

MIKA ROTTENBERG

**RABBIT
HOLE**

A

**미카 로텐버그:
래빗홀**

SJ

**ASJC
SCREENING
PROGRAM**

**NOVEMBER
21-26, 2023**

C

Screening Schedule

I. 14:00—15:12

Squeeze (2010) (20:00)

Spaghetti Blockchain (2019) (18:15)

Bowls Balls Souls Holes (2014) (27:54)

Mary's Cherries (2004) (05:50)

II. 15:30—17:05

Sneeze (2012) (03:02)

REMOTE (2022) (91:50)

- The title of the work and the subtitles for *REMOTE* have not been translated into Korean as per the artist's request.
- Please note that screening works are video installations, loop play, with physical elements and surround sound but for this occasion the artist agreed to show in the Art Hall.

Mika Rottenberg has continuously explored the realms of production and labor that lie beneath the surface of contemporary capitalist logic. Through her work, she highlights the sensory composition of the scene and the condensed concepts embedded within it, using her unique artistic language to capture moments within this visual narrative. *Mika Rottenberg: Rabbit Hole* presents a selection of six artworks ranging from the artist's early 2000s creations to her most recent works. Sensually reconstructed through the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas and the reimagining of everyday elements, her work prompts the viewer to explore the often overlooked facets of contemporary society that undeniably exist.

Remote spaces whose place and time are difficult to pinpoint, routes and systems that elude logical causality, and women who repeatedly engage in inexplicable acts of production or strenuous physical labor that at times even seem cruel, all confound the predictability of our everyday perception. This system of production, which operates without a determined purpose or value, constitutes the hidden side of the visually represented reality. The screening program offers the opportunity to rethink our daily lives by encountering this hidden side, reconstructed from the perspective of labor, bodies, and women through the artist's sensual language.

To visualize the overlooked realm of existing yet unnoticed production sites, the artist pairs opposing concepts within a single frame, such as reality and fiction, tangible objects and metaphors, collective and individual, production and destruction, contraction and expansion, and noise and silence. Like complementary colors, the stark difference between these contrasting concepts amplifies their respective meanings and enhances their articulation through their sensual and intuitive qualities beyond rational comprehension. In addition, concepts such as inside and outside, above and below, and cause and effect are juxtaposed and infused in such a way as to elude rational causality, thereby dismantling the dichotomy of logic and conveying the artist's intention through the senses and the body rather than through logic and reason. By selecting six works that embody such a quality and screening them in a chronological order spanning approximately 10 years, this screening program creates a thorough overview of Rottenberg's oeuvre and aesthetic strategy.

Another distinctive feature of Rottenberg's work that can be seen in the screening pieces is the recurring imagery of a circle, which has been present in her work since her early years. These circles, which take on various forms such as holes through which the product moves or different working spaces are connected, tunnels, water drops, bubbles, the moon, eyes, and a clock. The circular motif is found throughout her work and carries a specific intention of the artist. Although these holes are ordinarily placed in the work, if the viewer notices them instead of simply passing by, and if this gaze is prolonged, in other words, if the circles are given sustained attention, they begin to multiply and expand infinitely, serving as a portal that transcends the current dimension. The hole implies the artist's hope for new possibilities beyond the constraints of reality. The screening program is also titled 'Rabbit Hole,' as the recurring holes are portals to other dimensions and points of subversion where the binary dichotomous distinctions are overturned. Just as Alice fell down the rabbit hole and entered Wonderland, the hole allows the viewer to enter the artist's world.

Peering into the hidden side of our familiar everyday lives, Mika Rottenberg discovered labor, bodies, and women in the realm of production hidden behind the lavish consumption of today's capitalist society. She has developed a delicate artistic language and a meticulous aesthetic strategy to compose her artistic world, with the hope of awakening those who may overlook or be insensitive to certain aspects. Through her sensual visual language that juxtaposes contrasting poles and subverts dichotomies, she aims to encourage experiential comprehension. Through the Rabbit Hole at Art Sonje Center, viewers will have the opportunity to explore Rottenberg's artistic world and discover the gaps in our daily lives, hoping to find their own perceptual portal open to new possibilities.

Mika Rottenberg, *Squeeze*, 2010

Single-channel video installation with sound and digital C-print, 20 min.
Dimensions variable.

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

In a dark and enclosed place, machinery operates, generating sounds of power, women of various ethnicities are connected through holes as they perform their assigned tasks. Their diverse race implies that this is a site of multinational labor, integrated into a production system that operates organically across spatial boundaries. The unfamiliar place, the isolation, the overproduction, the human labor embedded in the production system, and this production system that does not show what it is running for, all constitute the artist's visual representation of our society.

PHOTO CREDIT

Mika Rottenberg, *Squeeze* (Video Still), 2010

Single-channel video installation with sound and digital C-print, 20 min.

Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Cast: Trixter Bombshell; Bunny Glamazon; Rock Rose; Cara Fogel; Tongue; Linda, VK, Sheley, Lx and Lin from Refined Sparkling Nails & Spa Inc., New York; Mary Boone; Kathleen Boddington; Mariangelica Cuervo; Dolores Lopresti; Julia Schell; Martha and the Pick'n Clean Crew from Church Brothers Produce, Yuma, Arizona; Mahesh Manohan and workers from Boise Estate, Kerala, India.

Cinematography: Mahyad Tousi

Set Engineer: Quentin Conybeare

Prop Design and Special Effects: Katrin Altekamp

Sound Design: Ronen Nagel, Trim Postproduction

Production: Andrew Fierberg

Production Assistants: Paulina Bebecka, Henry Prince

Still Photography: Christopher Burke Studio

Acoustic Consultant: Steve Hamilton



Mika Rottenberg, *Spaghetti Blockchain*, 2019

Single-channel 4K video installation, 7.1 surround sound, color, 18min 15sec.
Dimensions variable.

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Beginning with a Tuvan throat singing, in which high and low pitches are simultaneously vocalized, as if a kaleidoscope were spinning to reveal the door to another dimension, the work is composed of various sounds, colors, and spaces. Here, the artist's perspective of the concept of labor is embodied as physical elements such as visual and aural components. The work captures various scenes of labor, including chopping ingredients with a knife, heated substances exploding and melting during cooking, men grooming themselves, and the intermittent superimposition of images of enormous machines mobilized for mass production. Sensually stimulating perceptual elements such as the multitude of colors, the tactile composition of the screen, the high and low-pitched sounds of the Tuvan throat singing, and the sounds of objects that elicit Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) are densely juxtaposed and configured within the frame.

PHOTO CREDIT

Mika Rottenberg, *Spaghetti Blockchain* (Video Still), 2019

Single-channel 4K video installation, 7.1 surround sound, color, 18:15 min.

Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Produced by Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto; Arts at CERN, the arts program of the European Laboratory of Particle Physics, Geneva, with the support of the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations, Geneva; Sprengel Museum, Hannover, with the support of Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung; and New Museum, New York

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer and Director of Photography: David Hollander (Fourth Density Productions)

Director of Set, Props, and Special Effects: Katrin Altekamp (4DEE Productions)

Cast: Tyva Kyzy (Choduraa Tumat, Aylanmaa Damyran, Sholbana Belek-ool), Tabia Wood, Fatima Jamal, Tal Ben Menashe, Meandra Nel, David Stern, Paul Vranesovic, and Joshua Sullivan

Camera: Marcin Kapron, Marcus Brooks, and Yuri Burak

Digital Imaging Technician: Loïc de Lame (Laryenco Production)

Additional Production Support: John C. Warren (Brooklyn Image Productions)

Gaffer: Alan Hostetter

Sound Recording: Vasily Amochkin

Sound Design and Mix: Ronen Nagel and Nati Taub (Sound Around Studios)

Production Manager: Natalia Almada

Production Assistant and Special Effects: Jake Couri

Production in Russia: Masha Keder

Production in Switzerland: Mónica Bello and Arts at CERN

Production Intern: Madeleine Kozma

Special thanks to Green Thumb Farms



Mika Rottenberg, *Bowls Balls Souls Holes*, 2014

Video and sculpture installation, 27min 54sec. Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Under the dark night, a woman, illuminated by moonlight, generates an unknown force through devices connected to her body. In a bingo hall where it's impossible to determine the time and place, people repeatedly and meaninglessly stamp bingo stamps after hearing and occasionally seeing randomly drawn numbers. A black woman sleeps alone in a crowd, occasionally evoking telekinetic energy. A man pinches his face with clips according to the color indicated on a numbered ball. These images are structured in a way that makes it difficult to infer or comprehend a logic of causality. In Rottenberg's work, the spatial dichotomy of inside/outside and rational causality are blurred, carrying little meaning and escaping the realm of logic and reason that makes everyday predictions possible. Through the senses and the body, the work reveals the meaninglessness and true nature of labor and production.

PHOTO CREDIT

Mika Rottenberg, *Bowls Balls Souls Holes* (Video Still), 2014

Video and sculpture installation, 27:54 min.

Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Cast: Enid Alicea, Sakeena Jordan, Garry Turner, and extras from West Side Bingo Hall

Cinematographer: Eric van den Brulle

Second Camera: Therese McPherson, Mahyad Tousi

Assistant Camera: Igor Ibradic

Art Department: Katrin Altekamp

Assistant Director: Mitra Hemkat

Line Producer: Natalie Campbell

Jib Operator: Ian McGrew

Lights: Alan Hostetter

PAs: Elizabeth Jaeger, Tanner Cornacchini

Hair and Makeup: Merria Dearman, Debbie Peiser

Set: Joshua Pelletier, Zach Rockhill

Steadicam: Aaron Brown

Sound Designer and Mixer: Ronen Nagel, Nati Taub

Additional Sound Recording: Paul Ruest, Argot Studios; Francisco LaTorre

Color Correction: Omri Peled

Special Effects: Eran Muskatel, EMU Visual Design

Media Manager: Jillian Iscaro

Intern: Chloe YinTzuHuang

Special thanks to Belle Fisch and the staff of West Side Bingo Hall



Mika Rottenberg, *Mary's Cherries*, 2004

Single channel video installation, 5min 50sec. Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Although the three women perform different tasks in separate spaces, they are connected vertically through a single hole and work in a unified production system. One woman grows and cuts her nails and passes them to the next, the next woman makes a dough from them, and the next woman takes the dough and turns it into maraschino cherries. All three women demonstrate the characteristic of production labor that utilizes the entirety of one's body, revealing the physicality and materiality that is clearly present in the production system. The humor in the exaggerated colors and clothing and the contrasting uncanny atmosphere of the enclosed space—which seems to be an ordinary space but becomes stranger upon closer inspection—are blended into the work, exposing the intimate and circular relationship between production, labor, and the female body, even conveying a sense of physical laboriousness and cruel brutality.

PHOTO CREDIT

Mika Rottenberg, *Mary's Cherries* (Video Still), 2004

Single channel video installation, 5:50 min.

Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Cast: Barbara, Rock Rose

Cinematography: Aaron Young

Sound Design: Paul Ruest



Mika Rottenberg, *Sneeze*, 2012

Single-channel video installation, sound, color, 3min 2sec.

Dimensions variable.

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Despite the men's businesslike attire, their overly inflated noses, deformed body parts, and the desolate atmosphere of the room create a palpable tension. The men seem to be uncomfortable and sneeze repeatedly in pain, further heightening the body's tension. But what they spit out when they sneeze are random objects such as rabbits, light bulbs, and chunks of meat. From these seemingly unrelated products, the viewer can infer the everyday aspect of modern capitalist society, which is driven by the satisfaction of personal appetites, the indulgence in the convenience of civilization, and the pursuit of abundance in life. Through their uncontrollable sneezing and the continuous production of unrelated objects through their noses or mouths, the viewer can reflect on the worthlessness of consumer goods and the excessive surplus value that is purposelessly, repeatedly, and endlessly produced in a capitalist society.

PHOTO CREDIT

Mika Rottenberg, *Sneeze* (Video Still), 2012

Single-channel video installation, sound, color, 3:02 min.

Dimensions variable

© Mika Rottenberg, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Cinematography: Mahdi Lepart

Cast: Édouard Achache, Gabriel de Pimodan, Gaetano Lucido

Makeup Artist: Jérôme Jardin

Sound Design and Mix: Ronen Nagel and Nati Taub (Sound Around Studios)

Producer: Mitra Hekmat

Mika Rottenberg & Mahyad Tousi, *REMOTE*, 2022

Feature film with 2K resolution, 1.85:1 Flat aspect ratio,

and 5.1 audio, 91 min 50 sec.

© Mika Rottenberg and Mahyad Tousi, Courtesy the artists and Hauser & Wirth.

The protagonist, who lives in a society that is more technologically advanced than ours, starts her day with a chicken clock and spends her day doing domestic work that seems similar to the present. Her sole pleasure is watching an online show before concluding her day. One day she notices that the clock in the show is running backwards. When the protagonist, who has been living a repetitive routine, notices the oddity of the round clock and starts to take action, this hole becomes a portal leading to a new path that connects her to others who have recognized a similar issue. The endpoint of this journey is unknown. However, by recognizing and sharing life's absurdities, we catch a glimpse of the artist's suggestion and hope for a continual gathering of shared meaning. Serving as both the starting point and connecting hub, the artist consistently alludes to the concepts of holes, eyes, doors, and passages, incorporating the circular motif.

PHOTO CREDIT

Mika Rottenberg & Mahyad Tousi, *REMOTE* (Film Still), 2022

Feature film with 2K resolution, 1.85:1 Flat aspect ratio, and 5.1 audio.

Duration: 91 minutes 50 seconds.

© Mika Rottenberg and Mahyad Tousi, Courtesy the artists and Hauser & Wirth

PRODUCTION CREDITS(ABBREVIATED)

Directed by Mika Rottenberg & Mahyad Tousi

Written by Mahyad Tousi

Based on story by Mika Rottenberg & Mahyad Tousi

Director of Photography: Nickolas Dylan Rossi

Lead Cast: Okwui Okpokwasili, Joony Kim

Supporting Cast: Pooya Mahseni, Nikita Tewani, Antonia Predovan, Yvette Mercedes, Hee Wan Kwon

Editor: Mika Rottenberg

Production Designers: Katrin Altekamp & Mika Rottenberg

Costume Designer: Laleh Khorramian

Hair & Makeup Artist: Segal Yehudai

Producers: Mika Rottenberg & Mahyad Tousi

Executive Producers: Okwui Okpokwasili, Mika Rottenberg, Madeline Warren

Co-producers: James Lingwood, Anders Kold, Michael Goodin

Line Producer: Jonathan Burkhart

Associate Producers: Natalia Sofia Almada, Deville Cohen

Casting by Damian Bao



Mika Rottenberg

Born in Buenos Aires in 1976, Rottenberg spent her formative years in Israel then moved to the US where she earned her BA from the School of Visual Arts in New York, and followed this with an MFA at Columbia in 2004.

A New York-based artist, Rottenberg is devoted to a rigorous practice that combines film, architectural installation, and sculpture to explore ideas of labor and the production of value in our contemporary hyper-capitalist world. Through the editing process and with footage from sets built in her studio, Rottenberg connects seemingly disparate places and objects, sensually crafting elaborate and subversive visual narratives. By weaving fact and fiction together, she highlights the inherent beauty and absurdity of our contemporary existence.

Rottenberg was the recipient of the 2019 Kurt Schwitters Prize, whereas in 2018, she was the winner of the Smithsonian American Art Museum's James Dicke Contemporary Artist Prize. Rottenberg's recent solo exhibitions include: MCA Chicago(2019); New Museum(2019); Museo d'Arte di Bologna(2019); Goldsmiths' Centre for Contemporary Art(2018); Kunsthaus Bregenz(2018); Bass Museum of Art(2017); and Palais de Tokyo(2016).

Mika Rottenberg: Rabbit Hole

November 21–26, 2023

Art Hall, Art Sonje Center

Artist: Mika Rottenberg

Curated by Choi Hanna (Curator, Art Sonje Center)

Assisted by Vein Lee (Curatorial Assistant, Art Sonje Center)

Organized by Art Sonje Center

Text: Choi Hanna

Editing: Choi Hanna, Vein Lee

Translation: Kim Shinu

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Opening Hours

12:00–19:00 (Closed Mondays)

Admission

25–64 years: 10,000 KRW

19–24 years: 7,000 KRW

9–18 years: 5,000 KRW

Art Pass cardholders: 7,000 KRW

Free: 8 and under, over 65, visitors with disabilities,

ICOM·CIMAM·SCM cardholders

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