

ARTFORUM

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

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ABSTRACT PHOTOGRAPHY
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inside the house, the other one is lurking about
g connects these two women—we just don't
Hubbard and Alexander Birchler's *House with*
ously orchestrated work of narrative video.
g that is often problematic in Hubbard and
y-handed staging of scenes and didactic ges-
rarely encountered in video art gives *House*
l air and makes it the best work the duo has

and Birchler's works are concerned with spaces
protagonists deal with them. The pair are
sition between inside and out, often staging
between an interior and an exterior. Whenever
line, drama happens. In *Single Wide*, 2002, a
p truck directly into her trailer home. As the
e scene, we see an immaculate interior split in
k.

we watch the story evolve in a twenty-minute
oung woman outside breaks into the house,
ends up sleeping outdoors by the illuminated
hile, the lady of the house prepares for bed.
eir diametrically opposed positions, move
paces but never meet. But we notice a photo-
d in the bedroom that reveals that the two
They pose side by side in happier days for the
ghter?

onflicts, implied guilt, separation, and the
play here. The daughter (if that is who she is)
and now returns to the comfort of her bour-
sn't want to be what she sees. For the grand
ys the piano: the same mournful piece her
before. A gardener fishes a dead deer out of
the girl runs away again. There is no concilia-
p simply begins again. The setting, the mod-
ns to determine how the characters move
over the suburbs once more. The whole story
, but it is so simply and cleanly staged and
/ affecting—one of the finest works of video
while.

—Stefan Zucker

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

of Language"

CA KAUFMANN

tle of Language," from the collection of forty-
oland Barthes between 1967 and 1980, this
tudy of the relationship between word and
communication. By necessity, the works cho-
variety. The exhibition began with two yellow
e wall next to a pair of plinths, also yellow,
two monitors showing a loop of two different
arpenters concert in which Karen Carpenter
se to You." The work in question, Candice
Close to You, 1970–2000, is from Breitz's
." Arranged on the wall opposite the entrance
Lily van der Stokker, one in acrylic on card-
id pen on paper, and one in acrylic on linen;
1993, they present a series of dates, written



View of "The Rustle of Language," 2009.

by hand one after another in a seemingly endless calligraphy. This first room also included a work by Roman Ondák—a shelf supporting a pile of coins, *Pocket Money of My Son*, 2007—and photos by Christian Marclay from 2003–2004, depicting various urban signifiers ranging from a public telephone to bags of food in gaudy colors; a collage made by superimposing a landscape over a photographic portrait of a human face, John Stezaker's *Mask XVIII*, 2006, and *Housemeister*, 2008; and a video by Yoshua Okon showing a suspicious figure with a grotesque face emerging from a little door in a white cube—each perhaps meant to signify how the word can also be only evoked, alluded to by gestures.

The second part of the show examined the juxtaposition of signs in greater depth. Fikret Atay's video *Theorists*, 2009, depicted a prayer in motion, or rather the continuous hustle and bustle of the faithful gathered inside a mosque; *Until It Makes Sense*, 2004, by Mario Garcia Torres, consisted of the title's words projected onto the wall; they seemed to float lightly in the space. In these rooms the overlapping of imaginary voices left no room for silence. Writing becomes painting, as in two 2009 works by Ricci Albenda that faced each other, one yellow, the other pink, with the titles *pff* and *EEK* painted on the monochrome canvases. The very contiguity of the works generated a kind of babble, a rhythm in which phrase and gesture intertwined through the most widely varied expressive means and, once again, the resulting synesthetic mishmash left no room for silence. Even when the word disappears, as in the photo of an untouched ruled notebook by Anne Collier, *Guilt (Page 107)*, 2008, it seems only to reappear, signified by the projected drawings of Dan Perjovschi, *Diorama of the Venice Biennial*, 2008, or by Stezaker's collages of overlapping faces and views, 2006–2007; or to become fragmented, as in the individual letters and punctuation marks typed out in three works by Henri Chopin, all 1983, and finally intuited, through Collier's *Sylvia Plath*, 2008—photos of the cover of a spoken-word LP.

—Marco Tagliaferro

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

VALENCIA, SPAIN

Kaoru Katayama

GALERÍA TOMÁS MARCH

The media's use and abuse of the concept of globalization have led some people to believe that cultural barriers between countries have completely disappeared. Nothing, of course, could be farther from the truth. Among the many who have discovered this for themselves is the

REVIEWS



Kaoru Katayama.
Te quiero mucho
(I Love You Very Much),
2009, still from an
HD color video,
4 minutes 2 seconds.

Japanese artist Kaoru Katayama, who moved to Spain in 1991. The initial culture clash took place in the city of Salamanca, where Katayama had gone to learn Spanish. To the newcomer, however, language was less a tool of exchange and communication than one of many spheres of misunderstanding. Another involved the Spanish penchant for endless physical contact (kisses, hugs, pats on the back), which was hard to become accustomed to for someone from a country where people keep their distance when they greet.

Perhaps this is why Katayama likes to call attention to the instability of national codes and stereotypes. In doing so, she has availed herself of many different disciplines, among them drawing, installation, video, and performance. In 2006, Katayama conceived *Ba-ji-toh-fuh, cuando el viento del este sopla al oído del caballo* (*Ba-ji-toh-fuh, When the East Wind Blows on the Horse's Ear*). This video projection, whose title is taken from a Japanese proverb, shows the artist herself, clad in black, against the austere background of a concrete construction. A young *charro*, a Salamanca dancer in traditional dress, tries to get Katayama's attention, circling around her while playing castanets. Communication does not seem possible: Japanese impassivity is unmoved by Spanish color and gesture. For *Technocharro*, 2004, Katayama recorded a traditional dance group from Salamanca, but the music in the video is not the sort that usually accompanies their dances; instead, we hear techno rhythms played by two DJs. The male and female dancers, wearing regional costumes, are comically disoriented at the beginning but gradually adapt their steps to the techno beat. Somehow, the traditional and the contemporary find an uneasy common ground.

In Valencia, where she is now based, Katayama showed a video recorded at a bar in downtown Los Angeles called Jalisco, a meeting place for gay Chicano and Mexican men. The title of this piece, *Te quiero mucho* (I Love You Very Much), 2009, alludes to a famous song from northern Mexico. Though the lyrics of the song clearly reference heterosexual relationships, here they become background music for passionate homoerotic dancing. Finally, inspired by Japanese comics, the drawings in the series "*Kotowaza (refrán)*" (*Kotowaza* [Proverb]), 2009, bring together proverbs about animals whose meanings are almost impossible for a non-Japanese-speaking viewer to figure out. Visual language should offer a means to move beyond language barriers, just as physical contact and emotion can bring people from distant regions together—but, as Katayama seems to suggest, doing so is never easy.

—Juan Vicente Aliaga

Translated from Spanish by Jane Brodie.

STOCKHOLM

Christine Ödlund

CHRISTIAN LARSEN

Christine Ödlund's recent exhibition was t drawings showing scenes of strange veget in extraterrestrial pastels, and trance-indu life-forms. The latter were lubricious in slippery to the touch and salacious. Two darkened rooms, providing an experience not that Ödlund's art is all New Agey sub was plenty of that. Rather, my first thought Tanning would fall for Ödlund's works, no backs to Surrealism but rather because, lik Ödlund hugs realism so tight that she cor out numinous metaphors—for a comp "Evening" (2004).

There is an unexpected turn to this exhibi later. First there is Ödlund's DIY animation isticfunk fusion. *Forest*, 2006, is a slothfu ocean floor, dense with rhythmic life and sha (lightning flashes while teeny creatures dart see). What's coming? you wonder. And ther way to a softer, looser style as Ödlund trans levels of "reality." As one reality gives way to the landscape that was already ambiguous Ödlund is facile with her styles; moving fro is like clicking through *orbis alia* scenes by while in her animations she takes your hand immersive never-never land to the next.

Ödlund's fantastic art is unexpectedly t that is a specter in her room. This figure's id title of this exhibition, "Thought-Forms," Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater's 1901 cism. Besant haunts the exhibition: A Briti advocate of women's rights and of Indian president of the Theosophical Society and a clairvoyant; then, while in India with Leadbeater in 1909, recognized the messianic aura given off by thirteen-year-old Jiddu Krishnamurti. She named him the Messiah, legally adopted him as her son, and took him as her spiritual teacher. Those were the days.

Ödlund's quest for higher planes of experience shadows Besant's, who observed with Leadbeater that the scientist "finds himself compelled to speculate on invisible presences, if only to find a rational explanation for undoubted physical phenomena, and insensibly he slips over the boundary, and is, although he does not yet realize it, contacting the astral plane." Besant also experienced radiating vibrations and floating forms made visible through her clairvoyance. Indeed, Ödlund's video installation *Thought-Form*, 2009, pays homage