

## Everywhere, Everyday

### Karine Matsakyan, Sona Abgaryan (Armenia)

Video Animation, 2010

Armenian female artists Karine Matsakian and Sona Abgaryan (b. 1979) embark on a cross-generational journey to chart the unchanging position of women in their native Armenia. In this subtle animation video, they explore overarching issues of gender roles, feminism, and freedom of expression, expanding on their previous works' critique of male dominance and consumerism in the art world and society at large. The video unfolds in a virtual world with the avatars, or digital personae, of the two artists performing against a green screen background, as if in the visual field of an early arcade game. Their puppet-like, computer-generated bodies move fluidly, at times acting like analog receivers of consumerist desires, and allow the artists to escape from the limits set by everyday conventions in order to reaffirm themselves as individuals or humans. The green screen background highlights its own infinite potentiality, as it could be replaced by any other image at any given time—a condition that is imbued with both freedom and anxiety. Through this the artists interrogate a woman's "role" as one of perpetual editing, constant negotiating, and open to reformulation. What are the parallels between edited, artificial online environments and curated artistic systems? The result is a recounting of suppressed realities where the theatricality of gestures performed by Matsakian and Abgaryan underscore the real conditions of Armenian society, and international art systems.

**Karine Matsakyan** was born in Gyumri , Armenia in 1959. After graduating from the Yerevan Academy of Fine Arts in 1985, the works of Matsakian have been consistently exhibited within Armenia and Europe. Her solo exhibitions include ones held at Charly Chacaturian Gallery in Yerevan (1997); Kultur Kontakt in Vienna (2001); Leube Kunst Project, Salzburg (2001), where Matsakyan was an artist in residence; and most recently "Cultural Body" in Armenian Center for Contemporary and Experimental Art in Yerevan (2009). Among the numerous group exhibitions in which Matsakyan has participated are "Third Floor" held at House of Artists in Yerevan (1987); the 49th Venice Biennale (2001); and "Getting Closer" held at the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, ifa) in Berlin , (2003). Matsakyan currently lives and works in Yerevan