



Olivia Mole juxtaposes material, spiritual in 'Yogaflogogo'

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Still from Olivia Mole's *The Origins of Chess*

Olivia Mole uses sacred ritual in her latest performance and installation piece, the final project in Southern Exposure's "Sets," a series of three two-week, process-based performance installations by Bay Area artists.

"Yogaflogogo" is a continuation of the London-born artist's use of live-action and animated video, sculpture, drawing and performance that work together to negotiate the tensions between imagination and the material body.

The show comprises a theatrical performance that takes place via physical installation on screens, objects and furniture.

"It's somewhere between a low-budget TV-show soundstage, a staged living room in an alternate-universe Ikea and a walk-in three-dimensional diagram from a '70s science book for kids," she says. The graphic elements in the physical set relate to images in the video, and conceptually, the set is meant to function as the inside of a set, the inside of a mind and the inside of a body and a cave.

S O U T H E R N E X P O S U R E

The live opening-night performance features two women who attempt to get a static-filled TV to work as they “fill the boredom of cyclical time with repetitive role playing, trying to fill the gap while there’s nothing to watch,” Mole says. The performers use props to activate the television, which “doesn’t make the TV work, but it does create a kind of language.”

Later in the performance, the actors play a game that evokes witch hunts, lost narratives of women and colonized peoples in the 16th century, and the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The theme of magical spells woven together by new languages and ways of creating meaning is summoned in sometimes humorous ways.

“The TV contains an oracle, a fitness guru with a clairvoyant ass — but her messages are unreadable, initially,” Mole says. “Eventually, the performers interpret them, which leads to the creation of a new form of human.”

In about an hour, Mole’s piece reflects the entire sweep of history as a “mediated process of becoming human.”

During the live performance, viewers must remain outside the central area, but afterward, they will be able to walk around the set, and the videos themselves will play for the two-week duration of the show.

Mole says that “Yogaflogogo” is by far the most complex piece she has made to date, “physically and in terms of a coordinated narrative with all the interrelated elements.” The title of the show comes from Mole’s interest in the ways “our endeavors to find spiritual or transcendent experience are so easily available to consumerism — private and intimate acts become public performances to be swallowed by the beast of capitalism.”