

**LYAM**



Last Year At Marienbad

Kota Ezawa

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Tuesday to Friday  
1.30 - 6.30 pm  
Saturday  
11 am - 4 pm

Opening

December 7 at 6 pm

Exhibition

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Text: *Same Time Last Year*

Kevin Killian

Image: Last Year At Marienbad

Kota Ezawa



Kevin Killian  
*Same Time Last Year*

“Knock-knock, anyone home?” I’ve come for my regular chalet appointment, for once a year we meet to rekindle an old romance. Empty salons. Corridors. Salons. Doors. Doors. Salons. Empty chairs, deep armchairs, thick carpets. Heavy hangings. Stairs, steps. Steps, one after the other. Glass objects, objects still intact, empty glasses. A glass that falls, three, two, one, zero. Glass partition, letters. One of them boasts a picture of my face on it, bobbing and bouncing on the soft European air conditioning, like a balloon. I’m so happy to see him. It’s been exactly one year, but will he remember me?

My lungs are pure oxygen, my palms sweaty like the face of a robot. I better play some NIM first.

I need distraction, I’ve got fifty bucks riding on the chance he won’t even recognize me. So what if he does? Fifty bucks riding, what does that mean? Does that mean I’ll be out 50? Seems so cruel when I’m not exactly, you know, in any shape to throw around my money. “Knock knock,” I repeat, weakly, to the Mozartian halls I find myself in, rows of men in tuxedo jackets and women dressed in slinky gowns and feather masks. Rooms with huge mirrors and high, high ceilings, everything made of cut paper like the origami Hiroshima victims cut into cranes.



In NIM, you remove several objects off a row of similar objects, and you make sure there's always at least one of what you're moving left in the row when you're done. Like shooting ducks. You don't want to literally shoot all of them and thereby extinguish the whole duck race! You need at least one male and one female to propagate themselves, start a new generation, eggs, ducklings, toddler ducks, teens, then drakes, and then you can go crazy all over again with your Mannheim. So leave you some dots on that line, line two also, line three for sure. And don't forget that the player who makes the first move invariably loses. It's built into the logarithms. Me—Parkinsons? No no! I'm just nervous, that's all, so I keep fidgeting with my nims. Spooky here in this ancient chalet in autumn.



Heathcliff—it's me, your Cathy, I'm coming home, it's so cold, let me into your window! I was only a boy when Kate Bush made that song a hit, and I fell in love with her gaudy, Lindsay Kemp “interpretative dance” skills. The way her long arms would wrap round her own ribcage, hugging herself as she zigzagged like a Pharaoh across a field of barley, poplars swaying behind her, her flame colored dress—or pantsuit—like a blazing provocation. Hugging herself, as though, like Heathcliff, she had been cast out of society for some unnamed offense related to her fabulousness. When she sang the words, “Let me in-a your window,” she raised a pale hand and covered her face with it, then let the hand slide so that the face seemed to be approaching a window pane, pressing its nose into it, in mute appeal, longing for the warmth inside of family life. Yet forever cut off from it because of her red dress, her orangey-red dress like a flamingo. It's me, your Cathy! She would mispronounce her own name, placing a heavy accent on the second syllable of “Cathy,” making it sound like “Ca-thee,” as if to say, I don't even care what I call myself, I'm beyond names, I am need.

In 1968 a French movie critic, Rene Predal, published this list of possible, alternative “meanings” of Marienbad, with the approval of Resnais. [I found this on the IMDB FAQ for L'Année Dernière à Marienbad.]



Nominated for four Academy Awards, Robert Mulligan's 1978 soap serial *Same Time Next Year* used the Robbe-Grillet structure just as playfully. George and Doris, married to others, meet one evening in 1951 in a Northern California vacation resort, have dinner, wind up in bed, then panic the next day at the thought that they've been "cheating." At the end of the weekend, they go back to their spouses, but agree to meet every year on this date, for the rest of the lives, and to keep this ongoing adultery a secret. The film drops into their lives every five years, so we see them change not only in looks, and the simple matter of aging, but through the changes in US and world society of the same period. By film's end they are in their fifties—rough, grizzled veterans of 50s suburbia, 60's angst and 70s rage and liberation. Ellen Burstyn and Alan Alda play the pair through thick and thin. Obviously based on *Last Year at Marienbad*, the charm of the film is waiting to see how they're going to look the next time we see them, and Mulligan's costume and hair designers rarely disappoint.

5) A is dead and the "hotel" is really Hell or Limbo. M is some sort of devil, and X is trying to bring A back to the realm of the living

6) The whole set-up is the result of a failed time-travel experiment (a situation Resnais will explore in 1968's "*Je t'aime, je t'aime*"), and X, A and all the hotel's guest are caught in a time-loop, of whom only M is aware. They are condemned to relive this situation for all eternity

7) The "Morel's Invention" alternative—M has invented a machine that create a completely believable virtual reality - except him and X, all the other characters are "fake." The machine is looping, and thus X is reliving all the same event's again and again (it must be stressed that Resnais had not read "Morel's Invention" until well after he did *Marienbad*)

8) We're just seeing the rest of the "drama" acted in the hotel's theatre, A is just imagining herself in the role of the heroine out of boredom



*Prelude to a Putdown*

“She can be very seductive,” have you ever heard this phrase without its corellary, the putdown, something like, “but she’s utterly mad.”

“I know she can be very seductive,” by itself, is not really a sentence, as it lacks the requisite followup, “but you’re making a huge mistake.”

“He can be very seductive,” I have heard it say, “but for God’s sake, Kevin, he’s only 25.”

As a prelude to a putdown, “she can be very seductive” has few peers. I have lived through decades of English and heard this one a million times. What type of person says these five words? People haunted by their own imaginations! GEORGE. I know he can be very seductive—

DORIS. —But what, George? What? Take that hoo-kah out of your mouth in the 60s and spit it out!

GEORGE. But he’s from the streets—a guttersnipe—and he’ll pull you down with him, Doris.

In The Mail on Sunday, one of Keith Urban’s early girlfriends warned Nicole Kidman against hoping too much. “When he talks the talk, he can be very seductive, but I’m not sure Keith will ever be ready to settle down.”



9) The “hotel” is an asylum, all the “guests” are insane, A is suffering from schizophrenia and X is just a figment of her imagination—M is her doctor.

10) M is a scientist who has populated the hotel of living mannequins, X is being just the subject of a strange experiment

11) Nothing really strange is happening—the story is banally the attempt of X to have A remember their affair of one year before (who she does remember, even if she’s denying). All the “strangeness” is just a deliberate attempt to mislead the audience through clever editing.

12) X has never met A, but he dreamed of her—he’s genuinely convinced they had an affair “last year.” All the shifting realities are just part of his defective memory

Can you even tell me who we’ll be driving with? That way I’d know what to expect.

“Do you always know what to expect in life?” he says without looking up again. “Maybe in America you do, but we are not all Americans, happily for the world.”  
“For me, this isn’t a holiday.”



*Instructions for Kota*

Gray strips,  
smiles of gray,  
cut them from the wall,  
let men and women see through the wall,

Break out half a cup vermouth, one quarter cup  
mustard of Dusseldorf,  
red potatoes, small like the eyeballs of lovers,  
cut black strips black as movie telephones,  
strips white as lace,  
In the LP by the Monkees, it was easy then to tell weak  
from strong,  
right from wrong, but today there is no day or night

Today there is no black and white?

Matted, moving, wired, each slice eclipsing one  
beneath  
for when the sun comes out the moon  
fades from sight, yet still it pools your blood

white chalk, cream, magnolia  
lace of animation, that provides for its workers,  
I would be a Monkee in your court,  
abiding as the jester,  
the rich Kartoffelsalat a hit with kids,  
and Kota, the best video on Youtube, is  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ9m8AysY1M>

“Craig dancing to Kate Bush,” not the Craig we know,  
but a Liverpool lad of 19, who says of himself on his  
site, “Hahaha a fun energetic person who jus wants a  
laugh weneva he can, cud go on 4eva lol!” What kind  
of car you have, Craig?  
“Oof like I drive hahah.”

Lace is a place,  
animation sensation  
see you same time last year



GEORGE. —Why do you have to look so luminous? It'd make things so much easier if you woke up with puffy eyes and blotchy skin like everyone else.

DORIS. Guess God thought chubby thighs were enough.

GEORGE. And your silences! I have never heard anyone raise his voice in this hotel—no one. The servants are mute. Do you know what I heard, that last year at this season, it was so cold that the water in the ponds froze.

DORIS. What do you want of me?

GEORGE. But you always stayed at a certain distance, as if on the threshold, as if at the entrance to a place that was too dark, or strange . . .

DORIS. You are like a shadow—and you're waiting for me to come closer—Oh, let me alone . . . let me alone . . . let me alone!

GEORGE. You know what the worst part of this is? —While I'm thinking all of this, I have the most fantastic hard-on.



graphic design: Ryan Thayer

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