MARISSA LEE BENEDICT DAVID RUETER

DARK FIBER

Wrightwood 659	2019
US Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale	2018
Illinois State University Galleries	2016
Contemporary Art Brussels	2015
EXPO Chicago	2015
Chicago Artists Coalition	2015



"DRAW. In A Thousand Plateaus, to draw is an act of creation. What is drawn (the Body without Organs, the plane of consistency, a line of flight) does not preexist the act of drawing. The French word tracer captures this better: It has all the graphic connotations of "to draw" in English, but can also mean to blaze a trail or open a road. "To trace" (decalquer), on the other hand, is to copy something from a model."

– Brian Massumi, "Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgements," A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

Viewers entering the video installation, *Dark Fiber (2015-19)*, are greeted with scenes of Benedict and Rueter digging, burying, pulling, and cutting a fiber-optic cable in the shadows of large-scale infrastructure. Locations such as the US/ Mexico border wall, Chicago- area refineries, and an Antwerp shipping canal segue into urban, then interior spaces, gradually reducing in scale and increasing in strangeness, until a tiny specialized machine cuts a single strand of fiber. The exhibition site eventually appears on camera, inviting viewers to literally and uncannily connect the filmic industrial worlds with the installation space. The video, which inaugurated the artists' collaboration in 2014, has traveled to six exhibitions around the world.

At the time of the work's conception (2014) a quick Google image search for the phrase "internet infrastructure" revealed little about the sites, materials, and labor of internet infrastructure. Searches instead retrieved a procession of tangled, blue-tinted node-link diagrams. The results for "cloud computing" were (and still are) even more optically jejune; one could reasonably think that the internet is simply carried along by a combination of blue icons, arrows, and boring magic.

In telecommunications industry jargon "dark fiber" is a term for unused, or "unlit" fiber optic cable. As of 2014, adding a few latent strands to a fiber rollout cost little compared to leasing land, negotiating rights-ofway, digging trenches, and sawing through city streets. Telecom companies frequently opted to overbuild capacity in anticipation of future demand. The demand for this capacity became, in many instances, superfluous with technologic leaps that paced increasing amounts of information into light wave frequencies. The latent, now surplus, cable became a real estate opportunity for a growing number of private companies to lease this unused fiber to create their own exclusive networks.

The node-link diagram, a mathematical abstraction that is now shorthand for the complexity of networked society, can obscure more than it reveals. Frame-by-frame, *Dark Fibe*r draws a different

approach to network representation, suggesting that one might instead follow a single line: one that hops between systems and scales, through vast landscapes, industrial infrastructure, media apparatuses, walls and conduits, lived space, and imagined worlds. Histories of property, white settlement, fronterism, innovation, and technologies of "progress," trace, and are traced by, this line. The result is not an understanding delivered whole, but a subjective experience, one afforded by walking a path.

Dark Fiber was exhibited first at the Chicago Artists Coalition (US) as a solo exhibition in 2015. The video is siteadapted (the ending reshot) for each exhibition of the work.

Consequent sited-adapted exhibitions of the video installation took place at: EXPO Chicago (US) in 2015 (selected by Jacob Proctor, formerly of the Neubauer Collegium at the University of Chicago); *The Works: Artists In and From Chicago* in 2015, curated by Abigail Winograd and Dieter Roelstrate for Contemporary Art Brussels (BE); *Placelesness* in 2016, curated by Jason Judd for the Illinois State University Gallery (Normal, IL, US); *Dimensions of Citizenship: Architecture and Belonging from the Body to the Cosmos* for the U.S. Pavilion's "Transit Screening Lounge," curated in part by Iker Gill, for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale (IT); and *Dimensions of Citizenship* for Wrightwood 659 (Chicago, US).

A link to a video excerpt for the version of *Dark Fiber* produced for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale can be found *here*.

Special thanks over the years to: Meghan Moe Beitiks, Alex Benedict, Ingrid Burrington & Creative Time Reports, Lindsey french, CLUI & Matt Coolidge, Pat Elifritz, Jeremiah Jones, Brian Lee, John & Patricia Lee, Adam Mansour, Juan Luis Olvera, Marc & Anne Rueter, Eleonore de Sadeleer, Teresa Silva, and Andy Tokarski.



EXHIBITED AT CHICAGO ARTISTS COALITION (2015), EXPO CHICAGO (2015) CONTEMPORARY ART BRUSSELS (2015), EXPO CHICAGO (2015), ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY GALLERIES (2016), 54TH VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE (2018), WRIGHTWOOD 695 (2019);

10:20-MINUTE LOOPING VIDEO INSTALLATION WITH SITE-ADAPTED FIBER OPTIC CABLE AND JUNCTION BOX.



Previous page, this page and next: installation images of *Dark Fiber* at the Chicago Artists Coalition (2015).





This page and next three: video stills from Dark Fiber (2014-19).











Previous page: diagram created by the artists during production.

This page: while *Dark Fiber* was installated at the Chicago Artists Coalition (2015), Rueter and Benedict created an open call for a video screening program under the title "Line of Site." The call solicited videos, of any nature, the only requirement being that the means of delivering the video to the gallery must be considered as part of the work. The video program screened works by artists: Kayla Anderson, Kathryn Trumbull Fimreite, Lindsey french, Donny Gettinger, Stephanie Graham, Cristen Leifheit, Alyssa Moxley, Jeremiah Jones, Phil Peters, and Andrew Rosinski.



This page and next three pages: video stills from Dark Fiber (2014-19).









This page and next two: installation images of *Dark Fiber* at Contemporary Art Brussels (2015).







This page and next three: video stills from *Dark Fiber* (2014-19).









This page and next three: installation images of *Dark Fiber* at the EXPO Chicago art fair (2015). The third iteration of the work was housed in a custom-fabricated modular "telecom equipment shed" built to the dimensions of the art fair booth.. The mobile screening room, built from laminated and painted structural insulated panels, hid in plain site. Viewers stepped up into the unit, entering a small air-conditioned, felt-lined room projection room. A line of real fiber optic cable ran from over the back wall, draping to the floor before treading through a cable port hole plate into the building, where it plugged into an artist fabricated "splicing" box.











This page and next: in addition to exhibiting their own work in EXPO Chicago, in this iteration Rueter and Benedict organized a selection of videos to periodically interrupted "Dark Fiber" over the course of the art fair, every hour on the hour. The curated selection of 21 short videos collectively reflected themes of interrupted communication, language, friction, race, place, technology, and landscape. The video program was billed under the title "INTERLOCKING SINGLE-MODE 21-STRAND FIBER OPTIC CABLE" and featured works by artists based within a 285 mile radius from Chicago: Kayla Anderson, Ruth Ann (Nina Barnett and Robyn Nesbitt), Jeffrey Michael Austin, Melika Bass, Sarah Belknap and Joseph Belknap, Rashayla Marie Brown, Hope Esser, Lori Felker, Snow Yunxue Fu, Chido Johnson, Ben Moren, Johana Moscoso, Stefanie Motta, Dan Paz, Alejandro Figueredo Díaz-Perera, Phil Peters, Andrew Rosinski, Casey Smallwood, Sanaz Sohrabi, and Hyounsang Yoo. Tha above installation image features Rashayla Marie Brown's 10:06 minute single-channel video *Off the Hook* (2013) playing at 6:00 PM on Sunday, September 20th, 2015.

the same place, as always us happy for a while when taphor for the development y class.. To move forward time, not the arrow. w at any point it will always not really moving — if time 'gument against motion; it ajectory in space when s created by Zeno of Elea erera (BOLT 2014-16) ual problem (2012) PM nments major Media Arts department and Minneapolis College of Art he WZFR, an experimental n western Wisconsin. He is oolis Institute of Arts, the nd the Third Beijing Film Media Art Triennial. He pited at the Soap Factory bark Festival in Minneapolis specific and mixed reality tween the digital and natural projects that investigate the king, performance, and based media artist working *y and old*, Prof. Frank Eugen imming Scientifically Taught, est, and no bed is so soft as e limbs are constantly in ectly motionless, while only difference being that Exchange 2013) PM € MCA. dition, they have presented y, MO, Ultra-Deep Field allery in Rockford, IL, The tory in Minneapolis, MN, Chicago, Out There at s include Cosmosis at now at University Illinois lub of Chicago. In October 10. The Overview Effect at go Works at the Museum fuseum of Contemporary hibitions include Sarah and Karsten Lund putowski (Hyperallergic), dges (exhibition catalogue in examined by Caroline orking as a team since 2008 of the Art Institute of educators who received Belknap are Chicago-based body they so often stare in subsequently consumed to obtain two leaves from a ashington Square in Weisman Art Museum more comfortable than throughout Chicago, A + D Gallery of Columbia ollege in Palos Heights, IL Art Council and Hyde Center, Hyde Park Art 0:50 min HD video defined as 'live gestures' and video documentation A non-stop confrontation is an experiment with the self, and its surroundings through a poetic lens highlighting the nature of artist practice: experiments and failures. Working within the boundaries of what would be best is represented by Otros 360 grados Gallery in Bogota Colombia. in Colombia, Alessandro Pasotti and Fabrizio Padovan in Italy, and a private collection in Germany. Her work On Open Sky, São Paulo, Brazil; and Cuchifritos, New of Bogotá, Colombia; Video Guerrilha An Art Gallery She has exhibited widely nationally and internationally Steuben, WI, and at the Lillstreet Art Center in Chicago Chicago Artist Coalition's BOLT and HATCH projects. BIO urge to imitate sounds to successfully express myself. This video reflects that frustration. experience in using two languages, Spanish and English, I found myself frustrated and fascinated in the My interest in communication is inspired by my personal SD video 1:10 min Chicago. Participation in festivals and exhibitions in Cuba include the International Festival of Video Art in with collaborator Cara Megan Lewis at The Mission Gallery and participation in the Rapid Pulse International the uncertainty and unknowns surrounding Obama's December 17, 2014 announcement; a two-person show process of forcing self-contradiction. Recent exhibitions and the universal points of view, exploring absence and political paradoxes in a variety of ways, by the seeks to make connections between the personal text. The visual result is dictated by the investigation and the specifics of the context of each piece. Diaz-Perera BIO Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera is an artist from Havana, Cuba, based in Chicago, IL. A conceptual HD video 3:50 min Sanaz Sohrabi (BOLT 2014-15) A non-stop confrontation (2013) private collections of Cesar Gaviria and Solita Mishan and Jessica Cochran. Moscoso's work is part of the exhibitions curated by Norene Leddy, Liz Slagus, York, NY. She also has had work commissioned for in places such as ArtBO 2014, International Art Fair ACRE (Artists' Cooperative Residency and Exhibitions) in Canada. Recently, she was an artist in residence at the Made Gallery in Chicago and Port Moody Arts Centre in won awards for her work from places such Woman culture from a personal point of view. Moscoso has work reveals issues of migrations, gender roles and Through embroidery, video and performance, her Johana Moscoso (HATCH 2012-13, BOLT 2015-16) Como una pluma / Like a feather (2013) are many verbs that end "os." These words enforce the describes the love between partners. In this song there Both/Los dos uses the song "Somos novios" by Johana Moscoso (HATCH 2012-13, BOLT 2015-16) Both / Los dos (2011) Urozco in Havana Camaguey, the 10th and 11th Havana Biennials, and Performance Art Festival at Defibrillator Gallery, all in for 3 weeks behind the walls of the gallery to embody entitled In the Absence of a Body, in which he lived artist, Diaz-Perera works across the media of video, Johana Moscoso is a Colombian artist based in Chicago feeling was lost in translation. song in to English I felt that the romance was lost. The romanticism in the song. When trying to translate this Armando Manzanero. It is a very romantic song that include a solo show at the Chicago Artists' Coalition photography, painting, installation, performance and a workshop-exhibition in collaboration with Gabriel

performed and exhibited at the Arts Club of Chicago (Chicago, IL), the Watermill Center (Long Island, NY), The Hills Esthetic Center (Chicago, IL), arace Exhibition the Anna Louise Raymond Fellowship, Chicago Artist Coalition's BOLT Residency, the Propeller Fund, and the BIO this performance deals with how gender and power intersect in the slippery slope of the increasing to reach its goal. The video is based off of the myth of Atalanta, who was forced to marry a suitor who from University of Tehran and her Master of Fine Arts from photography department at the School of the Art the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL; Calumet subjectivity, and spirituality. Brown also serves as the inaugural Director of Student Affairs for Diversity and engagement/disruption: curation and installation: and theoretical writings infused with autobiography. production modes. Her work spans photographic and Breakout Artist, Rashayla Marie Brown manages a Rashayla Marie Brown (BOLT 2013-14) gallery at Columbia College (Chicago, IL), among others She is a Lecturer at The School of the Art Institute of (Chicago, IL), Defibrillator (Chicago, IL), La Esquina of Chicago, where she was awarded the Toby Devan College and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute cum laude in Studio Art and Art History from Oberlin artist whose work investigates the body via garments, sculpture, performance, and video. She earned her BA defeated her in a footrace by rolling irresistible apples 8:28 min excerpt from infinite loop Champaign. of Art and Design, at the University of Illinois Urbana North Gallery, Nightingale micro cinema, and Chicago Artist Coalition, among others. She received her BFA installation, photography and performance. In her work she employs strategies of re-enactment, fiction venues. She has received numerous awards, including Norteamericano, San Jose, Costa Rica; and other Gallery, New York, NY; Center for Sex and Culture, BFA from SAIC. Her work has also been featured at (SAIC). Brown holds a BA from Yale University and a Inclusion at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago living studio practice across an extensive list of cultural surfaces over time. institutionalization of the artist. The 'angry black woman' With the persona of an art dealer/representative HD video Off the Hook (2013) Chicago in the Department of Contemporary Practices Gallery (Kansas City, MO), and the Fashion Studies Space (Brooklyn, NY), Links Hall (Chicago, IL), NARS a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Scholarship. She has Center, Hatch Projects, and Ox-Bow, where she was in her path. the rolling apple can be heard as the hand attempts In this work, a running outstretched hand seeks an HD video Low Hanging Fruit (Atalanta) (2014) Institute of Chicago. Currently she teaches at the Schoo and video. She has been showing her work at 6018 and intersections and divisions between performance Yale Mellon Research Grant San Francisco, CA; Centro Cultural Costaricense video-based image-making; performance and social _auded by New City and Arc Magazine as a 2015 10:06 min Foundation (Brooklyn, NY), Chicago Artists Coalition has been an artist-in-residence at ACRE, the Watermill Lewis and the James Nelson Raymond Fellowships. She Hope Esser is a Chicago-based multidisciplinary the repetitive sounds of breath, footsteps, and even apple that is forever out of reach. Designed to loop, Hope Esser (HATCH 2013-14) 5:00 PM 6:00 PM

21 SHORT VIDEOS BY 24 ARTISTS FROM THE CHICAGO ARTISTS COALITION; SINGLE-MODE 21-STRAND NTERLOCKING IBER OPTIC CA

3:00 PM

BIO

Sanaz Sohrabi is a visual artist working across video,



When manufacturing fiber optic cable, filaments of plastic-coated glass strands are bundled in concentric helical layers around a central core: 12, 24, 48 (or more) exquisitely thin mile-long strands piled adjacent to each other, transmitting information encoded as pulses of light tightly bound together yet never, quite, touching

and interlocutions. Projected in the dark interior of a windowless telecom equipment shelter, built by Marissa Lee Benedict & David Rueter to screen their video Dark Fiber — a piece curated by Jacob Proctor for the Chicago Artist's Coalition's Booth #121 at EXPO Chicago 2015 the 21 short videos and films being shown are quiet choreographies and sublime train-wrecks of the mundane and the fantastical. A curation within a curation, INTERLOCKING SINGLE-MODE 21-STRAND FIBER OPTIC CABLE is a series of well-timed interjections, interludes

On the hour, each hour, while EXPO Chicago is open to the public (11 AM-7 PM; Friday September 18th, Saturday September 19th, and Sunday September 20th). *Dark Fiber* will pause in its loop and jump into the parallel universes of Kayla Anderson, Jeffery Michael Austin, Ruth Ann (Nina Barnett & Robyn Nesbitt), Melika Bass, Sarah Belknap & Joseph Belknap, Rashayla Marie Brown, Hope Esser, Sebura&Gartelmann, Lori Felker, Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera, Snow Yunxue Fu, Chido Johnson

4:00 PM

Residency, HATCH Projects, and the Midwest Artist Exchange), and are currently living and working across the nation and around the globe Ben Moren, Johana Moscoso, Stefanie Motta, Andrew Rosinski, Dan Paz, Phil Peters, Sanaz Sohrabi, Casey Smallwood, and Hyounsang Yoo The twenty-four selected artists have, over the past five years, participated in CAC's various residency and exhibition programs (BOLT

Special thanks to all the artists who have so generously agreed to screen their work: to Teresa E. Silva (Director of Exhibitions & Residencies. Chicago Artists Coalition): and to Jacob Proctor (Curator, Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, the University of Chicago).



This page and next four: video stills from *Dark Fiber* (2014-19).













This page and next: video stills from Dark Fiber (2014-19).

