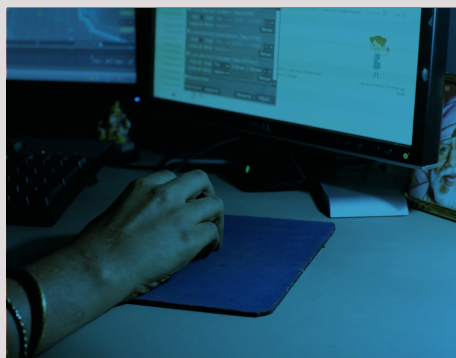
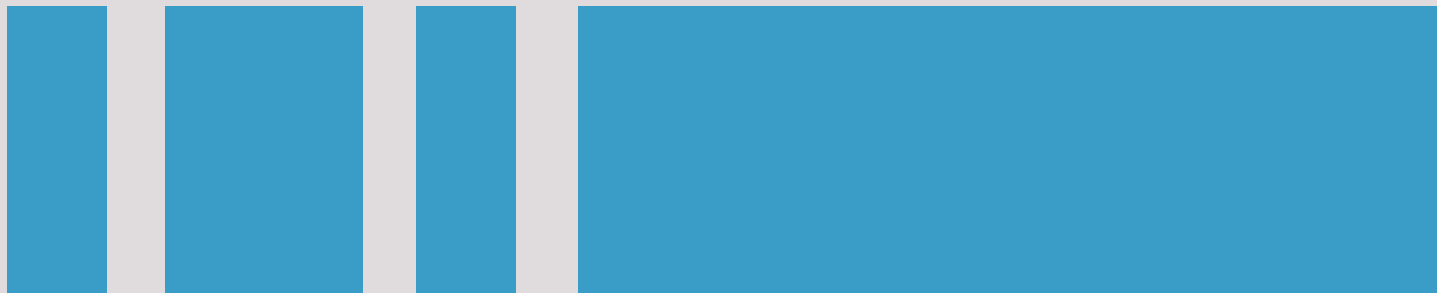


Control



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 generating a 3D still of office workers staring into computer screens. They are anonymous, their backs to the camera. The artist Lucy Raven shot these various scenes in postproduction studios around the world, including Beijing, Mumbai, Chennai, Vancouver, Toronto, London, and Los Angeles, then compiled them into the 3D video installation *Curtains* (2014). These workers create the high-definition visual effects that have come to define Hollywood 3D blockbuster films such as *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* (2011) and *Godzilla* (2014). Requiring dedicated attention to each frame, the labor involved in creating and modifying computer-generated effects and graphics is time consuming, detailed, and repetitive. Raven's project captures the processes—economic, material, political—that underlie the creation of these high-gloss spectacles.

Like other works by Raven, *Curtains* is not so much a document of these conditions as a perspective on them that is as obscured and complex as the forces at play in the actual subject matter. How is it possible to represent the ebb and flow of capital, the international trade agreements that encourage outsourcing, the time zones that separate a studio in Mumbai from one in Hollywood, or the network of movie theaters, bootlegs, and downloads that circulate the final film? *Curtains* pauses on one moment where all these influences coalesce.

The work operates in layers to display both a location of production and a production of location. Within the video installation, the visitor sees actual postproduction studios on screen where, through the visual effects software used by workers at these sites, location becomes simulated. These

office scenes are presented in anaglyph 3D, a version of the effects that activate filmic fantasies. The work sites and the films produced within them are not neutral spaces or products, but themselves dependent on the powers that dictate and influence the locations. Production and location are therefore interwoven and layered, a fact that comes into focus in fleeting moments, like the stills in *Curtains* that suddenly sync. The viewer gets a flash of the vast organization and resources necessary for the mounting of glossy movie spectacles, but not the entirety of their massive reach.

To bring colossal material and social infrastructures into relief requires a unique type of storytelling, and thus Raven maintains a hybrid artistic practice that employs methods of journalism, history, and media ecology. Her 2009 film *China Town* traces the copper mining and production industry, which transforms raw ore into copper wire, by following the

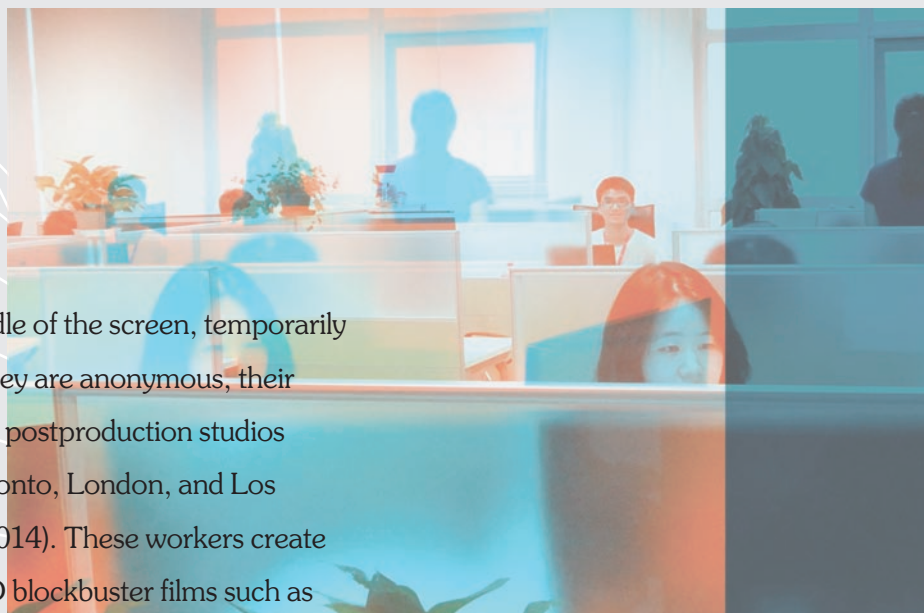
journey from an open pit mine in Nevada to a smelter in China that refines and produces the final product.¹ This intricate industry is represented in a photographic animation with ambient audio from each site, portraying in a rapid succession of photos the immense coordination needed to move raw material 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 relayed without voiceover or script.

The artist's ongoing archive and exhibition series *RPx* similarly evolved out of fieldwork, 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 charts a largely unknown and unseen history. Through her research and distinctive storytelling approach, Raven brings the material processes inherent to technology to the surface, weaving 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 mouse pad. 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."²

Notes: ¹ *China Town* screens at YBCA on November 8th, with an introduction by the artist. ² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 46–47.

Above:
Lucy Raven, *PR1*, 2012
Color screenprint, Courtesy the artist



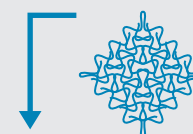
Falls the Shadow

Deborah Stratman

There was a darkness; then a dizzy, sickening sensation of sight that was not like seeing; I saw a Line that was no 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 Three Dimensions: open your eye once again and try to look steadily."

— Edwin 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 blind spot that makes reason retreat to another dimension—to the dimension of thinking, for which the indeterminate is a necessity.



In *Curtains*, two images, one blue, the other red-shifted, slowly approach, fuse, then separate along the horizontal plane. There are physiological by-products of trying to resolve these two images, between which the lacuna imperiously drifts, constricting before gaping wide again. When the two images are just shy of fusion, one experiences a kind of brain-bifurcating wiggle from the frustrated effort of reconciling difference. The unstable vibration throws off ghostly shimmers and solarized forms on otherwise-quotidian images. Then, at the moment of coalescence, we experience a depth charge where the ocular universe jolts and expands, and everything that came before seems a flatland. The combination is not an additive sum, but a multiplicative product—a value of another dimension. Each time those red and blue images coalesce, we get a phenomenological anchor for an artwork that is in all other respects intent on scrutinizing the manufacturing of an image.

Toronto, Vancouver, London, Los Angeles, Chennai, Mumbai, Beijing—urban hosts in a wide net of production nodes to which the fabrication of images is outsourced. Lucy Raven's camera extracts still frames from these global office sites, each a bland analog for the next, where the common denominator is a seated worker whose underutilized corpus labors before a computer screen on yet another static frame. This isolated frame the worker produces will eventually join up with scores of other immobile frames-in production and metamorphose into a Hollywood 3D juggernaut. In effect, *Curtains* offers up a divided stasis (of both the filmic frame and the worker's body) in the ulterior service of careening, simulated embodiment and extra-dimensional profit.

In ancient China, when those in power colonized a new region, it was said the people there "received the calendar." In Papua New Guinea, the colonial era was referred to as *taim bilong masta* ("time belong master").¹ One could hardly conceive a more succinct epithet for the surrender of an idiosyncratic, local, indigenous time to that of a synchronized industrial capital. Subjecting people to a new measure of time is one of the more subtly profound aspects of imperialist power because it represents a colonizing of the mind.



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 leans 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 how places, ideas, and society are intertwined.

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 motion, And the act, Falls the Shadow." ¹ Jay Griffiths, *A Sideways Look at Time* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004), 192.

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

Above:
Lucy Raven, *PR4*, 2014
Color screenprint, Courtesy the artist



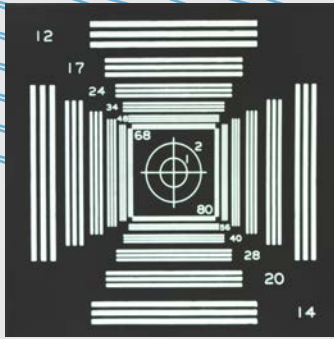
Lucy Raven
Lenticular print
2014

Courtesy the artist

**About Control:
Technology In Culture**

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.

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.



Lucy Raven, *PR2, 2012*
Color screenprint
Courtesy the artist

Public Programs

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 invites exploration and risk-taking, quiet reflection, and active engagement.

Exhibition Credits

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.

Design by Nicole Ginelli.