

Mirrors, Marks & Loops — Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib at Locks Gallery

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By Natalia Angeles Vieyra

Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib's *Mirrors, Marks and Loops* at Locks Gallery samples distinct pieces that represent the duo's surrealistic and diverse approaches to video art and image-making. The artists are a husband-and-wife duo who began collaborating in 2007 after achieving national recognition for their individual artistic projects.

Material Culture and Alienation

Beginning with the massive floor-to-ceiling HD video installation, "Ascension (with Cat)," the exhibition at Locks Gallery immerses you in the pair's perceptual experimentations. In the piece, playing cards, pocket change, autumn leaves, and other ordinary objects from the couple's home are freed from gravity's rules and drift upward in repeating loops through a flat and indeterminate space.



The piece is overwhelming; despite the fluid and perhaps optimistic ascending motion of these items, the viewer experiences a sensation of drowning in inconsequential stuff—of being bogged down by the refuse of the everyday. Even the duo's housecat is thrown into the mix, lending a bit of needed comic relief to the installation.

This piece serves as a bridge between several distinct themes broached in the show, including the contemporary preoccupation with material things, as well as the potential of gestural experimentation and abstraction within video art.



To the left of "Ascension with Cat" are two pieces that offer a glimpse into a dystopian future. In both, it's a future in which the innovative architectural concept—the *Continuous Monument* originally proposed by Italian firm Superstudio in the 1970s—has been fully realized. The *Monument*, an intimidating, mirrored monolith, serves to divide and isolate those outside of it by reflecting their gaze

with its repeating, mirrored window panes.



The first projection, “The Continuous Moment Part 1,” explores the symbolic potential of architecture, presenting the viewer with a world where the *Monument* is installed at Niagara Falls; Manhattan; and the American West. Here, the *Monument* becomes a powerful metaphor for globalization.

A companion piece, “Routine Maintenance,” features the *Continuous Monument* again, this time installed in a desert landscape. Here, a single window-washer maintains the structure; his presence highlights its isolating and alienating qualities.

The repetitive cadence of window-washer, red desert, and blue sky is disturbed by an ominous interruption, as an unfortunate bird is mesmerized by the reflective surface of the *Monument* and shrieks in pain as it crashes into the side of the building.

Artistic experimentation

With “Post-Perceptual Exercises #1 and #2,” the tenor of the exhibition shifts. In these experimental video portraits, the viewer is presented with a vista into the lives of artists as they work alone in their studios. These pieces combine elements of the documentary and the surrealistic by layering sounds, typographic experimentation; found footage; and advanced digital techniques. Like the abstracted, twisting objects in “Ascension (with Cat),” these short, looping pieces explore the potential of mark-making and gesture within moving images.



Further experimentation, this time with filmic construction, takes place in “Exploded View,” the only piece in the exhibition that utilizes a 16mm projection. Here, a piece of pyrite floats inexplicably in a hyper-realistic wooded environment, like some kind of fantastical cinematic diorama.

Despite the variety of topics and themes addressed in the show, *Mirrors, Marks & Loops* is unified by the two artists’ commitment to experimentation within the medium of video art. Through their use of abstraction and gesture, Hironaka and Suib engage with traditional modernist narratives, while simultaneously creating work that is decidedly innovative and contemporary.

Mirrors, Marks & Loops is on view at Locks Gallery through July 26th, 2014.

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