

## I'M ALWAYS HERE

Rodrigo Guzman-Serrano

I am always here, in this body, in this place. The meaning of the word *here* is, without doubt, never fixed, but it is always referential. Here always refers to me, the speaker, the body that enunciates it. And, although flexible, here is always certain: there is always a here. **I'M ALWAYS HERE** addresses the meaning, language, and conditions of *being in here* through artworks and artistic projects that explore space as both individual and collective, as well as embodied, physical, and virtual.

The spaces we inhabit can generally be divided into three levels: bodies, sites, and locations. These three levels grow outwards like waves that build and expand on each other. The *body* is the first space we occupy, our flesh and bones together with our mind. *Site* refers to our immediate surroundings, a setting, like a room or a virtual environment, which could be anywhere and anytime. *Location* relates more specifically to our “global place” in relationship to others, an intersection, a city, a nation. Like concentric circles, these concepts intermingle and flow into and out of each other.

In her series *The sound of my grandma's skin*, Chi Wong unveils the deep interconnectedness between touching and hearing that takes place in and on our bodies. These interactive “music boxes” represent Wong's long search to relive personal moments with a loved one who is no longer here. Similarly, her work *Overlapping prints* explores the material dimension of our relationships by using alginate casts of skin that become surfaces of texture and personal memory.

Ryo Ikeshiro's *degeundoki* and *Pika! Ppeonijeog, Pika! Ppeonijeog / PPiikkaa!! PPppeeoonnijjeeoogg* invite us to think of language as a site of culture and physical and emotional evocations by exploring the use of onomatopoeia—words that evoke the sound of what they describe—in Japanese and Korean. *degeundoki* offers an insight into the creation of new ideophones used by ethnically Korean minorities in Japan, while *Pika! Ppeonijeog* is based on the words “pika!” and “ppeonijeog”, both referring to “flashing light” in Japanese and Korean.

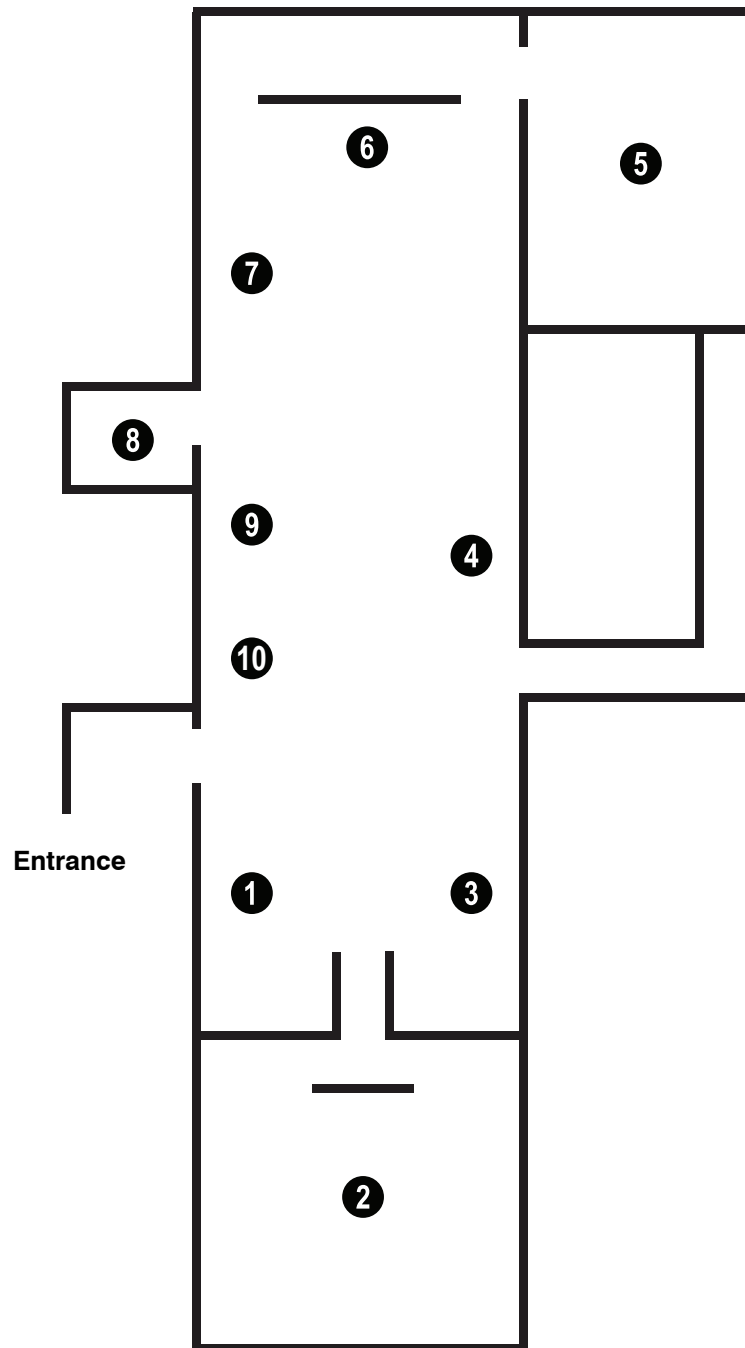
With *bug*, Ikeshiro emphasizes the sense of site and location by using modulated ultrasound and ambisonics field recordings combined with directional speakers paired with lasers. In this installation, sound functions beyond a mere auditive experience as it becomes a point of reference for location and spatial awareness.

Ray LC explores the possibilities offered by virtual environments to give us a sense of site and of being in space in his works *Home Alone* and *Sound Of(f)*. *Home Alone* generates images of room interiors with the use of machine learning. Peeping through a window frame, these oneiric sights of morphing rooms become oddly familiar to us while, at the same time, being in constant transformation. *Catch and Release*, on the other hand, allows us to experience how machines “see” activities that are quintessentially human, like dancing, and it invites us to think about what is lost when these activities are filtered through digital technologies.

In *Sound Of(f)*, LC utilizes virtual reality and machine learning to create a playful narrative of loss, memory, and sound. It begins with a scenario of the arrival of a train, where an intimate character steps off without saying goodbye.

Finally, PerMagnus Lindborg maps out the importance of location in *Pieces of Eight – 八音*, which explores how musicians adapt their performances to the soundscape at a specific location: a nature trail, a busy commuter point, a construction site, and a boat in the harbor.

The artworks in **I'M ALWAYS HERE** offer a reflection into all levels of inhabiting space. They address the complex relationships between bodies, sites, and locations, by amalgamating multisensorial channels, sounds and images, physical and virtual environments, and high and low technology.

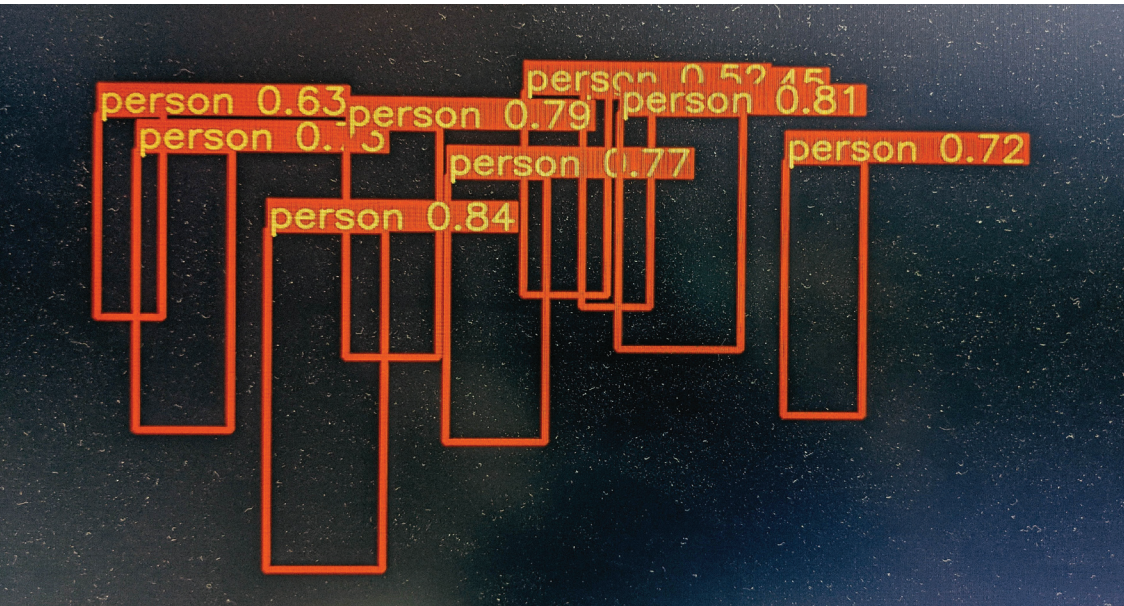


- 1** **degeundoki**  
*Ryo Ikeshiro*
- 2** **bug**  
*Ryo Ikeshiro*
- 3** **Pika! Ppeonjeog, Pika! Ppeonjeog / PPIikkaa!! PPppeeoonnijjeeoogg**  
*Ryo Ikeshiro*
- 4** **Catch and Release**  
*Ray LC*
- 5** **Selection of films**  
*PerMagnus Lindborg*
- 6** **P8•八音**  
*PerMagnus Lindborg (2021), with Joyce Beetuan Koh and Marie Chan Ching Yee.  
 Produced by SOUNDISLANDS with support from HKNME and City University.*
- 7** **Home Alone**  
*Ray LC and Anthon*
- 8** **Sound Of(f)**  
*Ray LC and Studio for Narrative Spaces  
 (Zeynep Erol, Lydia Li, Allen Zhang, Kasin Fong)*
- 9** **The Sound of My Grandma's Skin**  
*Chi Wong*
- 10** **Overlapping Prints**  
*Chi Wong*

# 4

## Catch and Release Ray LC

2021



我們想象機器如何看待我們是充滿了個人偏見和期望的，與實際上機器如何看待我們完全不同。在這件作品中，我利用舞蹈作為媒介，來展示機器如何消化不同流派的音樂啟動下人類身體的律動。當我們驚嘆於擺脫了人類視角，被電腦視覺檢測到的路徑，我們便開始理解如何用機器的方式看世界。直到舞蹈結束時，我們才能與我們舒適的人類視覺重聚，但到那時，舞蹈結束了，我們想知道，如果我們不必把自己局限在機器的鏡頭里，舞蹈的體驗到底是什麼樣的。機器視覺只能捕捉人類稍縱即逝的形態，並在它們不再被檢測到時釋放它們。他們可以看到動態模式，但他們看不到抽象背後的現實。也許僅僅抽象就足夠了？

*Catch and Release* 使用 Yolo 算法以計算方式檢測在四台 CRT 電視上播放的四場舞蹈表演中的人體動作：Cuban Rueda、Swing、Bollywood 和 Salsa。



The way we imagine how machines see us is imbued with our own biased perceptions and expectations, and nothing like the way machines actually see us. In this work, I use the medium of dance to show how machines can digest the dynamic forms of human bodies in different genres of music-driven movement. As we marvel at the patterns detected by computer vision, free of the human way of looking, we begin to understand how to see the world the way machines do. It isn't until the end of the dance when we can reunite with our comfortable human visions, but by then the dance is finished, and we wondered what the dancing experience really was like, if we didn't have to limit ourselves to the lens of the machine. Machine vision can only catch the fleeting forms of the human, and release them when they are no longer detected. They can see the dynamic patterns, but they can't see the reality behind the abstractions. Perhaps mere abstractions are enough?

*Catch and Release* uses the Yolo algorithm to computationally detect human movements in four dance performances shown on four CRT TV's: Cuban Rueda, Swing, Bollywood, and Salsa.



# 7

## *Home Alone* Ray LC and Anthon Zhang

2021

對於香港社區來說，「家」是一個扮演著不同角色，以及充滿個人故事的空間。它可以是豪華的社交連接點，也可以是狹窄的隔離空間，亦可以是看護者和居家工作者的工作場所。

*Home Alone* 是一個基於 StyleGANS 機器學習的香港室內空間敘事景觀——從狹窄的家政工人空間到城市雅皮士的高樓大廈。它從寧靜的臥室場景，到悶熱的浴室，到滿是窗戶的高層建築，再到為家庭工人提供的緊湊客房，最後到鹽田仔的廢棄房屋。最終發現剩下的只有他們通過破碎的瓶子、破爛的玩偶和祖先照片向我們傳達的故事。終於，我們獨自在香港。



For communities of folks of Hong Kong, home serves as a different space full of their individual stories. It can be a luxurious interior for social connection, a cramped space for quarantine, or a workplace for both caretakers and work-from-homers.

*Home Alone* is a StyleGANS machine-learning-based narrative landscape of the interior spaces of Hong Kong, from cramped spaces of domestic workers to high rise mansions of urban yuppies. It evolves from the serene bedroom scene, to the stuffy bathroom, to the window-filled high rise, to the compact guest room for its domestic worker populace, to eventually the abandoned houses of Yim Tin Tsai. We find ourselves finally left alone only with their previous narratives in the form of broken bottles, ragged dolls, and ancestral photos. Finally, we are home alone in Hong Kong.

Sound Of(f)  
Ray LC and Studio for Narrative Spaces  
(Zeynep Erol, Lydia Li, Allen Zhang, Kasin Fong)



2021



我們的生活充滿噪音——從不想聽見卻會吵醒我們的聲音，不想關注的假新聞，到旨在觸發行為的錯誤信息。為了展示噪音可以被掩飾並讓人潛意識「認為」是真實信息，我們創建了一個敘事干預，跟隨一列火車，通過機器學習生成的風景和分類的聲音，作為我們意識的隱喻，評估我們的夢和想法。

這個角色包含了我們生活中多個人的特徵，就像我們所知道的許多地方之間的景觀過渡一樣。探索它們會觸發使用機器學習算凖分組的空間音訊。視覺和聽覺的探索一起講述了火車到達的場景，我們親密的角色沒有說再見就走了，而我們鼓起決心創造一個環境來詆毀信息源，最終自己說再見，關掉聲音。



Our lives are inundated with noise, from sounds we don't want to hear waking us up, fake news we don't want to pay attention to, to misinformation designed to trigger our behaviours. Showing the way noise can be disguise and subconsciously 'known' as real information, we created a narrative intervention that follows a train traveling through machine-learning generated landscapes and sorted voices as a metaphor for our consciousness taking stock of our dreams and ideas.

The character contains the characteristics of multiple people in our lives, just as the landscape transitions between many places we know. Exploring them triggers spatial audio that are grouped using a machine-learning algorithm. Together the visual and audio exploration narrates the scenario of the arrival of the train, where our intimate character steps off without saying goodbye, while we summon up our resolve to create an environment to discredit the information source, to finally say goodbye ourselves, to turn off the sound.