

By

Hilary Harp & Suzie Silver

Abstract

In the “Performance” section we present excerpts of eight out of ten sections of *Fruit Machine*, a live-video variety show created and performed by Hilary Harp & Suzie Silver. *Fruit Machine* occupies a unique place at the juncture between technically sophisticated interactive media and a humble and carnivalesque aesthetics reminiscent of a folk ritual or a school play. Combining sculptural controllers and costumes with live and pre-recorded sound and video, the performance creates a bridge between the physical world and the unbounded universe of the screen. Camp codes of high artifice and excess, and camp’s self-conscious celebration of exotica are all at work here.

Description of *Fruit Machine*

Fruit Machine is a campy hour-long media performance that uses a dynamic interplay between live and screen-based events to probe the relationship between bodies and fantasies. Inspired by a long tradition of camp aesthetics, especially Jack Smith’s homemade participatory glamour and Leigh Bowery’s extravagant perversity, *Fruit Machine* brings together camp and digital performance. Using Arduino microcontrollers, Bluetooth and Max/MSP/Jitter, physical props and costumes actively influence screen-based and sonic events.

The overall performance is more mutant musical or concert than play. As much emphasis is placed on sound as image, with props and costumes functioning as audio-visual instruments. *Fruit Machine* includes ten short acts: five live sections and five pre-recorded “music videos.” It is designed to be an intimate, improvisatory performance, and it is structured to allow for revision, expansion, and excerpting.

“Fruit Machine” was a name given to a Canadian device designed during the Cold War to ferret out homosexuals from the civil service and the military. The subjects were made to view pornography, and the device measured the pupils of the eyes, perspiration, and pulse for a supposed erotic response. The word “fruit” in our title refers to both a quirky, eccentric or queer individual and to the fecund sex organs of plants. “Machine” references the rather technical engineering of the lurid and antic images. Camp codes of high artifice and excess, and camp’s self-conscious celebration of exotica are all at work here. *Fruit Machine* occupies a unique place at the juncture between technically sophisticated interactive media and a humble and carnivalesque aesthetics reminiscent of a folk ritual or a school play.

Hilary Harp and Suzie Silver - AV Lodge

AV Lodge is the ongoing media performance project of **Hilary Harp** and **Suzie Silver**. Collaborating since 2003, Harp and Silver have created a range of projects including objects, installations, videos and performances. Drawn to exotica, science fiction and pre-digital special effects, they create d.i.y.

spectacles by combining technical sophistication with humble materials. They have exhibited their objects and installations throughout the U.S. including the Munson Proctor Williams Art Institute, Penn State University, and the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, the Arizona State University Museum, Bucheon Gallery, San Francisco; and the Pittsburgh Glass Center. Their videos, have screened all over the world, including the 2004 Stuttgarter Filmwinter, Stuttgart, Germany; ENTERmultimediale 2, Prague, Czech Republic; Biennale Internazionale di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy; Angle: The First International Short Film and Video Festival, Xiamen, China; and Arcipelago, 13th International Festival of Short Films and New Images, Rome, Italy. Their videos are distributed by the Video Data Bank. They have performed their live media variety show *Fruit Machine* in a number of venues nationally including Transformer Gallery, Washington DC; Around the Coyote Festival, Chicago, IL; the Rodey Theater at the University of New Mexico; and the VAF Performance Space at San Diego State University.

Description of Excerpts

All props, costumes, videos, sounds, interactive media created and performed by Hilary Harp and Suzie Silver except where otherwise indicated.

Excerpt 1: *Robotic Robot and Robot Love*

Robotic Robot (performance)

Robot: Suzie Silver

Robot Love (music video)

Robot: Suzie Silver

Music: Robot Love by Ganymed

<http://www.vimeo.com/7618902>

Excerpt 2: *Wack-AHHH & Shit Pizza*

Wack-AHHH!?! (performance)

The Master: Suzie Silver

Shirtless Boys: Ben Rod & Drew Pavelchack

Shit Pizza (music video)

Marsupials: Hilary Harp & Suzie Silver

Music: Brain Handle (The Family Circus, Eggs, \$100 Toilet, Maniac Hoagie,

Hungarian Overcoat)

<http://www.vimeo.com/7618902>

Excerpt 3: *Telematic Yeti and Deep Space*

Telematic Yeti (performance)

Yeti: Hilary Harp

Deep Space (music video)

<http://www.vimeo.com/7618985>

Excerpt 4: *Warp & Weft*

Warp & Weft (performance)

Piper: Suzie Silver

<http://www.vimeo.com/1725267>