

Artforum, 2009

REVIEWS

picture via many, many vertical brushstrokes until . . . until what? Until, Jasch says, he has the impression that the picture is perfect, finished, and beautiful. But how does Jasch recognize this moment? This question ties together Jasch's otherwise formally different objects, pictures, and sculptures. The largest piece on display, nearly filling an entire room, had less to do with the painterly brushstroke or the sculptor's will to form than with the mischievous gestures of a Duchamp: *Tischinstallation* (Table Installation), 2009, a square tabletop propped up by a pedestal consisting of the massive white plaster cast of a full garbage bag. On top of the table were an actual open, grubby plastic bag containing shards of glass; a black designer lamp belonging to the gallery, illuminating the glass shards; and the black outline of the artist's hand and forearm. Beside this stood a lightweight plastic chair covered with bitumen.

The search for perfect form is a classical one, but only in our time has it been conceivable to seek a perfect form even for the imperfect. This conundrum of aesthetic perfection and material imperfection is the subject matter of Jasch's pictures, sculptures, and objects, and which in his hands touches on longing, desire, and the erotic.

—Noemi Smolik

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

ZÜRICH

"Deterioration, They Said"

MIGROS MUSEUM FÜR GEGENWARTSKUNST

"Deterioration, They Said" brought together a group of artists who belong to the MTV generation, having grown up with early forms of the video aesthetic and the ascendant technologies of the 1980s and '90s. The formative years of Cory Arcangel, Jessica and Jacob Ciocci/Paper Rad, Ryan Trecartin and Lizzie Fitch, and Shana Moulton were dominated by both television and the Internet, with their cornucopia of possibilities for reproduction and interconnectedness. Their works constitute a retort to those cultural critics who charge that the surfeit of information inevitably leads both to desensitization and the deterioration of critical or conceptual heft.

The show opened with a multimedia, all-over mix of works by Jessica and Jacob Ciocci, who also collaborate under the moniker Paper Rad. Jacob Ciocci's *Frozen and Trapped Forever*, 2009, for example, is an HD animation of countless GIF files from the Internet, bombarding the eye with a chaotic barrage of images. The hypernervous rapidity of the constantly moving figures results in visual overload. At the Migros



Shana Moulton, *Whispering Pines 4*, 2009, still from a two-channel video and mixed-media installation, 10 minutes 53 seconds. From "Deterioration, They Said."

Museum, these images were projected on a freestanding angled wall unit. The neighboring wall displayed a wild collage of a sampling of these same images—nothing more than an ephemeral cultural by-product—contrasting this old-format still picture with the animated image in which any picture is always just one of a series. Jessica Ciocci's work is more restrained. Her *Untitled (Grid Drawings)*, 2008–2009, are squares painstakingly colored on graph paper with felt-tip pens. Seamlessly climbing most of the way up a wall, this handmade work gave the impression, when seen from a distance, of a grid of pixels.

Cory Arcangel presented the double projection *A Couple Thousand Short Films About Glenn Gould*, 2007. Arcangel uses countless YouTube videos of amateur musicians to render the first movement of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* as an audiovisual arrangement. With every note, he cuts to a different video, each of which contains a different part of the melody. The montage culminates in a hallucinatory overload of sound and image in the tradition of an experimental "flicker film"; Gould, who was known for his radical approach to both music and television, is thus an all-too-appropriate reference.

Further on, one encountered Ryan Trecartin and Lizzie Fitch's well-known, nutty, carnivalesque video *A Family Finds Entertainment*, 2004, which was supplemented with a sofa with a sculptural construction built off of it to create the installation *Living Room Channel*, 2007. This room and the one following were populated by a selection of sculptures made of cheap everyday and hardware store materials that would look at home alongside the work of Rachel Harrison, imbuing sculptural assemblage and video montage with a strange equivalency.

The climax of the show was the work of Shana Moulton, with videos from the ongoing series "Whispering Pines," 2002–, embedded in sculptural installations. In the videos, we accompany the artist's alter ego Cynthia, a hypochondriac dreamer who is searching for fulfillment with the help of esoteric plastic kitsch and orthopedic instruments. A walk-in labyrinth, an oversize half-moon fitted with a staircase displaying knickknacks (while a "mood video" was projected on the side wall), and a construction reminiscent of a shrine together created an environment for the videos, while at the same time representing hypertrophic versions of objects that appear in them. Making use of green-screen technology, Moulton creates a one-of-a-kind video aesthetic that pays tribute to New Age music clips à la Enya. Moulton also wittily refers back to currents in art history that can be connected to esotericism; *Whispering Pines 9*, 2009, for example, documents her travels to Land art sites in New Mexico and the church of San Francisco de Asis in Taos, famous for having been painted by Georgia O'Keeffe and photographed by Paul Strand. Using signs that are unstable but capable of being valorized, she looks on "deterioration" as a kind of process that gains meaning through recycling.

—Valérie Knoll

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

Chiharu Shiota

ROTWAND GALLERY

What was so appealing about the Chiharu Shiota installation *A Long Day*, 2009, is the way the artist transformed the white cube into something completely unrecognizable. As is usual for her, this Japanese artist from Berlin filled the space by spinning a web of wool yarn that appeared penetrable but in fact took over everything. Behind the tangle of black, you could hear the clicking of computer keyboards and scraps of telephone conversations. The gallery had vanished behind the work. No going forward—that's where the yarn was—but to