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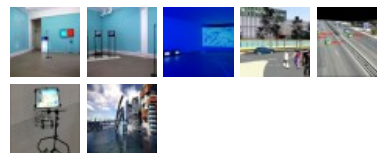
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2018.07.05 Thu, by Translated by: Banyu Huang

Fantastic Grounds: Jiu Jiu and the Politics of the Digital Image

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In "Fantastic Grounds", the artist Jiu Jiu juxtaposes computer-generated images with all manners of gathered materials: from early experiments with computer graphics and video to the experiences of gamers playing simulated games (like Sim Life), from hacked spoof videos to 3D models of Disneyland. These fragments are brought together and through the use of jump cuts inserted into the narrative, breaking up the linear temporality of the video. It also hides a thread of the artist's ideas about the interrelation between image generation and real space: rather imperceptibly, the working modalities in computer programming and the operational interface in design software shape our modes of thought and our means of carrying out tasks, leading to a homogenization of the user, which is projected out into real life, influencing how lifestyles are formed. For Jiu Jiu, this is the manifestation of the subjectivity of the image/video. The process of creating architectural renderings of urban buildings, like the destruction and remodeling of the world, is like the constant rendering and re-rendering of the image itself, which simultaneously continues to improve upon itself.

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“1. 选择城市” 展览现场 2017

八通场站 出口，展览现场，2017

Fantastic Grounds – Tomorrow, installation view, 2017

As such, in order to ensure an integrated and complete exhibition, Jiu Jiu conducted step-by-step experiments in two different project spaces. I:Project Space, located in a courtyard house at the end of Banqiao Hutong, has floors painted with a layer of silver reflective material, while a black stand supports a LCD screen, which plays the first half of “Fantastic Grounds”. In the “Light Pavilion Project”, located on the second floor of Taikang Space, a florescent tube is placed in one of the corners, its blue light filling up the entire space where three videos play, their content transitioning from the abstract to the representational. The punchline of the show comes from an early printed advertisement from Dell, with the slogan “Get More Out of Now”—a symbol of the human desires which would soon emerge and which posed the ensuing question: could humanity actually control the future world then being birthed?



《人造场地》，视频截帧，2017
“Fantastic Grounds”



《人造场地》，视频截帧，2017
“Fantastic Grounds”

This exhibition creates a scene of punitive seduction—an “iron hand in velvet glove” sci-fi atmosphere—and introduces a number of classic science-fiction themes: the coercive nature of technology, its effect on ethics and morality, the innate desires and ambitions of machines, and the deep-seated human anxiety about the threat of runaway technology. At one point in “Fantastic Grounds”, some young people aggressively hack apart a computer on the grass. In this deeply unequal struggle, the computer is only a lifeless object, weak and powerless, the unfortunate victim of their need to let off steam. Juxtaposed against other subjective, cold, calm imagery, this resentful, seemingly absurd act is imbued with pessimistic and nihilistic sentiments. It is as though humans are strapped in on the information highway—that non-stop flow of traffic—constant muttering to oneself and yet deaf to the unknowable truths and the essence of the universe. What is the subject? Where does the subject actually arise? As the images on the wall start to consolidate, transform, and spin, the real and the false, the subject and object become mutually convertible. The subjectivity that has emerged since Descartes has been disintegrated into an infinitesimal mass of densely packed individual entities, both restricting and influencing one other. There is no sovereign; there is no monotheistic god.



"Making Good Things Go Better", 展览现场

"Making Good Things Go Better", installation view



"Making Good Things Go Better", 展览现场

"Making Good Things Go Better", installation view

From his 2016 solo show "Making Good Things Go Better" at Telescope Space to "Fantastic Grounds" in 2017, Jiu Jiu has been concerned with looking at counteracting forces produced by the formation of images. But the computer interface still remains in the "othered" position of being objectified, whether it is in the artist's artistic process or the audience's viewing experience. This strange "onlooker" stance embodied in this "othering" carelessly exposes the artist's utilitarian tendencies, and prevents him from digging deeper into the background of this phenomena—this transformation from subjecthood to objecthood. If the goal of tracing the origins of image formation is to dissect how images create meaning, perhaps we might expect more than simply a collage of materials, lists or elaborate descriptions, but rather comprehensive research and understanding of how images prescribe and discipline our gaze and behavior. What is needed is a more active and general questioning, critical analysis, or even a complete subversion of codified modes of thinking and everyday logic. Then this

analysis, or even a complete subversion of codified modes of thinking and everyday logic. Then this new, subversive logic could be used to reassess and reassemble these images anew—a somewhat thorny path to navigate. Even though we have accepted this inversion of the subject-object, there is no denying or running away from the existence of the subject; the task at hand is to sum up principles and discover truths. Yet these truths and principles are all hidden behind the surface phenomena of the explosion of images in contemporary society, awaiting capture by a pair of hands.



《场地》，视频截帧，2017
“Grounds”





场地, 2017
“Grounds “

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