

Patty Chang

Rather To Potentialities, 2009
Video
Ed. 3
10 min 52 sec



This project is based on Multiple Language Version Films. After sound film was invented, but before they perfected a dubbing technique, studios would make films in multiple language versions to distribute in international markets. This practice flourished between 1928-33. Instead of just dubbing the voices, the studios would re-film each language successively with the same actors or different ones. This practice was known as body dubbing. The scenes would often be shot one language following the next in a factory-like practice, using the same sets and even the same camera directions.

I became interested in Multiple Language Films because the first Chinese American film star, Anna May Wong, travelled to the UK to film the MLV film, *The Flame of Love* in French, German and English, with a different leading man for each. I thought it was interesting that Anna May Wong, a Chinese American woman, would signify the exoticized Other for each European culture, but as the star of the film, she would also signify the Center, and the irresolution in being both at once.

When I watched MLV films, I thought that perhaps this irresolution was inherent in any performance that tries to replicate itself, but is unable to. In their simultaneous viewing, there is a sense of the inability to realize.

The footage in the video comes from *SOS Iceberg* (English), *SOS Eisberg* (German), *L'Atlantide* (French), and *Mistress of Atlantis* (English). Both of these film narratives deal with extreme landscapes and the western imaginaries of unknown places. The titles come from fragments of *An Imaginative Geography* by Peter Bishop.

The photographic images in the drawings are video stills taken from the abovementioned films.

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