

# TITLE MAGAZINE

## 1967: Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib

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LOCKSGALLERY



Installation view of 1967, multi-channel video installation



“Comrades / and / friends / today’s / topic / is / current / events,” flashes one word at a time across a video projection in Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib’s panoramic video and audio installation, *1967*. The message is a clear and confident introduction to nothing but itself, the string of words looping periodically without direct elaboration, all anticipation and no resolution. The phrase is an ambiguous introduction of sorts to the installation, which fills the first floor gallery at Locks with a dizzying array of lights and sounds, some acidic and flickering, others slowly smoldering. Loosely following the narrative of a young Maoist revolutionary on her way to stir up trouble at the *1967* World Exposition in Montreal, *1967* features original and appropriated footage related to 60s revolutionary zeal in many incarnations, from left-wing didactic writing to Chinese propagandist films from the height of the cultural revolution.

Expecting the exhibition to be equal parts liberal politics and nostalgia for past revolutionary causes, I was pleasantly surprised to find myself instead bowled over by the sheer chaos of the in-

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stallation. Abstract grids, burning geodesic domes, and flawed choreographed dance footage compete for a moment of each viewer's attention, among many other images and sounds.

In case that might be off-putting, the gallery has been furnished with comfortable furniture that invites audiences to take this overwhelming exhibition in at a relaxed pace, sampling a variety of audio tracks from headphones, looking at flat screen monitors leaned casually against the walls, or experiencing the overall cacophony. The installation is a vibrant recontextualization that infects leftist propaganda with the very strategies of the media spectacle that Maoist and Situationist alike tried so hard to dismantle. If there is subversion in this installation, it is in effect carried out against political content itself, with propaganda becoming ambiguous aesthetics through a technological reshuffling.

What happens then to revolutionary ideas when they become part of the very media spectacle that they seek to dismantle? Something interesting and uncertain, if *1967* is any indication. Just as Brian Eno and David Byrnes' 1981 album *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* sampled right-wing radio evangelists, transforming them into texture and abstraction, *1967* carries out a similar transformation with the media residue of the political left.

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