

THE NOTION OF A HOME IN OUR PAST, OUR PRESENT AND, OUR FUTURE

Nicole Borland

Essay on Santiago Tavera's solo exhibition, "Reverberations of a Topological Daydream" at Forest City Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada || March 2 to April 13, 2018

The notion of "home" is ever-changing. Whether in time, concept, place, or location, home is in constant flux with only imagined moments of static existence. While in the present, the apparent parameters of the home are often forsaken while the constructed understanding of this place exists in memories of the past or hopes for the future. As much as the home itself by definition is a physical space, it is an idea, it is a feeling both of comfort and discomfort, of happiness and of unhappiness. It is something created over time through a series of experiences both individual and shared.

These are but some of the primary elements of experience at play in Santiago Tavera's exhibition, "Reverberations of a Topological Daydream." Upon finding myself immersed in this environment of repeated transformations, I immediately felt a sense of questioning, a sense of feeling both comfort and alienation, as I became part of a collective awareness as well as an intimately personal experience.

To begin with, entering a dimly lit room greeted by an audio visual component where the listener/viewer attempts to make sense of both what the eye sees and what we are struggling to hear and understand. Whether surrounded by several other people or in solitude, determination strikes and we endeavour more vigorously to make sense of what is presented to us in personal experience.

Using headphones, pressing tighter on them in order to grasp the message, I realize there is an overlay between both English and Spanish, one language I do speak and one that I do not, resulting in a recording that leaves me without understanding on a literal level, but an emotional and metaphorical one. This element awakened in me the understanding (or lack thereof), that home is beyond the structure of which I have lived in my entire life, but extends to geographical location. From city to city and between continents, and that is a lived experience I can only identify with through a specifically constructed circumstance. We move through and try to relate and in that act we become aligned, we become disparate, I feel someone else's past and perhaps my own future, but we continue.

From a solitary experience to a communal one, moving on through a space that seems to be inhabited by someone else, I start to feel more attached, more at "home" as I began considering my own personal relation to the messages literally enveloping me. These digital renderings, pressed upon the images of the home exist in consistent distortion and perpetual movement. It becomes quite clear that these metaphorically illustrate our current age, although seemingly otherworldly, this virtual reality shows fragments of our homes, our lives, and the world we live in, in every projection, in every plexiglass, plasticized reflection, and in every reverberation of reality. In this instance, our individual perceptions exist solely, but are influenced by others as we see how those around us react. It is solemn in one sense, but a sensory overload in another. We grapple with what we know and what we perceive while witnessing the constant flux of both digital and physical worlds.

At this point the experience traverses past experience and present understanding. Boundaries are broken down and a sort of (slightly oxymoronic) individual unification occurs. Upon completion of meandering through these rooms set out for us, the experience could be distilled in short into how we maintain and retain a life, an entire world, and in other words, a home.