

59 *Jean Baudrillard, Carissa Rodriguez, Tiffany Sia*
13.6.–2.8.2025

Jean Baudrillard

To get back to photography: it's technics which gives the photo its extraordinary character as image. It's through this technicity that our world reveals itself to be radically non-objective. It is, paradoxically, the objective lens of the camera which reveals the unobjectivity of the world, that little something which will not be resolved by analysis or in resemblance. It's technique, it carries us beyond resemblance, to the heart of the illusion of reality.¹

Carissa Rodriguez

Carissa Rodriguez' work *The Maid* (2018) takes its title from a 1913 short story by Robert Walser and tells the tale of a hired caregiver who spends two decades searching for a lost child who inexplicably disappears under her care. The video loosely enacts a search of sorts, but with artworks as stand-ins for the child. The camera follows the provenance of a group ovoid crystalline sculptures by artist Sherrie Levine that are small enough to be cradled in two hands and aptly titled *Newborn* (1993). The elliptical forms are in fact cast glass reproductions of a marble Constantin Brâncuși sculpture titled *Le Nouveau Né* (c. 1920). Levine's reworking of a preexisting form is a gesture loaded with narrative potential that Rodriguez sought to put in motion cinematically. To film *The Maid*, Levine's *Newborns* first had to be located through various institutional channels and access had to be granted to film in the private homes of collectors, a museum storage, and an auction house. The result is less of an inventory and more of a dramatization framed by the Walser tale. The enduring care given to the Newborns throughout the film is a specific kind of affection that plays out between clinical closeness and insurmountable distance. The sculpture is an inanimate object, but its filmic treatment gives it a lifelike quality. According to Rodriguez, "Narrativizing the Newborn work through a time-based medium was a way of seeing it vacillate between subject and object. [...] Sculpture is a three dimensional, tangible thing, but when rendered cinematically it becomes two-dimensional— an image, a surface."²

Tiffany Sia

Tiffany Sia's weeklong, episodic landscape film, *A Road Movie Is Impossible in Hong Kong* (2021), attempts to reimagine the genre of a road movie in Hong Kong as a live, and durational work. Originally presented as an episodic work each day, the piece was originally live-streamed during the first week of daylight savings time beginning at sunrise during Sia's solo exhibition *Slippery When Wet* at Artists Space in 2021. In iterations thereafter, the work has been shown at Seoul Museum of Art and Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen Düsseldorf in 2022 as a 7-channel simultaneous video installation. Inspired by a series of personal correspondence from 2016 in published in the artist's chapbook *Salty Wet* (2019) and a lecture by Hong Kong film critic and programmer Clarence Tsui at Hong Kong Baptist University, the work takes up the provocation that a road movie is impossible in Hong Kong. Tsui's lecture on the sociopolitical circumstances upon filmmaking began with a challenge that a "road movie," an American cinema trope, is not translatable to Hong Kong. Each hike begins at various points across the island. Each video affords a new view, and some repeating views, observing the regularity and repetition of sea traffic, birdsong on the island, and whirring of the

1 Jean Baudrillard, *Paroxysm*, 1997

2 Excerpt from Gloria Hasnay in the exhibition booklet of Carissa Rodriguez *Imitation of Life* at Kunstverein München, Munich, 2024

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wind turbine and power station. There is a voice behind the camera as it broadcasts, breathing, and the camera swings out of the way to evade filming faces of fellow hikers on the trail. People are only heard off-screen. Presented horizontally, the 7 channel video installation as shown at FELIX GAUDLITZ is meant to invoke the way one moves around viewing a landscape paper scroll in museums and institutional contexts. Viewing is walking across a long plane of shifting perspectives.