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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Right: Lucy Raven, *Curtains*, 2014, 3-D digital video installation, color, sound, 50 minutes.



Raven's use of anaglyph 3-D in *Curtains* enacts a material separation from the processes used in digital blockbusters and points to the internal differentiations that exist within the domain of stereoscopy. She cannily turns to an outmoded device to interrogate the industrial relations that cohere around its present-day inheritor, thereby calling on old media to challenge the twin logics of innovation and planned obsolescence so ubiquitous in the present. In this, Raven is not alone. Though digital 3-D is generally thought of as a technological novelty in Hollywood, artists such as Trisha Baga, Ben Coonley, Jodie Mack, and Blake Williams engage with 3-D in artisanal, low-tech ways, as if to challenge the industry's dominion over it. Such DIY stereoscopy reaches special heights in Mack's *Let Your Light Shine* (2013), which was paired with the candy pop of *Katy Perry: Part of Me* (2012) at BAM. Mack's film is remarkable for the stark contrast between its economy of means and its sensational visual effect. Seen with the naked eye, it is an abstract animation of white markings on a black background, but viewed through diffraction-grating glasses that separate light into spectral components, it transforms into a rainbow extravaganza that prompts the viewer to consider the intersections between abstract animation, psychedelia, and the science of optics. Mack has described *Let Your Light Shine* as "acknowledging a desire for all things natural and spectacular—fireworks, sunsets, rippling water."⁸ Yet, crucially, she refrains from mimetically picturing such things in favor of creating a specifically cinematic experience.

Like *Let Your Light Shine*, Alexandre Larose's *Brouillard—Passage #14* (2013) pushes the limits of what might properly be considered a 3-D film in provocative and productive ways. *Brouillard*, which Larose made by exposing the same thousand-foot reel of expired and discontinued Ektachrome thirty-nine times at 150 frames per second, until the film broke in-camera, is what Speidel called a "3-D bastard," in that it is neither truly stereoscopic nor flat. This long take consists of a traveling shot that moves through the forest to a lakeshore, with the

vibrating coexistence of almost-identical views serving to create a slight parallax effect. Larose's exquisite film shimmers with a pointillist vitality, using old media to index the ceaseless becoming of the world—a refreshing alternative to the banal perfection of the computer renderings that populate so much digital 3-D.

The mainstream discourse around 3-D is yoked to very limited kinds of filmmaking, with a work's success largely judged on the basis of its ability to generate revenue. Unsurprisingly, this fails to do justice to the role of stereoscopy within feature filmmaking, where digital 3-D has taken major steps toward the perfection of illusionism while participating in a wider cultural shift toward nonperspectival, tactile spaces. (In this regard, 3-D might be thought to be the inverted twin of the touch screen.) The limitations of this discourse become even clearer when one considers the place of 3-D in artists' cinema, where interest is growing: May also saw the opening of exhibitions (in London and Berlin, respectively) by Malcolm Le Grice and Cyprien Gaillard that featured 3-D works. To consider this technology—or, rather, *these* technologies, for 3-D is not one thing—beyond commercial cinema forces one to leave behind a narrative in which 3-D lives or dies at the box office and emerges only as a cyclically recurring blip on the radar of mass-cult novelty. Making such a move opens the possibility of finding a history more continuous and complex than is often acknowledged, in which the possibilities of stereoscopy have been called on for myriad uses, many of which lie far from storytelling, beyond the regime of commodified innovation that governs Hollywood, and are, at times, even positioned against it. 3-D doesn't have to be all or nothing; parallax cinema is best understood as a parallel cinema, occasionally swerving into the mainstream but often evolving alongside it. Although no one would wish to diminish the triumph of *Goodbye to Language*, it cannot be forgotten that Godard is far from the first or the only 3-D heretic. □