

S P E C T R U M

A SURVEY OF ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE

REALITY CONSTRUCTION

Breese Little, 30b Great Sutton Street, EC1V 0DU.
Tuesday 26th May, 7 pm

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Reality Construction

Guest curated by Bernard Walsh.
Anne Kathrin Greiner, Amy Nickolls, Theo Tagholm, David Theobald.
Guest artist Uriel Orlow

"I have decided that seeing this is worth recording"

Spectrum's first screening *Reality Construction* brings together four artists' moving image works submitted in Spectrum's open call. The screening explores moving image's complex relationship with photography, cinematic language and examines the (re)construction of reality.

Anne Kathrin Greiner's art practice is driven by a keen interest in personal and collective memory, the power of place and questions of identity, how people relate to (and are influenced by) their environment.

Amy Nickolls' practice is predominantly video based and through her work she aims to seek out a sense of absurdity and failure in the face of claims of authenticity or reality in mainstream film and television.

Theo Tagholm primarily deals with photography's relationship to film. The mapping of the world through images and the hierarchies involved in creating a system often recur in his work.

David Theobald's work centres around technology and its impact on subjectivity. Consisting primarily of digital animation, his subject matter mirrors the structure of the underlying technology used in its creation and the repetitive processes that seem central to the infrastructure of contemporary society.

Uriel Orlow lives and works in London. He makes multi-media installations that explore blind spots of history and forms of haunting and bring different image-regimes and narrative modes into correspondence.

The following texts have been produced in response to the films screened in *Reality Construction*.

Many thanks to Elena Colman, Jess Currie, Laetitia Guillotin, Saira Harvey, James Schofield James Tabbush and Rachel Wilson for their contributions.

Spectrum initiated from a want to research and provide a platform for artists currently working with moving image. *Spectrum* has formed from an open call, rather than prescribing a particular 'theme' beforehand the screening events are curated from the entries received and tailored to the submitted works.

Reality Construction

I explain, I've reached a point in my life where I can no longer accept uncritically any image whatsoever, be it television picture, film frame, photograph, web page, advertisement graphic, drawing, cartoon or painting. When I say, "accept uncritically" I mean I now refuse to take any image as necessarily representative of any existent thing. And furthermore, I challenge the information, which any image appears to be conveying.

Will Self has recently been telling people that he is 'post-image'. The announcement, he accepts sounds 'absurdly portentous' but he's sticking with it regardless.

Meanwhile, back in 1968 John Berger is also trying to persuade us of the importance of engaging with photographic images in his essay *Understanding a Photograph*. They constitute such a large part of the information we receive through news, media, advertisement and all the other inconspicuous but all pervasive facets of life and as such it's vital we know what they're doing there.

Why complicate in this way an experience which we have many times every day – the experience of looking at a photograph? Because the simplicity with which we usually treat the experience is wasteful and confusing. We think of photographs as works of art, as evidence of a particular truth, as likenesses, as news items. Every photograph is in fact a means of testing, confirming and constructing a total view of reality.

Nearly fifty years on the issue hasn't gone away. As a culture we seem more aware of a photograph's ability to lie to us, but this might manifest itself for example in a celebrity releasing their pre-airbrushed photo-shoot which is arguably a technological lie as much as a social one. Perhaps we're making progress, but to embody the constant critical scrutiny which Self claims to have attained seems exhausting to me and besides, there is a great deal of pleasure to be gained from immersing oneself in an image, lie or otherwise. Even if it were possible to attain absolute impulsive consumption or detached intellectual doubt in regard to our consumption of images I can't say I would recommend it. Here Self mentions his childhood, in the days before he reached representation nirvana.

In as much as I've found them deeply absorbing, I've also always experienced a slight repulsion, as if every time I approach the surface of the image I bounce back. Nevertheless I loved films as a child, and was well able to suspend disbelief in even the ricketiest of stage furniture.

This 'bouncing back' is surely something worth considering. Some aspect of the image, whether in the content, the form or the delivery has led Self to refuse an acceptance of its premise. These two polarities of awareness and mesmerism, or more specifically a flickering back and forth between them is useful in its ability to set off a chain of uncomfortable self-reflection. Artists are a group charged with some degree of responsibility of visual awareness and accordingly the four moving image works shown together for the first screening of *Spectrum: A Survey of Artists' Moving Image* are unified in their investigation of this uneasy state.

I thought of Berger's essay particularly in relation to these works because of a distinction he draws between painting and photography. The former, he argues is composed of internal references: the language of painting and of the artist. They are filtered through several layers of conversion from outside world (or not), to eyes, to mind, to hand, to paint, to image. Photography on the other hand consists of external references and has no language of its own. A photograph is created by a very direct physical relationship between object, light and camera that mimics the way we process images ourselves. So where does this leave film and video?

A movie director can manipulate time as a painter can manipulate the confluence of the event he depicts.

I suspect, as is hinted here in his only reference to moving image, that they contain elements of both Berger's definitions. Take for example Theo Tagholm's video *Meanwhile Elsewhere*. Soundtrack and ambient noise switch subtly to coincide (and conflict) with material that could at times form a narrative film while elsewhere resembling moments caught on holiday footage. A narrow boat trip, fireworks, an out-of-focus man across the room in a pub; what at first could be a planned narrative falls quickly into inconsequential caught personal moments and back again to hints of a structure. There is a moment of CGI footage in amongst them, heavy with potential readings, of road disappearing under the speeding headlights of a car. 'Where are you taking me?' reads the subtitle. The work seems to mirror the thought pattern of travel, of reverie, looking at one thing whilst being present elsewhere; emphasising the consciousness in viewing.

A photograph is a result of the photographer's decision that it is worth recording that this particular event or this particular object has been seen. If everything that existed were continually being photographed, every photograph would become meaningless.

Personal, documentary and public images differ from one another in their purpose, execution and the way they are received. The quality of Tagholm's video fluctuates across these potential categories but we are now moving towards a world where everything *is* being photographed. I can watch a loop of myself and other passengers on the CCTV screen fitted into most London buses. People take photographs of themselves and those close to them with the knowledge that they might become semi-public. Perhaps there was at some point, maybe in the noughties, a shift in the mind of the photographed and of the viewer. The eye of the camera now represents more than an objective eye, it represents a more specific, all pervasive, all public eye regardless of the number of people that actually see the image. And as private photography morphs into an odd personal-public genre, *Meanwhile Elsewhere* compounds myriad layers of artist as personal person whose self-aware holiday recordings become work and leave the viewer with that uneasy sense of the visually charismatic my head resounds with Will Self's sense of 'bouncing back'.

This consciousness of subject is similarly explored in Anne Kathrin Greiner's *Keimkasten 3*. A man in his early forties, dressed smartly in a leather jacket and wool cardigan, wanders about a post-industrial, barren landscape performing Sisyphean tasks and thinking. Deeply. Our Soviet-est protagonist is being observed it seems, but the observer is remains undefined. The same is true in fact of all the details of the film. There is no dialogue, no sequential time and no specific place is named. It feels as though the landscape is built from the psychological space of the character. He seems at times as equally in the dark as the viewer while at others his facial expression hints of an understanding of the restrictions that have been placed upon him and an eagerness to comply with the tasks appearing before him. A lurking presence of an overwhelming authoritarian power lingers, personified only by two silent, suited men who watch him as he progresses through an industrial building but make no move to approach him.

(A photograph) isolates, preserves and presents a moment taken from a continuum.

Our protagonist seems prepared for a filmic narrative, which will not fall into a coherent linear arrangement. As such you are left with the overall impression that the character is trapped in the memory of a film, or of an amalgamation of films: complete in style, mind-set and place but lacking the forward momentum of a cinematic narrative.

...painting interprets the world, translating into its own language.

Were this fragment to realise itself into a traditional cinematic film, the character's apprehension might be directed towards a more tangible enemy, but as it is we are left with only hints as to the shape this would take.

Instead, what he seems to be aware of, to be trapped by is the filmic structure itself. He is trapped within a cinematic genre, a reasonably developed character but one that relies on the ghost of numerous referential characters. His existence and consciousness is so ambiguous that he might almost be aware of the real systems controlling them, those of the filmmaker and audience. He is entirely created from a contract of reference between the two, which assumes a cultural shared knowledge and has been placed to drift without purpose through this space.

Though cinematic structure is similarly fundamental to Amy Nickolls' *Biscuithead*, we find that where Greiner tampers, mirrors and shifts, Nickolls' dismantles almost beyond the point of recognition. The video is formed of two halves, which bare seemingly no reference to one another save intermittent, single frames appearing sporadically from the previous sequence. Low-resolution wobbly scenes of a beach, of the coastline and horizon are followed by the spasmodic progression of a character from an emotionally expressive and circular plasticine face into a mask, and then worn by an individual. The last scenes belong to amateur horror; blood dripping from the mouth of an otherwise childish and placid rendition, the eyes finally open. It is becoming alive, or at least it is given a sort of Frankenstein-like existence.

The footage shifts schizophrenically between, personal, documentary, horror and art-genre. It's uncomfortable to watch. In comparison to the other works, the low res quality of the scenes repel us, prevent us from engaging even as much as we might have with Tagholm's work, which allows at least a temporary indulgence. It leaves the question, what are we asking of film, of art film. It's challenging to be as stimulated by such a work where the definition of the image is low and it's something that is not uncommon in artworks. But combined with a lack of any narrative where the absence of one feels purposeful there is no 'bouncing back' because there is no absorption in the first place.

...a photograph is a means of testing and confirming a total view of reality

The second half of the film is almost a relief. There are periods of clarity and definition. A lulling xylophone melody accompanies the final scenes of the eerie yet awkwardly quotidian form of the masked young woman complete with rain mac and rucksack in a suburban street. Her presence feels almost ridiculous; the seeming clarity of the stare, the finally still camera is an unflinching gesture in a film of uncertainty. 'I am looking at you, I am a character, I am the artist as character, I am not real'. We are left grasping at straws for meaning, foreign subtitles in two separate languages yield no clues. Nor by the end of the film are we any the wiser to either the relation between the two halves of the work. All aspects of the film and by extension perhaps narrative film itself are undermined before they have chance to establish themselves as some sort of truth to us as would normally be the case.

A photograph celebrates neither the event itself nor the faculty of sight in itself. A photograph is already a message about the event it records. The urgency of this message is not entirely dependent on the urgency of the event, but neither can it be entirely independent from it. At its simplest, the message, decoded, means: I have decided that seeing this is worth recording. [...] Photography is the process of rendering observation self-conscious.

A still shot covers a hatch window at onto an unmanned takeaway. Cans are lined on a shelf against the wall, the doner rotisserie turns, the neon blue flycatcher hums. There's a sense of heaviness, or humidity. At first glance, you might fail to see the defining aspect of David Theobald's *Kebab World*. It takes the sentiment "I have decided that seeing this is worth recording" which accompanies photography and mimics it; loading what would be each inconsequential detail with the weight of intention compounded by the evident effort of construction in CGI.

As the artist points out, a medium which can almost entirely replicate our visual senses normally falls within the category of online gaming or cinematic exhibitionism; 'the spectacular effects holding the spectator in thrall of the screen.' In some respects we seem unable to move beyond wonder at its capabilities, rarely putting it to use to construct something less than mesmerising. Perhaps it mirrors the sentiment felt on viewing the first moving images created in film, though the slow development of the technology combined with a visually over stimulated audience generally renders it little more than a parlour trick.

Imagine that the scene was a HD video recording. With a contemporarily default medium, or at least one that doesn't draw attention to itself, the subject of the video shifts into the limelight and the viewer finds himself wondering why she has been charged with looking at this surprisingly uneasy scene. What we are actually presented with though is a kind of hyper video. The subject is both more important, because Theobald has warranted it important enough to recreate in painstaking detail and less, as it is overshadowed by its production.

All four of these works embody Berger's description of the external representation common to photography. They are based technologically on the same premise and even *Kebab World*, which is not carried out in a medium based on the transference of light to a receptive plate, directly references it and has the potential to trick us into believing that it is such. Yet they are able to give away more than a photograph. The cinematic tropes and references on which *Keimkasten 3* and *Biscuithead* are based are also external but the works themselves build internal dialogues from these, processing and distorting them as a painting might.

There exists in moving image a crossing of boundaries between a genuine attempt at presenting reality, as a photograph might claim and the creation of it's internal reality, removed from the outside world. The thing that ties these pieces together is a consciousness of the medium's abilities and limitations in achieving this.

Rachel Wilson

In the opening of Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, the protagonist Evelyn (later, Eve, after his forced gender realignment at the hands of a band of radical feminist guerrillas) receives fellatio in the stalls of a grimy London cinema whilst watching a film starring Tristessa de St Ange, a tragic heroine cast from the same mould as Marlene Dietrich. Aged eighteen, this was my favourite book, and ostensibly still is. The dank London Evelyn escapes when he relocates to an apocalyptic New York, was about to become my home. Soon I would leave behind the modern, out of town, multiplexes of my suburban upbringing, exchanging them for the seedy, bijou picture houses of Soho and Charing Cross. London too, surely, would contain lovers of a calibre that did not exist in my cultureless hometown. Exciting, terrifying, men, and maybe women, who would turn my life upside down and cause me pain in ways I had as yet only imagined.

For the first year I didn't have many friends and so I went to the cinema alone a lot. I was certain that, somehow, I would meet my future inamorato in the foyer of the Panton Street Odeon after a screening of the latest David Lynch film. Drawn together by our shared love of late shows at The Prince Charles, ours would be nocturnal romance, whispered trysts in back rows under flickering, projected light. In my imagination I took on a triad of roles in this three-way union – the girl, kneeling on stale popcorn, the man, in ecstasy in his threadbare velour seat, and the screen queen, enlarged to supernatural dimensions; her glow reflecting back the inevitable, infinite sadness of our amours.

Of course this never happened. Never even came close to happening.

This fantasy, as with many of my teen desires, has passed. A decade later, my life has grown closer to the life I wanted to make for myself when I first read *The Passion of the New Eve*. But even now, I sometimes take my dates to the Peckhamplex, usually early in a courtship, and sometimes, accidentally-on-purpose, inch my hand over to their side of the armrest in the hope that they will take my hand. But they are too shy, or too gallant, these art boys that I try to romance nowadays.

The cinema is expensive and so I don't go too frequently, anyway. More often, I go to small galleries and watch artists' films made by my friends and acquaintances on the London art scene. As a maker of *things*, I have found it hard to experience the same visceral response to art film to traditional, silver screen cinema. Sensuous as I am, I wanted to experience this work in a way that I could *feel*.

The problem, I found, was not so much the content but the situation. The experience of going to the cinema is culturally entrenched, has been widely documented, in literature and in film itself. For you see, our very movements, reactions and thoughts, when we visit the cinema are artificial, or rather, the result of a lifetime absorbing all manner of contrived, fictitious cues. The erotic experiences I longed to for were in fact the result of a lifetime of cultural consumption. In other words, our feelings are not always our own.

How then do we react to artists' films? How should we behave in their presence? It seems less important to sit in rapturous silence when the setup of most galleries means that film work is looped and therefore it is more than likely that your encounter with the work will begin at somewhere other than the start. The experience is not linear. Popular culture is no help in presenting us with no model for our behaviour. It does not know what to do with contemporary art, never portraying it in a way that we, as artists or consumers of art, can find believable. Whilst video art is hardly a new medium, we are still at times unsure how to approach it.

I first slept in the Camden Art Centre. It was not a rebellious act, something much less than an intervention. I was tired, and there were beanbags. It was a quiet Sunday morning in the summer of 2012 and there was no one around to disturb me. As I stopped fighting the urge to close my eyes I was aware that there was something quietly transgressive in my actions, I was behaving in a way I was not *supposed* to. Whilst at times we are unsure how to behave in the presence of art, there is some certainty in how we are *not* meant to behave.

I have slept through a Tacita Dean film at The Frith Street gallery, a film by Bernadette Corporation at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, in fact I have slept in the darker corners of galleries all over the world. This is not, as you may think, a rejection of the work or a statement of disinterest. Neither is it a sign that the work is some way benign, that it has soothed me in the way something as bland as a lullaby might.

It feels to me that by sleeping in gallery I achieve an intimacy with the work. It would be more accurate to say I sleep *with* rather than *through* it. I may often sit with the work for several loops, allowing the a little light to seep through my eyelids whilst the soundtrack penetrates my subconscious. This mode of viewing, or rather, *being with* the film is the antithesis of the perfunctory, distracted, often slightly drunken, watch through, one may give the work at a private view.

My desire for erotic union in the cinema, a trinity of lust, a threesome with the silver screen, has now abated. And, whilst I cannot expect an artist to be flattered, or pleased, by my unconventional approach to consuming their work I engage in deep intimacy with their sounds and images, and carrying these with me into my dreams.

Elena Colman

Amy Nickolls
Interviewed by James Tabbush



“Where is the sea? There is something about it which suggests that it is familiar to us- we look at it as if we are creating poetry out of something we see all the time. We’ve had real feelings in front of this wind-with-seagulls. Things have happened in our lives, in front of it.

Everything feels as if it was made for us. We made it in our kitchen. We made it at summer camps. We made it feverishly, in the evenings, only showing it to our mystified little sister. It was art, our art!”

<Wo ist das Meer? Es gibt etwas über sie was darauf schließen lässt, dass es vertraut ist- wir es betrachten, als ob wir schaffen Poesie von etwas, das wir sehen, die ganze Zeit. Wir haben echte Gefühle vor diesem Wind-mit-Möwen hatten. Die Dinge haben sich in unserem Leben passiert ist, vor ihm.

Alles fühlt sich, als ob es für uns gemacht. Wir haben es in unserer Küche. Wir haben es an Sommerlagern. Wir haben es fieberhaft, in den Abendstunden, nur um unsere mystifiziert kleine Schwester zu zeigen. Es war Kunst, unsere Kunst!>

JT: I think I liked your films because I teach children art. If you’re comfortable with that. Because I used to teach art classes and used to make them do weird animations, where a newspaper cutting of Justin Bieber played the part of Noah, and that kind of thing. That’s what it reminds me of.

AN: More in what I was talking about with the kind of weirdness with the work. Like the uncanny valley with the puppets and that.

JT: My favourite bit of your film with MR BEN is his expression.

AN: Oh yeah, like a totally blank stare.

JT: No, more like a... surprised psychopath.

JT: What’s your biography?

AN: I’m from West London. From Uxbridge.

JT: Really? I thought you were going to be from the countryside. Why? I guess because I thought that people in the countryside, when they were teenagers, and if they liked art, they would spend lots of time outside and filming things, and in the bedrooms making art, and that your art might have emerged out of that kind of place.

AN: No, what I’m doing now very much emerged later on. I definitely started off as a painter. Did photography as well. My photography definitely fed into my film work. I used to make paintings that were a little like bits of sets. Like a room that you would go into, built out of paintings. They become like little homes.

JT: I like the bits in the sandwich film in which all the actors are supposed to be pretending to be bits of lettuce, but they’re all so happy to be there and grinning at each other.

AN: Yeah. Well I enjoy that look of something being a bit shit. But also quite good.

JT: You should see Turkish Star Wars then.

JT: Ich glaube, ich mochte Ihre Filme, weil ich Kinder Kunst zu lehren. Wenn Sie bequem mit, dass. Da habe ich Kunstunterricht zu lehren und verwendet werden, um ihnen zu tun seltsame Animationen, in denen ein Zeitungsausschnitt von Justin Bieber den Teil des Noah, und so etwas gespielt. Das ist, was es erinnert mich an.

AN: Mehr in worüber ich mit der Art von Verrücktheit mit der Arbeit zu sprechen. Wie die unheimliche Tal mit den Puppen und jenes.

JT: Mein Lieblings bit Ihres Films mit HERRN BEN ist sein Gesichtsausdruck.

AN: Oh ja, wie ein völlig leeren Blick.

JT: Nein, eher wie ein ... überrascht Psychopath.

JT: Was ist Ihrer Biographie?

AN: Ich komme aus West London. Aus Uxbridge.

JT: Wirklich? Ich dachte, Sie würden aus dem Land zu sein. Warum? Ich denke, weil ich dachte, dass die Menschen auf dem Land, als sie Teenager waren, und wenn sie Kunst mochte, sie verbringen viel Zeit draußen und Dreharbeiten Dinge, und in den Schlafzimmern, Kunst zu machen, und dass Ihre Technik könnte daraus hervorgegangen sind Art von Hotel.

AN: Nein, was ich jetzt tue sehr viel später entstanden. Ich begann auf jeden Fall weg als Maler. Hat Fotografie sowie. Meine Fotografie definitiv in meine Filmarbeit zugeführt. I verwendet werden, um Bilder, die ein wenig wie Bits Sätze waren zu machen. Wie ein Zimmer, die Sie in zu gehen, gebaut von Gemälden. Sie werden wie kleine Häuser.

JT: Ich mag die Bits in der Sandwich-Film, in dem alle Akteure sollen sein vorgibt, Bits Salat sein, aber sie sind alle so glücklich, dort zu und grinste zueinander sein.

AN: Ja. Nun genieße ich diesen Blick von etwas, ein bisschen Scheiße. Aber auch ziemlich gut.

JT: Sie sollten Turkish Star Wars sehen dann.

JT: Where was this one made?

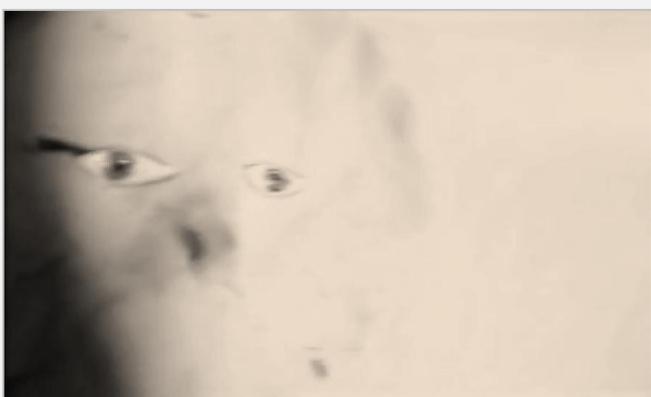
AN: Partially my bedroom, partially... erm, Dulwich woods?

JT: What is the connection between the first part and the second?

AN: The thing that I am always looking at is looking at clichés in visual media. If people are running thorough fields together you think, oh they're in love. The first part is very much based on, er, art film? When you go into a gallery you are expecting to see a certain thing whereas if you're going into a cinema you are expecting something different again. So, it's kind of honing in on that kind of expectation of what you're about to see. Almost copycat showing of, like, that this is a tool that people use.

JT: And are you setting us up to expect that the whole film will be like that?

AN: In a way, I guess, yeah. Well I think that's probably what it achieves. I like that in art you don't always have to think about the end result. That is, it doesn't always do what you expected it to do, almost? At the end, the images on the screen and the music are a bit of a contradiction- I want to push the contradictions in these languages of film.



JT: They've got another thing going on for me, which is that concurrently to the action they're involved with, I'm imagining them being made as a kind of children's art project.

AN: There's something nice about them as well in that they've got that childlike quality to them. Like children's TV which is a bit of a fun thing for me, can be kind of creepy. It's definitely a form of inspiration for me, even if I'm not always looking directly into it. Part of that is that because I'm looking at the language of film or TV and we're now exposed to that from a much younger age. In the early days of film, the audience would say, when the shot changed: but where's the first character gone? But you can now tell a story in about a minute just by using a few camera movements, and it's because the audience have advanced so far in their understanding of these languages.

JT: Well, you're not only undercutting all those clichés and tricks in the way you edit the content of the film, but you're also bringing the making of the film into the foreground in a way that doesn't even happen in normal post-modernistic fourth-wall breaking.

AN: Yeah, I agree, I think that is something I've tried to do, to bring those things to the forefront.

JT: Wo war dieses hier gemacht?

AN: Teilweise mein Schlafzimmer, teilweise ... erm, Dulwich Wald?

JT: Was ist der connections zwischen dem ersten Teil und dem zweiten?

AN: Die Sache, die ich immer auf der Suche bei an Klischees in visuellen Medien suchen. Wenn die Menschen laufen gründliche Felder zusammen Sie denken, oh, sie sind in der Liebe. Der erste Teil ist sehr stark auf, er, Kunstfilm basiert? Wenn Sie in eine Galerie gehen Sie erwarten, eine bestimmte Sache, während, wenn Sie in ein Kino Sie etwas anderes erwartet wieder wirst du sehen. Also, es ist Art von Honen in auf diese Art von Erwartung dessen, was Sie zu sehen sind. Fast Nachahmer Vorführung, wie, dass es sich um ein Werkzeug, das Menschen benutzen.

JT: Und sind Sie mit der Einstellung uns zu erwarten, dass der ganze Film wird so sein?

AN: In einer Weise, denke ich, ja. Nun, ich denke, das ist wahrscheinlich das, was sie erreicht. Ich mag, dass in der Kunst Sie müssen nicht immer über das Ergebnis zu denken. Das heißt nicht immer tun, was Sie erwartet, dass es zu tun, fast? Am Ende werden die Bilder auf dem Bildschirm und die Musik sind ein bisschen wie ein contradiction- Ich möchte die Widersprüche in diesen Sprachen von Film zu drücken.

JT: Sie haben noch etwas geht für mich, die der Wirkung sie mit, ich stelle mir vor, sie als eine Art von Kinderkunstprojekt gemacht beteiligt sind ist, dass gleichzeitig bekam.

AN: Es gibt etwas Nettes über sie so gut, dass sie habe diese kindliche Qualität zu ihnen. Wie die Kinder-TV, die eine Freude für mich ist, kann irgendwie gruselig sein? Es ist definitiv eine Form der Inspiration für mich, auch wenn ich nicht immer auf der Suche direkt in sie. Ein Teil davon ist, dass, weil ich freue mich auf die Sprache des Films oder TV und wir sind nun auf, dass von einem viel jüngeren Alter ausgesetzt. In der Frühzeit des Films, würde das Publikum sagen, wenn der Schuss geändert: Aber wo ist das erste Zeichen gegangen? Aber Sie können jetzt eine Geschichte erzählen, in etwa einer Minute nur mit ein paar Kamerabewegungen, und es ist, weil das Publikum so weit in ihr Verständnis von diesen Sprachen fortgeschritten.

JT: Nun, Sie nicht nur unterboten all die Klischees und Tricks, wie Sie den Inhalt des Films zu bearbeiten, aber du bist auch womit sich die Herstellung des Films in den Vordergrund in einer Weise, die nicht einmal in passieren normalen post-modernistische vierten Wand brechen.

AN: Ja, ich stimme zu, ich denke, das ist etwas, was ich versucht habe zu tun, um die Dinge in den Vordergrund rücken.



Untitled (anguish)

In order to be coherent and concise and also formidable; I have set up the camera and it is filming the entirety of this process, the process of me writing this text. I will attempt to complete this in one edit.

The lens is focusing on my face, music is playing through my laptop speakers, I look concerned and haggard, lethargic and sad. In order to allow myself to write this, I have had to make this entirely about me, me rather than *you*.

1.

I am grieving;
and

I want to be able to tackle the narrative in the way that I deserve.

2.

And time for me, is ungraspable, and I only feel complete, although, remaining unreal—in my own flattened out image which is dictated by the Camera.

3.

The Camera operates as a lover and as a judicial executioner.
The Camera is also a supplement for all of my deficiencies.

4.

I am like the characters in the movies, 2D and impenetrable.
The Camera penetrates my being explicitly, holistically within the vortex.

5.

I return to the woods, in which my relationship of late has become habitual.
I lie on the soiled ground, on the damp earth, and I plant myself, I hope that I have space to grow.

Things rarely go to plan and I grieve for my future which is now a complete impossibility. I wait in the woods until nightfall, where I begin to become scared. It is dark now and there is no solace to be retrieved from the light of the moon as it is currently shrouded by clouds. There is a warmth in the earth that satiates me to the core and yet somehow I still feel agoraphobic here, which still beats me, feeling empty.

6.

Somewhere, no longer available on the surface web there is a photograph, one documented instance of something that had once seemed so crucial, and I am trying to let that idea slide. The Camera consumes me; just as it had consumed me on that specific occasion and I am trying to let that idea slide.

7.

The Camera simultaneously consumes me and renders me obsolete.

8.

I am grieving for what is lost; and how now there is no evidence of what had seemingly once appeared so crucial.

6.

It would be naïve to suggest that the Camera only captures.

7.

I imagine alternate endings all of the time. Transdimensional finalities which promise the constant rereturning to old photographs and films as direct experience, once more able to encounter for the first time, always the first time. I extrapolate.

8.

The Camera and I are intrinsic within our surfaces, the realities remain implied.

9.

I return to the woods, I like it there a lot. I write a letter and I post it in the swamp. I picture that this is a good idea. I remove my shoes and my socks. I dip the toes that belong to my left foot in the swamp; I push the letter further into the depths of the water and for this I am thankful. The pearlescent pink envelope that captured the words I had written, is no longer visible to the eye and yet if only my big toe could see.

10.
The Camera convinces me to be selfless before I resume previous positions, postures or poses.
11.
I have refrained from divulging into what most needed to be said here, because it already seems implicit, however, also irrelevant, which has become my greatest of aims.
12.
here did the time go? Somehow, I didn't stop to capture a single instant.
13.
I perform the dedicated flash, forever moving in slow-motion.
14.
It appears as though I have been lost within a labyrinth with little focus for quite some time now, and I am beginning to think that the location is just in my mind which explains why there is no evidence, no films nor photographs.
15.
The Camera fucks me and kills me, and like so many others, this belongs entirely to metaphor.
16.
I have considered how pleasant it would be to be confronted with some sense of finitude, tragic and fatal. That until now seemed completely impossible. There is something so crisp about a clean cut, and I weep when I imagine all the ways in which I could have framed it.
17.
I delete all photographs and film files. I cascade the memories into piggy banks.
18.
Ideas are so potent and tools turn to weapons so easily, now.
19.
I have entered, a labyrinth of specifications and acute details.
20.
I return to the woods, only this time I am a child again. It is nightfall, I lie on the ground preparing for sleep. Later that night, I dream that my mother is now the child and I chase her through these woods. I chase her over bridges, crossing streams, there is an immanent sense of danger. I am unable to keep up with my mother as the child. She runs from me, she abhors me. I call her name and she is out of sight and I find myself located at the swamp again having already removed my shoes and socks, I submerge myself into the water, the stench is potent and cleansing. I continue to call my mother, within this same moment (that I am unable to capture), I realise in complete clarity how I have aged, my mother returns to me, she makes her self visible as she appears from behind a tree in which she had been hiding for years, waiting patiently. I stretch my left foot under the water and my big toe is able to see the pearlescent pink envelope which I once had posted to the swamp. I bring the letter to the surface, I read the letter. My mother as the child disappears once more. I let go. I expect to wake, which was certainly an expectation unlikely to occur.
21.
Endings are always so difficult and saying goodbye is inevitable, movies have to finish and credits have to roll.

Jess Currie

Kebab World:

As part of the inaugural '*Spectrum: A Survey of Artists' Moving Image*' screenings, David Theobald presents 'Kebab World'.

Described succinctly by the artist as:

'A simulation of late-night London reflected in the window of an East-end kebab shop.

An exercise in minimal animation.'

The viewer would be forgiven for potentially erring on the side of skepticism and only viewing the films on offer from the other participating artists under the subject banner of 'Reality Construction'. This would be a skeptical faux pas however, as alongside the other works 'Kebab World' provides a clear juncture and counterpoint to many arguments raised within them.

Focused on the snapshot of a particular location and segment within time, (in this case the unmanned serving window of a late night kebab shop), the film is rendered in almost pristine CGI entirely by the artist. What becomes quickly apparent though is mentioned in the opening of the description of the work. It is a simulation. Not a recreation, restaging or even animation based upon a real setting. It is a simulation that conjures the overall impression of the plethora of kebab shops that bloat the East-end both commercially and visually.

Arguably occupying the 'Order of Sorcery', or third stage in the Baudrillardian concept of Simulacra and Simulation, the work pretends to be a faithful copy, but is in fact a copy with no original. The film is outwardly representing the reality of the specific kebab shop it depicts, when actually the generated renders of the film function as arbitrarily created images which have no relation to the kebab shop in the first place as it doesn't exist. Without reading the description the whole notion of the work as a simulation would be unknown to viewers, and instead raises further questions about the authenticity of the shop and its perceived setting.

Although based on a specific area of London, any other town or city in the country (and even feasibly in Europe) will have its own incarnation, or most likely incarnations, of 'Kebab World'. The place that during daylight and sober hours most people would shy away from is here lent an inviting and almost hallucinatory déjà-vu-like quality thanks to the execution of the animation. Viewers can relate to what they see and hear throughout the film as undoubtedly most people will have their own experiences within them, and because of that a casual enthralling takes place.

Very much grounded in the day-to-day life of our wider society, the kebab shop is now seen by many as an eponymous British fast food institution. Obviously this is a fallacy, and stems from the introduction and Europe-wide cultural appropriation of an 18th century Turkish cooking style that has exponentially increased in popularity in recent decades. Within the film this idiosyncrasy of ownership is stripped back through small touches such as the Turkish flag pendant and photographs hanging on the back wall of the shop, the postcard on the side of the fridge and the repetition of the word 'world' in the shop's name and logo branding. Subtly the viewer becomes aware of a much wider focus than just the East-end of London.

The hint of a globalised society and worldwide networks of trade, communication and cultural exchange appear frequently in the artist's practice, and here is no different. Working as a financier in London and New York before training to become an artist, Theobald has firsthand experience of the evolved world we now inhabit. In his work however the subject is explored through the anxiety

produced by our globalised economy, and the sheer uncertainty that it creates. Here shown as the embracing of diverse foods and cultural practices related to them from around the world, there is always the spectre of national conflicts and political unrest lingering in the shadows ready to swing the balance in the opposite direction.

Despite the potentially overt political connotations within the film however, essentially the piece acts as a portrait. Not of the elusive worker of the shop, but of the shop itself and the objects and items that are housed within it, left in situ, unused and forgotten while the worker has disappeared momentarily.

As viewers we are privy to normally unseen glimpses of time through the work yet intrinsically we are aware that what we are seeing is in fact completely erroneous. Constructed in the digital world the film is an educated guess at best as to what would happen in the 3 minutes and 4 seconds of empty time within the imaginary shop. Undoubtedly the kebab rotisserie would keep slowly turning, the fly trap would hum just on the edge of earshot and would be drowned out by the songs from the station that the radio has been set to for an unknown length of time.

It is through this form of staged portrait that the work begins to slip between the boundaries of artistic classification. The fixed viewpoint of its creation and the asymmetrical framing of the windows and signs gives the snapshot quality of a picture, with the expanded worldview carried within a painting. The idea of film acting as a contemporary of both mediums here carries weight, but because of just how much the work draws on the theory of its predecessors the piece could be seen as entering into a wider debate of the hybridisation of visual languages.

In creating the film Theobald glorifies the seemingly insignificant period of time it displays, mirroring the repetitiveness of the painstaking animation technique with the perceived repetitiveness of the running of a kebab shop in the real (and constructed) world. Although potentially creating feelings of annoyance and even futility at the subject matter, the construction of a total view of an imagined reality helps to highlight issues in our real world.

Causing the viewer to ruminate on how we live our lives, and encouraging us to savour the small moments of peace and tranquility we take for granted in our uncertain climate, the work proves that it is so much more than an exercise in minimal animation.

James Schofield

Theo Tagholm's *Meanwhile Elsewhere* managed something that I wasn't expecting: it seduced me and made me aware of it. I was tricked and it took me a while to admit it.

It feels like Theo plays here with one's sense of self in the instants of its concordance with one's senses of the external, when dreaming, thinking, imagining; static in place yet elongated in time. There is a feeling of doziness in Theo Tagholm's video, and a tension, the one we should be aware of when we are being seduced by images and melancholia but often don't see until the curtain's down.

I like how I felt hypnotised and seduced by the journey, the images, the texture and the sound in Tagholm's film. Back in the car on the back seats going home through the night, dad driving, the silence and the road. I see seduction there, remembering car advertisements and their reliance on atmospheric sounds and catalytic music; the shimmering sun passing through the car's windows to brighten up the actor's smile. I am but annoyed to find out I might actually enjoy car advertisements.

There is the seduction of sentimentalism, reminiscences of one's own journeys, one's own holidays, dozing away, enjoying being alone and thinking, dreaming, making up stories, remembering others, and smiling gazing away. The seduction of the journey and what it has become associated with; images and video clips; the long shot giving the illusion of time and space passing, soothing.

And the seduction of the everyday, the little things, those that glimpses through, feel special and ephemeral, those we would like to catch and print in our heads so they will stay there and we will remember the moment, the feeling, the smell, the air, the sight. We look so hard, and breathe, and take it in, and then turn away.

The seduction of memory, of retrospective, for what is more seductive than to let oneself go deep down into memory reveries, holidays family footages from long time ago and gone, telling stories, of how it was before, what is now lost, grasping the last memories to reassure oneself.

I enjoyed being seduced by Theo's intricate sowing of images, rays of shimmering lights, morning blurs and sleepy mind's wanders. I enjoyed it a lot and he must have known for the video gives me a reflection in a train's window of a girl awake, the music stops and a sense of reality steps in.

But the reality shown feels a bit boring suddenly. The images are still shimmering with passing lights and throbbing with the sounds of traffic and wind in the trees, but the seduction is gone. The images, now alone, feel empty, only filled with background noises, and rather than being seduced back into my own memories I am now confronted to their comfortable seduction.

I wander, do I enjoy being alone in a sunny carriage because it is enjoyable or because I have experienced it so many times through images? So I freak out a bit because I might have made this all up. How come I play music in my head when looking out the train's window?

And I look at myself looking away. I am not looking away at all. I am looking at myself looking away and thus looking like something I know. And I frame this image in my head, and keep looking at it, and I like it when Theo's film reminds me that really, bluntly, it is all cracky noises and mechanical lights, it is beautiful and poetic because it is a collection of images, it has been images for years, it will scarcely ever be anything else. Yet I seem to

remember being a kid and enjoying things without thinking about them, but maybe I never did, I just have this image of perfect childhood in my head, it feels quite nice too.

So *Midnight Elsewhere* leaves me a bit disappointed, not because nothing happened but because it took me into a comfortable reverie only to wake me up with everyday sounds disturbing the seduction of the flow of images. Perhaps I'll watch a car advert now to go back to my reverie and reflection in the window. We are very much self-obsessed, and seduced by the own film we make about our life. The prettier the landscape the nicer the thoughts.

Laetitia Guillotin

Always again and over, always negotiating between.

I heard the election results before he woke and was so reluctant to wake him, like, morning bb, shit just got worse. He watches me put on make-up in my mirror and I appreciate him being at my place that morning, because the nauseating shock feels reason enough to call in sick. I can't afford to call in sick and I leave for work.

In Anne Kathrin Greiner's 8 minute film *Keimkasten 3*, a middle aged white man wakes to find himself located in a complex reminiscent of a blue collar work place perhaps, ex industrial, or an abandoned army base. Navy blue, old masculine, austere. Hair shaved to grade zero, his clothes a kind of casual uniform; both utilitarian and military, only overlaid with an informal leather jacket featuring an early 80's collar.

He does not appear to be located somewhere entirely unfamiliar, I mean, he is dressed for it. A lot could be spoken by an absence of the people.

The character performs simple, obscure tasks which once complete un-do themselves and revert immediately back to the start. The reversal process stays unseen.

Claudia Rankine, elaborating on her book *Citizen*, described as the pre-Ferguson book that felt post, articulates a kind of waiting she currently feels specific to black and brown bodies. She feels she is holding a waiting for something she doesn't expect to happen, that one is waiting for the indictment one doesn't expect to come. She expresses a question of how constantly, always, and again, the same body can both hold and negate the anticipation.

The protagonist finds himself in isolation, we are witness to his having no one to talk through the ambiguity of his situation.

The guy comes into confrontation with two uniformed guards. Having no inclination to ask them for an explanation, he keeps on. An instant occurs where he, and we, acknowledge he may be under watch, a signal of a potential body governing responsibility, and all parties silently move on.

On our lunch break, a friend and I talk, we share the shock.

That night at the pub my girl Hannah states her exhaustion, like she's so done with this city, she wants out, to move. She exasperates at assertions from friends adamant that emigration is not the way, we need to increase community efforts, strike, stay, resist, practice harder kind virtues to one another as it gets tougher.

“But why us? Why obliged? Why costing us? I have like other interests.”
Some days other interests start to feel like something else unaffordable to us.

The protagonist enters a room with a table lined with expectant folded, pressed white shirts. He considers them. He shakes each out into disarray with one hand, and sits a moment with the tangled pile.

In the question and answer session of Claudia's talk, a guy gives not a question but a thank you. Thank you, for helping me through the despair and rage of last year. Claudia gives reciprocal appreciation and she suggests the attendance of all present as a form of thank-you to one another, for recognising the gaps in society.

Listening to Claudia's talk at work whilst performing a repetitive task so menial, in what remains of a kind of blue collar labor in London, she's getting me through. I'm listening to her over the loud machines because I'm trying so hard to take something of choice and of worth to share from my day.

Its important you showed up
Its important you were even there
I'm glad you made it.
I am so glad you and we are here.

Saira Harvey

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