



VALERIE SULLIVAN FUCHS
LOUISVILLE, KY

Boys Don't Cry, the first local solo exhibition by Louisville multimedia artist Valerie Sullivan Fuchs in five years, is a conceptual expedition that challenges the senses' grasp of visual truth [Gallery NuLu; March 7—28, 2008].

The first of three galleries houses *Western/Western!*, 2008, an eight-minute video installation made in collaboration with classically-trained musician Ben Sollee, who attempts to play Bach's *Suite for Violincello in G Major* on the cello with the barrel of a rifle, periodically producing notes with the rifle's butt. At one point, he stops and contemplatively fondles his unusual bow, as if it were a sacred object rather than a converted weapon.

Boys Don't Cry, 2007, a collaborative effort by Fuchs, Sollee, and choreographer David Ingram, is a 3:30-minute video projected onto a screen suspended from the ceiling. Here, Sollee sings his own song *It's Not Impossible (Boys Don't Cry)* to accompany the movements of three black-suited dancers from the troupe Empujón, directed by Ingram. Recorded at the Louisville Extreme Skate Park, the footage shows the dancers running back and forth inside the twenty-four-foot full pipe before peacefully sliding to the bottom, as if exhausted or deceased, to be revived moments later by the magic of the video projector. But their revival is momentary, and the dancers disappear at intervals, as the concrete pipe supernaturally slides across the screen from center to right, disobeying physical laws. Presence and absence defy rational and sensory assumptions. What's more, as Sollee's lilting voice seeps into the first gallery and periodically dissolves the auditory unity of *Western/Western!*, the memory of *Boys Don't Cry* ingratiates itself into its experience and the viewer struggles to maintain coherence.

On the wall opposite *Boys Don't Cry*, three versions of a video still also call into question the veracity of what is taken as solid material form. *Apocrypha: Red, Green,*

and Blue, 2008, brightly-colored monochromatic thermal prints on wood, are simultaneously images of physical architecture and surreal abstractions. Hue adds a filter to the image, a layer that must be negotiated, much as recollections of places or events once experienced are relegated over time to an uncertain and shifting residence in the mind's eye.

Three video stills created in collaboration with the Louisville Ballet are on view in the middle gallery. *1/29.5 #1*, 2008, and *1/29.5 # 2*, 2008, two images of a rehearsal studio, flank *Untitled*, 2008, layered, projected, partial fragments of dancing bodies that morph into ghostlike entities and disappear in kaleidoscopic fashion. Close inspection reveals a body sliding to the floor, recalling the dancers in *Boys Don't Cry*. A musical adaptation of Steve Rouse's *Between Stillness* accompanies this work. The room also contains *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors*, 2008, two purple thermal prints on metal that recall *Apocrypha* visually and Marcel Duchamp's 1923 work nominally. Here, scenes of mountaintop removal evoke unseen interactions and abstract forces, much like those often attributed to Duchamp's unfinished piece. Fuchs' extreme excavation imagery also points to mechanized penetration and exchange, much like Duchamp's work.

Riddled with cracked networks, assemblages, and dust, Duchamp's *Bride* is a fitting metaphor for Fuchs' exhibition. Her work suggests the integration of the seen and unseen, forms dissipating into formlessness, and plural recognitions that evade common sense. Dusty remembrances and perceptual reconstitutions are vehicles driven by those who dare traverse this infinitely reconfiguring path.

—Marsha Morrison

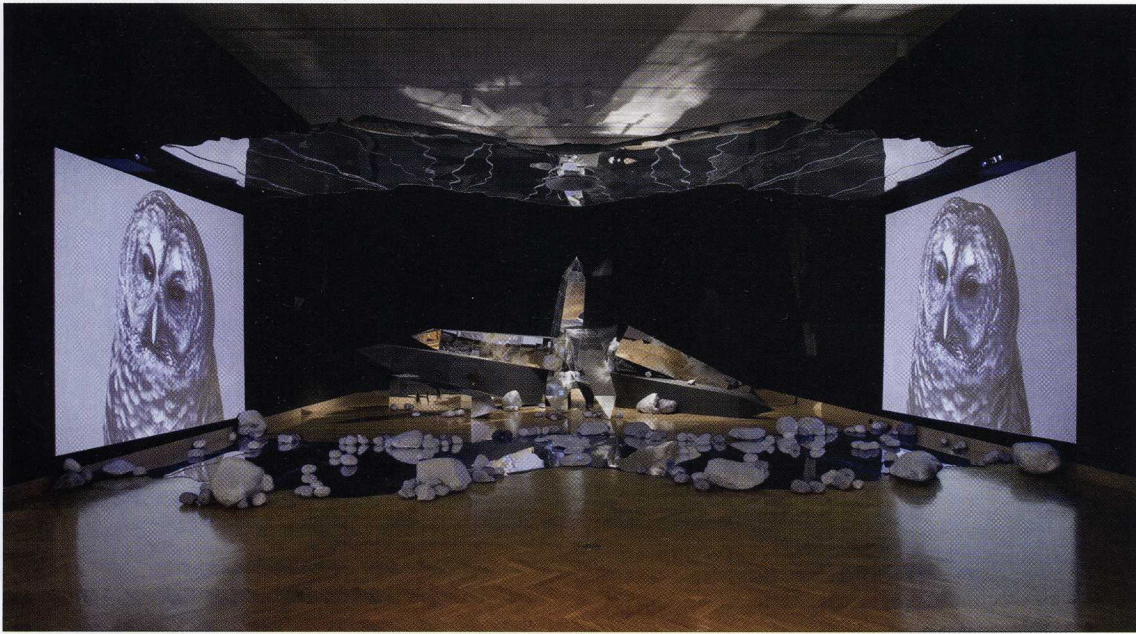
ANDRÉA STANISLAV
MINNEAPOLIS

Every encounter with art may well be an invitation to suspend our disbelief. Some works try harder than others to extend this invitation; others barely reward us for the effort. Andréa Stanislav's exhibition *River to Infinity—The Vanishing Points* gives us an opportunity to see how belief operates as a principle of representation: if we believe that something is here, we can recognize it [Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MAEP Galleries; January 25—March 16, 2008]. And sometimes, recognition is all we need to remind ourselves that belief is still possible. Or, to put it another way, seeing is believing.

In one gallery, Stanislav wall mounted a number of massive mirrors that reflect each other, opening up numerous portals into illusionary, endlessly receding spaces. Remnants of Edward S. Curtis' famous North American Indian archive project are etched on the surface of each mirror in *Portrait—Ghost I, III, V, and VI*, 2008. Hovering at the edge of presence and recognition as barely-there portraits, they evoke the agonies of American history; in catching the eyes of these knowing First Nations subjects, we are reminded that a collective memory of traumatic events does exist, and that it inflects the present.

While Stanislav had worked with cosmograms, mirrors, and continental maps before, she had never combined them in a single piece. On opposite walls of the same gallery, she installed two massive mirrored astrological charts: *Portrait I*, 2008, represents the first Continental Congress of 1774; *Portrait II*, 2008, the dates of provocations that have led to America's major wars. These aren't maps or portraits per se, but they are reminders that all beginnings require a rupture. What's more, Stanislav's combination of lo-fi special effects with astrological forecasting endows events with a kind of cultural personality. Looking into the abyss of images that recede into the past while they also stretch into the future, we see that the infinite reproductions are not

ABOVE: Valerie Sullivan Fuch in collaboration with Ben Sollee, still from *Western/Western!*, 2008, video installation, 8 minutes [courtesy of the artist and Gallery NuLu, Louisville, KY]



RE-ENACTMENTS MONTREAL

exact likenesses. Yet, we also know that hostilities have a way of repeating themselves.

The adjacent gallery presents the landscape and one-point perspective as important tools of empire by way of twin video projections and floor- and ceiling-mounted mirrors. For her video *River to Infinity—The Vanishing Points*, 2008, Stanislav staged nine mirrored obelisks in the Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah—like gems on jeweler's velvet—and a perfectly timed, dynamite and gasoline fireball explosion that reduces them to rubble with beautiful creative and violent force. Close-ups of an owl and a mirror-eyed seer come into the mix, invoking mythological figures with extrasensory foretelling powers. Once the dust settles, Stanislav conjures lo-fi camera magic to reverse the diegetic destruction and bring the obelisks back to wholeness. Her rewind-repeat trick isn't an elaborate and seductive illusion. But it asks us to witness the explosion over and over again, which produces a resurrection of sorts. There is no opportunity to restart and avoid the inevitable, however; we merely return to the beginning of a story that will repeat endlessly.

The cycle of life and death echoes throughout the work, which is caught in reiteration; it is the realm of circles, loops, rotations, orbits and abysses. Still, despite its forays into visual culture, the work makes little effort to convince us to believe in any specific model of time. It simply reveals, aestheticizes, and critiques the conceptions of repetition and return that operate, to varying degrees, in all theologies, ideologies, and historiographies.

—Christopher Atkins

The re-enactment of various art historical gestures and segments from media culture may well, by now, be an exhausted curatorial theme. Still, *Re-enactments* provides a frame for a productive dialogue between the selected works [DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art; February 22—May 25, 2008]. Side by side, the installations by Stan Douglas, Paul Pfeiffer, Nancy Davenport, Harun Farocki, Ann Lislegaard, and Kerry Tribe tell the Herculean story of finding and conveying coherent meaning. Each installation structures a relationship with the viewer that suggests the possibility—or impossibility—of asserting agency in a culture that is governed by the ubiquity of the screen.

Harun Farocki makes this difficulty—and the urgency of its countering—most obvious. In his *Documenta XII* hit, *Deep Play*, 2007, graphs of data, dynamic diagrams outlining the players' every move, arrows tracking the ball, and a continuous stream of sports reportage overlay a striking green soccer field. Here, for a moment, we seem in control of an omnipotent apparatus of surveillance and analysis. The power implied in this transfer is quickly eroded, however, as our attention is fractured over twelve competing screens. In this case, omnivision does not provide access to a "deep" truth: the apparatus has swallowed its referent. Instead, we are ensnared in the seemingly infinite analytical permutations of the World Cup, caught by the gaze like a fly, prey to the media.

Equally bleak but less seductive is Nancy Davenport's video loop *Weekend Campus*, 2004, a long tracking shot of a road in front of an art school, made from hundreds of still photographs of stalled cars, accidents, and dull-eyed witnesses. Davenport attempts neither credibility nor pathos. Nor does *Weekend Campus* suggest narrative resolution. The scene is also devoid of action: it consists of crumpled, piled-up metal, and an immobile group of students and teachers.

What's more, Davenport's remake of Godard's *Weekend*, 1967, recasts the original's black humor as something even darker. If Godard tactically alienated the audience from cinematic immersion in order to prompt reflection, the audience stands inert in front of Davenport's video—an exact mirror image of the impassive witnesses on the other side of the road. We face each other frontally with the wreckage between us. We cannot insert ourselves into this tableau: a teenager in a sports car gives us the finger.

Kerry Tribe's two-channel video installation *Here and Elsewhere*, 2002, also cites Godard, taking its cue from his televised interviews with French schoolchildren in 1978. In the video, an elderly man off-camera interviews a precocious adolescent girl with an English accent and bright red hair. He poses hefty philosophical questions about identity, space, time, and the limits of knowledge. For example, he asks: what does it mean to remember? Do you go back in time or do things move forward in time to meet you? The girl answers with confidence: they come forward. Question: are you being yourself or are you playing yourself? Answer: I'm doing both. The image itself is visibly a construction: it is made of two different projections, whose meeting creates a visible "seam." Rarely registered and sometimes showing altogether different footage, the combined image reveals more contradiction than the coherent worldview the girl is trying to enact. As the camera zooms out over the Hollywood hills, the video's self-reflexivity seems to demand reflexivity on a much greater scale: can such truths only be decreed from the perch of privilege?

Like Tribe's *Here and Elsewhere*, Ann Lislegaard's installation *I-You-Later-There*, 2000, concerns a female protagonist in her domestic environment. A large section of white flooring leaning up against the wall serves as a screen. A bright light flashes on it intermittently: it is synchronized to the woman's voice. She walks around

INSIDE FRONT COVER: Nancy Davenport, still from *Workers (Leaving the Factory)*, 2007, multi-channel video installation (courtesy of the artist and Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York) / ABOVE: Andrea Stanislav, exhibition view of *River to Infinity—The Vanishing Point* (courtesy of the artist and Minneapolis Institute of Art)