

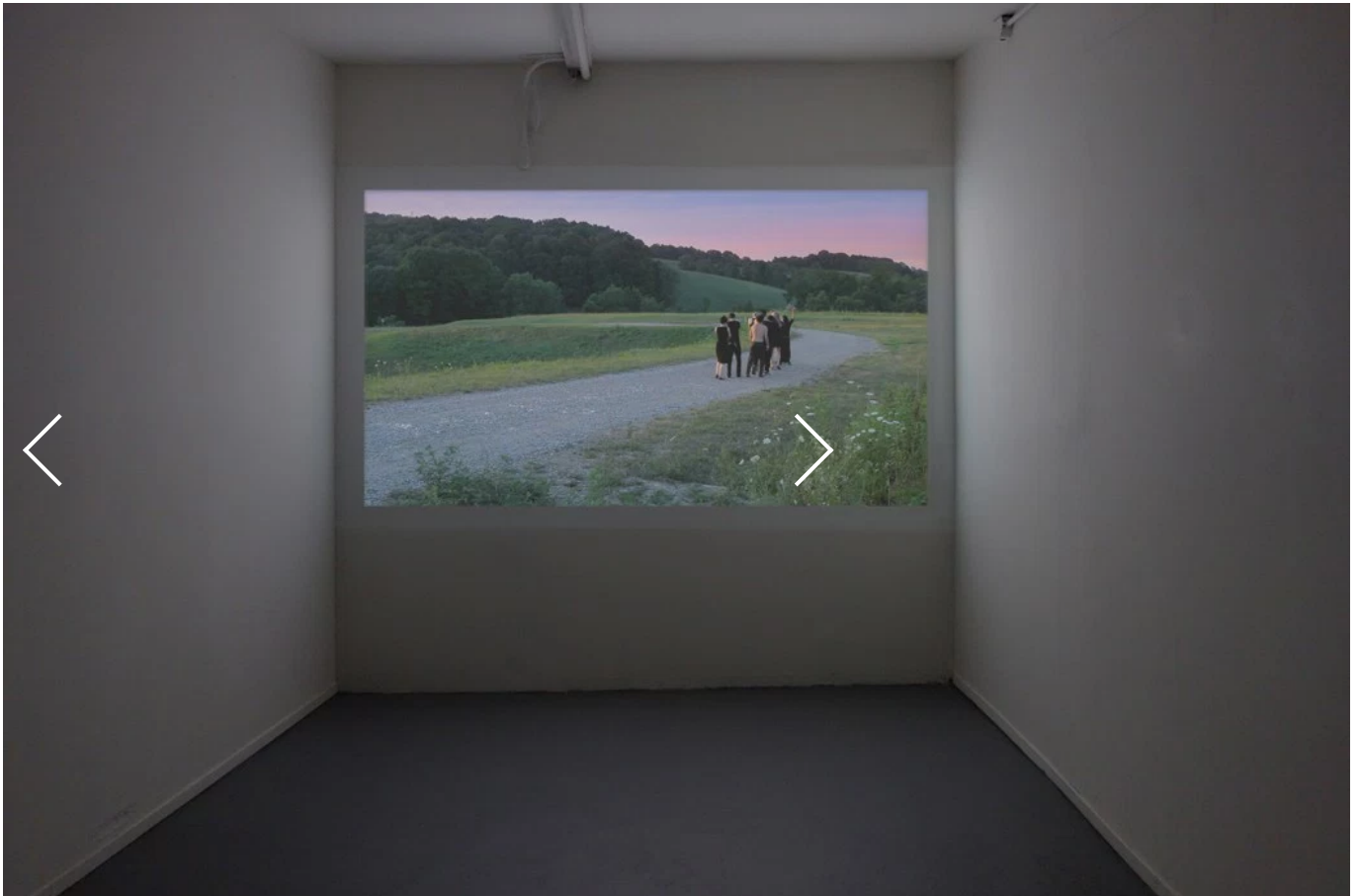
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*Shiyuan Liu. "The Edge of Vision, or the Edge of the Earth" 2013; single channel video, 6 min.*

# Alter-Circuit: Shiyuan Liu, My Paper Knife at Et al.

GENEVIEVE QUICK on October 22, 2014 at 6:08 AM

In *Alter-Circuit: Shiyuan Liu, My Paper Knife*, the artist fuses appropriated imagery and narrative with her own video footage. Using imagery as raw material, Liu explores a cascading set of references and nomadism in virtual and imaginary places.

In her photo-based installation *As Simple as Clay* (2013), Liu presents 1140 intriguing and seductive prints in two wire postcard racks. Using Google's text-based search and image recognition capabilities, Liu collected images of clay. Liu's searches also produced image of rubbery, blobby, and at times softly geometric materials that resemble clay, like cheese, soap, and lotion. With these formal similarities, the imagery expands from her original query of "clay" to clay-like. Liu also shifts her images away from their original sources by replacing their backgrounds with chroma-key blue. With this gesture, Liu references the digital editing process that allows artists to insert objects into different contexts. Liu's loosely defined clay-like substances with their chroma-key backgrounds are open to change, suggestive of clay's mutability when in the hands of a sculptor. In presenting her imagery as postcards, the original imagery moved from screen-based browsing to the inhabitable world where viewers are invited to physically flip through her postcard racks. Rather than depicting foreign places as postcards often do, Liu images are displaced web-sourced objects.

In the back of the gallery Liu projects her video *the Edge of Vision, the Edge of the Earth* (2013). With the narration lifted from different BBC documentaries, Liu constructs a story of an imaginary place where the sun's cyclical disappearance causes the seas to freeze and people to migrate to, presumably, more hospitable places. The video depicts a procession of ten people on a rural road with the leader throwing flowers, while the others almost comedically cry and one pulls her hair. While the documentary-like narrative and her crisp video footage are rooted in some level of reality, Liu has sequenced them to create an imaginary and rather incongruous place.

As part of Asian Contemporary Art Week 2014, Xiaoyu Weng and Marie Martraire from the Asian Contemporary Arts Consortium in San Francisco (ACAC-SF) and Et al. present a smart and sometimes quirky new voice in the context of contemporary Asian art. With Liu originally from Beijing, recently educated in New York, and currently residing in Copenhagen, her global citizenship informs her sense of place. Rather than being strictly autobiographical, Liu uses web-sourced objects and an imaginary place to stand-in for dislocation. While we attempt to define identity, many of us are in constant motion and physically or digitally global nomads. Liu probes the porosity between the digital and embodied place – and the fictions, translations, and mis/recognitions that occur in both places.

Alter-Circuit: Shiyuan Liu, *My Paper Knife is on view at Et al. in San Francisco September 25 – October 24, 2014.*

*Images courtesy of the artist and Et al.*

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