

Project: Obsession/Love Forever 2007

8 channel 3D animation installation with sound

Obsession/ Love Forever aspires to come to terms with our contemporary vision of beauty by examining the crossover between the fashion industry's construction of norms and contemporary myth created in cyber culture and computer gaming. My project is continuation of my on going series TOKI/Cyborg Project (2003~) which questions new technology's role in image making and representation. My digital character TOKI parodies the idealisation of female form in Asian manga and anime, computer gaming and cyber culture. TOKI's body has been cut into pieces - posing coyly to sit, move and beckon in the perfume bottle. The parts of the body become a product of beautification and commodity conflating power and seduction. The animated body parts parody the obsession with beauty created by phallic motivations in cyber culture and gaming, with the work referencing critical contributions from contemporary mythology, psychoanalysis, technology, cybernetics, aesthetics, plastic surgery, feminism, consumerism and eroticism.

The project features digital 3D animations consisting of 8 DVD projection installations and experimental sound connected to a surround sound system. Each DVD features an animation sequence of different parts of TOKI's body captured and reacting with particles in a collection of perfume bottles. Each DVD is QuickTime DV PAL/NTSC format. The duration of DVD is approx 2 minutes.

Each DVD of animation conveys ideas and concept behind the project. The animated body parts express, with a slightly ironic turn, commenting male desire and voyeuristic fantasy as well as female fantasy of presenting body as a commodity. Each DVD plays with and accentuates the slippery separations between dominance and desire, fantasy and fear, and birth and death.

The DVDs are:

DVD 1. Hand in Moschino perfume bottle

- DVD 2. Lips in Chance perfume bottle Eye in perfume bottle
- DVD 3. Eye in Chopard Wish bottle
- DVD 4. Breast in Lou Lou perfume bottle
- DVD 5. Eye in J'adore perfume bottle
- DVD 6. Legs and shoes in Channel No. 5 perfume bottle
- DVD 7. Bottom in Poison perfume bottle
- DVD 8. Genitalia in Comme des Garcons perfume bottle

All the perfume bottles are modelled to look slightly different from the reference of the actual model of commercial designer perfume.

Conceptual background

Obsession/ Love Forever

“Between love and madness lies obsession.”

Charles Levin, *Obsession*, A scent of style: Some Thoughts on Calvin Klein's *Obsession* (four 15 second commercials on video)

In the title of the project ***Obsession*** is named after perfume by Calvin Klein and ***love*** and ***forever*** are common words/themes for perfumes. Touching on the humorous or surreal, the works have significantly steered clear of clichés of the psychological definition of obsession; rather they explore the theme with a mixture of seriousness and delicacy.

The project aspires to come to terms with our contemporary vision of beauty by examining the crossover between the fashion industry's construction of norms and contemporary myth created in computer gaming and cyber culture. In the age of computer, online-games and the internet, digitalization and computerization have changed our environment, our viewing habits, modes of perception and fashion in contemporary pop culture. Digital technology and scientific progress have tried to

create the absolute perfect vocabulary of beauty. The project seeks to investigate ideas about the relationship between beauty, perfection, and technological progress.

The project features 8 DVD animations of parts of TOKI's body captured in the collection of perfume bottles; an obsessive collection of fetishes. Fetishized beauty trapped in perfume bottles, is the fascination that holds the desire for closure, power and logical perfection, is closed and ritualized. Manic fantasy follows psychotic simulacra of bodily images. Parts of the body in the line of gazes signify woman as the colonized subject. Cutting up the body into pieces could lead to an idea of glamour going beyond the perfection of the body; cutting leading toward death itself.

Hye Rim Lee's perky Manga and computer game heroine inspired doll-like TOKI has cut her body into pieces, posing coyly, sitting, moving and beckoning in the perfume bottle. These "body parts" are a departure from the clean lined and highly stylized female figure, revealing the smoothness and awkwardness of plastic, synthetic and fantastic 3D animation modeling techniques, thereby commenting on the creation of a contemporary mythology and the representation of the female body form. The parts of the body become a product of beautification and commodity, conflating power and seduction. The artist uses a popular vocabulary of the fetishized female body to complicate notions of the erotic with a very vulgar modeling of the figure. The body parts parody obsessive beauty created by phallic directions in cyber culture and gaming. The animated body parts express, with a slightly ironic turn, comments on male desire and voyeuristic fantasy as well as female fantasy; of presenting the body as a commodity. The works involve critical contributions from contemporary mythology, psychoanalysis, technology, cybernetics, aesthetics, plastic surgery, feminism, consumerism and eroticism.

Eyes (DVD 3 and 5) can be a projection of desire and give the sole power of the gaze from the viewer taking in woman's power. Long fingernail (DVD 1) and high heels (DVD 6 and the sound of the exhibition) are the masculinization of the woman's desire to satisfy the viewer's desire. The dynamic interplay of looks is confrontational and has a darker vision than just mere parody of the male gaze; alluding to the impending victimization or fantasization of women's desires - implementing pleasure of passivity and of subjection, thereby reinforcing a phallic economy of desire. Each

DVD plays with and accentuates the slippery separations between dominance and desire, fantasy and fear, and birth and death. The video installation is made of the body, of desire, of the sexual, of the fluid, of movement and of sound, and my ongoing motif.

TOKI/Cyborg Project (2002~)

Obsession/ Love Forever is continuation of my on going series TOKI/Cyborg Project. The project questions new technology's role in image making and representation. I provocatively interpret the way in which popular culture promotes the myth of transformative processes that offer the attainment of a virtual and constructed physical perfection. My digital character TOKI parodies the idealisation of female form in Asian manga and anime culture, computer gaming and cyber culture. The project explores the contemporary myth created in cyber culture and computer gaming. The project scrutinises the links between video games and popular culture and presents a discussion on the impact of games on popular culture.

My project focuses on the creative process of computer game design and explores the artistic development of game concepts. The project explores the link between new technology – its role in production and content - and popular culture. It aims to produce innovations by seeking to fuse the use of new media with unexplored areas of popular culture and the inner worlds of the private individual. The viewer will be led into a fantasyland and an imaginary space where a journey will be explored through psychologically and sexually charged sites. The imaginary space starts from alternative realities and moves to a virtual dreamy fantasy world where desire, happiness and anxiety are explored in many different ways. My project aims to deepen game concepts by merging them with art and life. By taking the game off the console and into an installation space an intimate connection between the viewer and game characters will be produced and the subsequent emotional and psychological responses explored.

TOKI/Cyborg Project: The Evolution of TOKI 2002

Bunny Cubed, short video

Bunny Boom, interactive installation
Mini TOKI, object, plastic blow up doll
TOKI/Cyborg, DVD projection and sound

TOKI/Cyborg Project: The Birth of TOKI 2003~2004

The Birth of TOKI: hundreds and thousands, a series of Digital print
TOKIland, multimedia performance
TOKINARA, short video
BOOM BOOM: super heroine super beauty, 4 channel DVD projection and sound

TOKI/Cyborg Project: game, pop and cyber world 2004~2005

Super Toy: 2 channel DVD installation and sound
Powder Room: 4 channel DVD installation and sound
Lash: DVD projection and sound
Prince G: 3 channel DVD projection and sound

The background of TOKI: The evolution of TOKI

My work explores the myriad and complex influences that contribute to any consideration of a migrant Korean's identity. I use a return to adolescence as a metaphor to search for identity faced by a migrant's experience in new cultural boundaries as an 'alien Asian'. In 2002 my practice hinged around the evolution of my fictional character, TOKI (Korean for Bunny). TOKI's existence is a restless one and her manifestations shift between animal, human, Cyborg and spirit form, as I attempt to locate my desires in the worlds of cyberspace, 3D computer modelling, Japanese animé, consumer merchandise and the fantasy world of dream. TOKI is the embodiment of a sense of fantasy, sensuality, and seduction with a touch of madness. She is a product of Western consumerism, Japanese pop culture, Korean tradition, femininity and feminism.

TOKI is a digital personification and through her I explore the position of Korean women in society. TOKI's white body also epitomises the powerful image of idealized beauty, and the ability of digital and surgical construction to create a 'plastic' fantasy world. She is an avatar, the recipient of desires projected onto a graphic

personification. She becomes a vehicle for fantasy exploration inherent in the video game. From her initial inception, TOKI has been destined to star in her own video game. The video game will be an alternative game that provokes questions involving relations between the body and technology, male and female, and inner and outer states. The game challenges boy game culture and creates new relations between images, bodies, identities, and artefacts through the media in relation to game girl culture.