

KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE

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tue - fr 1 - 6 pm, sa 11am - 2pm Uhr

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KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE

26. November - 19. December 2009

Tue- Fr 1 - 6 pm, Sa 11 am - 2 pm

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MELIK OHANIAN

September 11, 1973 Santiago Chile, 2007 / 2007

DVD Pro HD, colour, sound with English subtitles, 90'

Courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

September 11, 1973, Santiago, Chile. Augusto Pinochet leads a coup d'état against the elected Republican government. On this day, the long democratic tradition that had existed since 1917 is brutally brought to a halt with the assassination of Salvador Allende.

An emblematic, extensive political documentary titled "The Battle Of Chile" was made by Patricio Guzmán during that time. A three-part film was shot during the months that preceded the 1973 coup d'état in Santiago when the left and right face off in the streets, in the factories, in the courts, in the universities, in parliament, and in the news media. The situation becomes unsustainable. The United States finances the truckers' strike and foments social chaos. Allende tries to reach an agreement with the powers of the Christian Democracy, but fails. The contradictions within the left-wing increase the crisis. The military begins to conspire in Valparaíso. A wide sector of the middle class supports the boycott and civil war. On September 11, Pinochet bombs the governmental palace.

The film created by Melik Ohanian is shot at the exact locations where the events of 1973 occurred, recording the contemporary realities of Santiago. The commentary of the original second-part film of 1973 is used as a narrative/

historical reference juxtaposed onto the film from 2007. The past is superimposed to the present, at the same time.

ADAM VACKAR

Improvement / 2009

Installation: DVD, color, sound, 10'; movie theater seats

Courtesy of gandy gallery, Bratislava

Adam Vackar established contact with some homeless people, and then, with the help of a makeup artist, costume designer, and hair stylist — people normally employed in the film and television industry — under the spotlight he changed their appearance into “normal”, “ideal” folks. In this way Vackar employs the language of art film to address consumer society’s superficiality and quasi-fascist aesthetic obsession.

The video in the way it is filmed is switching between a “making-of” style and reality show-like style movie. All filming background — working lamps, stylist’s, hair make’s and make-up artist’s tables and utensils, cables and other things used for film making which are usually hidden behind — are shown as part of the film. The space of decaying former factory is nowadays used for reality show shooting was left as raw as it is in reality.

This reality show with homeless people offers a comparison for Communist society with the post-Communist Czech society that is still lacking real substance, though it is formally associated with a capitalist democratic system. In his art



Vackar uses city streets, society, and his own body as canvases on which to illustrate the passing of time and the brutal nature of reality. His work is rooted in the reality from



circles, their footsteps the only other sound accompanying the ambient noise. Used as a means to subdue the inmates, the procession is viewed from two vantage points, forcing the viewer into dual roles. Though the viewer begins at a distance from the prisoners, he/she is forced to oscillate between walking alongside of them in their march to nowhere and pulling back to observe. Trubkovich inverts the color he typically uses to connote captives or fugitives, this time the guards wearing the orange.

The video "Ant Farm" gives the viewer a similar sense of overseeing an interminable inmate activity. As the prisoners are put to a task, no discernable merit or fulfillment accompanies the labor itself, with "Ant Farm" serving as a modern day Myth of Sisyphus where one is condemned to repeat forever, the same meaningless efforts. The futile

exercise questions any intentions of the work as a means to motivate and redeem.

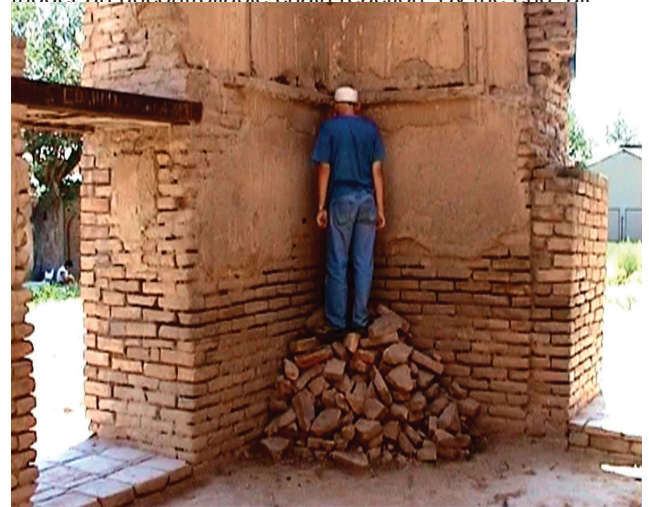
Kon Trubkovich incorporates found images and footage into his own crafted vocabulary, as he references a range



tember 11th by turning the over-media-covered fact into its most extreme and ironic extension. The film is a fictitious newscast of the end of the world using footage from Hollywood films. An anchorman for MSNBC's «24 hour disaster and Survival Network», reports on a sequence of events beginning with the bombing of Big Ben. The situation gets progressively worse as terrorists destroy the Chrysler building, vaporize the White House, and bomb Paris and New York. Between sequences of destruction, the anchorman interviews various people. A Harvard professor explains, that the terrorists are simply evil and



should be smokes out of their holes no matter what. Then a pet and child psychologist, offers tips on how to counsel pets and children after disasters. The final retaliation efforts trigger an uncontrollable chain reaction. By the end, all



Haunted by JFK's assassination, Conner obsessively filmed television coverage of the killing, funeral and miscellaneous contemporary programming, repurposing the footage into both a sorrowful portrait of a lost hero and a blistering critique of postwar consumerism.

The film REPORT often seems degraded: iconic images of the motorcade start and re-start, jump cut and broken. The mismatch between what we see and hear — or between the procession of images themselves — is jarring. We

are interrupted by film-leader, blanks. Everything centers on the film's blank spots. The filmic image — jump-cut newsreel of the Kennedy motorcade nearing Dealey Plaza — disintegrates at the most crucial moment in the film's



As such, it is terrifying. It refuses, in its refusal to show, to allow violence to rise to the status of icon; this same act refuses to make us into witnesses, allowing the narrating newscaster to witness on our behalf. It points to erasure, and absence — not only the absence that is death, but also the inability of mourning to reconcile itself to the traumatic event.

As a historical document, *REPORT* covers the Kennedy assassination and the chaos and confusion of its immediate aftermath. The film was begun within days of the event,

and updated and revised as history unfolded, as other reports (including the Warren Commission's) were begun and completed, over the next several years. According to Bruce Jenkins, eight versions were completed; only one is definitive. Or: one film was remade continually, as its author attempted to settle on a historical account satisfactory to the moment it describes. In many ways, Conner's film reports on reportage itself, on the gaps, absences, and erasures in the historical record. It investigates the contrast between history as it is lived — in the chaos of its unfolding, in its rupture — and history as it is rationalized and codified within and by social institutions. (Nathan Austin)



Mumtoz Kamolzoda: SEARCH, 2008







