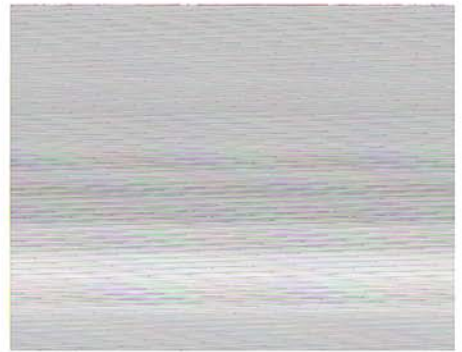


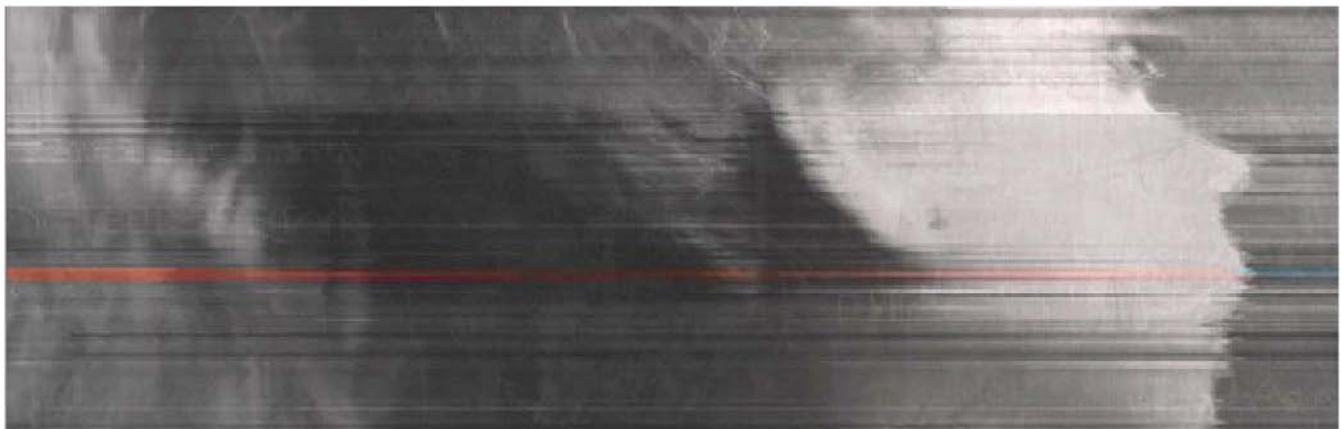
IN 46401-46411 . Digital printing.2008



IN 46401-46411 part I . Digital printing.2008

“Vintage and Digital Encounters: “

Saya Da Jung’s Usage of Online Objects and Glitch Techniques
by Oriana Nakano
(Curatorial Assistant, The National Museum of Art Osaka/Japan)





SAYA DA JUNG *IN 46401-46411, 2010*

two channel digital video installation view converted from 8 mm film transferred to 16 mm film (4 minutes 35 seconds and 7 minutes 27 seconds) continuous loop

Saya Da Jung works with small quiet objects and small quiet cubes within a most dizzying, hovering digital reality. Silences. Childhood memories. Delicate translucent emotions. Absences and loss. Effacement of gestures. Signals and seals, erasure of subjectivity. Creative destruction. Time-space compression. Tactile dimensions of corporeality. Redemption of color in a sheer infinity of mathematical partitions and aleatory proliferation. Uncountable tiny possibilities of the global digital economy.

She chooses digital media art to make painting, while perfectly aware that digital art is a complex medium rather unfit for the over-consciously commercial arts marketplace. The reason why she is arresting painting in digital art is that she sees it not only as transcription but as transmission, downloadable, shareable, mechanically reproduc-

ible medium. She swoops up the molecular details of the image-editing process. She uses the technique of glitch to bring lines and fissures across the image, similar to paint raked with the squeegee over canvases by artists like Jack Whitten and Gerhard Richter. She searches for accidents and randomness beneath the surface of the digital image just as Max Ernst was searching for natural materials and new textures to give life to his white canvases when rubbed with the pencil. Saya Da Jung is interested in working with vintage methods and modern techniques. Having graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Film, Video and New Media department (MFA 2010), few of the one which uses vintage film editing equipment, optical printing and jp printing machine, it is only natural for her to wish to combine old and new, hand processing editing tools for film and new media like glitch. Mixing everything, from glitch, texture of surface, painting, lithography, creates the chaos which brings out to the artist the inner order her art needs.

Dolls and Glitch

In her art, Saya Da Jung uses the non-invasive technique of glitch to grasp the image of the body, an innocent, a-sexual expression of the body in an over-sexualized culture. Both optically and mechanically, the moiré patterns created by the glitch technique of image-editing and the physical pull in the electronic and digital act, make the glitch-images resemble "ultrasound-images". An ultrasound image is brought by a linear array transducer generating a 2D image of received echoes and is usually associated with pregnancies. Using sound waves so high they cannot be heard by the human ear, sonography allows visualization and examination of the fetus without X-rays. The visual texture of all glitch-images remind of such a process. Yet in Saya Da Jung's case, the choice for a glitch technique is not accidental. The visual in her case is searching for a sound-content. Her "ultrasound" is exposing an inner scream.

The online Barbie dolls have recently become the object of Saya Da Jung's works. Just as with the equipment, the dolls she started using, the Barbie dolls from the "I wish, I have" series are vintage as well. "I wish, I have" reveals two sides: what is wished for as opposed to what is possessed already, the "wish list" and the "have list". The artist wants her dolls old, vintage, used but not damaged. She searches for them online, adds

them to her “wish list”, even so, bear in mind that it is the list itself that interests her, not the buy. She never really purchases them. This is not a “I want to possess” type of Bellmerian fetish, it is the wish for an impossibility.

The artist retains the image of the dolls on her computer screen. They are there, in a space of their own, and also open to the public eye, on e-Bay or someplace else, in a space called cyberspace, a space empty of matter, a vacuum. They show their beauty, as well as the damages inflicted on them by time. The artist watches them online and wishes she could save them. She knows she cannot, therefore she starts altering them herself, by manipulating the image digitally. This is the beginning of the redemption of the self. The doll, never getting in the artist’s hands, either left online or bought by another, is allowed change and freedom in the digitalized space of a computer desktop. Becoming another, the doll somehow starts telling a story.

If you pay attention to the details, you will notice that the screen of the online shopping web site is rather interesting, for certain elements are common to all products and feel pretty much representative of how objects (and artworks make no exception) are seen, as simple products thrown on the market. Search for details, and you will notice that there is a “Time left”, there is a “Price”, a

“Best Offer”. Customers can choose to “Buy It Now” or “Make Offer”. The item has a “Number” and belongs to a “Seller”.

When Saya Da Jung applies both old and new techniques to manipulate the film, she withdraws it from a visible modern, conscious reality back to an image of instincts and origins, an ultrasound image. Her computer mouse is similar to the linear array transducer of received echoes, used at medical check-ups. The lines raking the image from one digital transformation to another are the visual representation of the echoes of chaos itself, the sound of all beginnings, the beginning of existence, life, experience, pain. Saya Da Jung uses this feeling of ultrasonic beam, flow, tissue, motion of materials in her IN 46401-46411, 2010 (1) where she transfers a two channel digital video installation from 8 mm film to 16 mm film.

I wish, I have (2011) (2) is a film. When we take time to analyze this film, we notice a doll’s head, legs, and something similar to typed Greek alphabet letters, currency symbols, and numbers. These glyphs are not typed, though. They are the unexpected result of the manipulation of files, which is typical of the glitch editing process. If we look at other works she had made, a couple of things become more obvious. Cube beyond cube, who am I? Sound and Fury (2003) and Hurt My Heart (2005), reveal the same ultrasound rage. C-M Motors Body Shop (Hugging for Healing, 2010) is a video not using glitch, yet still revealing an intense preoccupation with details, parts, fragments of the body of the device. In this case it might be only a car and its parts, yet for someone like Saya Da Jung stating that she is constantly trying to understand the root of her impossibility to communicate with others, the analysis of the inside parts should be interpreted as a physical search for the roots of emotional distress. The Scale is Everything (2009) was a work focused on eating disorders, weights and scales. There are numbers going all over the screen, defining existence through data and physicality. Those numbers have been intentionally typed, yet they look similar to the accidental glyphs resulted in the I wish, I have glitch. So looking back to I wish, I have, we find the glyph-accident amazing, those



SAYA DA JUNG 2009 *The Scale is Everything*
Video Installation ; bandages, measuring tapes 4 I-pods.detail View



^ I wish I have; B4 the project Collected Image



^I wish I have; legs ll .2012/ 38X24

glyphs resulted from the act of glitching with the frequency of numbers at the stock exchange does grab our attention. Before looking deeper into the subject of “dolls”, let us understand more about glitch and the background of accidents, spontaneity, and randomness in art.

(accidental) background. technique. glitch. from the Surrealist Frottage to the transverse isotropy in the digital breakdown of abstraction.

So, what is glitch?

“Technically, a glitch is best understood as an unexpected, unexplainable consequence of an interruption within one or more (digital) information flows. All these flows of digital information are encoded, often with the help of compressions, to store or transfer data as easy and fast as possible - a technique that is normally obfuscated. However, when you break a flow of data, it will quite possibly be corrupted. When the data of an image is corrupted, this can reveal the language of the compression that breaks through the surface of the image. A technological event that is sometimes used as a tool in art or as a style in design.” (3)

Therefore, glitch is a methodological accident. A method is a conscious tool. This particular method brings accidents from the flow of consciousness forward into the stream of reality. The more technological reality becomes, the greater the probability that accidents occur. The French cultural theorist Paul Virilio writes about “integral accidents”, a concept supporting accidents as the sine qua non condition for tech-

nology. In other words, technology existing without accidents calls for an impossibility. What is the nature of accidents in art? Are accidents good or bad?

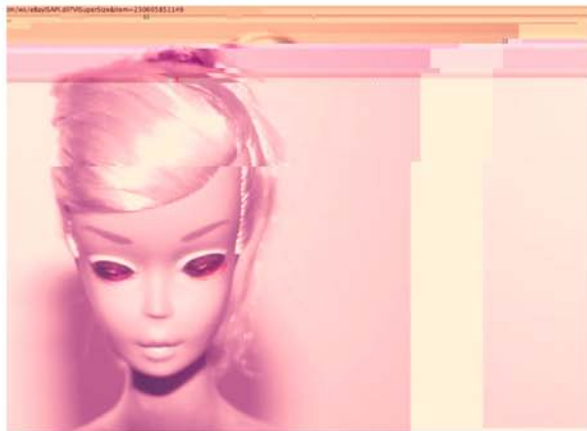
The search for accidents in art is at least ninety years old. Name it digital media, video art or glitch, the technique of allowing chance and randomness to discover on one's behalf a more exciting background to work on/with, goes back to Man Ray's photograms and to surrealism. We will emphasize here those techniques closest to glitch.

Max Ernst and the frottage technique on the nineteen-twenties.

In 1925, Max Ernst, major contributor to the theory and practice of Surrealism, developed a technique of placing wood and other natural objects underneath the white paper or canvas, then rubbing the pencil on top until negative shapes would appear in relief and create unexpected, accidental textures. His *Histoire Naturelle*, a portfolio of thirty-four collotypes after frottage, was published in Paris in 1926.

Jack Whitten, the squeegee and the Xerox printers in the nineteen-seventies.

In 1973, Jack Whitten has used the squeegee in a continuous motion across the layers of acrylic, producing a dizzying, quasi-photographic blur. With a razor-sharp carpenter's plane he exposed areas of paint underneath, which made the accidental surprises abound. Whitten learnt from his 1974 artist-residency at Xerox Corporation that “he could go far beyond the indexical trace, just as xerography is not limited to one-



^ *I wish I have; B4 the project Collected Image*



^ *A Midsummer Night's Dream (Part II) 2012 38X24*

to-one transfer but is capable of zooming out or enlarging, cropping or roving, scrolling or dragging... Works such as the "Gamma Group" series of 1975 induced moire patterns which connected the physical pull to the parallel electronic and digital act, the line-by-line raster scan... Xerox was also communicable: created images that could be sent. Whitten's works figured out not only transcription but transmission", writes Michelle Kuo. (4)

Gerhard Richter, the squeegee and the digital printing of the noughties.

Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Modern Art at Harvard University, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh names Gerhard Richter's most recent intervention in the legacies of abstraction, the chance ornament. We are living in the post-industrial era of abstraction and proliferation. (5)

"Chance as ideology had entered painting in the 1950s in various ways... A newly liberated subject, an author, and an art without any intention appeared on the horizon as one of the great radical promises of the 1960s", explains Buchloh. His article considers Richter's artistic development throughout the 60s, and reaches the twenty-tens when Richter is again attracting crowds with his Panorama retrospectives at Tate Modern in London and Neue und Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin. His recent large-scale abstract paintings have been documented in Corinne Belz's new film, *Gerhard Richter Painting* (2011), where Richter is using the same semi-mechanical device of the squeegee as Jack Whitten previously. "The squeegee process becomes

transparent as an operation at the extreme opposite end from what chance operations in the wake of Surrealist legacies of automatism had still promised... Richter executes the painting with a massive device that rakes paint across an apparently carefully planned and painted surface. Crisscrossing the canvas horizontally and vertically leads to a radical diminishment of tactile control and manual dexterity, suggesting that the erasure of painterly detail is as essential to the work's production as the inscription of procedural traces. Thus as uncanny and deeply discomfiting dialectic between enunciation and erasure occurs", and with this Buchloh unknowingly describes perfectly the discomfiting dialectic occurring between enunciation and erasure in Saya Da Jung's glitch works created in the same period, 2010, 2011.

The new series of digital prints, titled "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (2011), are close to the digital media glitch through their usage of a highly developed technological application of rigorously parallel, extremely refined and reduced chromatic striations. "These "Strips" emerged from a paradoxical process in which the artist subjected one of his earlier large-scale abstractions (*Abstract Painting*, *Abstraktes Bild*, 1990 [CR:724-4]) to a series of programmatically anti-painterly operations in order to produce a detailed and voluminous documentation of the digital breakdown of abstraction for the pages of a book, "Patterns" (Walter König, Cologne, Heni Publishing, London, 2011)", explains the author. Many of the strip-images in



*Saya Da Jung .2011
I wish I have; Hot Ass*

*Collected Image, in my
wish lists on ebay
website, digitally ma-
nipulated C print, resin
coated.
15x20, 21x28, 42X56*

this book, such as Variation VI: 29/64 show a close resemblance to the digitalized character-image obtained by Saya Da Jung in the process of manipulating her doll-images. A strip of colors and a string of signs share the same visuality. Buchloh regards Richter's abstractions as "apparently subjected to something more than a deceptively simple series of mathematical partitions and multiplications" owing to "a second operation of doubling and symmetrical reversal." The subjective possibilities and their random applications in Richter's work do not signify to Buchloh the artist's abandonment to a digital futurism increasingly surrounding and overwhelming us. Are Saya Da Jung's works abandoning themselves to a reality behind the screen?

Saya Da Jung and glitch, chance vs randomness in the twenty-tens

Saya Da Jung more recently works with glitch, a technique widely spread among Chicago artists. She manipulates the file from movie file with an image-editor then gets it back to movie format, which is a method inviting technical errors. She chooses to do what you would not normally do with a movie file, in her search for something accidental and interesting to happen. The file does become something unexpected, unplanned. And this search for accidental improvement is very important here. A strip of colors and a string of signs are the result of digital manipulation of

the film she is using. We may name it "the error". In digital media, glitch is a technique of chances, of randomness, leading from a movie to an error. Is this chance, randomness, or a determined, technically explicable process? Philosophy and sciences regard chance and randomness as possibly not the same thing. Some theories consider that there is chance without randomness. Randomness is seen as indifferent to history, while chance is not. Other theories focus on the concept of randomness without chance. Theories of chaotic dynamics build on sets of infinite binary sequences which are measure-preserving, and where each coordinate can be represented as an infinite binary sequence. Baker's transformation of stretch and fold dynamics in chaos theory is described as follows: "We take a system the state of which is characterized by a point in the real unit square. We specify the evolution of this system over time as follows, letting Q be the function governing the discrete evolution of the system over time." (6) Similarly, Saya Da Jung witnesses the discrete evolution over time of the initial image in her work. The binary system behind the image suffers a transformation. The glitch visual effect is actually not explained by artistic transformations, but by the chaotic dynamics of the binary system supporting the images on a digital platform. The chaotic movement of the glitch becomes specific and explicable.

In other words, Saya Da Jung's Barbie dolls are more than just dolls. They are entities caught between chance or randomness and determinism. Is there any compatibility with her inner thoughts or consistency in the accidental flow of the glitch? Let us consider what Saya Da Jung wished to represent with her dolls, what kind of game of forces between determinism and chance, randomness and free will, are her dolls actually expressing from behind the computer screen.

(non-accidental) subject. the dolls. the self. the other

Now that we went through the history of techniques similar to glitch in painting, manually manipulated printing and digitally manipulated printing, we may focus on the actual subject of Saya Da Jung's recent works and ask the question why dolls? The doll could be the image the artist chooses for herself. An avatar, a self that is an other. Another image. A former image, of herself as a child. An image of another.

Dolls in art have a history themselves. I would argue that unlike the rich historical background of the glitch technique, the history of dolls in art explains almost nothing about Saya Da Jung's dolls. By contrast, we get a glimpse of what her dolls are not: sexual, useful, to be possessed. The hottest trend in the Japanese contemporary art, artist Takashi Murakami, makes erotic figures such as Miss Ko and other female doll-figurines which sell well on the international market. His dolls, or *kyarakutaa* are exactly what buyers want them to be: sexual, graphic, they represent the female figure subordinated to their wish list. Mario Ambrosius is using big-sized dolls (75x112.5cm) for his *A ma poupee japonaise*, (2000-2001) (7). Just like Hans Bellmer, he likes to leave visible the cruel lines separating the doll's parts. Manabe Mamie's Momoko dolls are dressed in sweatshirt clothes and exhibited (8). R.M.Fischer has used big dolls, live-sized plastic mannequins as artworks in his "Bloomindale's Department Store Window Installation", 59th Street and Lexington Avenue, New York, 1979. Each mannequin had its own source of light, and was exhibited in such a way that they looked almost dragged into the light. Whether or not that light expressed the flashlights making famous people famous, or the light shone on beauty, an observation point is definitely fixed. The doll is observed from only one angle. Saya Da Jung's Barbie dolls, too are seen from a single perspective, that of the

camera photographing them before the images are uploaded online.

Laurie Simmons is perhaps a little closer to Saya Da Jung than any other artists mentioned. Simmons used colorful figurines in color-coordinated interiors, in works such as *Red and White Kitchen*, *Yellow Living Room*, *Blue Bath* etc., in *Chromogenic C-prints*, 38x50.2 inches, 24x24.5 inches (1983). (9) Her style and usage of dolls developed from a Hitchcock-like *Black Series* (1977), to mini-home housewife *Interiors* (1978), *Water Ballet* with real performers (1980-1) and *Dolls Underwater* (1981). Laurie Simmons watched a lot of Hitchcock films, and was inspired by their ideal color, spatial relations and lighting.

It was Max Ernst's *Au-dessus des nuages marches la minuit*, 1920, a surrealist collage of tiny Barbie-doll-like legs descending an insect-shaped top, that inspired Laurie Simmons when she started creating images of tiny Barbie-doll-like legs descending objects that had some kind of value to women, such as purses and houses. She started creating "walking objects". On top, an object, the lower part, the legs of a doll. *Walking Purse* (1989), *Walking House* (1989), *Walking Gun* (1991), *Walking Cake* (1989). In *Bending Globe* (1991), she is showing the naked legs and buttocks of a doll from behind. The rest of the body is inside the globe. Saya Da Jung's *I wish, I have: Hot Ass* (2011) has got the same perspective, while adding some hot color. Simmons later moved to the "love doll", placing a real-size doll in the same places she used before in her art, in a bed, underwater etc. The most recent works of hers moved therefore from the casual, house-wife to the erotic plastic immobile female figure, as art.

In her text *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey (10) quotes Hitchcock while writing about stereotypes in traditional Hollywood films, scopophilia, about women reduced to images, signifying the male desire, and men, bearers of the male gaze which stands at the root of voyeurism, fetishism, narcissism and identification with masculine ego ideals. She calls this obsessional male gaze in the Hollywood trend of representation, erotic contemplation. The erotic contemplation is a state of mind towards which Saya Da Jung's dolls show no interest. The erotic contemplation creates a space of no-choice, shut and restrictive to someone else's desires. Saya Da Jung's dolls choose to

of no-choice, shut and restrictive to someone else's desires. Saya Da Jung's dolls choose to have a choice, choose openness, and sublimation of their own desires. Subjects like dolls and others can become an artist's signature, as it is in Hand Bellmer and Simmons's case. Sometimes the dolls are merely a starting point, and the artwork evolves into a different subject. In Hans Bellmer's case, desire, torture and death took over the doll. Saya Da Jung's forms, the digitalized images of dolls themselves are changing their texture and material through editing.

For the moment, Saya Da Jung feels comfortable identifying her self with let us say, immature images, from anime-like computerized characters to Barbie dolls. She is not breaking them, not twisting them. These miniature bodies are subject, not object. Saya Da Jung is watching them, unobsessively, analyzing them, giving their static status a dynamic input. A modern input. In *After Dark*, a novel written by Haruki Murakami of an Orwellian 1984 inspiration, a camera is following the rhythms of a character until the character itself is left devoid of a certain reality. The camera is manipulated in the novel in such a way that it leaves the observers unnoticed: "we are invisible, anonymous intruders...we observe but we do not intervene". Yet, while being unnoticed, the movements of the camera change the reality of the character to the point of loss of identity. Saya Da Jung moves this "object" called doll into a subjective category. Observing the doll translates as self-introspection for the artist.

Take this Barbie doll as a woman in modern society. She might be texting, checking emails, reading e-zines and news online. Purchasing books, shoes, airplane tickets, online. Might have people around her texting, google-ing, on the bus, on the subway, walking, not stopping, not noticing, not communicating. A woman invaded by useful and useless information, needing it to find a job, to hold a job, to promote herself or her employer. Social networking, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Blog, Website, update, upload, upset. This is the modern image of a woman's space. A modern woman's space. Such a noisy space and cyberspace, that the inner scream of the human being is left unheard, deafened. In this space where no silences are allowed, where the environment is too big and too

+ Saya Da Jung -2012I wish I have: ();Electronic Barbie collected image on ebay website, digitally manipulated C-print, Lithography print overlaid.



- (1) Saya Da Jung, IN-46401-46411 (2010) <http://sayadajung.com/#2224986/IN-46401-46411>
- (2) Saya Da Jung, I wish I have (2011) <http://vimeo.com/22631195>
- (3) Dutch artist and theorist Rosa Menkman explains more about glitch on her blog (accessed on 10 February 2012) <http://rosa-menkman.blogspot.com/2012/02/glitch-for-dummies-english-translation.html>
- (4) Michelle Kuo, Jack Whitten – A Portfolio – in Art Forum International, February 2012, pp 184-195
- (5) Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, The Chance Ornament: Aphorisms on Gerhard Richter's Abstractions, in Art Forum International, February 2012, pp 168-179. See also another recent article, Till Briegleb, Gerhard Richter: Der Unsichtbare, in ART, Das Kunstmagazin, February 2012, pp 18-37.
- (6) Chance versus Randomness, in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (accessed 7 February 2012). <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/chance-randomness/>
- (7) At the Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo, in Bijutsu techo 10, 2003, p. 88.
- (8) Manabe Mamie's works in Bijutsu techo 10, 2003, p. 96. See also her official website www.petworks.co.jp/doll/
- (9) Some of these works have been on display at Tomio Koyama Gallery in Tokyo, for further reference visit tomio koyama gallery.com.
- (10) Laura Mulvey, Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, in Screen 16.3, Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18.



varied and absorbs everything in it, Saya Da Jung manipulates the film of one's presence destroying the image until nothing is left on the film as if that life had never existed. She manipulates the file from movie file to Photoshop able or image-editing file then gets it back to movie format, in her search for something to happen at random. The newly obtained file reveals the unexpected, the unplanned. As we already mentioned when analyzing ninety years of art history as a background of the glitch technique, this search for accidental improvement of the real support of the artwork is essential and while bringing about negative shapes, it is a very positive tool in itself. But Saya Da Jung does more than glitching: her manipulating of the file turns into a medical scan pulling the fiber of the film till the scream of the human being is heard. Using a doll, the modern woman is still screaming deep inside, that there is something wrong in the world around her.

The choice for a doll can also be seen as a denial of the flesh. "I am a lump of flesh, a commercial asset", is what Haruki Murakami's character Eri, observed with an Orwellian camera, thought of herself. When replacing one's flesh-ness with the cold plastic body of a doll, everything that is negative about the way flesh is seen by others voyeuristically, fetishistically, is opposed, and therefore untouchable. Saya Da Jung's dolls are not awaking erotic fantasies. On the contrary, if they could talk something, they might say Don't touch me !

Glitch is, if we may, a modern mosaic of chances, a digital error of memories, thoughts, emotions, repulsions, sympathy, which synthesize two fundamental ideas, chaos and order, into one unified form, as the artistic expression of creative destruction, which in mythology is represented by the sacred figured of the Hindu god Shiva, destroyer and creator. With glitch, Saya Da Jung destroys an image. The destruction of an image creates another. In modern times, the expression "creative destruction" has been popularized by its usage in relation with economic theory, capitalism, socialism and democracy writings. Making art right from the heart of capitalism and democracy, New York-based artist Saya Da Jung's works get closer to the original meaning of creative destruction. It is an entire world of creation she is destroying and a new creative world she is trying to turn destruction into. With the doll subject, a mother – child attachment becomes more visible in her works. Saya

Da Jung's creative destruction in art derives from a dual creation-destruction in life which opposes economic theories with humanistic studies of the human being.

The surrealist body, prior to the digital era was highly erotic. A photo of Man Ray inside the Central Office of Surrealist Research (1924) is showing a fragmented sculpture flying above the surrealist circle. There must be something connecting broken dolls and fragmented sculptures representing in museums across the world the classical ideal beauty: the idea that before becoming a fragment, the whole was not just whole, it was perfect. The woman's body, before fragmented by the male erotic gaze, was perfect. The unborn children, if not dumped by the male egotism, would have been perfect. Saya Da Jung's regard is not piercing through the surface of the image with harshness, she gently looks at the body of the doll, does not buy or damage it. She leaves surfaces intact, online, she edits and transforms their reality. With her glitch technique, she makes sounds of pain and unborn heartbeats existent at frequencies higher than you will ever be able to hear, hearable. The search for the inside of herself is Saya Da Jung's Ultrasound.

ORIANA NAKANO is a Curatorial Assistant The National Museum of Art Osaka, Japan.

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Vintage and Digital Encounters: Saya Da Jung's Usage of Online Objects and Glitch Techniques
