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## THE BOX

June 1–30, 2017

### Jennifer and Kevin McCoy

*Broker* (2016)

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Image courtesy of the artists and Postmasters Gallery, New York.

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#### Broker

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Jennifer and Kevin McCoy's *Broker* considers the abstract nature of luxury as well as the language employed to create meaning and instill a sense of justification in the mind of both buyer and seller of high-end services. At the outset, the viewer is introduced to an agent (played by Gillian Chadsey) practicing her pitch in an immaculate apartment 77 floors above the streets of Manhattan. (Set aside, for a moment, the visual prompt that clues the viewer in on the name atop this particular building.)

The white, sparsely decorated space is sterile and lifeless to the point where it is rendered almost alien. In fact, in terms of attainability, it is an alien space, almost futuristic. Dressed in black and white with her hair tightly pulled back, the broker hones her script, dwelling on details (handmade, custom-made) ultimately designed to reassure the potential buyer of the uniqueness of this extravagance. The broker's pitch is not aimed at you and me but it does provide a brief glimpse into how such a rarefied transaction might unfold.

Almost seamlessly, the broker transitions from her studied recitation to a heavily synthesized song (created by composer and sound collagist Lori Scacco) that reveals for the viewer, step-by-step, the subliminal science behind a sales strategy that is effective for a "marketer or politician."

Regal. Sensual. Futuristic. Spacious. Personalized. Scientific. The linguistic enticements are so vague that they obfuscate any real consideration of the desirability of the object. It's an arid space given meaning by the labels bestowed upon it and by the perceived status it will bring the buyer.

The line between rehearsal and performance blurs as *Broker* unfolds. A dramatic change in camera position at one point fixes the viewer more firmly in the place of the buyer. The broker's façade begins to waver as she comes across paintings—in effect, glitches in this hermetic environment—apparently left haphazardly in various rooms throughout the apartment.

The glitch is made manifest as the broker herself short circuits, tugging at a thread in the otherwise pristine rug, tugging at her now unkempt hair, her eyes, and her face. The broker and the image she is pitching can only be projected. They can't withstand scrutiny or deviation and, ultimately, this speaks to the fragile nature of value that exists only on the barest of surfaces.

The apartment, of course, is in one of Manhattan's Trump Towers, and *Broker* takes on unintended and unexpected meanings in the wake of the last election and the first 100+ days of the current administration. The image that many had of our country has also experienced a profound glitch—and it remains to be seen what might get us back on script.

David Filipi  
Director of Film/Video

Jennifer (b. 1967) and Kevin McCoy (b. 1968) live and work in Brooklyn. Their work has been exhibited internationally at museums, festivals, and galleries. Their work is in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, the Milwaukee Art Museum, and the Speed Museum, among others. They received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2011. Jennifer received a BA from Cornell University and Kevin has a BA from Whitman College. They each have an MFA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

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Jennifer and Kevin McCoy

*Broker*, 2016

28 mins., video

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