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Newsletter #29 20.10.2010

Opening: Saturday 30.10.2010, 18:00-21:00

Welcome to Open Archive #2. With more than 2500 titles, Argos Centre for Art and Media administers the largest and most accessible archive of audiovisual art in electronic and digital format in Belgium. Have a look at the collections in our multimedia library, and feel free to leaf through over four thousand publications – catalogues, theoretical works, artists' books and others – that contextualise this selection. In this digital era, archives are constantly changing. Technological developments and social media have resulted in a new, dynamic contact with the past and the forming of recollection. Now more than ever, the past can be seen as a space of possibilities, as a site that can deliver a constructive contribution to an archeology of the present. It is for this reason that the second Open Archive festival – the first edition took place in 2007 – repeatedly places the Argos collection at the heart of the programme of events. Over the course of six weeks, Argos maps developments and trends in the domain of image and media culture. We use our archive as a starting point to trace dozens of discursive paths ... **Read More**

ARGOS MEDIA LIBRARY

03.11.2010 – 11.12.2010

Argos Media Library, the heart of the centre, is constantly expanding. Currently, it contains approximately 2500 audiovisual works and more than 4000 publications, the most extensive collection of its kind in Belgium. The audiovisual files can be called conceptual, including documentary and film-essay tones, while the publication files are more academic and analytical in orientation. Take a look at the collection in our Media Library, and feel free to leaf through catalogues, theoretical works, artists' books and current subscriptions to twenty art magazines. Argos's Media Library attaches great importance to critical theory, to the audiovisual expressive arts and to the more extensive domain in which art, media and technology interact with each other.

Wednesday-Saturday, 12:00-19:00

Argos, Werfstraat 13 rue du Chantier, 1000 Brussels

Entrance fee: 3 / 2 euro

More info

Premiere

16.11.2010, 20:00

Jan De Cock - Repromotion

Cinema Arenberg, Koninginnegalerij 26 Galerie de la Reine, 1000 Brussels

www.arenberg.be

Entrance fee: 8 / 6, 60 euro

In *Repromotion*, the first film by the artist Jan De Cock, we see a new perspective opening up in his work. The title refers to the exhibition of the same name held at Bozar in summer 2009, which, together with the artist's studio in Brussels, provides the backdrop for a surprising tableau. Sometimes playful, then restrained and observant, De Cock – alternating his position from behind to in front of the camera – appears in a world of his own making. In his prismatic installation work, formally indebted to the modernist and constructivist idioms, De Cock has already shown himself to be a master in making the eye an instrument. He now adds a through-view to what was a view. His tightly designed spatial modules, collages of chipboard and photomontage, interact with tracking shots which literally offer a view through his geometrically formal structures, which are commonly but unjustly considered static. The filming not only articulates the plane within the plane, but also breathes life and vitality into the whole construction. Visitors to the exhibition are captured in penetrating close-ups. Children talk spontaneously about what they have seen and do drawings and take photos. Eagles and owls fly around freely under the highly concentrated gaze of a young archer. De Cock's work, which he himself once characterised as 'film montage in space', has always made reference to film. Now he has plunged into the flow. *Repromotion*, which can best be described as a filmic 'Jan De Cock by Jan De Cock' is the odd man out in the eight-part documentary series called Vormgevers ('Designers') on the Canvas television channel.

Repromotion. 2010, 52', video, colour, Dutch and French spoken, Dutch subtitles.

Practical info

Please note: this event has a limited capacity, and booking in advance is recommended. Please contact reservation@argosarts.org or 02/ 229 00 03.

www.jandecock.net

New Artists in Distribution

Erik Büniger

The Swedish artist, composer, musician and writer Erik Büniger (1976) works with re-contextualising existing media in performances, installations and web projects. In *Gospels*, sections of Hollywood interviews are removed from their original contexts, interacting to form a new, seemingly coherent whole. Yet these pre-existing works frequently conflict; Büniger explores the disjunction between replaying and experiencing in his *A Lecture on Schizophrenia*. This simultaneously analytical and performative work highlights the relationship between sound and perceived 'reality', using popular references and familiar footage including Barack Obama and Woody Allen. Similar tensions are exposed in *God Moves on the Water*, in which two songs about the sinking of the Titanic are combined to form a third narrative. In the Belgian premiere of *The Third Man*, the negative power of music is explored. Displacing and recombining familiar material, Büniger challenges the separation between authentic and simulated experiences.

www.erikbuniger.com

Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson

Libia Castro (1970), from Spain, and Ólafur Ólafsson (1973), from Iceland, have been working together since 1997. Much of their work forms a corpus of ongoing research into the ways life, society and the personal are influenced and constructed by socio-economic and political factors, amongst others. Their video works are an intimate examination of these themes in the lives of individual people, always using the place as a starting point. In every possible way, they challenge their audience and compel them to respond to new stimuli and interact with the subject. Castro and Ólafsson are particularly drawn to the new global phenomenon of transculturalism, and the mobility that enables.

www.libia-olafur.com

Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

Julia Meltzer and David Thorne are politically engaged artists. They produce installations, photographs, and videos that raise questions about the uses of documents and their social, political, and affective impact. Formerly working under the moniker *The Speculative Archive*, the artists' collaborative activities from 1999 to 2003 examined the intersection of state secrecy, memory, and history. Newer works address the use of documents—ranging from images and texts to objects, people, and even physical structures—“to project and claim visions of the future,” according to the artists. Thorne is the recipient of a 2007 Art Matters grant and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, and a 2004 recipient of a Rockefeller Media Arts Fellowship. He completed his MFA in Interdisciplinary Studio at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2004. In spring 2006 David was a visiting artist at The Cooper Union in New York City. He collaborated with Andrea Geyer, Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, and Katya Sander on the project *9 Scripts from a Nation at War* for documenta 12.

www.meltzerthorne.com

Till Roeskens

Amateur of applied geography, Till Roeskens, as an artist, belongs to the family of explorers. His work develops in the confrontation with a given territory and those who try to draw their own ways within it. What he brings back from his wanderings, be it a book, a video film, a slide show lecture or other light forms, is never meant to be a simple report, but an invitation to exercise one's perception, a questioning about what we are able to seize from the infinite complexity of the world. His 'attempts to find his bearings' are done with a constant concern to touch an uninformed audience and to make them become co-authors of the work.

Till Roeskens

Krassimir Terziev

Krassimir Terziev is one of the leading Bulgarian contemporary artists. He is acclaimed for his works in experimental film and video art and recognised as one of the most profound researchers in these areas in Bulgaria. His work concerns the clichés of contemporary urban cultures, the mystification of national values, memory and social amnesia.

www.terziev.info

New Works in Distribution

Herman Asselberghs

Beste Steve

2010, 45', video, colour, Dutch spoken, English subtitles.

In *Beste Steve (Dear Steve)*, a man is smoothly dismantling a brand new MacBook Pro. Meanwhile, in a voice-over, a letter is read, addressed to Steve Jobs and signed by the artist. *Beste Steve* reveals the irreducible materiality of a tool that symbolises so-called immaterial labour. It lets us travel through immaterial worlds and, as the product of a brand, represents record-selling numbers and profits one can no longer grasp. It also subtly reveals a set of paradoxes and ambiguities which might reside in the actions effected by the artist with this tool, such as informing ourselves and others about a political conflict happening elsewhere in the world. The tools necessary to do this might

have a history that is partly imbedded in such conflicts. But there is hope. Thanks to Herman's internet research, revealed in his writing to Steve, we easily learn where the object that lets us travel in immaterial worlds has been manufactured. The artist uses a wide range of cultural references, such as the use of a language of the 'Old Continent' in the voice-over.

Erik Büniger

A Lecture on Schizophrenia

2009, 37'18", video, colour and b&w, English spoken.

Recordings of sound and image are all-pervasive in the modern world, and sometimes seem to have a life of their own. Erik Büniger's 'lecture' – a narrative voiced over a series of images, clips and quotations – explores what happens when the recording and the original source become separated or confused. The artist uses comedy of Woody Allen, the songs of Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra, and speeches of Barack Obama to draw attention to disjunctions between image and sound, and the effect a change to one can have to the other. Found footage from the 1973 film *The Exorcist* is combined with Biblical quotations to explore the conflation of the voice with the soul. When a deceased person can be 'played back', has technology overcome death? From the very first recording of a human voice to the message on your answering machine, the piece explores ownership and possession, reality and illusion, and the presence of the 'body' of a voice. Büniger's project exists not only as a video piece but also as a performance piece, manipulating the very effects he analyses as he explores the nervous split that is created when sound is separated from its source.

Erik Büniger

God Moves on the Water

2008, 3'14", video, colour, English spoken and running text.

In this intriguing and at times startling exploration of narrative, Büniger collides two very different interpretations of the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912. The music video of Céline Dion's *My heart will go on*, featuring clips from the 1997 film *Titanic*, is manipulated to fit a much earlier blues song about the same event. Blind Willie Johnson's *God Moves on the Water* is performed in a very different style from Dion's song. Büniger alters the speed of extracts, and plays them backwards of Dion singing, so that she appears to be singing the words of the 1929 song. The male voice juxtaposed against the image of a female singer has a jarring effect, which contradicts the ease with which the almost gospel style of Johnson's song sits over Dion's sentimental visual performance. Clips of Dion are interspersed with excerpts from the film, which feature only the reconstructed ship itself. The iceberg, collision and sinking are not seen, and the boat is sometimes seen to move backwards, to retreat from its calamitous fate. This disjunction between the words and the images underlines the disunity of this new narrative.

Erik Büniger

Gospels

2006, 22'27" (exhibition version) & 10' (screening version), video, colour, English spoken.

With His terrible beauty, passion and drive, He has a profound effect on the people whose lives He touches. His presence generates a physical and spiritual experience, a euphoria that fascinates and frightens. Sometimes reinforcing and sometimes contradicting each other, accounts of this undefined figure contain some sort of coherence in the tone of the speakers' voices and in the way they raise their hands. The artist sometimes "caught a glimpse of a silhouette reflected in their eyes." Who is this mysterious 'He' – a prophet, a preacher, a genius? In fact, this is not a documentary about one man but a compilation of disparate clips. Whilst searching through Hollywood

archive material, Büniger stumbled across more and more interviews in which there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to whom the person on camera was actually referring to. Using monotonous and ethereal background music, and periodically blanking the screen with a white light, the artist creates the impression of coherence across the excerpts. The thread of continuity relies on the verbal and non-verbal language of religion, possession and passion that is used throughout. Büniger's ongoing and open-ended "canon in the making" is a powerful invitation to reflect on our need to create gods.

Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson

Avant-Garde Citizens

Avant-garde Citizens steps into the lives and identities of refugees in the world today, using the Netherlands as a departure point. The project is a series of video-portraits of people who have become enmeshed in the viciously complicated and tortuously slow Dutch immigration and asylum system. The people featured, mostly living without a residence permit in Holland, where they are generally referred to as *Illegals*, share experiences of detention and imprisonment in deportation centres and criminal prisons, despite being innocent of any crime. Filmed in a series of typical locations around Holland – a peaceful field, a beach, a living room – each Citizen tells his or her story to the microphone they hold, as they stand with their backs to the camera. There is no movement to draw the eye away from the solitary figure. The words and voices are the focus, as harsh experiences are related with simplicity and acceptance. The artists juxtapose familiar backgrounds with the unfamiliarity of the tales told to emphasise that these events are taking place in the Netherlands. The artists cite their concern with the rapidly growing number and capacity of detention- and deportation centers in the Netherlands as a key motivation for engaging with this topic.

Avant-garde citizens: Janneke's story

2007-2008, 22', video, colour, Dutch spoken, English subtitles.

Avant-garde citizens: Mpia's story

2007-2008, 17', video, colour, English and Lingala spoken, English subtitles.

Avant-garde citizens: Samm's story

2007-2008, 36', video, colour, English spoken, English subtitles.

Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson

Caregivers

2008, 14', video, colour, English and Italian spoken, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish subtitles.

Caregivers presents the Ukrainian women who have chosen voluntary exile to work as caregivers for the elderly in Italy, where they earn enough to provide financial support to their families back home in Ukraine. Living on the margins, they are solitary and elusive figures whose roles are defined but whose individual identities are not being recognized by the host country. Their way of life is rooted in silence and service, and their existence appears formless to us because they adapt themselves to the needs of the people they care for. Castro and Ólafsson combine music, words and film to explore distinctions and similarities in their lives. Hands and feet are developed as visual motifs, eloquently demonstrating the connections and divisions between the two communities living side-by-side. Superimposed on this visual sequence, Davide Beretta's investigative article is performed in a contemporary operatic style. Through visually interrupting the piece, this stylised rendering of the text reveals the meaning of the words anew. While the text provides figures and facts, and the images present fragments of the story of lives filled with humanity, it is the music that underscores the distance between these two different forms of viewing reality and imparts a sense of surreal disorientation to the situation.

Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson

Lobbyists

2009, 16', video, colour, Dutch, English and Polish spoken, Dutch, English, French, German, Spanish subtitles.

The lobbying industry in Brussels has ballooned in recent years, and has developed a key role in the functioning of the European Union. The artists studied historical and contemporary sources constructing the figure of the lobbyist, interviewed and filmed a variety of people associated with lobbyist associations and civilian 'watchdog' groups. They commissioned British reporter Tamasin Cave to write an article on the subject, and worked with actress Caroline Dalton and the Icelandic reggae group Hjalmar to perform the text in a range of interwoven and interrupting styles. It is both sung and spoken over dub music, as a monotone recital and as though reading a story to a child. The video touches on different genres, juxtaposing imagery with a newspaper article vocalized to dub music, and throughout the work humor is used as a binding agent. These contrasting and sometimes alienating elements trigger the viewer's active involvement and reflection on the subject of the work as well as on the work and medium itself. *Lobbyists* received third prize at the Dutch art prize Prix de Rome in 2009.

Jan Dietvorst & Roy Villevoe**Owner of the Voyage**

2007, 16', video (split screen), colour, English subtitles.

Since 1992, Roy Villevoe has frequently visited Papua, the former Dutch New Guinea. Visual artist Jan Dietvorst has joined him regularly; together they produce an oeuvre of films that deal with the influences to which the local people, the Asmat, have been exposed since their first contact with Western outsiders in the 1950s. In 2000, two of Villevoe's long-time Asmat friends made a journey to the Netherlands: the brothers Rufus Satí and Rodan Omomá. A year later their cousin and trusted friend Pupís is interviewed about the two brothers' adventures. The split-screen projection in *Owner of the Voyage* shows their journey simultaneously with the commentary on their travels. In the interview Pupís reconstructs the brothers' experiences from his own unique perspective; without being asked, he incorporates his own personal agenda within his report.

Peter Downsborough**A] PART**

2009, 11'50", video, b&w, sound, English running text.

A] PART is a video project filmed in the Citroën Building on the Place de l'Yser/IJzerplein in Brussels. Downsborough directs camera through different levels of the building. Sometimes the camera focusses on what is happening outside: traffic... Only buildings, cars and structures are seen. Human figures remain absent both in- and outside the building, and the film becomes a composition of lines and volumes provided by concrete floors, steel columns and roof structure, windows, TL-lighting, cars, a roof... Most of the video is silent, but the internal sounds of the building can be heard in a few fragments of the piece. At the end, the image turns black, and the sound of the street comes in, a reminder that this video depicts an interior of the city.

Peter Downsborough**inter[POSE**

2009, 4'52", video, b&w, sound, English running text.

inter[POSE is a video project shot off-season in Deal, Kent (UK). It focuses on the town's shoreline and the 1950s modernist pier (the last to be built in the UK). As the camera moves slowly over and under the pier, combining fixed shots with travelling, it focusses on the pier's surroundings, its structure, and details such as the texture of the concrete: a composition of lines, hovering between the static and the dynamic.

Peter Downsborough**I, Y, AND**

2010, 6'30", video, b&w, sound, English running text.

The camera travels through the outer areas of Barcelona, moving slowly through tunnels, along roads, on the water and elsewhere, blending travelling and fixed shots. The artists focusses on the infrastructure of the city – piers, docks, tunnels and buildings. Sporadically, we hear the sounds of the city. A voice-over pronounces some words in Spanish and English, while other words appear on screen, turning the images into a phrase of time and space. The piece concludes at the Ramblas. By briefly inserting images of this street in colour, and gradually returning them to black and white, the artist is deconstructing his own habitual use of black and white.

Peter Downsborough**THEN**

2008, 3'15", video, b&w, sound, English running text.

THEN is a video project filmed in and around San Francisco. The camera moves with the traffic on the Bay Bridge, which is the longest high-level, steel bridge in the world. Moving over the bridge, Downsborough's constructivist approach of reality results in a sober but playful phrase consisting of fragments of space and time, extracted from an urban and infrastructural landscape, and of words that are inserted into the image itself, or briefly added by a voice-over.

Pieter Geenen**atlantis**

2008, 11'10", video, colour, sound.

In 2009 the construction of the Three Gorges Dam on the Chinese Yangtze River was completed. As a result of this construction, 632 sq km of land a distance of 660 km upstream flooded up to a level of 175 m. Numerous social and environmental issues related to its construction made this dam one of the world's most controversial projects in recent history. *atlantis* shows the banks of the Three Gorges Reservoir being scanned by the searchlights of a Yangtze cruise boat. The lightbeam on this nocturnal landscape seems to explore a sunken universe, a land which people appear to have left, with demolished buildings, ravaged forests and ghost ships. *atlantis* is an audio-visual journey into the Three Gorges Reservoir, following the Yangtze River from the world's largest dam in Sandouping up to the city of Chongqing.

Pieter Geenen**nostalgia**

2009, 13'26", video, colour, sound.

The concept of land on the island of Cyprus has changed radically since the military and political events of 1974. The division of the island into a Southern Greek and a Northern

Turkish part after the invasion of Turkish troops in August 1974 forms a climax in the turbulent history of Cyprus. Though Greek and Turkish Cypriots had lived together until that point, they then fled each to one side of the island, leaving behind their homes and lives. Although it has been possible for a few years now to cross the UN-controlled buffer-zone between the two halves, the essence of the situation has not changed, and the division still resonates in people's minds. Shot from a tourist observatory in Greek Nicosia, *nostalgia* - the word is derived from the Greek words 'nostos' and 'algos', meaning 'return' and 'suffering' - shows a panoramic view of the Turkish part of Cyprus, seen from across the buffer-zone. The soundtrack is a collection of the sounds you can hear along this so-called Attila Line dividing the island from coast to coast – sounds from the beaches around the ghost-town of Varosha and its abandoned houses, from the Ledra Museum observatory in Nicosia, a war memorial and various other sites.

Adam Leech

Blanket Apology

2010, 5'16", video, colour, English spoken.

Blanket Apology focuses on strategies of communication that are used when public figures give public apologies. Like *Speech Bubble* (2008), *Blanket Apology* is a dialogue between a man and a woman. The man is attempting to offer an apology for his sexual perversion, unethical medical practices, theft, and hubris; while at the same time attempting to 'save face' and maintain his position as a public figure. The woman is demanding an apology and an explanation; while at the same time being manipulated by the man's linguistic and sociological tricks. *Blanket Apology* was inspired by the apologies from the catholic church for sex abuse in 2010, the admission of guilt by Pol Hauspie (of Lernout & Hauspie) for corporate fraud, and the recent apology by the US government for the 'Guatemalan Syphilis Experiment'.

Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

epic (malhame)

2008, 7', video, colour, Arabic spoken, English subtitles.

"2 years ago when I was a donkey they used to hit me so I didn't fall into the hole that is at the edge of the valley. I used to always walk along the edge of the valley, reach the hole, move around it, and then continue walking. Of course, that is after I fell into it the first time. I loved walking along the edge of the valley because I didn't love walking over here, though there is space here. Walking along the edge enhances my donkey-ness. Ok, well, now, in the current human age I'm living in, there is a big hole in the city. All the people are passing by and falling into it. All the cars are falling into it. They even starting sending ambulances into it to rescue people. Eventually it was decided to build a hospital next to the hole in an attempt to make things better. And, sir, they built that hospital, but there were no people left, no humans left. All the people fell into the hole. Even the hospital fell into the hole, and that's how the humans came to an end. Bye-bye humans."

Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

It's not my memory of it: three recollected documents

2003, 25', video, colour, English spoken.

Referencing specific historical records as memories which reappear in moments of danger, the work addresses the logic of the bureaucracy of secrecy in the current climate of heightened security. Through unacknowledged film, reassembled documents and images, three lost narratives of CIA activity in Iran, Yemen and the USSR between 1974 and 2002 are retold. These records are punctuated by fragments of interviews with information management officials from various federal agencies, who explain some of the distinctions between, for example, classified and unclassified information. The

conclusion reflects on the role of documents in the constitution of the dynamic of knowing and not knowing. This piece won "Best Documentary" at the International Short Film Festival, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2004.

Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

Not a matter of if but when: brief records of a time in which expectations were repeatedly raised and lowered and people grew exhausted from never knowing if the moment was at hand or still to come

2006, 32', video, colour, Arabic spoken, English subtitles.

Not a matter of if but when... was developed in 2005–06 in Damascus, Syria. This period of time was marked by momentous events: Rafiq Hariri, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, was assassinated, the Syrians were pressured to withdraw from Lebanon after a 30-year occupation, the "Cedar Revolution" came and went, elections were held in Iraq and were followed by a descent into civil war, and Hezbollah strengthened its position in Southern Lebanon. These events reverberated in Syria and gave rise to widespread anxiety and anticipation around the potential for imminent change, regime change, internal reform, internal collapse, civil war and the increased power of conservative Islam. Over a period of several months, we worked with Rami Farah to record short sequences in which he responded to a prompt or a written text. Through a combination of direct address and fantastical narrative, Rami's improvisations speak to living in a condition of uncertainty, chaos and stasis.

Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

Take into the air my quiet breath

2007, 17', video, colour, English spoken.

In 1966, the Syrian government's Ministry of Endowments solicited plans for a building to replace a 14th-century Mamluk mosque in Martyr's Square in the centre of Damascus. A young architect proposed a design for a 5-star hotel and new mosque. In 1971, his plans were scrapped. In 1982, building started on a new structure. Hospital? Parking garage? Military housing? The project – now called the Basel al-Asad Center – has been the subject of much rumor and speculation. As of 2007, the building remains unfinished. In this documentary video, an architect recounts the chronicle of the building and considers its possible future.

Julia Meltzer & David Thorne

We will live to see these things, or, five pictures of what may come to pass

2007, 47', video, colour, English spoken.

We will live to see these things, or, five pictures of what may come to pass is a documentary video in five parts about competing visions of an uncertain future. Shot in 2005–06 in Damascus, Syria, each section of the piece – the chronicle of a building in downtown Damascus, a recitation anticipating the arrival of a perfect leader, an interview with a dissident intellectual, a portrait of a Qur'an school for young girls, and an imagining of the world made anew – offers a different perspective on what might come to pass in a place where people live between the competing forces of a repressive regime, a growing conservative Islamic movement, and intense pressure from the United States. The piece won 'Best New International Video' award at the Images Festival in Toronto, 2007 and the 'Dialogue Award' at the European Media Arts Festival in Osnabrueck, Germany 2008.

Wendy Morris

Off the Record

2008, 4'56", 35mm transferred to video, colour, sound.

Off the Record explores the different experiences and treatment of black and white South African soldiers in Europe during World War I. Two documents form the basis of the film, a war diary kept by the artist's great-uncle Walter Giddy, and a 1917 account by Sol Plaatje of the frustrated attempts of many black South Africans to play their part in the war effort. Points of convergence between these disparate histories are created through the process of animation.

Hans Op de Beeck

Staging Silence

2009, 22', video, b&w, sound.

After experiencing many similar public places, the artist found that they collectively lingered in his memory as abstracted, archetypal spaces. These formed the starting point of *Staging Silence*, an ambiguous piece featuring an eclectic mix of ridiculous and serious images, the concrete and fantasy. The amateurish quality references slapstick, while the absence of colour invokes the insidious suspense and latent derailment of film noir. Silent and unpeopled environments are artificefully 'staged', allowing the spectator to project himself as the lone protagonist. Anonymous arms appear and disappear, manipulating banal objects, scale representations and artificial lighting to create alien yet recognisable locations. Inspired by the images themselves, Serge Lacroix composed and performed the accompanying score.

Eric Pauwels

Les films rêvés

2009, 180', video, colour, French spoken, English subtitles.

In the work of the filmmaker, author and director Eric Pauwels (1953), cinema and life are inseparably intertwined. His documentaries, sometimes called 'half-films', take on the role of memory, weaving fiction with ethnography and questioning the spectator's impressions of the subject. *Les films rêvés* is a poetic exploration of the land of dreams, of voyages into the unknown, whose destination is paradise, the lost garden of Eden. Constantly returning to the small blue shed in his garden, Eric Pauwels traces stories and journeys from history, from myth, from his childhood. Footage from the artist's previous films is combined with borrowed images from other films and other sources, with a soundtrack sampling music from cultures across the globe, from Bollywood to bagpipes and Polynesia to Patagonia. This work meanders through stories of all kinds, drawing everything together into the idea that to live is to dream.

Nicolas Provost

Stardust

2010, 20', video, colour, English spoken.

Provost's 2007 piece *Plot point* used a subtle combination of music, editing and photography to lead the viewer into a subconscious process of establishing and discovering a story. *Stardust* takes this a stage further, manipulating recorded conversations taken from films as well as background music. Provost moves from New York to Las Vegas, filming the public going about their daily business. He then uses these clips of people engaging in conversations, making phone calls, watching a screen or gazing into space, and adds film music and dialogue over the top. Provost is the master of exploiting the associations and reactions learned by the public through years of watching crime and action films and television programmes, using film music to build tension, to induce emotional responses, to alter the nature of what is seen or heard. He also uses parataxis to great effect, presenting two separate and unrelated things together, so that the audience generates links. For example, hearing gunshots while the camera shows only a closed door, we think that the shots have been fired in the room behind the door. Through his understanding of cinematographic language, Provost

manipulates the audience into generating narratives and developing characters. As the piece progresses, the plots that must be built become more complex and less believable, exposing the tricks Provost is playing.

Till Roeskens

Vidéocartographies: Aïda, Palestine

2009, 46', video, colour, Arabic spoken, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish subtitles.

Aïda is a refugee camp in Palestine. Till Roeskens asks several of its inhabitants to draw him a map. The camera records the inverse of these scribbles, showing the marks of the black pen through the white paper. Men, women and children mark out buildings, identify the homes of family or friends, or the site of a shooting or other event. Routes are marked – obstacles, checkpoints, barbed wire. Children mark the hole for playing marbles, women describe the routes to the hospital. Slowly, these rough marks form a readable text depicting communities, ways of living, ways of surviving. Past, present and future are inscribed onto the paper, the dynamics of growth and change, both sudden and slow. Personal stories unfold, revealing the resilience, strength and adaptability of the invisible people behind the voices.

Jayce Salloum

untitled part 4: terra incognita

2005, 37'30", video, colour, English spoken, French subtitles.

terra incognita focuses on fragments of histories, of pre-European contact, contact, and settlement of the Kelowna (south-central B.C.) area through the accounts of several N'Syilx'cen (Okanagan Nation) speakers. It traces connections and correlations between the periods of extermination/ disintegration, assimilation, and marginalization to their present day and context of being First Nations. Sites of social and historical significance are encountered juxtaposed with the current realities of the area's 'landscape'. An experiential videotape that lends itself not to a comprehensive survey, but a sifting through the layers of time and present, an inconclusive yet incisive speculation, in a history lived and survived. Through various generations of accounts, the familiar and historical read the existing with the disappeared, just past the surface, digging into our (not unproblematic) relationship with the complexities of the past, our presence here, and that of the original inhabitants of this place. With this videotape we can come closer to recognizing the terms of our history(ies) and viewing them with an alternate vision challenging our perceptions in a critical manner of recounting steeped in generational ephemerality, materiality, and social relations. This endeavour is not with the aim of reconciliation (which is impossible within one project or lifetime), but with the objective of taking into consideration, legacies of contact, settlement, colonization, and capital, and the contested and conflicted notions of home/land, nation, assimilation, native and other in an attempt to challenge our realities and in doing so, reclaim and reconstruct an agency (for all viewers and subjects), that is complex and self determining.

Jayce Salloum

untitled part 6: upon the resonance of histories

2009-2010, 146'45", video, colour, English spoken.

Parihaka (on the north island of Aotearoa/New Zealand) is seen by many nationally and internationally as a symbol of non-violent resistance, and a Maori struggle for contemporary and historical justice. Speaking of the history of Parihaka and Taranaki through stories of key events in the struggle to retain Maori lands and culture, Te Miringa Hohaia (Taranaki iwi - Kaitiaki of the Te Paepae o Te Raukura meeting house and marae at Parihaka Paa) chronicles the early period of the British invasion, settlement, and series of attacks upon Parihaka and the resistance to these colonizing efforts. Many conflicts

are repelled led by the likes of Riwha Titokowaru, (1823-1888), and through the Parihaka leadership of Te Whiti o Rongomai (1815-1907), and Tohu K kahi, (1828-1907), the struggle is transformed into a non-violent resistance movement peppered with sophisticated armed resistance when necessary. Some of the systematic, oppressive techniques used by the proto-nationalist government forces and subsequently the New Zealand government to wrest control of the land and the attempts to disenfranchise the Maori people are illustrated. This general history is made specific and personal and then woven back to reflect the imperatives of agency, of resisting, and of carrying constructive actions forward into peace.

Krassimir Terziev

A Message from Space in my Backyard

2008-2009, 9'49", video (single channel or two channels video installation), colour and b&w, English spoken, English running text.

Krassimir Terziev's *A Message from Space in my Backyard* documents several cases of space debris coming back to earth. These cases become a series of dissonant counterpoints to one of the strongest embodiments of a belief in enlightenment: man's ability to conquer space. Focussed on the debris left behind by one of the scientific and political highlights of progress in modernity, the film embodies the enduring need for intellectual interpretation and cultural imagination when one watches phenomena like these from the perspective of individual human life. For instance, the film refers to the meaning of the word 'heaven' in secular modernity, the loss of any relation between form and function, and, finally, the magic character of all these accidents. There are two versions of this film, one of them being a single channel version with a voice-over, and the other one a two channel video installation, where the story is being told by running texts appearing on one of the screens.

Krassimir Terziev

Battles of Troy

2005, 51', video, colour, Bulgarian spoken, English subtitles.

Imagine a group of 300 athletes of Bulgarian origin, collected from all-over the country to be a core of the armies in the Warner Bross Motion Picture *Troy* (2004). For most of them this is a first close contact with the cinema world. They are coming from the Fitness Halls and the National Sports Academy and they have professional backgrounds, quit remote from cinema. And now imagine all these men, flown to the Mexican coast, where they spent 3 months in training and shooting the mass battle scenes of *Troy* as background of the feats of arms of Eric Bana and Brad Pitt. What are their desires and dreams before, their frustrations and adventures during, and disappointments after the trip? What kind of movie they saw on the set during the battles shooting, and how much it matches the movie they saw in the film theater after the premiere? *Battles of Troy* is a study on the internal economy of contemporary globalized cinema production, see through the eyes of the lowest unit in the production hierarchy - the extras.

Sarah Vanagt

Boulevard d'Ypres / Ieperlaan

2010, 65', video, colour, Dutch, English and French spoken, Dutch, English and French subtitles.

The Boulevard d'Ypres in Brussels, with its large and colourful Mediterranean stores, offers glimpses of the Tales of the Thousand and One Nights. Urban development is now driving out these shops selling couscous, dates and olives. It is this turning point in the history of her own street that Vanagt uses as a starting point for a 'microhistorical experiment'. Vanagt converted one of the already empty stores into a film studio, and invited her neighbours – a mix of new inhabitants, undocumented immigrants, asylum-

seekers, and shopkeepers – to come and tell a story, a fairy tale. Her approach is inspired by the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg, one of the initiators of microhistory. This branch of history attempts to uncover power relations in society by focusing on details, and on the mental universes created by the men and women in the street. In *Boulevard d'Ypres*, the histories are fictionalised by use of the third-person voice: 'he' replaces 'I'. Thus, a mythical dimension is added, as if these tales form part of an oral storytelling tradition. Before the street changes into something new, before the empty store turns into a restaurant, a fitness centre, or an art gallery, the old store-house temporarily functions as a place of memory. The shop, the street, and the storytellers all find themselves at a point-zero of history.

Laurent Van Lancker & Florence Aigner

Disorient

2010, 36', video, colour and b&w, English and French spoken, English subtitles.

A polyphony of tales by migrants who return to their homeland after having lived abroad. Whether they are Vietnamese, Indian, Syrian, Iranian, Chinese, Pakistani, academics, contract workers, political refugees, businessmen or students, they all are confronted with a second exile: coming home. They also share the capacity to analyse the differences between the cultures they have lived in with humour, critical distance and lived experiences. This experimental documentary moulds this polyphony of tales in a minimalist, impressionistic form. Only a few traces of images, of travelling, of material culture, appear above the voices and soundscapes, just as there remain only shadows and memories of their presence abroad. This film is the condensed result of a long-term project – around twenty interviews conducted in different Asian countries and a series of subtle laboratory work including scratching the film tape – which evokes the reminiscences of the memories and traces of life of the encountered protagonists.

Laurent Van Lancker

Majjudo (Lost Man)

2009, 31', video, colour and b&w, English and French running text, sound.

Someone who leaves the dying fire without his torchlight is a lost man. According to the filmmakers, *Majjudo* is "sensorially drifting in a French-Senegalese experience of Shadow Cinema". While light is mainly provided by torchlights, creating a cinema-driven shadowplay, people are dancing and playing music during the night. During the daytime, one is riding a bike. The camera travels, reminding us that cinema embodies movement. Image and sound are given the same attention in this film, the whole becoming a sensorial experience of moving light, shades, colours, nature, and music. Nightly projections of archival film material on local history are visually confronted with views of the actual landscape.

Jef Cornelis TV Works

Until 25.11.2010

Jef Cornelis TV Works

jefcornelis.janvaneyck.nl

To actively draw attention to the recent publication *The clandestine* in the work of Jef Cornelis (Publisher: Jan van Eyck Academie; co-publishers: Argos, De Witte Raaf, Marcelum Boxtareos) and to make their research project about the work of former television-producer Jef Cornelis more profound, the authors Koen Brams en Dirk Pültau go on a small-scale lecture-tour with stages in Antwerp, Louvain and Brussels. Apart from the authors, other speakers and guests appear as well, among which Cornelis himself, and diverse film screenings take place.

Jef Cornelis (*1941) was from 1963 to 1998 producer, director en screenplay writer at VRT, the Dutch-language Belgian public broadcaster. During those thirty five years,

Cornelis realized an impressive oeuvre. It includes more than 200 titles and is both artistically and cultural-historically pioneering.

ANTWERP / Cinema Zuid

Screening, 20.10.2010, 20:00

Introduced by Dirk Pültau

- **James Lee Byars, Antwerpen 18 april – 7 mei 1969.** 1969, 32'30", b&w, English spoken.
- **Daniel Buren.** 1971, 5'40", b&w, Dutch and French spoken, English subtitles.
- **Cogels Osylei.** 1970, 5'25", b&w, Dutch spoken.
- **Cogels Osylei, Berchem.** 1971, 10'25", b&w, Dutch spoken.
- **De straat.** 1972, 39'30", b&w and colour, Dutch spoken.
- **HET GEDROOMDE BOEK : variaties op "vita brevis" van Maurice Gilliams.** 1979, 45'17", colour, Dutch spoken.

LEUVEN / Museum M

Screening, 21.10.2010, 20:00

Introduced by Dirk Pültau

- **Een openbaar bad voor Munster.** 1987, 40', colour, Dutch and German spoken, English subtitles.
- **C'EST MOY QUE JE PEINS, Wie alleen staat heeft recht van spreken.** 1996, 57'05", colour, Dutch and French spoken.

BRUSSELS / Argos centre for media and art

Discussion, 19.11.2010, 20:30

Jef Cornelis in discussion with Alexander Kluge. Moderator: Paul Willemsen

Lectures, 25.11.2010, 20:30

- Koen Brams: 'Learning from the archive'
- Dirk Pültau: 'Het performatieve document. Over herinneringsarbeid in de documentaires van Jef Cornelis'

Screening, 11.12.2010, 12:00

- **De langste dag.** 1986, 375'48", colour, Dutch, English, French and Italian spoken, English subtitles.

Jef Cornelis TV Works is a collaborative project between ARGOS (Brussels), Jan Van Eyck Academy (Maastricht), Museum M (Leuven), Extra City Kunsthal Antwerpen (Antwerp) and Cinema Zuid (Antwerp).

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