

ANNIKA KOOPS

Bump Function

5th – 27th February, 2016

Recalling my childhood, many hours were spent watching my younger sister play her favourite Nintendo 64 epic *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. Controlling the game's protagonist Link – a young warrior with a rather pestering fairy friend named Navi – the gamer travels all over the dangerous and varied lands of Hyrule in a quest to stop the game's villain Ganondolf.

While *Ocarina of Time* is considered one of the greatest video games of all time, my strongest memory of the game are in fact its spatial limitations and its slight glitches. In particular, in an early stage, Link must navigate the Deku Forest. While appearing as an open, natural space with many over hanging vines, my sister soon realised that game's actual spatial construction in 3D graphics was worlds apart from its green and breezy image. In fact, a series of small rooms, the illusion of unbridled woodland was created by a couple of repeated wallpapers of a green forest or rock face. Link often bumped into or skirted around these invisible, yet imposed walls, providing my sister with hours of frustration during the long stretches of days when she was wrapped up in completing the virtual quest.

In such simulated games, disjuncture occurs when the player reaches the programmed horizon, while the visual horizon stretches out in front of them. A reduced possibility of navigation is a common result when the player happens upon the edge of the map. In other 3D animation games, these spatial glitches can produce strange and wonderful visual effects. From the landscape inexplicably dropping away into darkness, to strange environmental anomalies where the simulation of real world physics slips, for example rocks floating off the ground, untethered to the laws that govern earthly objects.

Annika Koops' exhibition *Bump Function* – whose title derives its name from a mathematical equation that creates a bump/hump in Euclidean space – takes the simulation of reality, and its sifting ground within 3D graphics as its foundation. Stepping away from hyper-realistic portraiture, Koop's new paintings focus on a strange version of still life that flirts with moments of abstraction. Meticulously developing each pictorial scene with 3D animation and modelling software before translating this again through the painting process, Koops applies and subtracts real world physics to each object within these stitched-together compositions.

Given the rapid development of such software in recent years, it is astounding to discover the highly exact simulations of the physical world one can apply, how an abstract 'object' which typically exists only as equations or raw data, can be made to appear solid. For each object or scene one can control the degree of bounce factor, gravity, friction and beyond. The complex

conditions that make up the world around us become calculated and quantified and when applied to the construction of this new half-reality, highlight the user's omnipotence across the constructed setting.

As seen in *Continuous Derivatives of all Orders* (2016), Koops' manipulation of these conditions results in a quietly absurd scene: floating rings support draped fabric; pyramids and cones sit beside a doodle of some foliage that inexplicitly hangs in the air. The painting's pictorial field exists without a cohesive spatial integrity as each object has its own spatial logic and is brought together in a suspension of physics. Similar spatial incongruities that Koops engages with in this body of work can be found in Giotto's Proto-Renaissance frescoes at the early discoveries of naturalistic perspective. Giotto's depiction of a cathedral and a city are individually convincing in the story of Saint Francis banishing devils from the City of Arezzo in the Basilica of Assisi, however each are painted in a different scale and portrayed from entirely different viewpoints within the one setting. The inconstancies of Giotto's simulation of space create fascinating insights into the psychological shift in the conception of perspective that took place in the middle ages. Koops wilfully draws upon these differing understandings of pictorial space as a means to draw together multiple temporalities and medium specific constructions of the image. She pushes and pulls the image between historical resonances of painting and the fast moving abstractions of 3D modelling. Darting across this field, Koops recognizes and imaginatively critiques the way in which technological advancement has radically shifted our sense of space and scale.

Liang Luscombe is an artist and currently Program Curator at West Space.

Annika Koops is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart

CAVES

Suite 18, Level 6
37 Swanston Street
Melbourne 3000
Victoria, Australia
(the Nicholas Building)
cavesgallery.com

Gallery hours: Thursday, Friday 12 - 6pm, Saturday 1 - 5pm or by
appointment call 0413205929 or 0416051672