

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2015



University Galleries of Illinois State University is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibition, ***Normal Reality***. A public reception will be held on Wednesday, September 2, 2015, from 5 to 7pm. The exhibition is on view from June 15 through September 9, 2015.

Additional programming includes:

- Tuesday, September 1 at noon: Lecture by exhibition curator Jason Judd
- June 8 – Sept 4: University Galleries is partnering with the historic Normal Theater to project a video by one artist in *Normal Reality* per weekend as the preview for the evening's screening. For Normal Theater's schedule please visit: www.normaltheater.com

Normal Reality presents twelve artists from the U.S., Canada, and Europe, whose embrace of popular digital technologies raises questions about normalcy in the age of accessibility. Video art as a medium began in the mid-1960s with the advent of portable cameras and recorders, which, though cumbersome and expensive, offered a limited number of artists a new tool for exploring issues of time, space, language, and the body—with an immediacy not possible with film. As video technology advanced to camcorders in the 1980s, “effects processing” facilities still had to be rented by the hour for anyone trying to use digital effects and edits with any level of sophistication. Now, many of us carry high-definition smartphone cameras in our pockets, with fairly easy access to the limitless possibilities of cutting-edge editing software.



The artists featured in *Normal Reality* are guided by the exploratory concerns laid out by early video practitioners, but the environments they navigate are accessed largely through a multilayered and ultra-fragmented media experience of gaming, 24/7 Internet access, social media posting at a stoplight, and GPS. This experience is a given: digital reality **is** reality, Facebook is our forum, and posting pictures of where we are and what we are eating is increasingly how we define ourselves.

Sparkling I by **Petra Cortright** (Los Angeles) is one of twelve videos in the exhibition exemplifying this “normal reality.” Performing in front of a built-in webcam with preset digital effects, Cortright nonchalantly waves a tree branch like a magic wand that dissolves into sparkling star effects, accompanied by the most clichéd synthesized fairytale-like soundtrack. Her digitized body's real-time oscillation between actual motions and their dematerialization into a virtual realm hits home the increasing displacement of actual nature by our experience as measured on screen time.

In **Jaakko Pallasvuo's** (Helsinki) video, *Utopia*, the artist/narrator dispassionately relates, in the manner of a director's commentary on a DVD, his failure to capture in video—as opposed to language—the essence of an idyllic Swedish landscape we view on the screen. Cutting to his small Finnish apartment where he edits on a laptop whose screen we view face-on, his

interspersing of Japanese emoticons and clip art implies that the video he shot is no more capable of capturing the Sublime than emoticons are of expressing actual emotion. As the sequence quickly cuts back to him walking into an expanse of mountain peaks and lush greenery, his voiceover states "...Maybe it felt as unreal as it looks."

In *Realm of Nothingness*, **Kathy Rose** (New York) integrates dance, theater, and cinematic features into a dream-like narrative which draws parallels between tradition and hi-tech. Her audio and editing mimicking the rhythm and choreography of Japanese Noh theater, she holds true to the traditional storytelling about masks as a means of transformation between supernatural and human forms. In Rose's case, the masks are not made from Japanese Cypress but from digital collage, and the theater is not a hardwood stage but a black video screen on which the characters can pop in and out between reality and illusion.

The nine other videos in the exhibition are: *Everything Becomes X-Ray* by **Mariam Graff** (Fairview, Illinois), *The Realm of Nothingness* by **Rosa Menkman** (Arnhem, Netherlands), *MindPlace ThoughtStream* by **Shana Moulton** (New York, NY), *central-lattice* by **Brenna Murphy** (Edmunds, Washington), *The Land Behind* by **Sabrina Ratté** (Montreal), *Implicit Bias—ghost in the shell* by **Wolfie E. Rawk** (Chicago), *Island Light* by **Andrew Rosinski** (Chicago), *QTzrk_loop* by **Jon J. Satrom** (Chicago), and *floVV* by **Małgosia Woźnica** (Warsaw).

This project is organized by University Galleries' Curator Jason Judd, and is supported in part by the Illinois Arts Council.

University Galleries is located at Uptown Station at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway. Parking is available directly above, and the first hour is free. If you need special accommodations to participate in any event, please contact University Galleries at 309.438.5487 or gallery@ilstu.edu. Please allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation. Please note that all events at University Galleries are free.

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