

Ann Lislegaard

25 October – 13 December 2008

Murray Guy is pleased to present two major digital animations by Ann Lislegaard: *Crystal World* (after J.G. Ballard), 2006 and *Left Hand of Darkness* (after Ursula K. Le Guin), 2008. These works comprise the second and third parts of a trilogy of 3D animations based on science fiction novels that began with *Bellona* (after Samuel R Delany), exhibited at Murray Guy in 2005.

This trilogy continues Lislegaard's longstanding investigation into spatial perception, cognition, and, in particular, divergent forms of narrative. She draws here on science fiction not to illustrate its imaginative content but rather, as Frederic Jameson articulates it, because of science fiction's potential to provide "something like an experimental variation on our empirical universe."¹ The works reference modernism and historical visions of the future to reflect on our present triangulation of space and knowledge and temporality; as a whole, they comprise a far-reaching investigation into the structuring of cognition in the digital age.

Crystal World (after J.G. Ballard) is a looping double screen animation showing a modernist glass hotel in a tropical jungle that is slowly invaded by crystalline growth. Text drawn from Ballard's 1966 novel, which describes a viral crystal found deep in the rainforest that petrifies all organic matter, mingles intermittently with shifting digital images of shadows and the jungle seen from vague interior spaces. Taking the glass house as conceit for a modernist structuring of knowledge, Lislegaard's animation directly references the Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi's 1951 Glass House, and the work of Robert Smithson and Eva Hesse, who investigated crystalline and organic structures as a means of articulating nonlinear time.

Set in a similarly extreme climate, *Left Hand of Darkness* (after Ursula K. LeGuin) is a three-channel projection that draws on LeGuin's 1969 novel describing an icy planet populated by a single sex of androgynous humanoids. Pages of the novel are inscribed on top of another and rotoscopic images spin next to drawings of male and female genitalia. Here identity and behavior seem at once both paralyzed and in a state of constant flux; the novel's radical re-imagining of gender is inscribed in a fluid space between cinema, architecture and writing.² As in *Crystal World*, Lislegaard works to reconfigure polarities—between interiority and exteriority, male and female, organic and inorganic—in an explosively horizontal digital terrain, where nothing aligns as we would expect.

Ann Lislegaard lives and works between Copenhagen and New York. *Crystal World* (after J.G. Ballard) was recently on view as an outdoor installation in *Light Project* at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis, and was originally commissioned for 27th Bienal de São Paulo in 2006. Lislegaard has had numerous solo museum exhibitions, including presentations at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2007); Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark (2007); Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2004); Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, Scotland (2002); and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (1999), among others. She represented Denmark at the 51st Biennale di Venezia in 2005 and will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle opening in May 2009.

¹ Frederic Jameson, "World Reduction in Le Guin: The Emergence of Utopian Narrative," *Science Fiction Studies* 7 (November 1975).

² cf. Lars Bang Larson, "In Visions: Extra-cultural surprise and the status of utopia in Ann Lislegaard's work," in *Ann Lislegaard: Science Fiction* (Amsterdam: Paul Andriessse), 2008.