

KUNSTVEREIN IN HAMBURG

PRESS RELEASE

Bruce & Norman Yonemoto – MIRROR OF DESIRE

9.7.2022 – 2.10.2022



Courtesy of Bruce Yonemoto and Electronic Arts Intermix EAI New York

Press Conference

8.7.2022, 12 Uhr

Registrations: presse@kunstverein.de

Opening

8.7.2022, 19 Uhr

Artist Talk

9.7.2022, 16 Uhr

Please find the complete program on our website.

*The Kunstverein in Hamburg is proud to present Mirror of Desire, the first institutional solo exhibition of Bruce (*1949, USA) and Norman Yonemoto (*1946-2014, USA) in Germany.*

The artists' highly stylized, ironic, and camp films deconstruct the visual language of advertising and the tropes of 20th century Hollywood cinema. In their work, they draw from genres like the melodrama or the soap opera to simultaneously exaggerate and deflate narrative structures, cultural mythologies, and psychoanalytic norms.

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*Informed by queer and Asian-American perspectives, the films in *Mirror of Desire* exemplify a form of analysis that takes dominant visual culture and the techniques of its production as its object.*

*Often produced as collaborations, Bruce and Norman Yonemoto's films star several figures from the Los Angeles art and performance scene, beginning in the late 1970's, including Patricia Arquette, Goldie Glitters, Spalding Gray, Mike Kelley, Ron Vawter and Mary Woronov—all of whom appear in *Mirror of Desire* at the Kunstverein in Hamburg.*

Curated by Milan Ther

Garage Sale

1976, 85 min, 16mm, digitised, sound. Courtesy the artist

*The first collaborative film of the Yonemoto brothers, *Garage Sale*, centers on the marital upheaval between drag queen Goldie Glitters and her husband Hero. Once a member of San Francisco's legendary *The Cockettes* theater troupe, Goldie was famously crowned Santa Monica College's 1975 Homecoming Queen, captured in Bruce Yonemoto's documentary *Homecoming* (1975). *Garage Sale* subverts the drag aspect of Goldie's performance enabling her to sympathetically play a woman whose fantasies and expectations have been shaped by Hollywood romance films. The film follows the couple as Hero tries to regain Goldie's love by seeking the advice of a cast of eccentric characters.*

Blinky The Friendly Hen

Made with Jeffrey Vallance

1988, 15:30 min, video transferred to digital, sound. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

*"In the novella *Blinky The Friendly Hen* (1978), artist Jeffrey Vallance documented the supermarket purchase of a frozen chicken and its burial in the Los Angeles S.P.C.A. Pet Memorial Park. Naming the fryer Blinky, Vallance transformed poultry into pet, paying tribute to the billions of hens sacrificed each year for our consumption. Ten years later, questions of the true cause of Blinky's death continue to swirl. Blinky, the videotape, documents the search for this cause. Alas, like the shroud of Turin, Blinky's death cannot be completely resolved. Blinky's ten-year story ends where it began, in our culture's glistening, dreamlike symbol of heavenly closure, the supermarket." (Norman Yonemoto)*

Based on the book by Jeffrey Vallance. Photography: Nick Ursin. Music: Tom Recchion. Computer Animation Sequence: Jim Rygiel. A KYO-DAI production.

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Green Card: An American Romance

1982, 79:15 min, video transferred to digital, sound. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

The final installment of the Yonemotos' Soap Opera Series uses the deadpan syntax of television melodrama to tell the story of Sumi, a young Japanese woman who marries an American surfer/filmmaker for the green card that will allow her to pursue her artistic career. Falling prey to the seductive Hollywood fantasy of romantic love, she loses her "American Dream" of independence. Casting an ironic eye on the Los Angeles lifestyle and art scene of the early 1980s, this stylized narrative asserts that the delirium of Hollywood "reality" — the collective memory of the media (mediated through cinema) — has a manipulative impact on the "truth" of our personal lives. As Sumi says, "The way we see family, friends, relationships — even love — is mass media propaganda."

Videoplay: Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. Producer: Bruce Yonemoto. Director: Norman Yonemoto. Camera: Norman Yonemoto, Nikolai Ursin. Story: Sumi Nobuhara. Performers: Sumi Nobuhara, Jay Struthers, Kyoko Watanabe, Nobu Tanaka, Francis Washington, Wenden Baldwin, Gary Lloyd, Lin Hixson. A KYO-DAI production

Spalding Gray's Map of L.A.

1984, 27:40 min, video transferred to digital, sound. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

In this satire of the mythology of Los Angeles, the Yonemotos collaborated with performance artist and member of the Wooster Group Spalding Gray and actors Mary Woronov and Marshall Efron, juxtaposing a parodic fictional narrative with Gray's autobiographical monologues. The re-enactment of the New York artist's encounter with the excess of Los Angeles focuses on the Southern Californian obsession with cars as consumer icons. In tragicomic monologues that punctuate the ongoing fantasy narrative, Gray traces his sentimental education through a series of anecdotal childhood memories that detail his romantic infatuation with cars as well as its deeply traumatic basis.

Director/Editor / Regie: Norman Yonemoto. Producer: Bruce Yonemoto. Written by: Spalding Gray, Marshall Efron, Mary Woronov, Bruce Yonemoto, Norman Yonemoto. Photography: Nikolai Ursin. Music adapted by Carl Stone. Starring: Spalding Gray, Marshall Efron, Mary Woronov, Coleen Sterritt. A KYO-DAI production.

Made in Hollywood

1990, 56:12 min, 35mm, 16mm format and video transferred to digital, sound.
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Made in Hollywood depicts the powerful mediation of reality and fantasy, desire and identity, by the myths of television and cinema. Quoting from a catalogue of popular styles and sources, from TV commercials to The Wizard of Oz to the melodramatic lighting of Douglas Sirk, the Yonemotos construct a parable of the Hollywood image-making industry from a pastiche of narrative clichés: a small-town ingenue goes West to find her dream and

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loses her innocence; the patriarch of a Hollywood studio nears death; a New York couple seeks screenwriting fame and fortune in the movies. With deadpan humor and some hyperbole, the Yonemotos layer artifice upon artifice while documenting the production of the film itself, constructing an image-world where reality and representation, truth and simulation, are meaningless distinctions.

Patricia Arquette as Tammy, Michael Lerner as Irving, Ron Vawter as Matt, Mary Woronov as Mary. Starring: Rachel Rosenthal, Greg Mehrtens, Tim Miller, Raymond Cruz. With: Dona Hardy, Gordon Metcalf, Michael Smith, Perrey Reeves, David Schweizer, Alex Gerrard, Mike Kelley, Tiffany Gerrard, Dean Jones. Producer: Bruce Yonemoto. Director: Norman Yonemoto. Screenplay: Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. Editor: Norman Yonemoto. Musical Score / Partitur: Carl Stone. Additional Music / Weitere Musik: Steve Stewart & Weba Garretson. Production Design: Patti Podesta, Gary Lloyd. Photography: Nikolai Ursin. Associate Producer: Carl Ludwig Rettinger. Executive Producer: Tadayuki Kariyama. Co-Producer: John Wentworth. Made possible by ZDF and the National Endowment for the Arts in association with the Film Arts Foundation. A KYO-DAI production.

Vault

1984, 11:45 min, video transferred to digital, sound / 1984, 11:45 Minuten, digitalisiertes Video, Sound. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Vault restages a traditional fiction of desire: boy meets girl, girl moves on. Telling the love story of a pole vaulter/concert cellist and a cowboy/Abstract Expressionist painter, the Yonemotos fuel the film with psychosexual metaphors and references to pop culture and art. The film eventually implies the power of media to imagine personal fictions. Self-conscious strategies such as the use of overtly Freudian symbols, flashback reconstructions of childhood trauma, and Wagnerian orchestration are wielded deftly.

Interview directed and edited by: Peter Kirby, Director / Editor: Norman Yonemoto, Producer / Produzent: Bruce Yonemoto, Photography / Kamera: Nikolai Ursin, Written by / Geschrieben von: Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. Sound: Steve Paxton, Musical Adaptation: Carl Stone, "Faded Love Death" by: Ed Marsh, Performers: Kim Claybough, Brian Rosewell, Chad Cooper, Elizabeth Hustoles. A KYO-DAI production, EAI

Kappa

Made in collaboration with Mike Kelley

1986, 26 min, video transferred to digital, sound. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Produced as a six year collaboration with artist Mike Kelley, Kappa delves into the myths of both Graeco-Roman Oedipus and the Japanese figure of the Kappa, which is a malevolent, ribald water imp. Within this framework, the Yonemotos craft a highly charged tale on loss and desire that quotes from Luis Buñuel, Sigmund Freud, and media, bringing the various myths to a delirious collusion. The libidinous Kappa is played with eerie intensity Kelley, while actress Mary Woronov figures locaste, the subject of desire, as a vamp from a Hollywood exploitation film. Steeped in "perversion" and violent longings, the mythical imagery is presented in purposefully unsubtle forms. In this oddly poignant essay on

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compulsion and catharsis, the Yonemoto brothers demonstrate how archetypes appear to hold the power to move and to manipulate us.

Producers: Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. Photography: Nikolai Ursin. Music: Carl Stone. Written by: Bruce & Norman Yonemoto and Mike Kelley. Animated Sequence: Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw. Additional Photography: Michael Goldberg, Shunichi Fujioka, Gary Hill. Performers: Mike Kelley, Mary Woronov, Ed Ruscha. Narrator: Keye Luke. A KYO-DAI production

A History of Clouds

1991, 37 min, 35mm format and video transferred to digital, sound. Courtesy the artist

Composed as a video-lecture in the style of an educational tape, A History of Clouds surveys how clouds have been represented in Western art and photography over centuries. In its final section, the Yonemotos turn to the work of Gary Lloyd, whose company produces meticulously painted backdrops for TV and films, including their own Made in Hollywood.

Curated by: Milan Ther

Exhibition design: Lennart Wolff

Assistant Curator: Nicholas Tammens

Subtitles: Linda Epp, Svenja Kirsch, Nicholas Tammens, Josephine Quaas, Greta-Mattea Wieland

Video Assistance: Willi Hans

Tech: Otis Dusör

Graphic Design: Ziga Testen, Svenja Kirsch

Construction team: Suzana Cocic, Otis Dusör, Robert Görß, John Otis Kurka, Tobias Sandberger, Felix Scheffran, Heinz Völlen

The exhibition is made possible with the kind support of the Ministry of Culture and Media of Hamburg. /

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Media Partner:



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Press materials and exhibition images can be downloaded from our website at the following link:

<https://www.kunstverein.de/presse>

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