Control

Lucy Raven:

Hollywood Chop Riding

November 6, 2014 - January 11, 2015
Accessing the Inaccessible
Ceci Moss

Single frames showing individual workspaces slowly migrate to the middle of the screen, temporarily transforming raw ore into copper wire, by following the journey from an open pit mine in Nevada to a smelter in China that refines and produces the final product. 1 This intricate industry is represented in a photographic animation with ambient audio from each site, portraying in a rapid succession of photos the immense coordination needed to move raw material from mine to train to sea to factory. Raven's extensive research into this process forms the core of the film, whose targeted focus on the movement of copper across the globe is revealed without voiceover or script.

The artist's ongoing archive and exhibition series BPX similarly evolved out of failures, out of which comes the screen print series PRX. As a resident at the Hammer Museum in 2011, Raven began seeking out and collecting motion picture test patterns used by projectionists to calibrate the technical aspects of a film projection) from archives and private collections all over Los Angeles. These cast-off and forgotten test patterns, essential to the experience of seeing a film in a theater, are repurposed in Raven's prints, installations, and films, a growing archive that she slowly mines through research and distinctive storytelling approach. Raven brings the material processes inherent to the technology of the screen to the fore, wearing a nuanced and intricate picture of systems that are otherwise invisible or unseen.

At the end of YBCA's terrace gallery hangs a large lenticular print depicting a hand of an anonymous worker. As the viewer walks past it, the hand seems to move a mouse across a mousepad. This simple yet direct image is a reminder that regardless of the intricate economic and material factors that determine our technologies and infrastructures, the human experience remains paramount to the development and functioning of these forces. As Marshall McLuhan declared in Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, "To behold, use or perceive any extension of ourselves in technological form is necessarily to embrace it... In the electric age we wear all mankind as our skin."


Falls the Shadow
Deborah Stratman

There was a darkness: from a diary, echoing sensation of night that was not like seeing, I saw a line that was not a line. Space that was not Space. I was myself, and not myself. When I could find voice, I shrieked aloud in agony, “Either this is madness or it is Hell.” “It is neither,” calmly replied the voice of the Sphere, “it is Knowledge, it is Those Dimensions: open your eye once again and try to look steadily.”

— Eduard A. Abbott, Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions, 1884

The fixed gap that exists between our two pupils is, on average, 60 millimeters. In trying to reconcile the slight but resolute disparity between these tandem views, our brain produces the concept of depth. We can say that the gap is the difference that makes a difference. Given a void, the mind scrambles to fill it because the void is the place where reason fails. It’s the blinder spot that makes reason retreat to another dimension—the dimension of thinking, for which the indeterminacy is a necessity.

Notes: The title of this essay is excerpted from T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Hollow Men,” especially: “Between the idea, And the reality, Between the conception and the creation of a thing, lies the Mulliner’s siesta!” Jay Griffiths, A Sublime Look at Time (New York: Jeremy T. Palter / Penguin, 2000), 310.

We might say that the division of film into individual frames is a colonizing of space-time. The illusion of motion, when produced from still images, demands that experience be subdivided into a specific number frames per second, 24 for example, separated by intervals of nothingness. The mind leaps on these zones of interstitial black to settle the difference between adjacent frames, and in its efforts, comes up with the notion of movement. Which is to say, the industry of cinema regulates and subdivides time in order to mass-produce and distribute a spectacular time. With Curtains, Raven both points to and works against this colonizing disposition by producing a place for thinking within a lattice of protracted suspense. We await the red-blue superpositions, each a fleeting, somatic nod to the transnational enterprise of fabricating dimension.

The Chicago-based artist and filmmaker Deborah Stratman makes work that investigates issues of power, control, and belief, exploring face-places, ideas, and society are intertwined.

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Left: Lucy Raven, Curtains, 2014
Anaglyph video installation with sound
Courtesy the artist

About Lucy Raven, FR1, 2012
Color screenprint, Courtesy the artist

Above

About Lucy Raven, FR1, 2014
Color screenprint, Courtesy the artist
The term “control” refers to philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s theory that, as a result of the ever-increasing role of information technology, Michel Foucault’s “disciplinary society” of the 20th century has given way to a “control society” in the 21st century. In contrast to discipline, which molds the individual through confinement in factories, prisons, and schools, control is diffuse, adaptable, and ubiquitous, modulating rather than molding the individual.

Control: Technology in Culture, curated by Ceci Moss, Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, is Yerba Buena Center for the Arts’s ongoing series of exhibitions showcasing work by emerging and mid-career artists who examine the social, cultural, and experiential implications of technology. The series seeks to prompt timely questions about the profound and far-reaching influence of technology in our daily lives by focusing on artists whose work spans a multitude of disciplines and relates to a diverse set of issues, including architecture, acoustics, psychology, labor, consumerism, the environment, and the military.

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YBCA Exhibitions 14-15 is made possible in part by Mike Wilkins and Sheila Duignan, Meridee Moore and Kevin King, the Creative Ventures Council, and members of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts is grateful to the City of San Francisco for its ongoing support.

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-978-ARTS
ybca.org

Opening Reception
Thu, Nov 6, 6:30–8 PM
Youth Arts Lounge & Upstairs galleries
Free with gallery admission

Join us in celebrating the opening of Lucy Raven’s solo exhibition Hollywood Chop Riding, part of the ongoing exhibition series Control: Technology in Culture.

China Town film screening
Sat, Nov 8, 2014, 1–3 PM
YBCA Screening Room
Free with gallery admission

Join us for a screening of China Town, artist Lucy Raven’s 2009 film that follows the copper mining and production industry from an open pit mine in Nevada to a processing factory in China. The film considers what it actually means to “be wired” and in turn, to be connected, in today’s global economic system. Introduction by the artist.

Artist Bio
Lucy Raven is an artist based in New York. She works primarily with animation and the moving image. Her movies and installations have been shown at art and film spaces internationally, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; MUMOK, Vienna; Portikus, Frankfurt; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Wavelengths at the Toronto International Film Festival; Forum Expanded at the Berlinale; and in the 2012 Whitney Biennial, among others. She is currently an artist in residence at the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

About YBCA
Founded in 1993 out of an expressed need for an accessible, high profile arts center devoted to contemporary art of all genres, YBCA presents contemporary art from the Bay Area and around the world that reflects the profound issues and ideas of our time, expands the boundaries of artistic practice, and celebrates the diversity of human experience and expression. YBCA is an integrated site for creative endeavor; a unique fusion of art, innovation, and ideas in a social environment. It serves as a curated platform for the dynamic convergence of artists, inventors, thinkers, producers, and the community, working together to sustain multiple levels of participation, propel short- and long-term social change, and ensure contemporary arts and living artists are vital to our society. YBCA’s artistic offerings include a year-round exhibition program, two annual performance series, a celebrated year-round art film program, a community rentals program making YBCA performance spaces available to Bay Area performing arts organizations at affordable rates, and award-winning community engagement programming. Distinguished by its widespread support of local, national, and international artists in the performing, visual, and media arts, YBCA is also recognized for its innovative approach to audience-centered programs and for its partnerships with other arts and community organizations. Through its programming, YBCA evokes exploration and risk-taking, quiet reflection, and active engagement.

Exhibition Credits
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Design by Nicole Ginelli.