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Event: Exhibition: Summertime; or, Close-ups on Places We've (Never) Been

Location: Walter and McBean Galleries
San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI)
800 Chestnut Street
San Francisco, CA 94133

Opening reception: Friday, 26 June 2009, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public

Exhibition Dates: 27 June–12 September 2009

Images: High-resolution digital images available

Press Contact: Bob Gamboa, (415) 749-4507, bgamboa@sfaai.edu

Summertime; or, Close-ups on Places We've (Never) Been—an Exhibition of Film and Video Works—Opens at SFAI on 26 June

San Francisco, CA (June 2, 2009)—On Friday, 26 June 2009, the opening reception for Summertime; or, Close-ups on Places We've (Never) Been—an exhibition of film and video works by a roster of international artists, curated by SFAI's director of Exhibitions and Public Programs, Hou Hanru—will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Walter and McBean Galleries on SFAI's 800 Chestnut Street campus. Free and open to the public (Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), the exhibition will be on view from 27 June to 12 September 2009.

Against the now-commonplace backdrop of an economic downward spiral whose sighted end keeps proving to be another mirage, summertime comes—a redundant predetermined mythology replete with its own cache of ready-made images. One such image, a stalwart in the Western canonical lexicon, is the spatial metaphor “through” which abstract entities like summertime are positioned so as to offer relief for—a “vacation” from—other abstract entities like global economic repression. The promise built into the relief-inducing spatial metaphor is the very promise inherent in the relooping mythology of summertime itself—distance, perspective, the

exchange of a messy recent past in which we remain multiply enmeshed for a balmy idyllic present brimming with nostalgic fantasies about what summertime (never) was.

Raising anew the question how certain forms of spatial organization—in particular, the utopic socioeconomic experiments of modernist architecture and design—have become so naturalized a force within the urban environment that they inform the very infrastructure of our identities, each of the artists in this exhibition—Knut Åsdam, Chen Shaoxiong, Jimmie Durham, Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani, Cyprien Gaillard, Marine Hugonnier, Emre Hüner, Aleksander Komarov, Mark Lewis, and Sam Samore—foregrounds the anomie engendered, within quite particular localities, by idealized and universalizing vocabularies for the configuration of site and space. Though generated out of the diverse cultural and personal backgrounds of their makers and though together demonstrating a manifold of filmic approaches and strategies, each video in its way proposes at once a critique of and a new vision for the hypermodernist sky-, land-, or cityscapes it provocatively evokes. In a word—indeed, in a coinage of Michel Foucault’s—what these artists seek is that “other place” or “heterotopia” endlessly gone missing in the (sub)urban flux, endlessly driven out of plain sight into hiding by the totalizing and ratiocinative structurality of things, their exhaustive expropriation by the Enlightenment habitus.

Focusing on new video art, *Summertime*; or, *Close-ups on Places We’ve (Never) Been* will present both extended cinematic works and installations of new videos by artists who work in time-based media. The exhibition will also utilize the SFAI campus as the “other place” of the multiplex movie house. In lieu of countless many seats and two aisles for exit, the Walter and McBean Galleries will be maintained as a thoroughgoing and parallactic network of aisles—aisles that contain but one solitary and extraordinary setting for taking one’s seat, *Small Case-study House (Sunset House)* (2009), a work designed and created by Atelier Bow-Wow.

SFAI’s exhibitions and public programs are supported in part by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. Atelier Bow-Wow’s Small Case-study House (Sunset House) was commissioned by REDCAT in Los Angeles and supported by Bill Roschen and Christi Van Cleve.

San Francisco Art Institute

Founded in 1871, SFAI is one of the oldest and most prestigious schools of higher education in contemporary art in the US. Focusing on the interdependence of thinking, making, and learning, SFAI’s academic and public programs are dedicated to excellence and diversity.

SFAI’s School of Studio Practice concentrates on developing the artist’s vision through studio experiments and is based on the belief that artists are an essential part of society. It offers a BFA, an MFA, and a Post-Baccalaureate certificate in Design and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, and Sculpture/Ceramics.

SFAI’s School of Interdisciplinary Studies is motivated by the premise that critical thinking and writing, informed by an in-depth understanding of theory and practice, are essential for engaging contemporary global society. It offers degree programs in Exhibition and Museum Studies (MA only), History and Theory of Contemporary Art (BA and MA), and Urban Studies (BA and MA).

SFAI's Dual Degree MA/MFA program is ideally designed for students who seek a deep and balanced immersion in both theoretical discourse and art practice. A three-year commitment, the degree consists in an MA in History and Theory of Contemporary Art and an MFA in any area of study within the School of Studio Practice (see above).

For more information about this exhibition and other public or academic programs at SFAI, please go to www.sfai.edu or call 415 749 4563.