

# BOMB

Samara Golden  
by Kristin Lucas



Installation view of *The Flat Side of the Knife*, 2014, MoMA/PS1, New York. View from first floor landing; CRT monitor with live video feed coming through video mixer, plaid carpet, umbrellas, ribbons, couch.

I went on a few adventures as a prompt for writing this response to Samara Golden's *The Flat Side of the Knife*. I was drawn to the way that Golden's installation tethered me between a realtime physical presence and a timeless, psychically charged, illusionary space. I sought to reanimate aspects of my experience through activities I could do from Austin, Texas, which would similarly trigger both embodiment and disembodiment. I first went to a mirror maze that was closed for renovation; next, to a haunted house; finally, to a sensory deprivation tank. I chose to write from the experience of the latter given that floating between worlds led to a permeable, less analytical form of writing, while fulfilling the promise of enhanced brain activity and deep relaxation.

Select soundtrack. "Ocean Waves" or "Keyboards" or "Sounds for the Supermarket (1975)" or "That Song You Sing Along to While Changing the Lyrics to Better Mirror Your Own Life." Take off your clothes. Rinse off the day. Step into glowing isolation tank. Close lid. Turn off light. Face your fears. Enter ghostly "Ocean Waves." Attain equilibrium. Immerse yourself in atmospheric sound: *splitscreen videoscape* of waves crashing on a loop, mixing well with the scent of Epsom salts. Awaken your senses. Escape your body. Let the waves pull you in, marking time, a metronome for multidimensional, tri-level travel through an exploded view of a split-second splice, extracted from someone else's life, frozen and multiplied.

Inside now. Time to make the piece peace. Still thinking. "Keyboards" may have been a better match to Golden's installation. Next time. Let go. Get your money's worth! Lose your sense of spatial orientation in the dark infinite *mirror maze*. Minutes later, drifting. Half-submerged in salt water with my eyes shut. Alpha waves kicking in.

Visual cortex stirs up a vision of words from my notes resting buoyantly on the water's surface surrounding my body. Free form. I'm floating on a 3-D axis. I pivot but my body stays in place.

Mind's eye view. What I see, in this order: Stairs with chairs. Mirrored and reflective camouflaging surfaces. A cello. Beds. Carpets. Clusters of string instruments. Couches in kaleidoscopic arrangements. Ocean waves pouring over a rock. Half of a half moon. Going deeper. Capturing more detail. Doubling everywhere. Three beds on three levels in three colors: warm pink-peach, hospital blue, and pure white. An intravenous pole. A pack of shadowy figures *haunting* underneath the stairwell. Precariously placed *upward falling* wheelchairs on stairs traveling in different directions onto different levels. Catastrophe looming. Probable scenarios: life, half-life, afterlife.

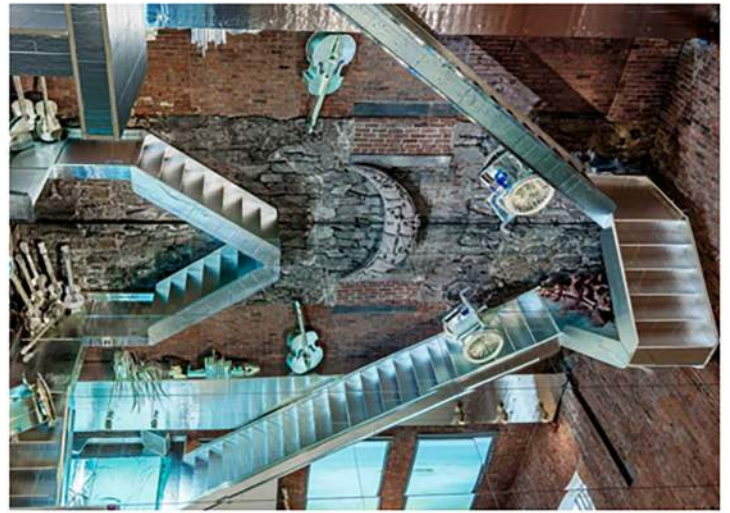


Detail of view from second floor down to mirrored floor; stairways, sofas, beds, tables, lamps, fans and instruments made of reflective foam insulation coated in resin, video projection, live video feed, video mixer, CRT monitor, three soundtracks.

Descend a solid set of stairs to catch another view. Plaid everywhere. Couch. Umbrellas. Bows. Stuffed animals of all sizes and kinds sewn out of the same cloth with unifying compassion. On a monitor, a live closed-circuit video feed of the blue bed with Chroma-keyed text moving like scan lines over the image. Inside, ideas, worries, lists, and email correspondence that reflect the thinking and creative process. A boombox blaring, de-spatializing music into the cavernous atrium.

End session. With a complimentary cup of Revival tea. Continue writing from couch *couch*. Surrounded by cats, *stuffed animals*. The experiment turns counterproductive. My body becomes heavy, *a body in jeopardy*. I am too relaxed, sedated to write.

— *Kristin Lucas is an artist living between Austin and New York City.*



Installation view of *The Flat Side of the Knife*, 2014, MoMA/PS1, New York. View from first floor landing down into mirrored floor; stairways, sofas, beds, tables, lamps, fans and instruments made of reflective foam insulation coated in resin, video projection, live video feed, video mixer, CRT monitor, three soundtracks. Images courtesy of the artist.