

YOUNG PROJECTS GALLERY
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Gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday 10:00am – 5pm.
Open by appointment Mondays and Saturdays.

Sabrina Ratté: Lieux-Dits

Opening reception 5:30-9:30pm October 6, 2016.
On view through January 20, 2017.

Co-curated by Sharsten Plenge, Young Projects is pleased to present *Lieux-Dits* the first US solo exhibition by Montreal-based artist Sabrina Ratté. Extending the flatness of the image into multidimensional habitats, Ratté's latest works for Young Projects articulate the nature of the electronic image as physical space, residing in both tangible and virtual expanses. On view is a survey of the artist's works in addition to new site-specific installations exploring video as environment— including works such as *Common Areas*, a sprawling, room-sized, four-channel installation; projection prints with video augmentation, and several single-channel videos.

Drawn by atmosphere and spatial memory, Ratté utilizes video to revel in the transparencies of epistemological space. Dematerializing photographs she captures from "reality," Ratté works between realms of interference— interweaving analog techniques with digital software to create spaces rich with texture and luminosity. "Sculpting electronic signals into architectures," her practice permeates from a deep-rooted interest in engaging with the image itself and extending the parameters inherent to its frame.

The show's title refers to the expression for small geographic regions or villages with no registered or official name. These "lieux-dits" are baptized based on historical anecdotes, myth or legend, or denoted as a landmark with a name characteristic of their place. Evoking an uninhabited site existing in the imaginary or in secrecy, the conception of "lieux-dits" relates to Ratté's conversation with architecture, growing a body of work continually informed by the [in]visible landscape and the [un]built nature of place. Viewing architecture as "another manifestation of science fiction," Ratté's installations invoke the moving image as a portal for accessing a surreal and elusive territory.

Works in the exhibition

Lobby Area (to the left from the exterior):

(print + projection)

Other Spaces: Winter Garden, 2016

Print with video projection.

Displayed at 93.25in x 72in / 236.86cm x 182.88cm.

Dimensions variable.

Courtesy Laffy Maffei Gallery

Part of the triptych *Other Spaces*, a collaboration between Sabrina Ratté and Brenna Murphy, *Winter Garden* stands as a monument initially configured of three projection prints: a composite of two individual pieces by each artist and a third emerging as a paired variation of their synthesis. Sharing a sensibility for transcending hierarchies of digital spaces—both conceptually and through their respective remodeling of dissecting video's anatomy and techniques—*Winter Garden* stands as Ratté's singular piece and as relic to her mastery of sculpting architectures by amalgamating electronic signals within coded landscapes. Inspired by Michel Foucault's *Les Hétérotopies*, utopias / dystopias, and the online experience, *Other Spaces* depicts an impalpable reality where interlocking lattices perpetually evolve—transforming into amorphous environments—continually shifting the perspectives between dimensions. *Winter Garden* is a window into the triangulation of *Other Spaces*: a projected facade onto experienced virtuality; a mirror reflecting the artifice embedded within the physicality of landscape.

Lobby Area 2 (right side from the exterior):

(flat screens, left to right)

Immeuble-Villas VII, 2016

Single-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable, 2'49 loop.

Edition of 5

Immeuble-Villas IV, 2016

Single-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable, 3'36 loop.

Edition of 5

Immeuble-Villas V, 2016

Single-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable, 3'4 loop.

Edition of 5

Immeuble-Villas I, 2016

Single-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable, 3'06 loop.

Edition of 5

(print + projection)

Immeuble-Villas II, 2016

Dye sublimation on aluminum with HD video augmentation, 16:9 aspect, 3'35 loop.

27in x 48in / 68.58cm x 121.92cm

Edition of 5

Immeuble-Villas is an ongoing series of abstract interior spaces where electronic textures and architectural elements are subtly animated. Referencing Le Corbusier's standardization of apartment buildings, selections from the series are displayed in their integrity as "tableaux"—with each video loop presented on individual screens. *Immeuble-Villas II* is presented as a dye sublimation on aluminum with video augmentation especially for this exhibition— the nature of the printed surface itself enhancing the artist's interest in architecture, corporate interiors, and the [un]built landscape.

Main Room

(four-channel video installation)

Common Areas, 2015

4-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable, 15'00 loop.

Soundtrack by Roger Tellier-Craig.

Initially conceived as a commission stretching the flat 50-foot lobby wall of the Museum of the Moving Image in New York, *Common Areas* is reconfigured as a 4-channel video installation specifically for Young Projects. A room-sized physical composite of interlocking screens shapes an atmospheric yet tangible space— the skeleton of a corporate interior assumes an over-sized dimensionality; a model of contextual architecture— carving a labyrinth where transparencies of brown and blue slide and undulate to reveal narratives according to our spatial movement within electrically charged rooms. Sliding doors, pulsing panels, and video wipes are superimposed onto structural skins, forming a hybrid passageway that crosses, oscillates, and interlinks— placing us in a modified web of architectonic space. Wavering impressions are enhanced by the controlled, slow rhythm of a visually attuned soundtrack by Ratté's long-standing collaborator Roger Tellier-Craig. Here, *Common Areas* exudes an eerie warmth as a colossal spatial intervention and pedestrian zone; articulating a formatted construct both mesmerizing and elusive.

Back Area 1 (to the right)

(projection on flat screen)

Built-In Views, 2016

Single-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable, 9'20 loop.

Video and Sound editing : Sabrina Ratté

Sound Design: Roger Tellier Craig

Commissioned by: Toronto Animated Image Society (TAIS), Toronto, Canada

World-wide distribution: Vtape, Toronto, Canada

Specially included in this exhibition prior to premiering as a commission for TAIS in Toronto this November.

Back Area 2 (long passageway to the left)

Fakeaway Haptics, 2016

Single-channel HD video, 16:9 aspect, dimensions variable. 3'22 loop.

Soundtrack by Roger Tellier-Craig.

From *Le Révéléateur's 12" Hyper*.

Fakeaway Haptics is built within a framed expanse that appears simultaneously confined and limitless— a dynamic and hallucinatory mediation on the possibility of the infinite within constructed space— a moving determinant matrix in a state of precise yet perpetual cacophony. A product of Ratté's ongoing audiovisual project with Roger Tellier-Craig as *Le Révéléateur*, and premiering in conjunction with *Hyper*, the duo's 12" released on Dekorder, *Fakeaway Haptics* is Ratté's first video to integrate 3D animation. A visual articulation in dialogue with the "granular textures of the sound," Ratté toggles between "noisy electronic images" and "impossible architectures" to render a complex environment of ambiguous end. Woven into the armature of a mirrored box for this presentation, *Fakeaway Haptics* shifts the electronic frame to position the viewer within the axis of its hologram.

Bios

Sabrina Ratté's video practice investigates the creation of virtual environments generated by analog technologies. Approaching electricity as raw material, she transforms the digital image into luminous and vibrating architectures. Her work exists on the edge of science-fiction, between abstraction and figuration, utopia and dystopia, architecture and landscape. She has been featured in numerous international exhibitions and platforms, concurrent to her audiovisual project with electronic composer and musician Roger Tellier-Craig as *Le Révéléateur*. Spanning installations, GIFs, prints and live performances, her works have been exhibited with *Paddles On! 1st Digital Art Auction* at Phillips (New York), *EMPAC* (Troy), *Museum of the Moving Image* (New York), the *International Film Festival Rotterdam*, *2016 Pulse New York - Contemporary Art Fair*, *BIAN* (Montreal), the *Lampo series* (Chicago), *Elektra* (Montreal), *MUTEK* (Montreal, Mexico, Barcelona). Her videos have been released on DVD by San Francisco label *Root Strata* and with video label *Undervolt & Co*. She is part of the online collective *Computers Club* and is represented by *Laffy Maffei Gallery* (Paris).

Roger Tellier-Craig is a Quebec native who has been an influential fixture on the Montreal experimental circuit for over 20 years. Covering a range of styles and contexts, his practice has taken him from rock to A/V performance and improvised music. His tenure with Canadian band *Fly Pan Am* performed internationally, and has releases via *Constellation* records. *Le Révéléateur*, his long-running audiovisual collaboration with Ratté, has performed in the US and toured throughout Europe, as well as released records on the labels *Root Strata*, *Gneiss Things* and *NNA Tapes*. *Le Révéléateur's* most recent record, *Hyper*, was released by Hamburg label *Dekorder*, while the soundtracks to Ratté's *Visites Possibles* and *Sightings* series were released in 2015 by UK-based *Where To Now?*

Le Révéléateur seeks inspiration through the performative tradition that combines electronic sound and video art, *Le Révéléateur's* live performance is the result of an intermedial dialogue between Sabrina Ratté and Roger Tellier-Craig. Through the creation of abstract architectural structures and electronic landscapes, Ratté's video images are in constant dialogue with the ethereal sounds and futuristic pulses generated by Tellier-Craig. Together, they aim to create an immersive audio-visual experience where sound and image are inseparable.

Sharsten Plenge is a curator inspired by a world saturated in digital excess, instant access, and convenience. Through her projects and *WOAH* (We Open Art Houses), she seeks utopian residues in a pervasive atmosphere of screens, sensory overload, and urban greyfields. She has collaborated on projects in Berlin, Houston, New York, and Los Angeles, where she currently resides and founded *WOAH* in 2012. A creative agency and idea hub housing spaces with experiential projects, *WOAH* works in tandem with artists, multimedia brands, and property owners to orient the intersection of art and technology in unexpected places.

Architecture and philosophy have a storied and fractious relationship. The idea of a 'just city' molding the lives of its just inhabitants is the founding statement of Western Philosophy in Plato's republic. Since then, the notion that architecture informs and molds human behavior and relationships has always simmered beneath the surface. From the Greeks to Bauhaus to Le Corbusier, architecture has always been shadowed by ideology and, by extension, by dreams of utopia.

Sabrina Ratté's video works explore fantastical architectural spaces with an eye to this ideological dream. As a part-time resident of Paris, she is deeply familiar with statist architecture. Nor is there any city outside of Paris that has been the site of so many convulsive and purely ideological attempts at civic utopia. From the Paris commune onward, the demands for a radical reimagining of the city itself have shut it down completely. In May of 1968, students galvanized into action by the abstruse revolutionary maxims of Situationism tore up the paving stones and throwing them at police, occupying theaters, and repurposing factories.

Yet as the twentieth century has shown, utopic movements and the cities they build can quickly devolve into totalitarianism or outright barbarism. Behind the philosopher architect, the dictator or the oligarch is never far behind. Ratté allows this unsettling tension to inform every aspect of her video work. We long and plan for utopia, but the plans are often disastrous. As she herself says, 'There is something uncanny and ominous, even terrifying in perfected architectural spaces.'

Using a blend of cutting edge and analog video technologies, Sabrina creates fantasy architectural spaces informed by this emotional and ideological tension. The viewer is paraded through interiors that are coldly polished in their beauty and slightly oppressive in their dimensions. Often times they are so geometrically perfected and reflective they verge on geometrical abstraction.

The result are stately, hallucinatory mazes that reflect our deep fascination with projecting ourselves into idealized spaces. Much like the architectural walkthroughs one sees at every sleek condominium sales office, Ratté's videos carry the cold imprint of luxury coupled with underlying unease.

Much of this unease is generated by her simultaneous use of digital and analog technologies. While architectural software forms the solid outlines and surfaces of her videos, many of the patterns are generated with primitive analog technology. These patterns are generated with the same knob studded gear used experimental and avant-garde video of the sixties and seventies. Along with her love of formalism, Ratté expresses a deep fascination with the early days of video and avant-garde cinema and weaves it within her work.

It reveals a healthy subversive impulse that informs and is seamlessly woven into all that cold luxury. In combining the two, she is making a potent statement about contemporary tensions between utopian ideals, late capitalist luxury, and the desire for subversion. While we long to project ourselves into idealized bodies and spaces, we retain our longing for subversion.

In Ratté's videos, the spaces are coldly idealized, even oppressive, statements of totalitarian grandeur, but raw analog noise decorates the walls.

—David Jager