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Three Emerging Artists Challenge Fact with Fiction on Panasonic Astrovision: Janaina Tschäpe, Hiraki Sawa, and the Neistat Brothers

Surreal Visions of the Ordinary Celebrate Third Anniversary of The 59th Minute



Stills from left to right: *Dwelling*, *Dream Sequence I*, *Mousetrap*

December 10, 2003: In celebration of the third anniversary of *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision*, **Creative Time** and **Panasonic** proudly present three videos by emerging artists: **Janaina Tschäpe**, **Hiraki Sawa**, and the **Neistat brothers (Casey and Van)**. The three works, *Dream Sequence I* (Tschäpe), *Dwelling* (Sawa), and *Mousetrap* (Neistats) will run **January 21 – April 30, 2004** on the NBC Astrovision by Panasonic. Blending reality and fiction, the three selected videos recast everyday objects—an airplane, a bed, a mousetrap—with an absurdist and dreamlike spirit, displacing them in unlikely circumstances. For three years in the heart of Times Square, *The 59th Minute* has showcased the works of emerging and established artists, from Thomas Struth, Jeremy Blake, and Fischli & Weiss to Gary Hill, Genviève Cadieux, and Marco Brambilla. Tschäpe, Sawa, and the Neistats continue the series' tradition of affording exposure to artists in the world's media capital and, in doing so, presenting artistic content as an antidote to the entrenched commercialism of Times Square.

Dream Sequence I, *Dwelling*, and *Mousetrap* will air daily in *The 59th Minute* on the NBC Astrovision by Panasonic in rotation on the last minute of every hour from 6:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m. except between 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Also on January 21, 2004, Creative Time will launch a five week public competition online as part of the next 59th Minute feature, Günther Selichar's *Who's Afraid of Blue, Red and Green?* See below for more information.

Dream Sequence I, Dwelling, and Mousetrap

Tschäpe, Sawa, and the Neistats' videos are suspenseful for their fragmented narratives, absence of people, and apparent simplicity, and escapist for their fantastical transformation of domestic environments and banal objects. Whether in witnessing an organic bubble grow from a bed and burst, miniature airplanes fly placidly through a private apartment, or a mouse in its final moments, in the heart of Times Square, we can lose ourselves in these three videos. Like "jouissance," the French term coined by Roland Barthes to characterize the moment in reading



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when a reader abandons themselves between the act of reading and the narrative, Tschäpe, Sawa, and the Neistats ask us to desert our preconceptions and even where we are.

Tschäpe's *Dream Sequence I* juxtaposes the intimacy of an unmade bed with a Spartan concrete courtyard (the artists's studio). Having once said, "something can become a sculpture with an action," Tschäpe "gives time a shape" while, for the duration of the minute-long work, a large, white bubble emerges from the center of the bed. Other than a breeze occasionally lifting the corners of the white sheets, the setting remains lifeless as the bubble grows like a baby in vitro. After reaching approximately three feet in diameter, however, the bubble suddenly bursts as if a secret can no longer be contained, water sloshes across the bed, spills onto the floor, and splatters the walls of the courtyard. Culminating in a sublime release, *Dream Sequence I* suggests a mysterious but vital inner life.

Hiraki Sawa's *Dwelling* takes place in the artist's apartment, a generic, one bedroom flat in London. Inside, Sawa creates a daydream universe of toy-sized jumbo jets, slowly taking off from pillows, tabletops, and carpets. Flying between rooms, over the kitchen sink, and past dangling light bulbs, the jets multiply until they are methodically weaving a thick web of air traffic. Aiming to challenge the nature of our perception, Sawa whimsically brings otherwise imposing objects associated with the outdoors into captivity. Shot in black and white, the planes are further stripped of realism amidst the Technicolor affect of Times Square, where their scale is diminished to that of insects. Sawa's containment and displacement of planes is, in itself, transporting.

***Mousetrap* by Casey and Van Neistat** features a white mouse pacing a minimalist space at the center of which is a plywood mousetrap rigged with cheese. In the heart of Times Square, a billboard-sized mouse tempting fate is strikingly surreal. As the mouse traverses the clinical set searching for the cheese, we are forced to entertain the possibility of bearing witness to its demise though spared the moment of reckoning. By implicating the gruesome nature of a tried and true practice, the Neistats deftly throw our cultural fascination with death back in our faces. Citing Hemingway's "Iceberg Principle" as inspiration, whereby the naked eye can only see a small portion of a known truth, *Mousetrap* uses playful yet macabre imagery to disarm us by denying an innate desire to witness and, therefore, prove an outcome.

The Artists

Janaina Tschäpe was born in Dachau, Germany in 1973, received her MFA at the School of Visual Arts in 1998, and currently lives and works in New York City. Her recent solo exhibitions have been presented by Bastide, Brussels; Carlier Gebauer Gallery, Berlin; Art Concept, Paris; Paço das Artes, Sao Paulo; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Clinica Aesthetica, Berlin. Tschäpe's numerous group shows include: *Unesco Salutes Women in Art*, Unesco HQ, Paris; *Identity*, Nichido Contemporary Art, Tokyo; *Nuites Blanches*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris; *Caminhos do Contemporâneo*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro; *Panorama da Arte Brasileira*, Museu de Arte Moderna de Sao Paulo; *Virgin Territory*, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; and *Four Walls Screening*, Art in General, New York. Janaina Tschäpe is represented by Brent Sikkema Gallery in New York.

Hiraki Sawa was born in 1977 in Ishikawa, Japan. In 2003, the artist received his MA in sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, where he now lives and works. The artist's first solo show took place at Ota Fine Arts Gallery, Tokyo, in 2003. Group exhibitions featuring Sawa's work include *Air*, James Cohan Gallery, New York; *Lyon Biennial*; *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, London; *Static*, Liverpool; *The Curve*, Barbican Centre, London; and *East International*, Norfolk Institute of Art and Design, Norfolk. Hiraki Sawa is represented by James Cohan Gallery in New York.



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Casey and Van Neistat, born in 1981 in New London, Connecticut and 1975 in Augusta, Maine, respectively, live and work in New York City. Since 2001, the brothers have assisted artist Tom Sachs in his New York studio. In addition to their latest, widely circulated film, *Ipod's Dirty Secret*, their work has been featured at the Fred Snitzer Gallery, The Rotterdam Film Festival, Art Basel Miami, Monitor Film series Japan, as well in private residences.

Competition by Günther Selichar: *Who's Afraid of Blue, Red and Green?*

On January 21, 2004, Creative Time and Panasonic launch a five week competition in preparation for artist Günther Selichar's ongoing series, *Who's Afraid of Blue, Red and Green?*, the next *59th Minute* feature (starting May 1, 2004). Electronic screens of every size and sort, including the NBC Astrovision by Panasonic, portray pictorial, representational imagery with variations on a set of elementary colors: red, blue, and green. **Starting January 21 through February 28, 2004, Selichar invites the international public to participate in an exercise designed to explore the creative possibilities in manipulating these elementary visual building blocks.** Inspired by Barnett Newman's abstract expressionist painting, *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue?* (1966-70), Selichar's *Who's Afraid of Blue, Red and Green?* asks participants to digitally create unique variations on the painting, its linear composition and tripartite palette the only rule set. To make an entry, the public can go to **www.creativetime.org** or **www.landessgalerie.at**, the url for the Landesmuseum in Linz, Austria, which will host a concurrent exhibition on Selichar's work. A jury consisting of the artist and members of the art community will select several entries to be screened in rotation on the Astrovision starting May 1, 2004.

Creative Time

The 59th Minute, like all programs in Creative Time's 30 year history as a public arts presenter, surprises New Yorkers and visitors alike with fresh artistic content in surprising urban locales. From Times Square, the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, the skies over Manhattan, and the recent *Tribute in Light* (the temporary light memorial to 9.11.01) to storefronts, milk cartons, deli cups, and billboards, Creative Time supports artists in enlivening the New York cityscape. Times Square is the site of one of Creative Time's most renowned projects, *The 42nd Street Project*, for which the organization commissioned twenty artists in the summers of 1993 and 1994 to create works for derelict marquees and storefronts in Times Square during its redevelopment. Returning to Times Square, *The 59th Minute* exemplifies how public/private partnerships can invigorate the urban landscape and enhance New York City. For more information on Creative Time please visit www.creativetime.org.

Panasonic

The NBC Astrovision by Panasonic is the visual centerpiece of New York City's Times Square, the "Crossroads of the World." Measuring nearly three stories high and four stories wide, the screen, which contains 1.5 million light-emitting diodes (LEDs), is capable of displaying more than one billion shades of color. Each year, millions of people see the Astrovision either on television, in the movies, or when they visit Times Square. And every New Year's Eve, the landmark video screen helps more than 500,000 Times Square revelers count down the famous ball drop. Panasonic is the best known brand of New Jersey-based Matsushita Electric Corporation of America, which is the principal North American subsidiary of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (MEI) (NYSE: MC). Additional information can be found by visiting www.panasonic.com.