

Disorientalism

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Disorientalism, a collaboration between Asian-American artists Katherine Behar and Marianne M. Kim, studies the disorienting effects of technologized labor, junk culture, and consumerism. Through live performance, video, and photographic projects, Disorientalism explores how these forces mediate race, gender, and bodies. In character, the Disorientals expose our hapless submersion in junk culture, and our failed attempts to rationalize it by mistakenly resorting to industriousness and work.



The Food Groups

"The Food Groups" is a five-part series of installations and performances focused on race and labor in American food production and promotion.

The Disorientals encounter five historical food industry trade characters of different races. In "Chapter 1: Ready Mix" we meet Aunt Jemima; in "Chapter 2: Brown Bagging" we meet Wendy; in "Chapter 3: Maiden Voyage" we meet the Land O'Lakes Indian Maiden, in "Chapter 4: A New Face" we meet Sun-Maid; and in Chapter 5 (forthcoming) we will meet Chiquita Banana.

These iconic identities are affective laborers whose job is giving a friendly face to factory food. In solidarity, the Disorientals work to erase distinctions between the depersonalized production and personalized promotion of industrial food.



A New Face

2018

SYNOPSIS:

A New Face explores migrant labor, aging, and the changing face of American agriculture. This mashup of the Sun-Maid raisin girl and John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* stars Marianne's 73-year-old mother. Recurring themes of debt and discrimination show the clash between the American dream of individuality and corporate interests. A third figure, labor activist Cesar Chavez, signals possible solidarities under these conditions.

Video sculpture, multi-channel video installation, single-channel video, five-channel animation, cardboard walls, suitcase with raisin boxes, seating area with books.



A New Face: And Such Was Their Hunger for the Land

SYNOPSIS:

Revealed on the interior of a suitcase, *And Such Was Their Hunger for the Land* presents a durational performance in which Mrs. Kim sits before a towering platter of grapes in her garden. She chops each grape with a garden spade, as dusk sets in. In the sound track, a young Korean woman reads passages about discrimination and debt from Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Video sculpture, 64:43 min.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/176827057>



A New Face: A Red Drop of Sun

SYNOPSIS:

Dressed in the Sun-Maid's iconic red bonnet, Mrs. Kim walks to and from the historic Gyeongbokgung Palace on a traffic median in downtown Seoul. The video imagery is fragmented and inset into a cardboard wall and isolated behind a faux barricade of toy nunchucks.

Multi-channel video installation,
cardboard, toy nunchucks, 2:13 min.



A New Face: Incorporated: Hunger Strike

SYNOPSIS:

The five Food Groups characters appear as animated avatars who undertake a hunger strike in solidarity with Chavez and each other. Slowly starving, they wait in silent dignity for a coming revolution. Over the course of fifteen minutes, their trademark outfits disintegrate along with their bodies, while a jazz funeral march plays. The video screens are embedded in a flimsy cardboard wall.

Five-channel animation, cardboard, wood, 15:05 min.
Link: <https://vimeo.com/322519464>



Incorporated: Hunger Strike



A New Face: Reading Nook

SYNOPSIS:

The reverse side of the cardboard wall displaying *Hunger Strike* offers a quiet space to sit and read from Steinbeck's novel or a biography of Chavez, or to fill out an alien entrepreneur E.B.-5 visa application.

Books, visa application, beanbag chairs, reading lights, bags, wood.



A New Face: West Again on 66

SYNOPSIS:

A dizzying array of snack-sized boxes of Sun-Maid Raisins fills a suitcase. Each box replaces Sun-Maid's face with a yellow circle, creating the illusion that she is dissolving into the yellow sun behind her.

Vintage suitcase, snack-sized raisin boxes, stickers, plastic grapes.



A New Face: The Western States Nervous Under the Beginning Change

SYNOPSIS:

A young Asian man celebrates an invitation to migrate to the United States as an alien real estate entrepreneur. Known as the "golden ticket," the E.B.-5 was created by the U.S. Congress in 1990 to stimulate the American economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors. The video incorporates E.B.-5's slogan "For You. For America" and Willy Wonka's "Golden Ticket" song.

Video, 2:52 min.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/431562516>



Maiden Voyage

2015

SYNOPSIS:

Inspired by the Land O' Lakes Indian Maiden and the Shadow Wolves, a special, all-Native border control unit of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Maiden Voyage* uses motifs of navigation and tracking to explore how privacy and mobility are linked to social class and technological visibility.



Installation with two videos on monitors, motorized spinning two-sided photographic fabric banners (each 36" x 52", hanging), camouflage objects, dreamcatcher, performance.



Maiden Voyage: iSpy

SYNOPSIS:

As day-laborer spies, the Disorientals set out to track the Land O' Lakes Indian Maiden who is reborn as a rich corporate executive. She is loaded with gold coins and broadcasts her whereabouts with a "Smoke Signals" smartphone app. The Disorientals navigate on bicycles, following her limo until the signal is lost.

Video, 3:36 min.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/116612368>



iSpy



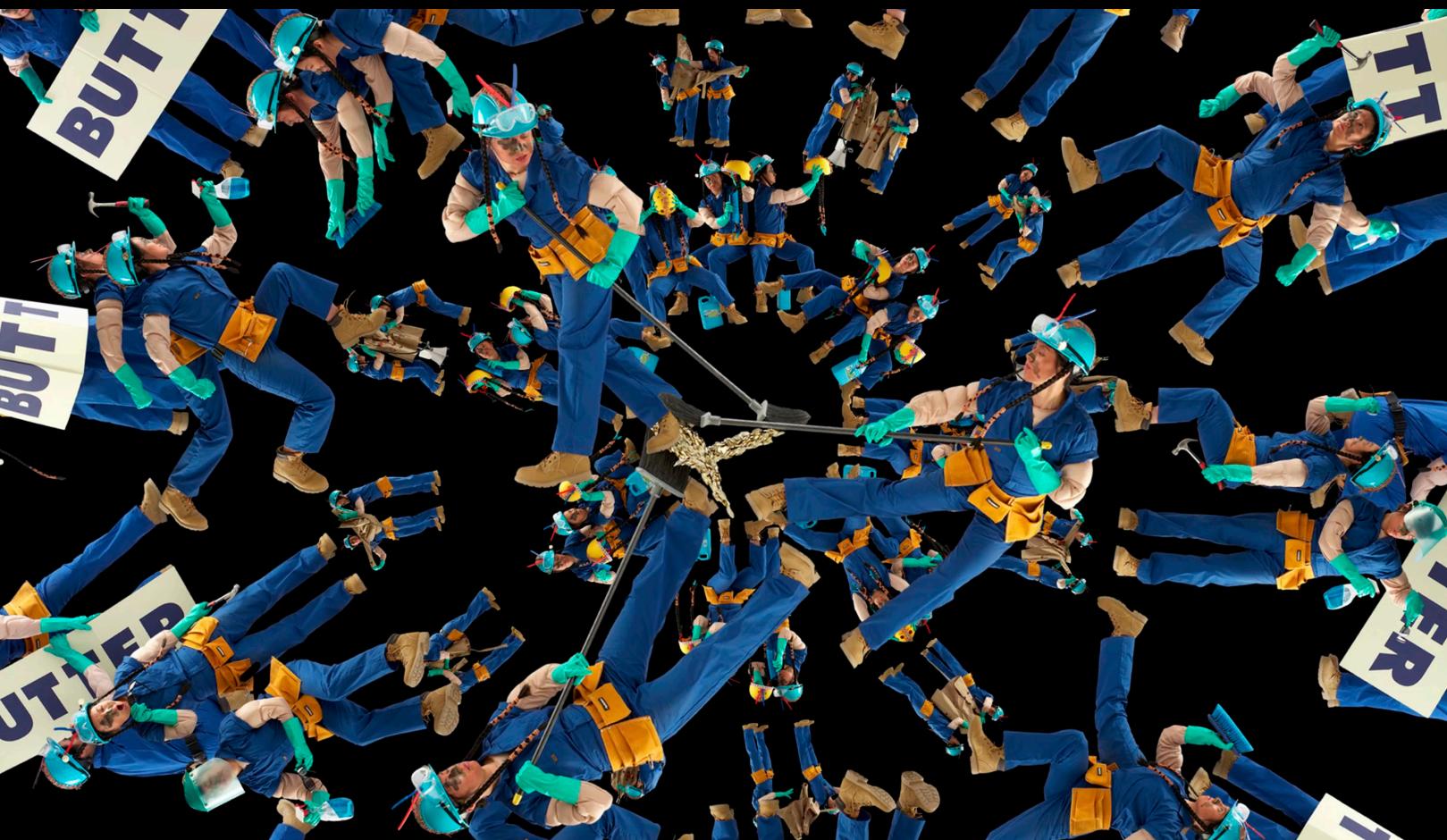
Maiden Voyage: The Churn

SYNOPSIS:

A play on the poor navigation of Christopher Columbus who tracks the "wrong" kind of Indian, *The Churn* is a spinning mandala containing the Shadow Wolves as Land O' Lakes union workers. As *The Churn* spins, they work, break, strike, and flee.

Video, 6 min., loop

Link: <https://vimeo.com/120715184>



The Church



Maiden Voyage: Two Sides to Every Coin- The Spies

SYNOPSIS:

Two-sided photographic fabric banners styled after Thangka cloths hang from the ceiling, rotating on motors. They picture the cast of *Maiden Voyage: The Spies*, *The Workers*, and *The Maiden*.

Two-sided photographic
fabric banners, motors, wood,
bicycle handle grips.



Maiden Voyage: Two Sides to Every Coin- The Workers



Maiden Voyage: Two Sides to Every Coin- The Maiden



Maiden Voyage: Incorporated

Bicycle wheel dreamcatcher.



Maiden Voyage: The Shadow Wolves

Performance with seated meditation
and "Indian tracker" choreography.
Link: <https://vimeo.com/135943621>



Brown Bagging

2012

SYNOPSIS:

In *Brown Bagging*, we join the Disorientals in Wendy's Brown Bag Factory, where mismatches – of material and immaterial labor, industrial and post-industrial production, work and game, self and commodity – play out on the factory floor.

Custom Kinect video game with interactive projection, three videos (on loops), 600 hand-stamped paper bags, performance.



SCORE 23

TIME 4.05 HURRY UP

Brown Bagging: Participation May Vary

SYNOPSIS:

In *Participation May Vary*, a Kinect video game, participants play along with Wendy at work. Repetitive gaming maneuvers meld with the repetitive tasks of factory food production. Players must learn Tai Chi to restore their work energy between shifts, and eventually must roll up the factory itself to liberate themselves and reach Nirvana.

Kinect video game. Collaboration with Silvia Ruzanka. Gameplay sample link: <https://vimeo.com/86316732>



Participation May Vary



Brown Bagging: Deluxe Double

SYNOPSIS:

In *Deluxe Double*, the Disorientals practice parking lot Tai Chi to fortify their work energy. Being a "productive" member of contemporary global culture erodes the line between producing commodities and producing self.

Video, 1:21 min.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/99176585>



Deluxe Double



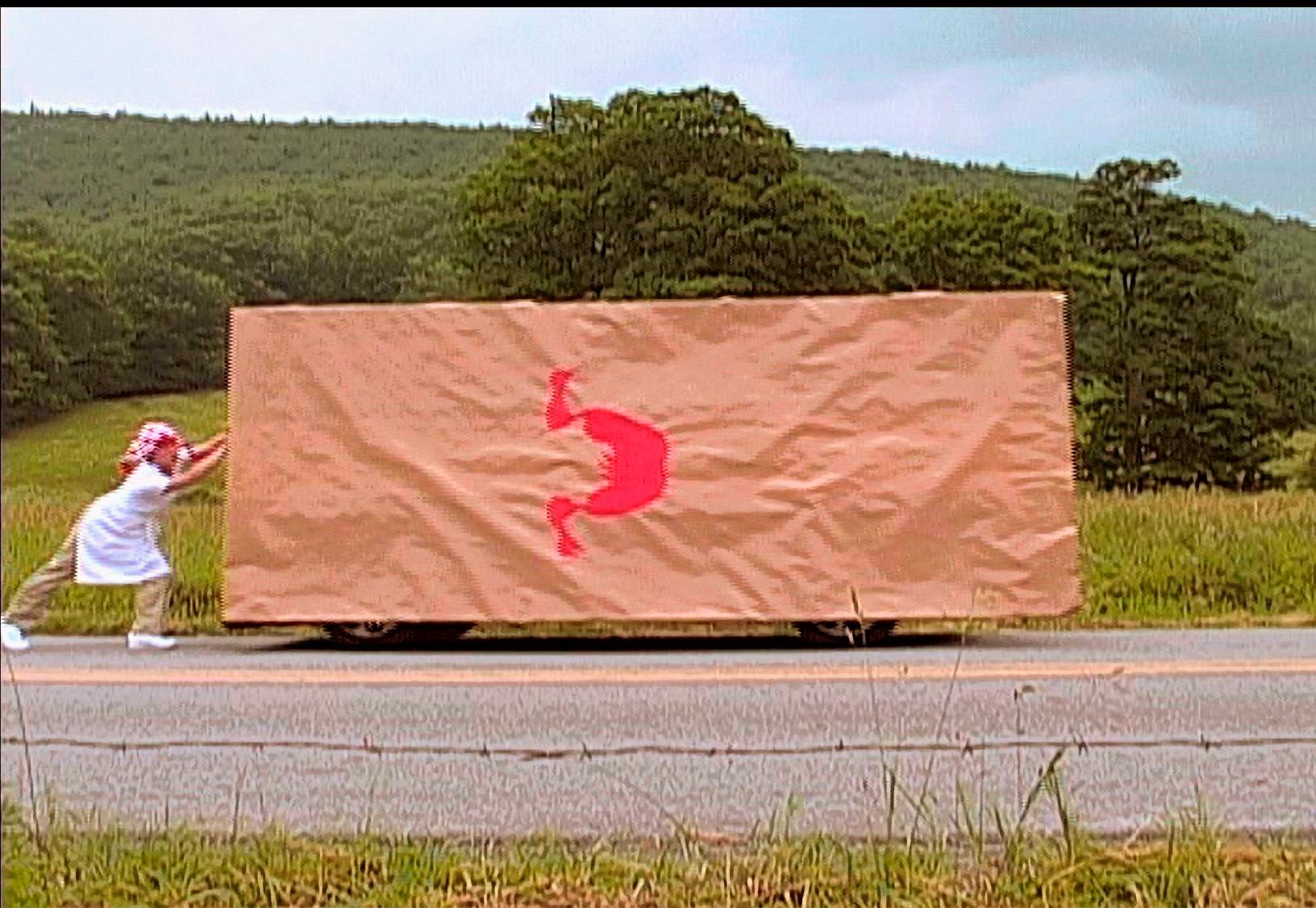
Brown Bagging: Biggie

SYNOPSIS:

In *Biggie*, the Disorientals push a giant brown bag along a country road.

Video, 45 sec.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/99162527>



Brown Bagging: Everyday Value

SYNOPSIS:

In *Everyday Value*, the Disorientals glean ketchup bottles in a tomato hot house.

Video, 1:35 min.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/99176584>



Brown Bagging: Quality Is Our Recipe

SYNOPSIS:

In *Quality is Our Recipe*, we find the Disorientals in Wendy's Old-Fashioned Brown Bagging Factory playing their own avatars in their Kinect video game, *Participation May Vary*. Stepping out of the factory game, the Disorientals become engulfed in a mass of brown bags and respond to the disembodied, computerized voice of an executive who directs them in absurd choreographies of labor, exploring tropes of gamification across all categories and classes of work.

Performance.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/151186059>



Quality Is Our Recipe



Quality Is Our Recipe



Quality Is Our Recipe



Quality Is Our Recipe



Ready Mix

2011

SYNOPSIS:

In *Ready Mix*, Disorientalism's preoccupation with junk culture translates into junk food. Using 3D lenticular prints and bobbleheads, the duo stirs up (or mixes up) the story of Aunt Jemima's century-long makeover from "slave mammy" to "modern working mother." The lenticulars restage back- and front-of-house scenes of working women from art history.



Four 3D lenticular light boxes (each 36" x 42", framed), four bobble head dolls, auto bobble stands, sound, performance.

This project contains content that some viewers may find triggering.

The following images are cropped.

Please contact us for more information about these works.

Ready Mix: Just Add Water

(DETAIL)

3D lenticular light box based
on *The Milkmaid* by Johannes
Vermeer (c. 1657-1658).



Ready Mix: Get Both Kinds

(DETAIL)

3D lenticular light box based
on *Odalisque* by Ferdinand
Roybet (c. 1870).



Ready Mix: I'se In Town, Honey

(DETAIL)

3D lenticular light box based
on *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*
by Édouard Manet (1882).



Ready Mix: Nothing Could Be Finer

(DETAIL)

3D lenticular light box based
on *The Moneylender and His Wife*
by Quentin Metsys (1514).



Ready Mix: Incorporated

Bobble head dolls, auto-bobble stands, sound.



Ready Mix: Light Cleaning

Cleaning performance with syrup bottles and light blubs.



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