which little is actually shown. Whether that's a falling depends, perhaps, on your patience with conceptual art's deferred gratifications. For Monk, such delays are clearly thematic. Spread around the gallery walls, four text pieces offer locations, times and dates in the future. These "Meeting Pieces" are ambiguous proposals. Will you show up? What will happen? Existing only as potential, they are like postcards cast in a strange grammatical tense: Wish you will be here.



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