

LOUISE NOGUCHI & JUNE PAK *somewhere between*

When we as viewers enter into the realm of the movie theatre we do so with the expectation that we will be presented with something that has been constructed for our viewing receivership. Our level of awareness regarding the degree to which something has been constructed may depend on the type of film that we see. For instance, an encounter with a fantasy or work of science fiction will likely differ from the reception of a work that is categorized as documentary. The different ways of receiving a work will likely be informed by one's understanding of how different genres operate; it is largely understood that certain genres such as the aforementioned fantasy and science fiction or a work of animation are usually based upon notions and themes which are "fanciful" and unfold in landscapes that do not exist in reality, whereas a work of documentary is understood to be representative of that which is indeed true (although depending on the level of criticality that a viewer brings to a work there may also be the awareness that within documentary there exists a level of construct and manipulation that rivals that of any "fictional" film). What remains constant in both instances however is that we typically will be viewing something that is separate from us as spectators.

Despite the emergence of elements such as "surround-sound" and the prevalence of visual effects of 3-d being employed in the goal of providing movie-goers with the experience of being in an immersive environment the role of audience in contemporary cinema is still very much expected to be that of passive viewers. The exhibition *somewhere between*, which features works by June Pak and Louise Noguchi, challenges this notion. Their works, though predicated on the conventions of viewing video which privileges the act of seeing, also embody a physicality that shifts the installation into a space which eludes categorization and necessitates active participation on the part of the viewer. Consisting of three pieces which are formed from a range of elements related to popular film and video imagery and discourse the works in *somewhere between* play with our sense of the "real".

June Pak's walkthrough incorporates footage from famed Korean director Kim Gi-Duk's eponymous film. The original film depicts the saga of an intruder who breaks into homes while the owners are away and performs acts of custodianship rather than removing possessions from the premises. In Pak's re-presentation of the work the film is shown as two separate projections that refract off of mirrors that have been placed at various intervals on the wall throughout the installation. In order to fully experience the work viewers must move into the space and in doing so, become unwitting participants in the work. The resulting "intrusions" on the work occur as a result of the viewers' very presence in the space where the work is installed. In a manner that is both subtle and undeniable, Pak expands the realm of the fictive space of the work in the "real" space of the viewer, blurring the boundary so that they combine to form a continuous space.

The work *somewhere* also appropriates a film clip, in this instance from the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. The featured clip is a well-known one: the scene, which has been selected from a section of the work that was shot in black



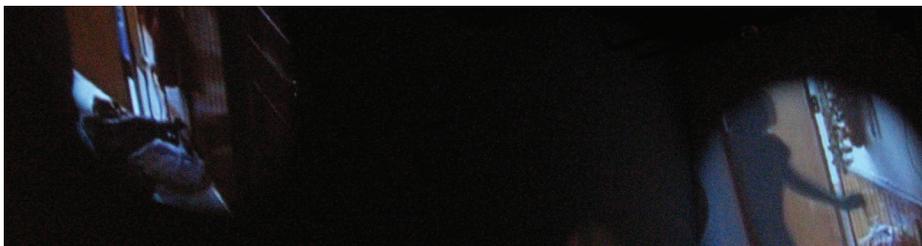
(detail) "somewhere" (video still), 2006-07 Louise Noguchi & June Pak 5-channel video
MAX/MSP programming by Martin Slawig (www.blackhole-factory.com)

and white depicts the protagonist Dorothy's house falling from the sky before landing in Oz. Under Pak and Noguchi's hands, the narrative of the scene is reorganized through the physical presentation of the piece. Appearing on five stacked monitors, the house is shown at a different stage in its descent towards the ground and the volume of the accompanying soundtrack increases with each stage. When the house is about to reach the ground the image flips back to the monitor at the top of the stacked column. The section that Noguchi and Pak have isolated from the film illustrates the ways in which special effects are employed to heighten our viewing experience of a film and the ways in which deceptively simple interventions, in this case an increase of sound, directly affects the ways in which viewers receive and process visual material. Other elements further this aspect of the work – the stacking of the monitors that display the work in a column underscores the trajectory of the falling house. Yet this also disrupts the way in which we are used to "reading" film as being projected onto a flattened plane and confined to one specific surface. Prevented from seeing the house settle on the ground, which would seem to be the logical and only conclusion of the building's motion, the continuous cycling of the clip keeps viewers hovering in a state of constant expectation which is never fulfilled.

The work *Disclaimer*, which Pak has realized in previous iterations as both an LED sign and a video, appears in the exhibition as text on a wall that separates the individual spaces that house walkthrough and *somewhere*. Reproduced in grey vinyl on a wall that has been painted a similar shade of grey, the barely perceptible text instructs viewers that "The characters and incidents portrayed and the names herein are fictitious and any similarity to the name, character and history of any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional." The statement, which often appears in the end credits of fictional television programs, has obvious links to the other works in the exhibit. On one level its missive reiterates the fact that both walkthrough and *The Wizard of Oz* are fictionalized narratives. However, when applied to our own experiences of the work its meaning becomes uncertain and suggests that the producers of the work (Pak and Noguchi) cannot assume responsibility for our perceptions and/or emotive conclusions during encounters with the work. The implication that in this instance the deciphering and making of meaning lies in our own hands is both a disconcerting and heady one.

- **Sally Frater**

The stacked columns also move the work into the field of sculpture, as the volume that is occupied by the monitors in the space of the gallery is three-dimensional.



"walkthrough" (detail), 2008-09, June Pak, multi-channel video/audio installation

LOUISE NOGUCHI

Born in Toronto, Canada, Louise Noguchi received her MFA from the University of Windsor, Canada and AOCA from the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. She is a professor in the Art and Art History program, a collaborative joint program between Sheridan Institute and the University of Toronto Mississauga where she teaches photography and performance-based art. Louise Noguchi is represented by Birch Libralato Gallery in Toronto, Canada.

JUNE PAK

June Pak was born in Seoul, South Korea, and now lives in Toronto, Canada. She holds a BFA from York University and a MFA from the University of Windsor. She is interested in exploring different spaces (cultural and personal) through media installations. Her single-channel videos and media installations have shown at various venues throughout Canada, the US and Europe. She currently teaches time-based media and interdisciplinary courses at the University of Western Ontario and is a PhD candidate in Studio Art at York University.

SALLY FRATER

Sally Frater is an independent curator and writer. She holds a BA in Studio Art from the University of Guelph and an MA in Contemporary Art from Sotheby's Institute of Art/University of Manchester in the UK. Her writing has appeared in NKA, Border Crossings Magazine, Fuse and C Magazine and she has curated exhibitions at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery and Gallery 44 Centre for Photography in Toronto and the McMaster Museum of Art in Hamilton. A member of Independent Curators International, she has received grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.

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s o m e w h e r e b e t w e e n

Curated by Sally Frater

September 7 – October 20, 2012

Opening Reception: Friday Sept 14, 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm