

**Heidi Voet**  
***Happy Next Year***  
**OneTwenty Gallery**

The work of Heidi Voet explores the distances and intersections between fantasy and reality. Within her installations she often re-adjusts existing architectural structures, adding such elements as renegade walls, ceilings, and doors, carefully designing a collision of the rational with the implausible. Her video projections are integrated within the dynamics of the installations, becoming a site where one sees images of an ideal world from the often-compromised conditions of actuality. In dealing with the impossible and temporary nature of dreams, Heidi Voet leads the viewer into corners of the psyche where logic, like her spaces, becomes subject to the all-shifting abilities of the imagination. In a way akin to such fantasists as Lewis Carroll and Tim Burton, Voet works at odds with the demands of order and predictability. The imaginative power and analytic intelligence of her work recall especially the writings of French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, who in his studies on air, dreams, fire, water, and earth, extolled the imagination as the ever-renewed source of human creativity, always on the move, surpassing any given image or form.

In *Happy Next Year*, Voet's playful manipulation of reality and fantasy blends with a reflection on that ancient and most problematic philosophical division: nature and culture. In the detached white setting of the gallery, details and carefully composed images stick out. A colorful flower, clouds on blue sky, caged birds, clouds again, viewed from an airplane window—stereotypical images that at the same time have an undeniable naïve charm.

"Good Morning Paradise" consists of a discreet double video projection, in which the door to the exhibition space serves as the swinging screen. On one side is projected the image of a blinking neon palm tree set in a Shanghai street; on the other, a sunset above the clouds taken from atop a mountain in Taiwan. When the gallery door is shut the two projections literally obliterate one another, light shining into light, serene natural beauty dissolving into the gaudy flashings of simulated nature and vice versa. By opening and closing the door, the visitor exerts an at first unconscious control over the scene, rendering the videos visible when entering the exhibition.

"Moving Clouds" is a lengthy imaginary highway cutting across the floor of the gallery, demarcated by concrete blocks and filled with paper model cars. It is a miniature traffic jam, where some of the vehicles have been unfortunately squashed, a scene of arrested commotion. In the windshields of the paper Porsches are reflected five different variations of white clouds and blue sky, again suggesting movement in an image that is still. *Le nuage nous aide à rêver la transformation* (the cloud helps us to dream of transformation), writes Bachelard, and so the cars also become vehicles of reverie, though ironically there is nothing special about them per se. The standard design was found on the internet, and modified by the artist; printouts of the models, each titled with a precise time (10:01am, 10:13am, 1:49pm, 3:32pm, 5:04pm) are framed and hung on the wall. In addition to these paper models, a series of three photographs is displayed, "Where the Hell on Earth", including birds in a cage, a seascape, and a view from an airplane above the clouds.

In "If memories were wishes" a horizontal wall is loaded down with concrete slabs causing it to bend, while five stacks of postcards reaching from the ground and 'through' the table seem to provide it with needed support. The image on the postcards (the public is free to help themselves to them) looks like a standard souvenir photograph, a picture of a colorful flower that is both exotic yet could be anywhere. On the back of the postcard is printed "we don't move on", a kind of ironic motto of the contemporary tourist-spectator, who sees the world through the distorted lens of 'anticipatory commemoration'. All of life will have been a beautiful memory, as the present already bends to the past so that it can be remembered in the 'rosier' future... Happy next year!

Aaron Schuster, March 2007.