



Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib with C. Spencer Yeh: 1967, 2012, multichannel video installation; at Locks.

LOCKS GALLERY



PHILADELPHIA
**NADIA HIRONAKA
 AND MATTHEW SUIB
 WITH C. SPENCER YEH**
 LOCKS

Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib's *1967* (2011), a multichannel video installation, is a colorful and synesthetic tour-de-force work that combines borrowed and original moving images, including scenes from Godard's film *La Chinoise* (1967), footage of the Montreal Expo from the same year, Chinese film from the Cultural Revolution and YouTube videos of recent Arab Spring protests. Through the complex layering of images and superimposed subtitle-like text written by the artists, the piece underscores both the mechanical activities of revolutionaries and the politicized nature of mass media, conflating real and imagined events and highlighting how we see through multiple cinematic lenses.

The installation comprised six projections that wrapped around the large gallery, and three strategically placed flat-screen monitors that rested against them. All nine channels are looped and run simultaneously, but the narrative sequence moves clockwise. In addition, the projections filled the walls from floor to ceiling, incorporating the shadows of viewers into the rapid movement through time and space, fact and fiction.

The piece begins with excerpts from *La Chinoise*; the movie explores the political situation of the 1960s New Left and follows its protagonist Véronique—a somewhat vapid French student who has pledged her allegiance to the Maoist cause—on an assassination mission. But Hironaka and Suib quickly appropriate Godard's Véronique, taking her on a different mission across the Atlantic Ocean.

One projection presents a black-and-white animation of her imagined flight to the Montreal Expo of 1967, where we join her on the futuristic monorail, in national pavilions (Cuba, the USSR and China feature prominently) and through frenetic crowds. The work fast-forwards through time, as Véronique witnesses the acrylic shell of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome on the Expo grounds go up in flames in 1976. Though her mission remains unresolved, she moves on to more recent history, stopping at the Shanghai Expo of 2010 and present-day protests in China and the Middle East. Throughout the installation, the puppetlike, robotic movements of both leaders and their followers are highlighted: for example, the looped footage of Godard's

French students doing calisthenics or singers in a Chinese epic musical film from 1965 that celebrates the history of the Communist Party under Mao.

Hironaka and Suib effectively show the stratified nature of history, and the way it both progresses and remains the same. In this elaborate essay film that takes us from the Cultural Revolution to 1960s Paris to today's China (2011, which was the year of the Rabbit, is referenced by bunnies occupying a grassy field in the final projection), Hironaka and Suib also cast architecture, technology and the media as players in their consideration of the successes and failures of revolutions, past and present.

Philadelphia-based husband-and-wife team Hironaka and Suib met in the mid-'90s as undergraduates and have collaborated since 2008. For this exhibition, the Brooklyn-based musicians C. Spencer Yeh and Aaron Moore, who performed the original score for *1967*, delivered a one-night performance that featured a vast retinue of experimental and traditional instruments deployed to heighten the suspense of Véronique's journey.

—Jennie Hirsh