

OVERVIEW

This video installation actualizes a recurring dream that I had been having over the course of my last semester (spring 2007) as a Critical Studies graduate student at The California Institute of the Arts, while focusing mainly on writing, theory and cinema. I believe that this dream was peripherally influenced by the psycho-sexual reading material that I was investigating under the guidance of CalArts professor Matias Viegner who recommended the following texts:

- *Pleasure of the Text* by Roland Barthes
- *Gender Trouble* by Judith Butler
- "The Laugh of the Medusa" essay by Helene Cixous (also: *Coming to Writing* or *The Newly Born Woman*)
- *Gyn/ecology* by Mary Daly
- *Anti-Oedipus* (esp. Foucault's preface) by Deleuze & Guattari
- *The History of Sexuality* by Michel Foucault
- *Another Mother Tongue* by Judy Grahn
- *This Sex Which Is Not One* by Luce Irigaray (or: *Speculum of the Other Woman*)
- *Gynesis* by Alice Jardine
- *Desire in Language* by Julia Kristeva (or: *Revolution in Poetic Language*)
- *The Straight Mind* by Monique Wittig (especially the 2nd half)

DESCRIPTION

In the dream, I am, more or less, a burdened tadpole or morphing organic land-water creature stranded in a shallow pool of water (perhaps, located near a larger body of water) separated by elevated, jagged rocks that are beautiful and seductive. I am sleek and timeless, engulfed in a thick skin resembling latex though completely organic. I am not alone in the puddle but surrounded by other creatures resembling myself. I come to the conclusion that these neighboring creatures are women, though each creature maintains a sexless, somewhat neutralized appearance. We struggle together in the puddle and attempt to break out of our thick, flexible skin. The skins vary in color and shade. We are each bound tightly in a skin that we must break out of in order to move to another stage of our lives. It is this sheer act of struggling to break out of our skin, tightly packed together, simultaneously similar yet separate, crowded in the shallow puddle that is the most significant experience in the dream. No one successfully breaks through our skin, despite the dream's recurrence. The dream eludes to a flexible pleasure-pain continuum. Though I am surrounded by others sharing my dilemma, I remember harboring feelings of solitude and alienation instead of unity. I often felt strong and ready upon waking.

PROCEDURE

With the assistance of filmmaker Alex Lorge, we chose to reenact a simplified version of the dream. Lorge filmed my attempts to reformulate my interpretation. Initially, I wanted to be filmed in six different locations in the greater Los Angeles area: a grassy knoll, sandy region, large swimming pool, ocean's edge near the beach, trash heap or "trashy" location and finally: on the pavement next to a busy highway such as the 405. Over time, we decided that it was better to narrow the locations down to three diverse ones: a grassy knoll (on CalArts campus), sandy area (in the Newhall wash) and a standard swimming pool (on CalArts campus). The installation was filmed and edited into six-minute loops for three identical-in-dimension screens approximately six feet in height displaying green grass, beige sand, and turquoise water. Text was appropriated and manipulated from Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*; these text samples were then spliced into each loop in a complimentary fashion. The three six-minute dvd's were displayed on projector screens onto grid cloth April 26, 2007 (10 pm-12 am). No sound accompanied.

INTERPRETATION

I believe that this recurring dreamscape was influenced by the fact that I was living in the same urban environment (Los Angeles) for two years on a focused, tightly wound path. Even though Los Angeles remains vibrant and multifarious, I became a creature of habit structured for survival, influenced by competition and out of my natural domain. I was ready to move on with my life, anxious to explore and learn about the rest of the world during the peak of my existence. New environments or circumstances often push individuals into recurring thoughts or obsessive patterns. Repetition and pattern-forming tendencies are psychological coping mechanisms, making both life's realities and dreams more comforting to one immersed or embedded in unpredictable, uncomfortable circumstances. The dream desisted upon leaving the city.

