EMBEDDED

Strange Neighbour gallery
Curated by Amy Marjoram & Michael Meneghetti

One of the reoccurring problems of curating new media today is the awkwardness of videos works in a gallery space. Like getting a fish out of its water, the screens and projections float in the white cube like satellites and sound works mix with each other, causing a familiar feeling of misplaced objects. The act of transmitting virtual media into a physical space always involves a certain sacrifice on the behalf of the works. And although *Embedded* - recently presented at 'Strange Neighbour' gallery - does not escape this fate, it seems this awkwardness plays on behalf of the exhibition as it questions our habits of image consumption.

In the catalogue text for *Embedded*, the co-curator Amy Marjoram writes a description of herself and her work:

"In the morning before I piss I roll over and look at my laptop as though it's a lover, baby are you okay, are you awake? My key-strokes replicate like blood cells. My hands bend in to typist bird claws, even when I am out of the house they are ready to pounce on a keyboard like a bird of prey. And I don't even game. Instead I play the internet like a piano, multiple tabs and pages open. Hungry for content, I forget to eat."

By describing something of her daily life, Marjoram manifests herself as a curator from a different kind: A mythological animal, hungry for images, a virtual life-form hunting in the net for visual leaks in the system. It is a gatherer of the unseen, the twisted, the wrongly made. If the curator is the hunter, then the exhibition is the cave in which they keep their hoard, plucked from the infinite depths of the internet, and like the still twitching bodies of small creatures, they jump aimlessly against the gallery's surface.

In one of the key videos, "End Game" by Nicole Breedon, we see a sequence of "GAME OVER" scenes from archaic computer games. The repetition of the death moment, minimised to basic graphic design in 2D emphasises the tragic hero. It is a repeated suicide, where the virtual character is brought to death by the player. A ceremonial act.

The works in Embedded represent a fantastic virtual universe, a simulation of exaggerated realness. The computer made image reflects glimpses of the users passions, angers and fears. Its repeated sequences emphasize the almost passive-aggressive nature of the player, who uses the virtual character as an extension of himself, producing psychological structures of identification or rejection.

In "Passive Bullying" by Hector Llanquín, the artist captures the moment from a Grand Theft Auto game, where his character constantly bothers and follows random virtual civilians in the streets, producing situations of harassment.

Another example is Georgie Roxby Smith, "The Fall Girl", where the artist records a glitch in the game where the character falls infinitely in space. The female body gets distorted, manipulated in a painful infinite cycle of torture.

"The works in Embedded all mash, twist, suspend or endlessly repeat aspects of screen-mediated living," declares Marjoram. For Embedded as a show is a collection of errors, randomly or intentionally made. It is one big repeated glitch whose different parts are struggling within themselves. Its violence is mostly hidden under the mask of non-provocative images: video game screen captures, clumsy 3D animations, hair shampoo advertisements. It is a trip in the mind of a heavy image addict, a mushrooms collection wisely and patiently picked from the net-forest.

Text by Bar Yerushalmi
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