

Hannah Weinberger
PRESS



Review: *Awake While You're Dreaming*, Freedman Fitzpatrick, 2015
By Dean Kissick

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FREEDMAN FITZPATRICK



Hannah Weinberger, *Awake, while you're dreaming*, 2015, three-channel color video projection, five-channel audio, various durations. Installation view. Photo: Vernon Price.

Entering this quixotic exhibition was like waking up as a kid in your childhood bedroom. Sunshine wafted through an open window of the vacant house in which the artist had made several subtle interventions. Sounds of cartoonish squelches, warbling songbirds, and dully thudding footsteps floated in through adjoining doorways. In one room, a disembodied voice spoke quietly of destroying a picture on the wall. But there were no pictures hung on any of the walls, only sets of speakers, and a few projectors on the wooden floors.

Hannah Weinberger's installation *Awake, while you're dreaming*, 2015, was situated in the just-cleared residence of gallerists Alex Freedman and Robbie Fitzpatrick, a space they were made to vacate after it was sold by their landlord. This weeklong show served as a sort of ambient closing ceremony for the residence, not so much a high-spirited valedictory as a contemplative meditation. With its audio of dawn choruses and looped video recordings of rippling waters, the project brought to mind one of those guided meditation videos intended to clear out extraneous thoughts and make space for mindfulness of the present—or rather a splicing of several such videos, inducing a vibe somewhere between the transcendent state the guides' listeners aspired to and a psychic muddle. Which is very Californian.

White curtains hung throughout the home's interiors served to partially absorb the echoes of Weinberger's percussive improvisations and the aforementioned nature recordings, as the soundscapes melted into one another from room to room. Hazy footage the artist filmed in and around Los Angeles—including at the Aquarium of the Pacific and Disneyland California—was projected across the walls, and sometimes bounced off the windows into rippling patterns of light. The blubber of a diving sea lion merged into polka-dot wallpaper slipping across the upstairs living room, evoking a monster imagined by a restless, housebound child. Downstairs, otherworldly jellyfish expanded and contracted their way across the kitchen wall in a hallucinatory fashion. Outside, the artist had swapped out a few of the porch lights for replacements in pink and orange.

In Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* (1987), angels stroll the streets of Berlin and watch over us while debating among themselves what it is to be alive. "When did time begin, and where does space end?" asks one. "Isn't life under the sun just a dream? Isn't what I see, hear, and smell just the mirage of a world before the world?" Weinberger's show evoked a similar philosophical quandary, but did so with more joy than anxiety. In a room at the back of the house was a little projection of a white palace with pinwheels blowing in the wind; a smiling clock face on its facade tick-tocked happily. Dolls clad in costumes from around the world pottered cyclically in and out of the palace's surreal, worn-down architecture—which may be familiar to the viewer as the exterior of the "It's a Small World After All" attraction at Disneyland. On the hillside at 3721 Evans Street, the art dealers' former residence was itself transformed (albeit briefly) into a similarly fantastic space—a great Swiss cuckoo clock of a house with visitors coming in and out, sugary glockenspiel-like melodies chiming now and again, and magical scenes of underwater creatures projected on a constant loop. In such a phantasmagoric setting, one wondered: What kind of world is this, anyway? Are we awake or only dreaming? —Dean Kissick