

Murray Guy

453 West 17 Street New York NY 10011 T: +1 212 463 7372 F: +1 212 463 7319 info@murrayguy.com

# ArtReview

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“Ann Lislegaard”  
Murray Guy  
By T.J. Carlin



*Crystal World (After J.G. Ballard)*, 2006 (installation view), two-channel black-and-white silent HD animation, two leaning screens.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the recent economic domino-effect is that some of the key components that factored into the disintegration – a credit default swap, for example – are structural elements most people had never even heard of prior to the crisis, and yet govern and profoundly affect our individual existences. The Orwellian edge to our current reality is more terrifying even than the strangest science fiction. In her exhibition at Murray Guy, Ann Lislegaard effectively harnesses the sense of the alien among us through an investigation of perception as manifest through several contemporary constructed versions of reality.

Lislegaard's combination of multiple reference sources in her videos serves to frame perception without taking any of the vehicles directly as subject matter, though *Crystal World (After J.G. Ballard)* (2006), one of the two animations on view, does seem to effect a subtle, broader critique of the digital. The video, an unsynced two-channel loop that operates in a continuously recombinant stream, delivers surreal visual

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renderings of a variety of spaces. It is accompanied by an excerpt from J.G. Ballard's haunting 1966 work by that name, which chronicles the progress of a viral crystal as it gradually petrifies a tropical landscape. The tension between abstraction and representation jangles as our viewpoint is led through a series of sparsely furnished architectural interiors with modernist overtones, many of them giving out into densely forested space; sometimes there is just enough visual information for the interiors to come together, while the outdoors is more richly detailed, though rendered rather flatly. Undercurrents of the passage of time and of the limits of perception nibble everywhere in the video like pangs of compunction. In reference to the advancing crystallisation, the excerpted lines read eerily: 'I quickly came to understand / that its hazards are a small price to pay / there are immense rewards to be found / in this phantasmagoric place / as more and more time leaks away.' One could easily imagine the digital being substituted in place of the crystal as subject of this passage. As light and shadow slide across the rooms ostensibly to create the illusion of a passing day, the details of the image get so blown out as to be indiscernible; the uncomfortable sense of having reached the edge of one's world and one's perceptual reach.

*Left Hand of Darkness (After Ursula K. Le Guin)* (2008) is less convincing experientially. In a three-channel animation, Lislegaard layers a simplified animation of a sexually ambiguous figure performing what look like various martial arts activities, with medical diagrams of male and female genitalia, schematic renderings of wintertime athletic equipment and superimposed text from Le Guin's namesake work, in which an icy planet is governed by an androgynous race. Though it is more 'tell' than 'show' its affect remains squarely in the cold realm of impassive scientific observation that lends the freak factor to *Crystal World*, though the investigation into the subjectivity of sexuality does register as an intellectual, if not as strongly an aesthetic, force. Together the videos lend a sometimes chilling take on fundamental forces that govern our world and shape our understanding of it.