



THE WAY WE MOVE NASHVILLE

As I walked through the video stalls at Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art, I was reminded of a relatively recent scientific discovery called mirror neurons—a subset of brain neurons thought to contribute to the ability to mimic the movements of other people. Apparently, when I watch someone move, my mirror neurons mimic that person's brain activity as if I were performing the action. Curated by Ron Lambert and featuring works by artists dealing with the body in all of its malleable, mutable complexity, the exhibition *The Way We Move* had my neurons buzzing [October 9, 2010—February 20, 2011]. A perfect venue for the show, Cheekwood—a museum, botanical garden, and contemporary art space—intimately housed the videos in a row of converted horse stables.

Barbara Hammer's *Sanctus*, 1990, a video made from rephotographed x-ray films originally shot in the 1930s by the doctor and cinematographer James Sibley Watson, was the showstopper. Here, we see the skeletal structure in motion as people do menial tasks: drinking, shaving, swallowing, turning, and so on. Hammer adds transparent, acidic, Warholian colors, layering, repeating, and mirroring the footage. This treatment, combined with the video's quick pace, gives *Sanctus* both earnestness and vehemence. *Sanctus* casts the skeleton as both frightening and elegant, lying just inside our skin. It also invokes the dangerous, nightmarish world that surrounds, threatens and invades the body. Neil B. Rolnick's reverberating chorus arrangement accompanies the shrill but mesmerizing images—a soundtrack equally agitating and lovely.

In Aurelia Mihai's *Endless Motion*, 1998, masses of people pass up, down, and around a public and heavily trafficked staircase. Divided into grids, the black-and-white video initially looks like a multi-camera surveillance central. But the grids begin to double, showing more and more people turning and leaving. This rhythmic regularity begins to take on an overwhelming, transpersonal significance. These casually turning bodies are literally

placed into a larger picture, shown to exist in a network—a vast gridded structure.

In *Loose Control*, 2008, Monica Panzarino and Nadine Sobel mimic the dance moves in Missy Elliot's music video for the song *Loose Control* after which the work is titled. They perform its booty thumping gyrations stoically. In addition, they speed up the frame rate, which gives their movements a comic bizarreness. Framed against barren walls, one of the girls leans back and apathetically watches her friend shake her ass. I'm sure neither girl smiles through the whole video. Erotically moving one's body is shown to be habitual and passionless, simply business as usual.

Jeff Daniel Silva slows the movements of the face in the installation *Second Sight/Split Second*, 2010. A circle vignettes the images, making us feel like a voyeur looking into a microscope. In short segments, the face is divided into a series of slow-moving but spectacular events: an eye is a machine that opens and closes, trilling lips jelly that waves and warps, a kiss is like two space ships merging. Faces are mush that open, extend, contract, and spit.

It's a good thing to be reminded that we are creatures, water bags, animals, and imitators of our own self-made images. Experiments with mirror neurons have shown that the only thing separating me from you—or me from a representation of you—is a feedback system between the brain and the skin. Take away the skin, and I can literally feel your pleasure—crazy, right. The representation of moving bodies is a communal experience that makes me imagine what it's like to be you, to do that, to feel what you feel. And it helps me see my body as merely a moving body among bodies.

—Matt Christy

SEAN RASPET NEW YORK

The sculptures, installations, and contractual works featured in Sean Rasket's exhibition *As If Written In* reflect the ways in which consumer society produces “free” time in the service of consumption, thereby folding leisure back into labor [The Kitchen; September 10—October 23, 2010]. This suggests the infinite temporality at play in the closed and recursive systems of production and labor. Rasket articulates this production of surplus time by taking up recognizable tropes of labor such as a commercial mop, factory clocks, and manila folders. He also enlists signifiers of leisure such as storefronts and window displays and institutional communication systems such as an institutional phone system, a gallery floor space, and a contractual agreement. In this, he points to the operational ubiquity of self-reflexive systems.

This varied material is fractured and repeated into iterative works that come together to shape the exhibition narrative. *(3 inflections)*, 2009-2010, revolves around three clocks. *(Inflection)*, 2010, enlists a mop. In both works, shards of mirror face the object with enough distance to both reflect and distort it. The mirrors reflect the object back towards itself, expanding the clock or mop through repetition while also distorting and fracturing it visually. Similarly, *Folder (a Novel)*, 2010, stages two chairs and an office, on which three packets of instructions are laid out for review. These are based on Rasket's work for the census bureau, where specifics such as names, places, and things are abstracted or written out, an experience of statistical objectivity that also shapes didactic texts. Rasket similarly unsettles our sense of place in *Background Processes*, 2010, where fourteen semi-transparent vinyl banners are arrayed as a maze for us to navigate. The banners juxtapose various desaturated images of reflections in storefronts and display windows taken from the artist's daily life in consumer culture. This juxtaposition flattens out the experience referentially while illustrating the idea that producing more of the same is a false expansion.

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Barbara Hammer, still from *Sanctus*, 1990, video, 19 minutes, color, English [courtesy of the artist and Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art, Nashville]; Sean Rasket, installation view of *As If Written In* at The Kitchen, New York [courtesy of the artist and The Kitchen, New York; photo: David Allison]

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