



Logline

Fugitive Refrains is a Rococo game played between forest and palace, nature and artifice, movement and landscape, figure and ground, dance and architecture, mirrors and echoes, and display and concealment.

Synopsis

Fugitive Refrains juxtaposes ornate imitations of nature from the Rococo interiors of Stuttgart's Solitude palace with performances that trace the old plan of the Rococo playground underlying the Solitude forest, in order to play a series of period games with nature and artifice, movement and landscape, figure and ground, mirrors and echoes, and display and concealment.

Statement

Fugitive Refrains is a video conceived and produced collaboratively by media artist Mariam Ghani and Butoh-trained dancer/choreographer Erin Kelly during a residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany. Schloss Solitude is a pleasure palace built by Duke Carl Eugen in the late Rococo period, and contains one of the first examples of trompe l'oeil wood ever used in European architecture. The imitation of nature, in the belief that artifice could make nature better than nature itself, was typical of the late Rococo. Constant play with figure, ground, and false perspective, through trompe l'oeil and the use of mirrors, was another important facet of the aesthetic. The ornate design of the Schloss extended at the time into the forest surrounding it, which was originally intended as a vast hunting preserve stretching between and used by the castles of several different aristocrats in the area. An elaborate garden was planned, though never completely finished,

just behind the Schloss, while the existing nature behind it was re-configured to accomodate the Duke's amusements, with grottos, paths, clearings and orchards planted into the forest in preparation for costume parties, and a system of artificial lakes dug into the hills for an annual gondola procession.

Our project explored the forest as it is today for traces of the garden that once was projected onto it. We looked for sites where the landscape still remembers the human desires that shaped it and the pleasures once pursued there, and where the artifice of design has decayed into an almost-natural order. In these sites we used movement to outline the forms of what was or what might have been, the ruins of a plan now perceptible only in peripheral vision, working with ideas of movement drawn from the Rococo aesthetic - playing with perceptions of figure and ground, and embodiment between human and natural. We also shot the ornamental forms and figurations of nature in the interior architecture of the Schloss, in order to create an interplay onscreen between mirrors and echoes, nature and artifice, faux and real.

Fugitive Refrains was developed for, performed, and shot in six specific sites in the Solitude forest, as well as inside the palace itself, in summer 2006, post-produced in New York and LA in 2006-07, and will premiere as a single-channel surround sound video installation at the Akademie in spring 2007.

Credits

Concept/direction: Mariam Ghani & Erin Kelly

Choreography: Erin Kelly

Camera/editing: Mariam Ghani

Score: Qasim Naqvi

Costumes: Mariam Ghani & Erin Kelly

Performers: Manuel Dengler, Sonia Dengler, Erin Kelly, Carola Venturini

Produced with the support of Akademie Schloss Solitude.

All images: Mariam Ghani & Erin Kelly, 2006

Formats

Shot on HDV 1080i50

Preview copies: DVD PAL (576i) letterbox 16:9

Screening copies: HDV PAL or NTSC, Beta SP PAL or NTSC

Bios

Mariam Ghani (Co-Director, DP, Editing) is a Brooklyn-based artist who works with video, installation, new media, photography, performance, text and public dialogue. She is a Soros and NYFA Fellow, has been an artist in residence at LMCC, Eyebeam Atelier, and Smack Mellon, and has exhibited widely since 1999. Her videos have screened at venues including the New York Video Festival, Rooftop Films, the d.u.m.b.o. Film and Video Festival, the Dallas Video Festival, the Liverpool Biennial, the PLAY Festival in Berlin, the Danish Film Institute, transmediale in Berlin, Independent Heroines in Bristol, Curtacinema in Rio, d/Art in Sydney, EMAP in Seoul, Futura in Prague, Smart Project Space in Amsterdam, the Boston Center for the Arts, the Asia Society, Paula Cooper Gallery, Exit Art, and the Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens Museums. Her work has been featured in RES, The Independent, the New York Times, Viralnet, O Globo, the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, the Daily Star and the BBC Persian World Service. She has a B.A. in Comparative Literature from NYU and an MFA from SVA, teaches in the Art & Technology program at the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey, and is currently a Fellow of the Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart. For more info: <http://www.kabul-reconstructions.net/mariam>

Erin Kelly (Co-Director, Choreography, Performer) employs techniques from Butoh, qigong, Thai massage, gymnastics, farming, cabaret dancing, and performance action-theater to create new works, ways of moving, and performance installation pieces that comment on human condition and its relationship to the environment and society. Her work as a dancer and choreographer has been seen nationally and internationally at venues including Theater for the New City and Movement Research at Judson Church in New York, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin in Miami and Paris, and Schloss Broellin in Germany.

Qasim Naqvi (Score) has composed and arranged music for television (including the BBC, Discovery Health, PBS, and the HBO Undercover Series), film (the critically acclaimed documentary feature *The American Ruling Class*, the narrative feature *The Cassidy Kids*, and Prashant Bhargava's Sundance-nominated short *Sangam*), and for original dance works by choreographers including Yael Caravan, Tai Jiminez, and Berlin's Ten Pin Chi Bhuto. His compositions have premiered in London, Berlin, Paris, Boudreaux, Amsterdam, Sapporo and Lahore. As a multi-instrumental performer of new and improvised music, Qasim has toured and collaborated with artists such as Reggie Workman, Don Byron, Lawrence D. Butch Morris, Vernon Reid, Brandon Ross, Carl Hancock Rux, Roswell Rudd, Charlie Burnham and Buster Williams. He is a member of the New York based avant-rock group Elysian Fields, the Electric Secrets Ensemble, Glass Ghost, and the Burnt Sugar Chamber Arkestra, a 21-piece ensemble for electro-acoustic improvisers. Qasim has also completed residencies at the Studio for Electro Instrumental Music in Amsterdam, and Harvestworks Digital Media Labs in New York, where he developed a computer based control system that interacts in real time with acoustic instruments based on varying principles of improvisation.

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Project Website:

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Production Stills:

a b/w pr still is at head of press kit
four hi-res color production stills follow on the subsequent pages
a wider selection of lo-res production stills can be found on the project website







