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One day in Japan, 15 September 2002' by Studiometis

Fanny Georges

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One day in Japan, Studiometis

Fanny Georges

Chronophotography, according to Marey, is a set of photographs of a moving object taken from the same viewpoint at equal intervals. Today, interactive chronophotography is a reinvestment of the chronophotographic tradition. Between the images the work becomes a complex system of signs. The user recomposes the framework of a story in the gaps.

"We go from absence to presence, from void to complete, by virtue of the fundamental illusion of our understanding. " [1]

"One day in Japan" is made using *vjying* software ('Play on me') that has been developed by the Studiometis collective. The user navigates in an animation database. The loops are classified by theme or in a chronological order. The user can change parameters of the visual experience with the keyboard: rotation, zoom, speed are controlled by keys "O", "A", "up", "down", "right", "left" and so on. Animations consist of photographs taken in Japan on September 15, 2002.

Studiometis plays on the idea of chronophotography. Some sequences adopt a fixed angle toward a moving target, in accordance with Marey's definition. Others adopt a moving angle and different targets. The diverse set of images is unified by the experience of the photographer. Image after image, loop after loop, the user subjectively rebuilds this experience.

On the first page, between the three pictures offered, I choose the first one, /Liquid funk/. Liquid sounds of rave break. A menu appears. I follow with the arrow keys.

/ Day/

/ 2002/

/ September/

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/ Sunday 15/

/ Nishiomiya museum/

/ The shell museum/.

(right arrow key)

/Architecture/, /ceiling/, /shells on a video monitor screen/, /green plants on green glass/, /flash red car/, /blue boat/ in a /glasslike grey yard/.

(Speed up)

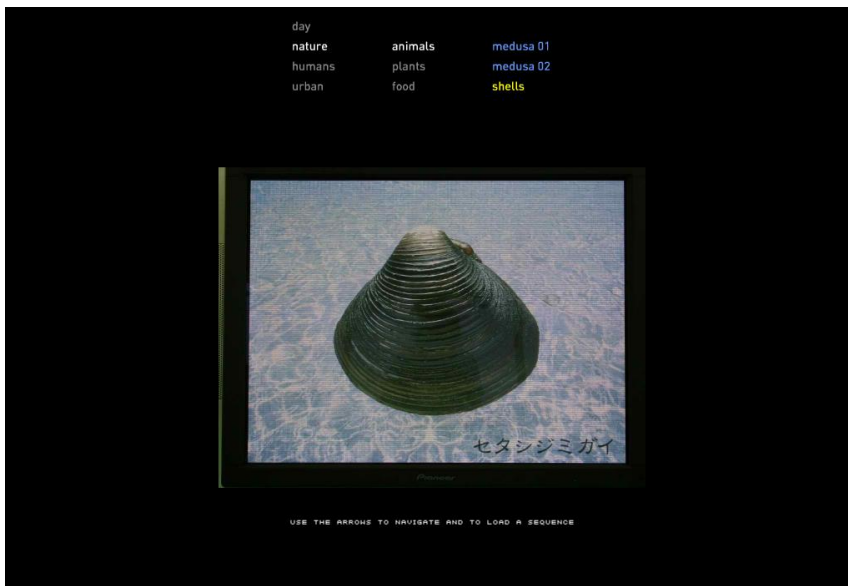


Figure 1 /Shell/

I */speed up/*. The lines superimpose and cross each other. A grammar is woven between the previously dissociated threads of meaning. The */shingle/* becomes associated with the */spotless round holes/*. The */shells/* follow one another, turn into */fossils on a digital sea/*, wave like a breath. */Sea/*, */shingle/*, in the */museum yard/*. The way I arrived here disappears and gives way to the absence-presence of the intermediate pictures.

(down)

I slow down and the image gets fixed. The shell remains. Water crystallizes.

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(up, up, up, up)

I /Speed up/. The music that I had thought independent from the image mixes with it by the accidental symbiosis of the motion of my hand with the images and the rhythm. My eye, my hand and my ears draw the image. It reveals the bit per minute. *Up, down, Up, down.* /Speed up/ and /slow down/ make sense. They become pulsation and dream. Synesthesia.

Find the balance

(Sound)

/Mari/

I see */Mari/*, a young Japanese girl. Her face is off camera. She smooths her pants and puts her hand in her pocket. She smooths her pants for a long time as if to enjoy the density of the white calico.

(left, down, right)

/Miko 1/

In a restaurant, */Miko/*, another young Japanese woman, speaks enthusiastically to somebody who is off camera. She swings her head and softly laughs.

(left, down, right)

/ Miko 2/

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Figure 2 /Miko 2/

This second loop has the same target /Miko/ as the previous one. /Miko/ is still /talking/ and /laughing/. Almost imperceptible change, the ground moves closer to me. My view of /Miko/, is shaking. **My view says:**

"Miko has a pretty smile

Then the picture delivers its story. It is Sunday afternoon. Mari is lying down in the park with me on a Sunday afternoon. We visit the shell museum; she introduces me to her friends. At night, sitting in a restaurant, a little bit lonely, I am suddenly hit by the charm of Miko.

(Indistinct, up, up)

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I make the image of Miko turn quickly. I get aware that in the middle, hands mix with her face. They finally recover it all. Hands become Miko, who becomes the hands, as if they were shaping her face and turning her into a work of art.

(up, up)

Around the picture, fingers wave, and mix up with chopsticks. Suddenly, it seems to me the image is getting blue. My kindness toward Miko becomes revealed by the change in hue. I am changing the hue. As the image becomes bluer my feeling becomes more intense. As my feeling becomes more intense the image becomes bluer.

I make it turn faster. I realise a forehead appears, the white skin blends with the poster behind Miko. On it are drawn Japanese signs that I do not understand. They may be linked to the workings of the restaurant: menu, today's lunch, maybe something deeper. I don't know, so I ignore it and move forward.

I /slow down/ and /zoom in/. I slowly get closer to observe her better. Her familiar and so kind face grows. She is not exactly in the centre of the picture that continues to turn slowly. Getting closer I miss my target.

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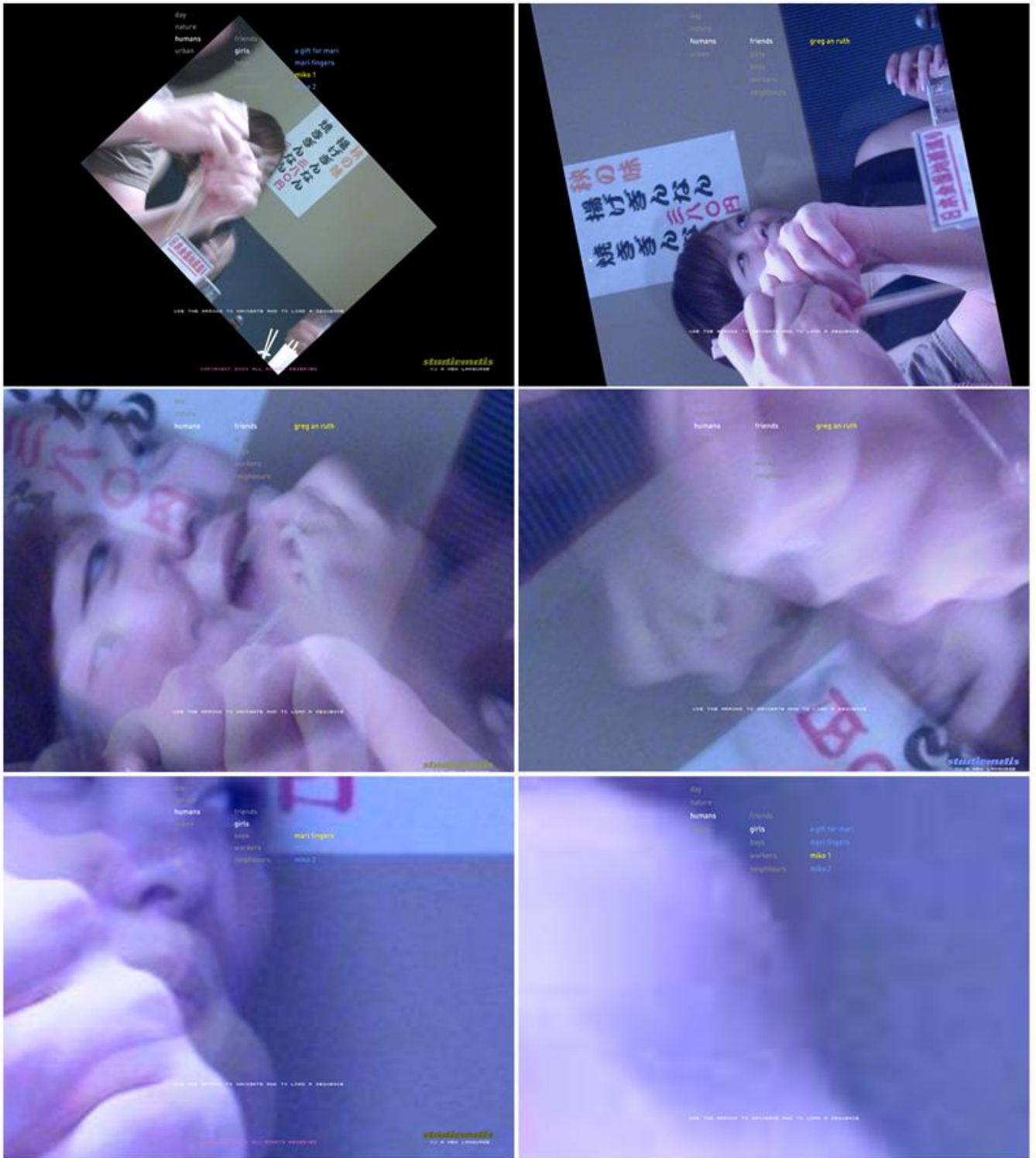


Figure 3/Miko 1/

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The Ancients conceived time as a succession of cycles in which the history of humanity was repeated while changing. The rhythm of the movements is built by repetition. Oriental art uses the repetition of the image of God to express holiness.

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God is unique, but multiple in his revelations. In the Beijing Summer Palace, in thousands of cubes I saw thousands of sculptures of the same immortal God. The repetitive gesture is carved and animated by faith. The image is given the power to be beyond man by its multitude.

The repetition gives the image an aura and crystallizes the gesture. Between the present images, inside the absence is built the fiction.

The animated loops repeat the photographer's experience. On each viewing, the pictures are the same but the **view** changes. The user, using the keyboard controls, explores the uncountable possibilities. The viewer draws links between images. Resurrection is revealed by the loop. There is neither beginning nor end, but a eternity **manufactured by** repetition. Exploring the image of Miko, I find the idea at the very end of my gesture, the eternity in the repetition.

The experience is built on the possibilities of the photographic images and also of the software. The viewer, regulating framing, hue, rotation, zoom and speed, creates his own rules of experience. In this way, **user** investigates the subjective reality seen by the photographer. Whereas 'One day in Japan' restores the experience of the photographer, the device '*Play on me*' proposes a framework of appropriation. The music invites one to associate sounds with images.

Controls allow the user to go inside the missing pictures by allowing **the user** to study convergences, repetitions, beginnings and ends. The mixture of random with programmed sequences expresses the symbiosis of the perceptive and expressive human device with the technical device. A new poetic form of the gesture is born. The gesture is a more than a movement. It is part of and extends the work. The arm of the viewer extends the interface into the haptic and the experiential. The repetitive gesture on the shutter release turns the image-segment into subjective movement. The gesture of the *vj* turns these subjective movements into theatre.

According to Studiometis, the photographic matter contained in '*Play on me*' is interchangeable with any other images. Perhaps this is because the fundamental objective of the experiment is not for the viewer to detect or interpret codes, but

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to create a multi-modal language and, with the help of illusion, to become both player and played.

1 « Nous allons de l'absence à la présence, du vide au plein, en vertu de l'illusion fondamentale de notre entendement » Henri Bergson, L'évolution créatrice, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1959, p. 727.