

HITO STEYERL

Factory of the Sun, 2015

Video installation: One-channel video, 23 min., HD video pro rez.MOV file. / Motion capture studio, blue, illuminated grid in the space / Free-standing projection architecture, sunloungers, and beach chairs

In her video installation *Factory of the Sun*, Hito Steyerl makes use of the emphatic notion of sunlight, that old symbol of progress, leading us in a dialectic fashion, which is both critical and playful, to the very heart of the debates about our digital present. It is not without a certain bitter irony that Steyerl weighs up the utopian potential of the internet against its “deadly transparency”. *Factory of the Sun* slips into the form of a computer game, so as to draw on the narrative structure of popular entertainment and establish a more favourable position from which to do battle. For it is about nothing less than sounding out the remaining freedom of action that political individuals and subjects have in the face of the inextricable interlacing of digital streams of information, economic interests, and social and cultural distortions. As a result, everything in this game is based on the immateriality of light as a medium of information, physical bodies, and values.

Like the diverse modes of a computer game, the film switches between different levels of reality. The narrator is Yulia, who at the same time is also the programmer of the game, whose protagonists are initially introduced to us as slave labourers in a motion capture studio—the technical *dispositif* that transforms the movements of a figure into light impulses, the basis of all the virtual reality in a computer game. In a frantic montage, the dance scenes act as the motor in an incessant stream of changing images. At the same time, the act of dancing represents the most playful form of resistance for the young protagonists in their struggle against the supremacy of their invisible opponents.

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Hito Steyerl, born 1966, lives and works as an artist, film-maker, and author in Berlin. ‘Hito Steyerl’s films and essays take the digital image as a point of departure for entering a world in which a politics of dazzle manifests as collective desire. This is to say that when war, genocide, capital flows, digital detritus, and class warfare always take place partially within images, we are no longer dealing with the virtual but with a confusing and possibly alien concreteness that we are only beginning to understand. Today the image world, Steyerl reminds us, is far from flat. And paradoxically it may be in its most trashy and hollowed out spots that we can locate its ethics. Because this is where forms run free and the altogether unseen and unrecognized toy with political projects at the speed of light. It is where spectacle and poverty merge, then split, then dance’ (Brian Kuan Wood).

Steyerl’s works have been shown around the world in numerous exhibitions and at a range of film festivals, most recently in the Artists Space, New York (2015), at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London (2014), the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2014), the Art Institute of Chicago (2013), and the Biennale di Venezia (2013). In 2007 she took part in documenta 12.

Further information and images on www.deutscher-pavillon.org and in the catalogue.