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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART (LACMA)

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The mechanics of binocular vision—the method by which a single three-dimensional image emerges from the brain’s synthesis of two perceiving eyes—subtend human perception. In the 1830s, the process was, in effect, operationalized with the invention of the stereoscope, in which technological means were employed to harness biology in the service of

illusionism (within the same decade, Louis Daguerre's camera likewise debuted). "3D: Double Vision" is apparently the first survey of this nearly two-hundred-year history of 3-D objects and their apparatuses to be shown in a North American art museum. More than a succession of novelties, the exhibition underlines the continued, self-conscious efforts of scientists, engineers, artists, and filmmakers to understand how the world appears to human eyes. Indeed, if anything, curator Britt Salvesen labored to maintain the seriousness of the premise. As she stated in an interview, stressing what it means to engage in this show, "One can argue that all art is an investigation of perception; 3-D art in particular involves the spectator in that process." (It's worth mentioning that Marcel Duchamp's hypnotically coiling *Rotoreliefs*, 1935/1965, hanging like talismans in the first space, established a project that everywhere insists upon the effect of viewer upon viewed.)

And to be sure, the deftly organized installation sumptuously incorporates red-and-blue 3-D frames, polarized glasses, Victorian stereoscopes, View-Master devices, and autostereoscopic images. Gallery attendants help match tool to work throughout the five sections, doling out a series of prostheses that make clear the reliance of the image not just on the spectator but also on the mediation between one and the other. After the first galleries, which detail the workings of binocular vision (hand-drawn specimens—stereoscopic pairs of geometric lines, for example—remind viewers that images perceived in 3-D may still be low-tech, as well as abstract or representational), the exhibition moves on to two historical periods in which the technology, formerly confined to the domain of science, was employed for the purpose of entertainment: the late nineteenth century and the post-World War II years, during which Hollywood assumed an especially vital role. (Clips from genres including Westerns and sci-fi are screened in a black-box gallery.) In a fourth section that is self-referential in another way, Salvesen collects materials from experimental films, performances, installations, and countercultures that stimulate altered perception, thereby keying the present institutional accommodation of such materials to CalArts' Art and Technology Program projects mounted at this very site from 1967 to 1971.

The final rooms return to the present, where 3-D triumphs not only in popular culture but also in contemporary art. Ed Ruscha (*The End #1–#4*, 1998/2016), Mariko Mori (*Birth of a Star*, 1995), and Lucy Raven

(*Curtains*, 2014) stand in for a broader swath of practitioners (addressed more expansively in the catalogue) who take up this technology—or who make its ocular and psychic dimensions their theme. For example, in Raven’s installation *Curtains*, two images glide to the midline of two screens, where they touch and begin the process of coherence again. Peggy Weil’s flickering *3D Wallpaper*, 1976/2018, a digital print of overlaid red and blue tracery hung in a long and narrow corridor, caps the show. The ready-made photo-op background, with its graphic pattern, was resurrected for this occasion, where it extended the show’s logic while suggesting a final interactive supplement in the form of the iPhone. Yet the wallpaper’s transcription into image reversed the logic of moving from two to three virtual dimensions: The parallax on which its in-person effects hinge is stilled in iPhone reproductions. The question of novelty—the scourge of this material as well as one of its greatest pleasures—thus lingers, a historical problem that still implicates curators and viewers alike.

— Suzanne Hudson

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