



Kai-Oi Jay Yung 'Interval; A Narrative Psychosis'
...As long as the sound of hammers did not cease...

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Artists are looking for a new modernity that would be based on translation. What matters today is to translate the cultural values of cultural groups and to connect them to the world network.... altermodernism, a movement connected to the creolisation of cultures and the fight for autonomy, but also the possibility of producing singularities in a more and more standardized world.

-Nicolas Bourriaud

Yung's practice; the lyrical, delicate and powerful chronicle, is embedded in the technological and its relationship to what Nicolas Bourriaud describes as the altermodern. In particular, Yung gives materialization through her video and interdisciplinary approach to four of the *manifesto's* principal concerns: "A new modernity is emerging, reconfigured to an age of globalisation– understood in its economic, political and cultural aspects: an altermodern culture/Increased communication, travel and migration are affecting the way we live/Our daily lives consist of journeys in a chaotic and teeming universe/ Today's art explores the bonds that text and image, time and space, weave between themselves." Similarly Yung evokes Brakhage's contemporary video art as moving visual thinking, or American experimental filmmaker and socialite Marie Menken. "Marie was one of the first filmmakers to improvise with a camera and edit while shooting. She filmed with her entire body, her entire nervous system. You can feel Marie behind every image, how she constructed the film in tiny

pieces and through the movement... And she gave us a new beginning. She took the film - the non-narrative film, the poetic film, the language of film - in a completely new direction, away from classic filmmaking and into a new adventure." Jonas Mekas.

Yung's physical trajectory between Hong Kong and across California to Sherborne and Bath parallels an internalized trajectory exploring fractured identities across time and space. Operating her video camera as an instrument of time-travel- these trajectories collect and intersperse the real, re-enacted and re-told. This complex collusion, based on a series of chance encounters present dialogues between artist as interviewer and the interviewee, questioning how realities and truths are constructed, manipulated and represented.

The duplicity of journey is simultaneously mirrored in Yung's multi-channelled installation and photographic work, which holds at its core the tormented nineteenth century American figure Sarah Winchester, heiress to the Winchester Repeating rifle fortune. Sarah's midnight séances and incessant construction of a spectacular architectural labyrinth- now museum- The Winchester Mystery House, San Jose, was borne from personal tragedy and an indulgence of an all-consuming superstition- leading to 'logical madness'.

Split Device

Yung analyses Winchester, and crucially herself, through two specific languages: the screen-based documentary and the staged performance, both forms of convention that offer perspectives of truth and artifice. This split device, which sees Yung conduct interviews with Shozo Kagoshima, museum director of the Mystery House, and one of its tour guides in one film- *Sarah Winchester; A Mystery House*, whilst in *Amnesia; A Rehearsal*, Yung 'performs' Sarah in period costume and staged environment. This creates a friction surrounding the verisimilitude of a story: that one depiction is 'truer' than another. Yung presents the truth of the documentary language in *Sarah Winchester; A Mystery House*, yet these actions are at once undone in *Amnesia; A Rehearsal*- where she reframes this story, simultaneously playing Sarah and inhabiting the characters/collaborators in the piece itself.

Yung describes her film *Amnesia: A Rehearsal* as "a psychological anti-narrative based on the intertwined biographies of Sarah Winchester, Jane Austen and chance internal crossings of the artist herself with Marigold Verity, a harpist in Sherborne." This scenario fuses the eccentricity of Winchester's American grandeur and privileged circumstances with Austen's English sentimentality, romance, realism, and wise social commentary, notably in the incarnation of Austen's *Emma*. Similarly, Yung's chance encounter with Marigold Verity plays out uncannily- Verity is a musician from Sherborne, Dorset, her life also entwined in wealth, musical talent, hauntings and large-scale construction of her own Jacobian home. In these *stagings*, contrived or serendipitous encounters, through mimicry Yung deliberates on reality itself as interplay between "theatre, architecture, film set, and two-dimensional screen." From here, Yung generates a new question, one that sees a progression towards the spiritual and questions the multi-channel projection as a vehicle to support the illusory and fantastical. She articulates how the consciousness can exist within parallel realities. Yung's 'double-exposure' of Winchester reveals that what is documented and evidence of truth has open-ended interpretations, similarly, the fabricated is rooted in irrefutable alternative historical perspectives.

From the epistolary (the documentary) literary genre, Yung now retells this through Marigold Verity who herself is then further projected through Yung's multiple encounters across Hong Kong and California. This includes a physiognomist, a former Alcatraz inmate to Yung's own grandmother and Spielberg's script producer; cross references and sequences components to a greater narrative. Taking the themes emerging from *Amnesia*... Yung distills and sequences over 60 hours of research footage into the categories of *Love, Architecture, Present, Death, Incantation* and *Journey* and three moving image works; *New World, Cable High* and *Traces*. References are abundant; a Ghost Opera, secret ceremonies, earthquakes devastation, Central's property development, China's shipping trade... The 'amnesia' that Yung implies is a retaliation against given historical truths, political, feminine, spiritual...colliding art as a series of perceptual differences in "which knowledge is proclaimed by all as outwardly coherent and sensical, but inwardly lacks any dependable congruity." Yung's amnesia then, is a tool for revision, reclamation and conviviality. It reminds of a coda by Francesco Bonami that reverberates and surmises on "the differences that makes a difference."

This interview then becomes another instalment in this sequence of videos, and Yung in role of interviewer allows us to become familiar with the interviewees; all become protagonists shaping this 'teeming' narrative of works. In the gallery itself, a mock double barrel rifle stands, the dress Yung performs in hangs... as evidence of a removed past. This reinforces Yung's relationship to another Bourriaud's examination of the function of the artist in the world, how art reprograms the world: that these works and our appearance in them is entirely abstracted as pure visual material, to be replayed, paused, stopped and tagged. Yung gives material substance to arguments fostered by Ustek around *Objet Image: Revisiting the interface*: "The knowledge that the history of photography and film provides us, constitutes the framework of what an image is; whereas today its wide-range of usage and consumption brings a diverse world of realms where its production is... to articulate the transformation that is taking place."

The encounter forms from a fascination. It implies a struggle, and also something so familiar in depth that there is an identity between those taking part in the encounter
-Jerzy Grotowski

Through her mediations of representation and participation, Yung's elaborate work exists at the interface of opposing and often uncompromising trajectories that are physical, emotional, ideological and intellectual. Her incessant multiplication of interconnecting realities uncovers the absurd impossibility of any singular truth, prompting us to question the incertitude or absolutes ordering daily living.