

*Eva Gold*

*'City of Rooms (part two)'*

*1–22 Apr 2023*

*The Shop, Sadie Coles HQ*

*Rose Easton*

Text by Hana Noorali and Lynton Talbot  
Footnotes by Eva Gold

Towards the beginning of *Cure*, the 1997 Japanese horror film directed by Kyoshi Kurosawa, the character Mamiya appears on a grim, debris strewn shoreline, seemingly out of nowhere. Like a mirage in a long beige overcoat, he looks up at the blanket grey sky before walking towards the camera.

The sound of thunderous waves rolling onto the large expanse of empty land is blended with an ominous, metallic drone, interrupted by the percussive crunch of Mamiya's footsteps as he walks towards us, navigating the trash on the ground. This rich, deep tone, at odds with the austere imagery, produces a sense of total dread; the waves, the wind, the drone, the footsteps. He walks past Hanaoka, the only other person on the shorefront, but stops and returns to speak to him. The camera is distant, and the voices, too. We can hear an interrogation ensue beneath the noise. In silhouette, against the grey sky, Mamiya repeatedly asks, 'where is this?' while Hanaoka replies; 'Shirasato Beach'.

Shirasato is the closest beach to Tokyo but we cannot see it beyond the horizon. Without place and time, this is a liminal space,<sup>1</sup> anchored only by a small boat visible in the ocean, making their proximity to life in the city evident but distant. Usually at the centre of events propelling the narrative, the protagonists here

are lost and our spectatorship of them is heightened as a result. We scrutinise them from one side, the boat from the other. They are surrounded, and we are invited to watch them struggle in some purgatorial arena; an inverted panoptic gaze.

When asked by Hanaoka 'where are you going?' Mamiya replies 'nowhere.' Mamiya asks again 'where is this, what is the date?', 'I don't know who I am'. The scene ends with him collapsing<sup>2</sup> and exclaiming 'help me, please... I don't remember anything.'<sup>3</sup> As a viewer, we understand this exchange to be a foreshadowing of the horror to come, the enigma upon which the narrative hinges. We have not seen the horror yet, but we know it's on its way.

Watching *Cure*, we are exposed to layers of mediation. Spatial, technological, psychological. The sites of murder are municipal infrastructures with complex or ambivalent statuses between private and public; hotel rooms, hospitals, police stations. We witness interrogations via the mediated screens of various forms of surveillance equipment.<sup>4</sup> People are watching people being watched. We are ourselves inscribed not simply as viewers but elevated to the uncomfortable status of voyeurs. Spaces are separated from their contexts. Even Mamiya on the beach first looks to the sky as if to ask, 'where did I even come from?'.<sup>5</sup> The killers are hypnotised to act without personal agency over their victims, often alienated from their own sense of complicity or sense of self as a result. Archetypes of horror

are continually undermined making everything more real and by extension more horrific.

The cinematic gaze has long been theorised as a technology of surveillance. Not only in the way cinema casts its audience as voyeur but also in the way protagonists are depicted as onlookers that essentialise the sexual, racial, gendered or classed 'other' in the service of driving narrative forward. This has constitutive effects upon the viewer that frames understanding and regulates the social body into certain conditions of perception. In an age of social media and the penetration of visual cultures into our social and political life, this phenomenon intensifies. As we all become producers as well as consumers of our visual media, we not only infinitely (re)produce the self, but we willingly (re)produce the technology of our own surveillance. We are both architect and prisoner of a panopticon of our own making.<sup>6</sup>

1 You suppose that you could be in familiar territory... The present – broken, desolated is constantly erasing itself, leaving few traces. Things catch your attention for a while but you do not remember them for very long. But the old memories persist, intact... constantly commemorated.<sup>a</sup>

2 I quicken my pace, dashing to the top of the stairs with the obscure conviction that each room must now be reduced to the platitude of a vacant tableau, a snapshot of an empty stage set.<sup>b</sup>

3 In the classical ‘art of memory’, the surest way to remember a speech or a story is mentally to disperse its parts about a real or imaginary house.<sup>c</sup>

4 The light from the bright room reflected from the mirror back into the room itself is much greater than the light transmitted from the dark room, overwhelming the small amount of light transmitted from the dark to the bright room; conversely, the light reflected back into the dark side is overwhelmed by the light transmitted from the bright side. This allows a viewer in the dark side to observe the bright room covertly.<sup>d</sup>

5 The problem is not, any more, the longing to get to the past, but the inability to get out of it. You find yourself in a grey black drizzle of static, a haze of crackle. Why is it always raining here? Or is that

just the sound of the television, tuned to a dead channel? <sup>e</sup>

6 The lights have gone out.<sup>f</sup>

a Mark Fisher, “Sleevenotes for The Caretaker’s *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*” *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 111.

b Brian Dillon, “Walking and Falling” *In The Dark Room* (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2020) 34.

c Brian Dillon, “Theatre of Memory” *In The Dark Room* (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2020) 28.

d “One-Way Mirror,” n.d., [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-way\\_mirror](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-way_mirror).

e Mark Fisher, “Sleevenotes for The Caretaker’s *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*” *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 111.

f Mark Fisher, “Sleevenotes for The Caretaker’s *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*” *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 111.

Eva Gold (b. 1994, Manchester, UK) lives and works in London. After completing her BA at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2016, Gold went on to complete a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Academy of Art, London in 2019. Her practice harnesses methodologies of storytelling, using objects, writing, materials and space to recount narratives. Recent solo exhibitions include *Slow Dance*, Eigen + Art Lab, Berlin (2022); *The Last Cowboys*, Ginny on Frederick, London (2022) and *Perv City*, at Parrhesiades in collaboration with Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London (2020). Selected group exhibitions include *Not before it has forgotten you*, Nicoletti Contemporary, London / The Pole Gallery, Paris (2022); Lock Up International, Brussels (2022); *SEX*, Rose Easton, London (2022); *Corps*, MAMOTH, London (2021); *Sets & Scenarios*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2020); *Barely Furtive Pleasures*, Nir Altman, Munich (2020) and *General Meeting*, Freehouse, London (2019).

## List of works

Eva Gold

00:06:03, 2023

Colour pencil on paper,  
steel and aluminium frame

25 × 29 × 3 cm

Eva Gold

00:10:22, 2023

Colour pencil on paper,  
steel and aluminium frame

25 × 29 × 3 cm

Eva Gold

*Insomniac (SE4 2PP)*, 2023

Aluminium

30 × 28 × 17 cm

Private View, Friday 31 March, 6 – 8pm  
Open, Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of live events and activations. Programme to be announced. Follow @roseeaston223 to be kept up to date. For all enquiries, please email [info@roseeaston.com](mailto:info@roseeaston.com)

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