

# EMPAC



TALES OF LOVE AND FEAR, BY LUCY RAVEN, 2015

PERFORMANCE

## Tales of Love and Fear

Lucy Raven

FRI / FEB 27<sup>TH</sup>

8:00 PM

### Tales of Love and Fear Lucy Raven

The culmination of several years of research, *Tales of Love and Fear* is a site-specific artwork for the Concert Hall. A regular artist-in-residence since fall 2013, Lucy Raven has focused her research on the history and evolution of 3D-film technologies and animation techniques. Investigating the fluid cultural perception of spatial depth through an art-historical lens, she explores the mechanisms of industrial cinema production through analysis of the transnational circulation of labor and materials.

Developed in collaboration with our production team, *Tales of Love and Fear* is comprised of a custom-built rig of counter-rotating platforms. A single stereoscopic photograph, taken by the artist during her research in India, is split by the two projectors into the left and right eye perspective. Conceived as a cinema for a single image, this piece expands and unifies our perception of the cinematic beyond the screen.

Using field recordings taken during a screening of a Bollywood horror movie in Mumbai, the surround soundtrack, designed by Paul Corley, transports the viewer into this cinematic environment. By translating and overlaying this specific auditory experience onto the Concert Hall, *Tales of Love and Fear* creates a composite architecture. Cones of light slowly revolve through the volume of the hall connecting the photographic image to the projection apparatus.

## From *Artforum's* “500 Words”

February 24, 2015

*Tales of Love and Fear* is a cousin of *Curtains*, a work I finished a couple of months ago that uses a similar anaglyph technique of separating right eye from left. *Curtains* is a fragmented portrait of the work that goes into making Hollywood's 3D blockbusters, a process that, as it has shifted from production to postproduction with the disappearance of celluloid, has created a global visual effects assembly line, where one film is broken up and sent piecemeal to the lowest bidder, then composited, or reassembled, back in Los Angeles. All visual effects are achieved painstakingly, frame by frame. 3D conversion is especially labor intensive, as it requires the digital creation of a synthetic second-eye view for every frame in the film. Big-budget films—what the people in *Curtains* are working on—get distributed on identical hard drives to movie theaters all around the world. You can see *Superman* in 3D in Beijing or London or Omaha or Kuala Lumpur, and you're watching identical files played in megaplexes outfitted with a thousand new features that adhere to Digital Cinema Package, or DCP, standards.

While doing research for *Curtains* I was also writing a series of illustrated lectures. One of these, *Low Relief*, focuses on a formal relationship between bas-relief carvings and 3D images. In that talk, I look at different histories of bas-relief carvings in the US and in India—and each culture's history of depicting spatial depth—as a way to discuss Hollywood's outsourcing of the work converting films to 3D, a process that's high tech, but also on some level artisanal, done by hand, and subjective. After trips to postproduction studios in Chennai, Mumbai, and Trivandrum, I went to central India to visit some of its oldest rock-cut temples. I came to feel that I was doing very deep background research, examining these ancient reliefs that emerged from the same geography where 3D images are now being made in virtual space. There has always been a desire to see behind the flat image.

In a way, if *Curtains* is about labor then *Tales* is about relief. I mean bas-relief but also relief from work, and a real enjoyment in watching movies. When I started talking to Victoria Brooks, the curator at EMPAC, about what I could do there, I said I was interested in creating a unique instance of cinema. A cinema made for a single film, which contains a single image. I took a lot of 3D stills on my trip to the ancient caves and temples, and in a way the one I chose isn't anything special. I like that there's no figure in it and I was very drawn to the architecture in this image, which rhymes with the columns in the concert hall at EMPAC. I consider *Tales* to be as much a movie as it is a kinetic sculpture performing the architecture of the theater it is in. I worked in collaboration with EMPAC's genius production team on the concept and design of the rig, and with a very talented composer, engineer, and producer, Paul Corley, on the sound. The sound, based around field recordings I made during a horror film I went to in Mumbai, takes advantage of the incredible acoustic possibilities in EMPAC's Concert Hall.

Despite what Oliver Wendell Holmes says in “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” about the verisimilitude of the stereo photograph, you are not seeing into infinite depth with 3D. The illusion works best when it is shallow; often that's when you're really grabbed by the solidity of forms within it. When I started looking back to the earliest patents for 3D, I saw that many of them spoke about the illusion created in terms of relief. As it turns out, the etymology of *anaglyph* is from the ancient Greek for “work in low relief.”

—Lucy Raven, as told to Corrine Fitzpatrick

## **On Animation and Workflow** Film Series

This ongoing series takes as its starting point the long co-history of animation and workflow, from early cinema to contemporary moving images, including art film and video, Hollywood productions, and video games.

### **Feb. 28:**

#### ***On Animation and Workflow Colloquium Screening***

Looking back upon a century's worth of image production, this screening program presents moving images from Georges Méliès' pre-digital compositing techniques at the turn of the 20th century to contemporary CGI, and artists' experiments with gaming software, to investigate the technical and aesthetic conditions that are manifest through the processes of constructing moving images. This screening is part of the Jaffe Colloquium: On Animation and Workflow that brings together a small group of artists, curators, visual effects specialists, engineers, and theorists to informally discuss ideas centered around the conditions of the long co-history of animation and workflow.

### **March 31:**

#### ***Parallel I-IV***

Harun Farocki

A four-part cycle of essay-films made by the late filmmaker Harun Farocki between 2012–2014, *Parallel I–IV* delves into the techniques and technologies involved in the making of contemporary moving images. Charting the development of computer animation through video games, industrial cinema, and military imaging, Farocki discards the cinematic notion of the “real” to uncover the unseen labor invisibly rendered into these on-screen digital worlds.

**CURATOR: VICTORIA BROOKS**

## **Biography**

**Lucy Raven** lives in New York City. Her work has been included in exhibitions and screenings internationally including Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Forum Expanded, Berlinale; Wavelengths, Toronto International Film Festival; New Directors New Films, New York; Hammer Projects, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the 2012 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She currently teaches at the Cooper Union School of Art.

**Paul Corley** – Sound Producer

**Todd Vos** – Lead Audio Engineer

**Eric Lin** – Mechanical Design and Fabrication

**Eric Ameres** and **Gordon Clement** – Software Design and Programming

**Eric Brucker** – Lead Video Engineer

**Geoff Abbas** – Director for Stage Technologies

**Victoria Brooks** – Curator

*With special thanks to everyone at EMPAC for the numerous conversations and collaborations that made this work possible.*

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Kim Strosahl / Acting Production Administrative Coordinator  
Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer  
Dan Swalec / Master Electrician  
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