



● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● Installation view of Lynne Marsh, *Upturned Starry Sky*, CONTACT Gallery, 2012, © Toni Hafkenscheid

Upturned Starry Sky presents a selection of works by Lynne Marsh (b. Canada, based in Montreal, Berlin, and London, UK) that come together under the rubric of spectacle. Engaging with three sites in Berlin—an empty sports stadium, a disused amusement park, and the interior of the city's iconic orchestral concert hall—Marsh positions the viewer as participant in the social relation that gives each location its essential meaning. Writing in 1967, French thinker Guy Debord stated "*The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images.*" This quote points us to a consistent element in Marsh's exhibition—which also relates to her art practice as a whole—the camera that depicts each of her subjects. Aligning the eye of the viewer with the camera lens, Marsh positions the viewer within the latent spectacles her artworks embody.

Debord's (1967) concept of "spectacle" represents a mechanism for de-politicization and pacification of social forces by distracting actors "from the most urgent task of real life: recovering the full range of their human powers through creative practice" (Best & Kellner, 1997, p. 84). Spectacle is a narrative and a theatrical performance that legitimates, rationalizes, and camouflages production and consumption. Late capitalism, according to Debord, enables social control in organization through a celebration of manic consumption and production, a masquerade of individual development and social progress that is really an abuse of labor and of ecology. "The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people mediated by images" (Debord, 1967, #4) [iii]. In all its specific forms, as information or propaganda, as advertisement or direct entertainment consumption, the spectacle is the dominant model of social life. Spectacle builds on Marx's concept of commodity fetish, "where the tangible world is replaced by a selection of images which exist above it, and which simultaneously impose themselves as the tangible par excellence" (Debord, 1967, #36). Or in the words of Best and Kellner (1997, p. 88):

When images determine and overtake reality, life is no longer lived directly and actively. The spectacle involves a form of social relations in which individuals passively consume commodity spectacles and services without active and creative involvement.

The spectacle is the material re-construction of the transcendent search. "The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life" (Debord, 1967, #42). It is the point when life becomes theatre, where the line between theatre-as-metaphor and life-is-theatre becomes so blurred we no longer pause to reflect on the difference.

Maria Harrison
Mixed Media/ Collage Artist

👍 + ➦ Email Me

“The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.” – Guy Debord, *The Society of Spectacle*

Born and raised in Southern California, Maria Harrison, at the age of 14, started incorporating images from magazines, fashion, religious representations, and various media/current events imagery that, according to Harrison, “compile and scream an entirely idealized portrait of nature and humanity.” Harrison’s art captures the moment, the present, and the current, all sealed into one image, one feeling, one theme be it femme fatale, city/nature, pure/pollution – a reflection on contrasts. Each of Harrison’s one-of-a-kind pieces are a result of a meticulous search through various sources in order to find the right mix of signs and signifier by “arranging a scheme of accumulated identifiable visuals” that tells a story “like words in a paragraph.” In a world inundated by a constant bombardment of images, Harrison captures the essence that each and everyone one of us tries to do on a daily basis – to try and make sense of the world.

how Zhang Ailing controlled her relationship with various magazines; how she located herself in the politically inflected magazine market; and how her sophisticated media strategies contributed to her success as a “professional writer.”

As well known, Zhang carefully constructed and circulated her image in the public arena. She may have sensed the changes of capitalist society, which Guy Debord characterised as “the society of the spectacle.” For Debord, “the society of the spectacle” does not simply denote a collection of images but points to the late capitalist society’s phenomenon that social relationships between people became to be mediated by images. Zhang established her relationship with the reader through her image she created within and outside texts.²⁾ Zhang Ailing’s relationship with the reading public was built not only through writings but also through images. She seems to have perceived the modern tendency that women writers become the media spectacle. “Media spectacle is indeed a culture of celebrity which provides dominant role models and icons of fashion, look, and personality.”³⁾ The fusion of the private with the public was becoming an important feature of the women’s magazine culture of Republican China and Zhang Ailing actively participated in such a magazine culture rather than becoming a victim.

The spectacle is the inverted image of society in which relations between commodities have supplanted relations between people, in which “passive identification with the spectacle supplants genuine activity”.



Guy Debord – *The Society of the Spectacle*

“The spectacle is not a collection of images,” Debord writes, “rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.” Debord postulated that Alienation had gained a new relevance through the invasive forces of the ‘spectacle’ – “a social relation between people that is mediated by images” consisting of mass media, advertisement and popular culture. The spectacle is a self-fulfilling control mechanism for society. Debord’s analysis developed the notions of “reification” and “fetishism of the commodity” pioneered by Karl Marx and Georg Lukács.

Don't turn back! There's no escape! You must continue on -- into the light!

The piece is a kick, which isn't the same as saying it's a trivial entertainment. Eliasson's art always courts pleasure, beauty and play -- even spectacle. This is, after all, the artist whose hypnotic 2003 installation of a shimmering yellow-orange "sun" hovering indoors inside the vast Turbine Hall of London's Tate Modern museum drew an unprecedented 2 million visitors.

Spectacle, in the recent critical lexicon, has developed into an unrelenting slur, a damning reference to a venal, transnational corporate society of media-driven distraction. "The spectacle is not a collection of images," Guy Debord wrote in "The Society of the Spectacle," the slim but influential volume about consumer mass-culture that, like Eliasson himself, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. "Rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."

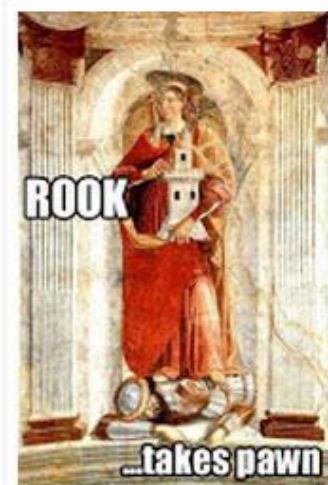
Eliasson's art doesn't deny our couch-potato culture, where bombs over Baghdad are indistinguishable from the latest manufactured-reality TV show, while fragmented audiences are bought and sold to advertisers, just like the products shown in commercials. But his work recognizes a vital distinction. The passivity induced by spectacular society is the real problem, not the spectacle itself.

An experimental artist in an almost scientific sense, his research is directed toward transforming passivity. One exhibition room is given over to a partial re-creation of his studio, and shelves lined with funky cardboard and chicken-wire models look like something from Buckminster Fuller's tinkering garage.

Eliasson's art produces the opposite of listless inertia. He makes art-spectacles to induce active perception, an acute awareness that nothing exists outside human consciousness. Perception creates reality. If consciousness changes, so does the world.

Nothing in his color tunnel is hidden. The chromatic mechanism -- coated plastic -- is simple and exposed. The obvious similarity to a toy kaleidoscope makes it universally accessible, even to those for whom contemporary art is alien.

With sociologist Guy Debord, Miller introduces the phenomenon of spectacle. The spectacle, according to Debord, is "not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (59). With Jean Baudrillard human agency "is reduced to choosing between the fulfillments proffered by the system" (61). With Fredric Jameson we encounter the "depthless liquidity of postmodern cultural symbols" (72). The result of all this in a post-Fordist society, according to Miller, is that our "countless acts of consumption and evaluation of commodities large and small train us daily to value things out of their contexts" (71). More sharply, they train us to believe that any problem we experience can be resolved by consumption. Whereas Christianity historically proposes the mortification of the flesh, engaged through a systematic practice of disciplines, and a participation in Christ's sufferings born up amidst a community of fellow pilgrims, advertising exploits "the dislocations suffered by modern persons and systematically [proposes] consumption as the remedy" (88).



Turning to the play-influenced *Society of the Spectacle* helps to reveal Romero's inability to recognize that his countercultural utopia functions as little more than a totalitarian cult. This contradiction arises because Romero tries to pit what Debord calls the *diffuse spectacle* of capitalist wage-earning societies against the *concentrated spectacle* of totalitarian regimes. Debord emphasizes, "The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image" (*Society* 24), but he clarifies that "[t]he spectacle is not a collection of images" (12). Instead, he uses the term "spectacle" to convey that "social relationships between people ... [are] mediated by images" (12). The pervasiveness of mass communications, such as television and magazines, results in the diminishment of "direct experience and the determination of events by individuals themselves" as they take on the habits of "passive contemplation of images (which have ... been chosen by other people)" (Jappe 6). The spectacle in its predominant guise as mass communication "appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification" (Debord, *Society* 12). Ironically, the spectacle promotes the opposite: separation and a lack of unity.^[11] All of spectacular capitalist society attends to its influence and is susceptible to the "illusion and false consciousness" that it promotes (12). Relevant to Romero's criticism of capitalism, Debord elaborates, "the modern spectacle [is ...] the autocratic reign of the market economy which [has] acceded to an irresponsible sovereignty and the totality of new techniques of government which accompany[] this reign" (Debord, *Comments* 2).

Spectacle

But what is the spectacle? The main aspects of this concept are described in the book *The Society of the Spectacle* (La Société du spectacle) by Guy Debord. It was first published 1967 in France and is a series of 221 short theses. Debord develops the thought of a modern society in which authentic social life has been replaced with its representation. He believes that we live relations through images. It is important to note that the spectacle is not a collection of images. It is a replacement mediated by images, social life is not about being anymore but about having. The enthusiasm for a new product demolishes real experiences. When you see a commercial (mediated by images) for a brand-new I-phone and you buy it, you don't buy a product, but an image. We have not made a decision ourselves, rather the decision has already been made for us. Meanwhile the spectacle appears as something positive, it is a monopoly on appearances. It pretends that consumption is good for us, but reality it lead to conformism. (This might be even more visible in today I-culture, in which everybody must have a smart-phone). The commodity fetishism or cultural homogenization leads to the destruction of human interaction.

Here lies a strange contradiction in the concept of the spectacle. It separates the people from their own lives and the lives of others but at the same time it brings us together through images. But due to the spectacle (supported by government, media and producers) we are equal, but not in a positive way, but in a conformist, boring way. In Debord's vision of modern society we become mere zombies, controlled by media and images. And that is what the spectacle is about.

The word 'spectacular' has to be given proper attention in order to understand why our contemporary art is losing its cutting teeth. The idea that deals with society as a 'spectacle' was forwarded by the French theoretician Guy Debord in 1967. In a society of spectacle or a spectacular society, Debord argued, 'Social relationships are created not by a collection of images but it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images'. According to him, in a spectacular society commodity would have completely colonised the social life. In the post-market scenario, in India too, art became a spectacular thing, and the organic relationship that once existed between people and art became a relationship that is mediated by images (of art, artists, art people, glitterati of the society who splurged in art). By becoming a complete commodity, art and its market colonised the social life and displaced the possibilities of critical engagement.

- 4 THE SPECTACLE IS NOT a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.

v. Crowds and Lack of Power

"The spectacle ... is the sun that never sets on the empire of modern passivity" (Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967)

Canetti was writing before Beatlemania, before the Vietnam War protests, and before the ascendance of TV. A few busy years later, an agitated French fellow named Guy Debord argued that under consumer capitalism, the whole of modern life "presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles". And before you say "Avatar 3D – Cool!" too loudly, take heed: Debord wasn't happy about this fact. In fact, he was so unhappy that he wrote a whole book calling for the overthrow of western civilisation. Luckily for Everett Dean Martin, however, this revolutionary book is such an impenetrable labyrinth of Neo-Marxist jargon that no one can understand it. Debord says crazy things like: "the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a *social relationship between people that is mediated by images*". In plain english, this means: in a media-saturated society, crowds are turned into images of crowd-ness; crowds become *spectacles* for spectators to watch (or ignore), rather than Canetti's pulsing, living organism, something irresistible to join. As a spectator, then, being in a crowd is not something you do, but something that *happens to you*.

The largest mass gathering in Melbourne, ever, occurred in February 2003, just before the US Army invaded Iraq. It was a massive turnout – between 150,000 and 250,000 people – that shut down Swanston Street, Flinders Street, the whole CBD. It was electric. It was thrilling. It was democracy in action. People cheered and screamed and hoisted each other up onto public monuments and waved for the videocameras. Everyone was there – the socialists, the trade unionists, Mothers Against War, Cyclists Against War – it was a veritable Babel of gibbering crowds, fun to watch, and even more fun to join. This Voltron-esque über-crowd sent a strong message to the government of the time, who took that strong message under consideration ... by ignoring it. The US Army went ahead with its tactical surgical strikes, and the Australian army sent in its support troops. Seven years later Iraq is still on the operating table, bleeding quietly, although it rarely makes the headlines.

Perhaps someone should channel Elias and write a sequel to *Crowds and Power*, called *Crowds and Lack of Power*.

The first piece of art work I am going to discuss is from Mark Jenkins, who is a street and sculpture artist from America. Jenkins is well known for his witty and outrageous street arts across the globe. Jenkins sculptures and art pieces may look sweet and cute but they seem to carry many issues surrounding them. *Embed* (photograph above) depicts a life size tape cast figures embedded into a wall. Shocking and rather odd to see, this piece is part of a series Jenkins started in 2006, which the figures were placed in busy urban and city environments to play with the idea of illusion and realism. Darkly comic and rather disturbing, Jenkins dresses them up in old clothing and hand-me-downs to create "an out of body experience". This image in particular captures not only the tape cast figure, but also a citizen in Washington DC, and this then umbrellas the idea of my understanding of the spectacle within society. *'The spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among people mediated by images'*



Cloverfield: the Facebook-YouTube-generation's blair-witch-godzilla project – a metaphoric tribute to the spirit-sapping-success of society's surrender to spectacle.

“All that was once directly lived has become mere representation.” Guy De bord

What happens to life if the snapshots we take to record life, become life?

J.J. Abrams has produced a smart new take on the monster movie genre that is in fact, a well deserved poke in our collective eye. It is a cinematic metaphor about the monster of mediated moments that has overrun our modern urban lifestyle.

As the spectacle of daily life becomes increasingly mediated by the raging tempest of electronic media and the so called meaningful moments of life are continuously surrendered to the all consuming beast of digital imagery, we come to a frightening threshold in the society viewed as spectacle. In the words of social theorist Guy Debord, “The spectacle is not a collection of images, rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.”



Spectacle,Space,Globalization



2013-12-27 00:28:18 来自: 开司米 (拨依一盒水彩笔)
The Production of Space的评论 ★★★★★

The spectacle is not a collection of images;rather,it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.

(Guy Debord,The society of the spectacle)

The quasi-logical presupposition of an identity between mental space (the space of the philosophers and epistemologists) and real space creates an abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other. From time to time some intrepid funambulist will set off to cross the void, giving a great show and sending a delightful shudder through the onlookers. (Henri Lefebvre,P6)

"Social space is a social product," argues Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*.In this kind of materialist reading of space,he differentiates between spatial practices,representational spaces,and the space of representation.This tripartite division can be understood in terms of the lived,the perceived,and the conceived.

Lefebvre's intervention in the intellectual discourse on space and postmodernity was at least twofold: first,he distinguishes between different forms of spatial practice in order to prevent the sort of conceptual conflation that results in contemporary critical discourse;second, he highlights the role of capitalism in the current fracturing of the spatial coordinates of lived reality.This later point is argued by first volatilizing and historicizing capitalism as a complex ensemble of multiple forms of capitalist relations,some industrial and commercial,others financial and speculative, that do not share either the same structure of temporality nor the same spatial dimensions.This point must also be understood in the context of Raymond Williams's important reminder that the "base" in the architectural metaphor or base-superstructure in Marxism implied both historical change and contradiction,as well as a processual understanding of social relations and not an objet or thing.

János Brückner uses porn as a reference point, an extremely subjective one that somehow still belongs to the territory of common knowledge – or to be more precise, the territory of common taboo. As he refers to that in the title of the exhibition, our perception of pornography is pre-set, default, its nature highly depends on the immediate environment we grew up in. With criticizing the visual domination of pornography and pornographic images, he not only comments on artificial heteronormative stereotypes and (image-) consumerism but also refers delicately to the problem of cultural homogenization as well. The problem, which was also addressed by the French theorist Guy Debord in his iconic collection of theses *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). As he states "The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."



János Brückner - Portrait of woman IV., oil, acrylic, canvas, 2012, 30x40 cm. Private collection.



We're a branding company, sure, but we believe in making the world a better place. Last night I started reading Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. It occurred to me that the reason this Situationist text is still relevant, and that Debord has not faded into the annals of history as a drunkard and eccentric, is that he prophesied what would come in the early 21st century.

Our Society of Spectacles

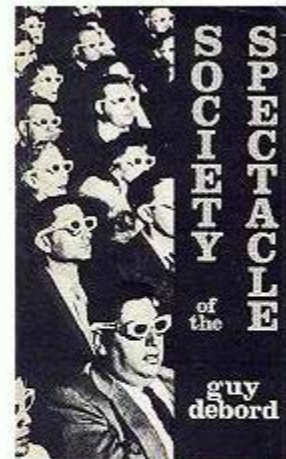
In Debord's era, forty-five years ago, images superseded the written and spoken word for the first time through advertising and media. Debord writes, "The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images." Debord uses the term "spectacle" to mean many things, including commodities, as well as the process of creating commodities, i.e. "a method of production, for development itself."

Those who lose the most in this method of production are individuals. As Debord writes, "At the same time all individual reality, being directly dependent on social power and completely shaped by that power, has assumed a social character." So what do we lose through diminished individual reality?

This is where Instagram comes in. Our propensity to share content is based largely on how we hope it will be appreciated, through likes or further sharing. The great irony of social networks is that they offer us interaction only through the social network *itself*. Instagram wants us to believe that it is an art based on filters and photography. In a way, it is. But in another way, Instagram takes the place of personal interaction. All social networks have this duplicity: as way of the future, and alienating social pretext. We seek validation of our individual realities by appealing to a mass sense of what we believe should define our reality.

While he wasn't the first celebrity whose body became a site of/for spectacle culture (Marilyn Monroe springs immediately to mind), Jackson's corpus is undoubtedly the signal symbol of the mediated American Dream, the most hyperbolic example how the human body might mediate consumerist desires. As Debord also pointed out in *Society*, "The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images." The death of Michael Jackson is precisely not the death of Michael Jackson's body, which will continue to live on, like one of the "Thriller" zombies, a spectacle absorbed and batted about by the spectacle culture. It will continue to exist as a rarefied nostalgic currency, for if we grieve the death of Michael Jackson, what precisely are we grieving if not a spectacular reflection of our own (mediated) development? Michael Jackson's body (of work) will always be resuscitated as a nostalgic marker for at least three generations of Americans (and the rest of the world, really). I do not believe that most of us mourn the death of Michael Jackson; instead, we continue to participate in his spectacle (or, rather, the spectacle of him) as a means of prolonging our own vitality and placating our own sense of self. It is not the loss of Jackson that we might acutely feel but instead a demarcation upon our own mortal bodies, for if a changeling like Jackson cannot escape bodily death, what hope do we have? At the same time, paradoxically, participating in the spectacle of the death of Michael Jackson's body partially alleviates (even as it subtly calls attention to) these anxieties. By affording Jackson (the illusion) of a certain immortality, we retain our own developmental, life-long investments in his spectacle, and, in turn, hope to secure our own bodies against the ravages of age, disease, decay, accident, gravity.

In *Society of the Spectacle*, a book which can be regarded as an updating of Marx's notion of commodity fetishism to take account of the qualitative shifts in the function of mass media after World War II, Guy Debord nevertheless insists that:



Society of the Spectacle, cover

Le spectacle n'est pas un ensemble d'images, main un rapport social entre des personnes, médiatisé par des images (Debord, 1967, 10).

The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images (Debord, 1987).

Because every convention could be turned around, “real life,” for the Situationists, was a canvas on which anything could be painted. The Situationists endeavored to change life itself through a total assault on culture.

The chief theoretical contribution of the Situationists was their characterization of modern capitalist society as an accumulation of spectacles in which “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation.”¹⁴⁸ In modern society, they proclaimed, all social relationships are mediated by images. Guy Debord writes: “The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.”¹⁴⁹ It was this phenomenon of mediation that they labeled as the spectacle:

Used from the very first as a term to designate contemporary culture—French: *spectacle*, a circus, a show, an exhibition—a one-way transmission of experience; a form of “communication” to which one side, the audience, can never reply; a culture based on the reduction of almost everyone to a state of abject non-creativity: of receptivity, passivity and isolation.¹⁵⁰

Turning to the play-influenced *Society of the Spectacle* helps to reveal Romero’s inability to recognize that his countercultural utopia functions as little more than a totalitarian cult. This contradiction arises because Romero tries to pit what Debord calls the *diffuse spectacle* of capitalist wage-earning societies against the *concentrated spectacle* of totalitarian regimes. Debord emphasizes, “The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image” (*Society* 24), but he clarifies that “[t]he spectacle is not a collection of images” (12). Instead, he uses the term “spectacle” to convey that “social relationship[s] between people ... [are] mediated by images” (12). The pervasiveness of mass communications, such as television and magazines, results in the diminishment of “direct experience and the determination of events by individuals themselves” as they take on the habits of “passive contemplation of images (which have ... been chosen by other people)” (Jappe 6). The spectacle in its predominant guise as mass communication “appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification” (Debord, *Society* 12). Ironically, the spectacle promotes the opposite: separation and a lack of unity.^[1] All of spectacular capitalist society attends to its influence and is susceptible to the “illusion and false consciousness” that it promotes (12). Relevant to Romero’s criticism of capitalism, Debord elaborates, “the modern spectacle [is ...] the autocratic reign of the market economy which [has] acceded to an irresponsible sovereignty and the totality of new techniques of government which accompany[] this reign” (Debord, *Comments* 2).

Reflections on and critiques of the media have a long standing. We might date the background for current approaches to Guy Debord’s classic book *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Debord argues, in an update of Marxist thought, that current social relations are no longer mediated by relations of production, but rather through what he calls “the spectacle.” The spectacle consists of the ubiquitous images – in advertising, on television, in the movies, and (postdating Debord’s work) on the internet – through which we relate to ourselves and one another. Debord, though, insists that the spectacle is not simply a matter of the images themselves: “The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.”⁴

The idea that our relationships have been mediated by images is at the core of the thought of Jean Baudrillard.⁵ In his early work, Baudrillard, like Debord, shifts the frame of Marxist thought away from its focus on productive relations. For Baudrillard, the proper focus is, instead, on consumption.⁶ He argues that we must abandon the focus on productivity and begin to ask about consumption: how it occurs and what codes it follows. Over the course of his career, Baudrillard radicalizes this idea until he argues that, because of the role various media play in constituting our world, we no longer live in a world of reality. Instead, our world is one of hyperreality or simulation.

We might think of the emergence of simulation this way. Human relations have always been mediated to some extent, at least through primitive signs and signals. The rise of language constitutes an important moment in the mediation of those relationships, as does the appearance of the printing press. However, with the explosion of media through which people interact with one another and their world – television, internet, email – social relationships have become dominated by the media through which they occur. In fact, as media

4. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Donald Nicholson-Smith (trans.) (Cambridge: Zone Books, 1994), 12.

image
not
available

Debord emphasizes that the spectacle is not a question of accumulation: “The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” (12). Thus, for example, when Perry Foyle goes to the Rainbow Bridge party, and is suddenly seized and kissed by a teenage girl, we read the following: “[H]e looked so much like that Hollywood actor, you know, and now she knew the thrill of kissing the original because all the similar features were located in roughly the same places, or something like that” (138). What the girl wants is not so much a sexual relationship as a social one. Or perhaps rather, what she desires is an impossibly “direct” relation to mediation itself, by means of the human “image” who is taken to embody it; the knowledge that the man is not the actor in some sense authorizes the thrill of at least momentarily regarding him as if he were the original.

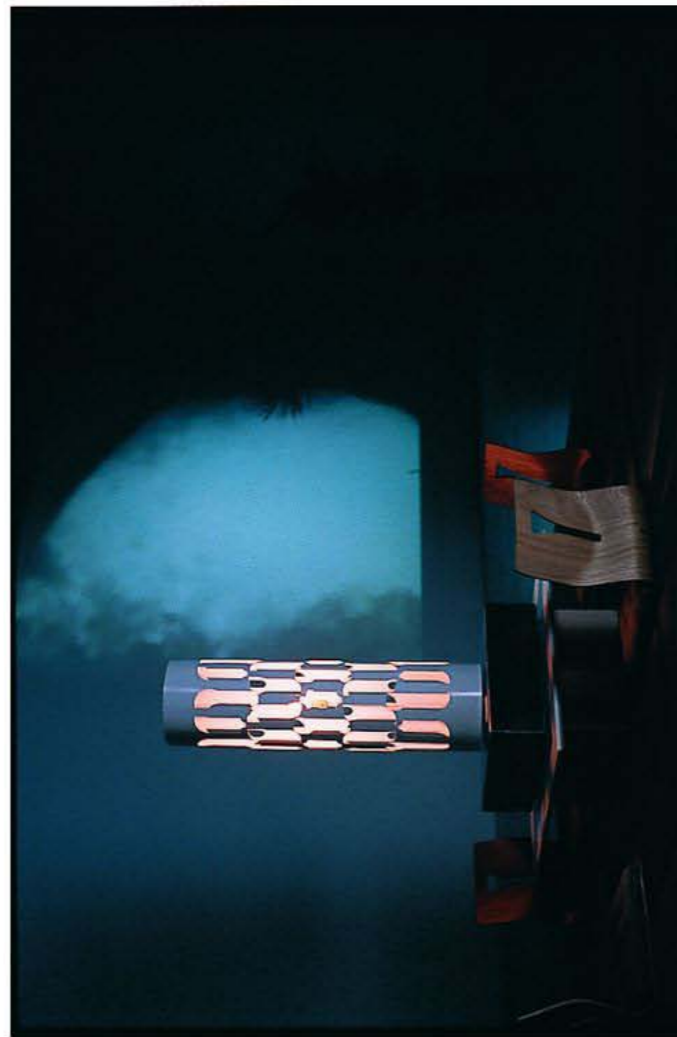
Going Native is replete with moments such as these. The novel has very little interest in society. Rather, society consists of the spectacle of society. “Look at all these assholes!” cries out Latisha while driving through the suburbs with Mister CD. “I hate ‘em all! (51). When not on the road, the narrative rests in self-sufficient, simulated worlds, either writ small in the form of motels or ranches, or writ large as Las Vegas or Hollywood—the better to bring out the purely mediated nature of social relationships, often simply at the perceptual level. This can be understood most clearly with respect to movie stars. Who are we to each other? We present ourselves on the model of the human images in the narratives we see, and that see us.

However, there is nothing consistent or even enduring about any particular example of mediation, which finally can be comprehended in one sense as

spectacle

A term that often refers to a large-scale cultural event, festival or celebration, or to an urban scene or stage set presented for visual consumption. It has been prominent in analyses of the significance of IMAGE production and the management of appearance in strategies of urban development in recent decades, with attention focusing in particular on temporary cultural events such as carnivals, International Expositions and sporting events, including the Olympic Games (Gold and Gold, 2005), as well as on more permanent spaces of entertainment, ‘theme park urbanism’ and ‘cities of spectacle’. The use of spectacular events has a long history, from the ‘bread and circuses’ of ancient times to efforts to promote European medieval city-states and metropolises of the nineteenth century. Yet the production of spectacles has become a common part of cultural strategies of economic development more recently, with studies exploring their implications for capital investment, cultural identity and TOURISM, and drawing out their multiple and contested readings by audiences. Many critics argue that such spectacles serve a diversionary function, masking underlying social and economic inequalities.

A key reference in critical discussions is Guy Debord’s book *The society of the spectacle*, first published in 1967. This is concerned less with spectacles as cultural events than with the spectacle in a critique of an alienated and image-saturated world. Developing earlier Marxist critiques of COMMODITY fetishism and ALIENATION, Debord writes that the spectacle ‘corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life’ (1994 [1967], thesis 42). This new stage in the ACCUMULATION of capital and the domination of social life by the ECON OMY is not simply the result of mass media manipulation and visual technologies, he stresses, for ‘the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images’ (thesis 29). URBANISM takes on particular importance within the spectacle as a technique for reshaping SPACE and ensuring the separation between people, although it is also a terrain within which struggles against the



CCA Project Gallery presented a new work by Certh Wyn Evans.

For his project at CCA, Certh Wyn Evans situated two distinct elements: The first, a reconstruction of Bron Gysin’s ‘Dreamachine’ – a revolving cylinder producing a flickering light – said to induce a state of lucid dreaming in the viewer. The second, a screening of films by the radical founder member of the Situationist International Guy Debord. ‘The Society of the Spectacle’ is a cinematic adaptation of his general text of the same name. On the one hand the Dreamachine ‘the only object that has been made to viewed with the eyes closed’ explores the interior subjective place of the mind’s eye, the source of imaging. The film on the other hand – a cultural artefact with its own complex history presents external reality as an immense accumulation of spectacles.

“The Spectacle is not a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images”.

Certh Wyn Evans stayed at CCA (Kitalyudhu as Professor of Research Program from September 1st to 30th, 1998.

This post is also available in Japanese

Thanks to the multiplying sockets linking consciousness to virtual sites of interaction, entertainment, and consumption, the blurring between mind and electronic screen is rapidly becoming a fait accompli whose consequences cannot be presently imagined (Gottschalk 1997). By comparison to the psychiatric description of schizophrenia therefore, telephrenia neither presumes an inability to function in intersubjective reality, nor necessarily an exacerbated “self-reflexivity to the point of dissolution” (Saas 1992). 7 As the schizophrenia of the multimedia age, telephrenia evokes rather a radically altered way of perceiving, self-reflecting and (inter)acting in a reality which becomes increasingly indistinguishable from its simulation. As situationist Guy Debord (1977, p. 1) remarked, “the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people mediated by images.” [italics mine] Paradoxically then, by comparison to schizophrenic symptoms usually described as dramatically visible and audible 8, the telephrenic ones appear quite unremarkable in the society of the spectacle. As always, it is a matter of degree.

To low-level fear as the climate of the postmodern moment. I thus add media screens as its constantly shifting cultural coordinates. Because such coordinates and the logic organizing them were absent in previous historical moments and minds, I believe that they must be included in any discussion of the psychosocial strategies (“diagnoses”) attributed to postmodern selfhood.

Spectacle is defined as both a (auto) narrative and a (meta) theatric performance that legitimates, rationalizes, and camouflages production, distribution, and consumption in late modern capitalism. (Source: Boje, Luhman, & Cunliffe, 2002).

◆ The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people mediated by images ◆ (Debord, 1970, #1) [iii].