ELINA MORIYA

The Ghost that Wasn't

Elina Moriya's fascination for Finnish and Japanese folklore ghost stories led her on a journey to investigate what ghosts represent and the values they echo in both cultures. The resulting *The Ghost that Wasn't* is a two-screen video installation with two alternative cultural knowledge systems, one individualistic and one collective, forming a balanced dialogue. The voiceover narrative follows the format of folkloric ghost stories where often a moral lesson is involved and passed on through the generations.

Moriya has deconstructed and (re)framed Finnish and Japanese ghost films from around the 1950s to question how do cultural images, individual, communal and cultural memories influence us when we form our perception and give meanings to images? Underlining the crucial role that embedded knowledge plays in our existence and communication, Moriya has distinguished cultural cues to bring our attention to the unwritten layers of knowledge: the sensual, haptic and emotional.

Short film extracts acting as cultural quotations occur simultaneously within a multitude of locations in mixtures of visual grammars, symbols, aesthetics, sensory aptitude and styles, operating in multidimensional, subconscious paradigms and conceptual frameworks. This is a tangible illustration of Moriya's concept of the '(a)crossing gaze' that is able to '(a)cross' alternative cultural knowledge systems learnt from parents and 'attune' to each culture.

However, the work illustrates that pre-existing images from the predominant ghost films are partial, inadequate, unverifiable or even unavailable to properly illustrate the voiceover narrative and new orders of images do not correspond to pre-existing images. This challenges what is recognised as an acknowledged visual grammar, with its related aesthetics and paradigms.

The work that has arisen from a mixture of two familiar cultures overlapping in subconscious sensory perceptions and cultural paradigms, creates a new entity, always consisting of at least two simultaneous parallel possibilities. The world then becomes a matrix of options and a multitude of locations depending on which position one takes. The audience is challenged to participate by selecting their engagement from the appearances on two screens, determining which scene at which point of time to focus on. This process of intuitive selection, influences how the language continuously transforms the meanings into dialogues and encounters with multidimensional contents.

Encountering ourselves is the first step to recognise and acknowledge alternative perspectives and the values they represent. Additionally, one needs willingness and commitment to navigate '(a)cross' unfamiliar narratives in order to truly consider various contexts as equally valuable. Through the deconstruction and integration of different orders of knowledge we can discover the traces of direct personal experiences and understand the imprints they have left on us. When we identify the humanity behind all diverse worldviews, this allows us to find translations and create dialogues that connect us as human to human, and move us towards a world that is inclusive instead of excluding.

When two alternative cultural systems operate simultaneously in multiple perspectives, with alternative meanings and variations of paradigms, one is continuously '(a)crossing' and 'attuning' from one to the other (within oneself), and ultimately all answers are as floating as the images.

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