

statement: corridor and projections+sound

I have long been interested in how our perception of reality is coded by culture. In early works, I initiated a conversation between photography, film, and memory by mining archives of travel photographs (the *Grandfather Photos*) and re-photographing film locations (*Ask the Dust* and *Two Roads*). However, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the monocular perspective of photographic representation and began to employ rear screen projection, digital models, color and sound to address issues of displacement and fragmentation.

My collaborations with Joseph Hammer – the performance *projections+sound* (1999–2001) and the web works, *projections+sound[web]* (2000–2001) for the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, and *corridor* (2001) for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles – are inspired by a 1967 photograph of a young Joseph posing proudly next to the family station wagon, displaying a suction cup and a square of red lighting gel. Joseph passed his time during vacations by making sounds with the suction cup and peering at the landscape through the red gel. Joseph's childhood use of color and sound to shift his perception of the passing view out the car window prompted me to rethink the function of a two dimensional plane as a focus for representations of landscape.

Key to our first work, *projections+sound*, is the creation of a space of defocus both in sound and vision. In cinema the performer and screen are a point of focus on a plane separate from the audience. In *projections+sound* both screen and performer (Joseph) are shifted to the floor, to the equivalent perceptual plane of the audience. A deceptively deep field of color dissolves is accompanied by live manipulation of audio tape loops to conjure memories of place displaced from physical representation. If there is focus it occurs in retrospect – in the reconstruction of the experience, in the weighing of recognizable moments against memory. The entire read is deferred until after the performance ends.

With iterations of this work on the web, first in *projections+sound[web]* and then in *corridor*, the looping of color and sound also defers a point of focus.

For *projections+sound[web]*, we continued to work from a list of iconic landscapes mostly derived from film. Spatial associations are generated from a minimum of visual and aural information: color values and looped sound. For *corridor* we returned to cinematic source material; we were particularly interested in the blend of the unfamiliar with the repressed familiar that is the source of sensations associated with the uncanny.

All of these works are a distillation of components that cue memory into color and sound, or light and sound. In Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie*, when Marnie sees a red ink stain on her blouse, she falls into a dead faint. Using color as a trigger for a traumatic memory is a typical cinematic convention. Coincidentally, in 1966, concurrent with the re-release of *Marnie* on a double bill with *The Birds*, Andy Warhol toured the US with the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, "a wildly disorienting palimpsest of feedback loops" in which "the boundary between figure and ground was completely undecidable (sic)." (1)

projections+sound, *projections+sound[web]* and *corridor* aren't centered within an object but within the body of the receiver; we foreground opticality and aurality to point to subjectivity. Even the computer screen, a source of research and information, becomes suddenly unreliable and a space of disinformation and misreading. The slow dissolve of white to gray to black and back again plays visual tricks. Sounds are implied that aren't really there and once deciphered, shift and change with each repetition of the loop. It's a simulation of cinema that exists in the interstitial space between the frames, the space of perception and memory.

Norman Klein in *The History of Forgetting*, writes that "Simulation is not a copy, but a blur between memory and signifier." Our work explores that blur.

Cindy Bernard (w/Joseph Hammer) 2001

(1) quoted from a lecture by David Joselit, *Yippie Pop: Abbie Hoffman, Andy Warhol and 60s Media Politics* presented as a part of the "Media Pop" conference at the Getty in April 2001.