

AN TE **LIU**

Pattern Language: Levittown / White (UPC Edition), 2004-2005

Piezo print on vinyl

Courtesy of the Artist and Henry Urbach Gallery, New York

The pattern in An Te Liu's wall paper installation was derived from multiplying a single, perspectival, aerial photograph of Levittown, one of the first suburban communities in the United States. Levittown(s) were pioneered by William Levitt in Pennsylvania and New York in the post-war era and were seen to be prototypes for the perfect single family suburban residential area. Levittown is a physical and historical embodiment of post-war idealism, they represent a view of the world that promises individual freedom, prosperity and decent family values. There is an interesting irony, however, in that a built form connected with the ideals of open space, good health and wholesome living ultimately takes on such a serial representation - that the unique and the same are collapsed into an endless repetition of sameness.

While the design logic of the suburban development is based on the logic of pattern making (one unit repeated and modified and repeated ad infinitum), the pattern of the suburban development is constructed to disguise the sameness of the individual products, but in the wallpaper pattern this repetition the seriality becomes very evident.

In Liu's installation the representation of architecture is reconstituted as a textile-like pattern, recalling the theories of German architectural theorist Gottfried Semper, who believed that there was an elementary relationship between textiles (knots, weaving, fabric, pattern) and architecture - that the first architecture was one of strands of cloth and membranes. In Liu's work, there is a collapse of the 3-D physicality of buildings and the 2-D reality of wall covering.

Yet in Liu's work, the overall repetition of the image pattern is broken by a second that has been laid over top or cut out of the fabric of the wallpaper. This takes the form of a series of vertical voids or interruptions in the wallpaper that are derived from the rhythmic pattern of a UPC (universal product or bar code). Both the UPC and the suburban development form patterns; while the UPC is scanned in order to identify the product (inventory, price, company/maker, etc...), the houses themselves are also mass-market products, created at a larger scale, yet equally consumable.