

PRESS RELEASE

when all seemingly stands still
curated by Amanda Abi Khalil

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when all seemingly stands still gathers works that challenge the characteristics of stillness and movement that are inherent to the filmic language. In each selected work, the strong or slight presence of movement and its absence or its recording of a non-event, is provoked by a set of 'actions' that are exterior to the camera movement. Motion, in its pace and nature is expanding on the poetic of the ordinary, the spectacle of nothingness and the restlessness of our times. This exhibition about movement becomes a lieu of waiting for something to happen; with all that this notion carries in the realm of desire and perception of time and existence.

In his newest video work, *Now the shadows I measure*, Michael John Whelan captures the motion of a Shive wave generator in an Indian Planetarium. This device invented in 1959 by physicist John Northrup Shive, was used to illustrate the movement of a wave, usually driven by a force that is invisible to the human eye. This sequence-shot that almost seems like a still image in the first seconds of the video (if it wasn't for the little movement of the man sitting in the background) ends up recording the shape of a wave movement when the generator is manually triggered. The slight oscillations of the machine at the end of the cycle coincide with the end of the recording. This time-based work captures a minimal movement that is in itself the manifestation of a movement like in a 'mise en abyme' perspective. Moving images and time-based works are characteristic of the artist's practice, what could have been a time-based video of a natural landscape, is the physical recording of the imperceptible movement in nature. His second work *That we were to wait* is an analog 20 minute photographic exposure made at night with artificial lights installed along the beach illuminating the crashing waves of the Irish Sea. We can see the shadow of the artist and his camera both waiting for the duration to take place. The title is taken from Samuel Beckett's widely known contribution to the *theatre of the absurd* with *Waiting for Godot* in which Vladimir and Estragon are doomed to be waiting for Godot.

At first glance, Albert Pischel's *Yosemite* looks like archival footage of an idyllic waterfall from an American landscape in the 1940's. The sound of the 16 mm projector is reminiscent of another epoch, as is the sepia film. As we closely watch the looping movement, the stillness of the image is questioned, revealing something fictitious and of unclear status. Is it a documentary footage, afterall? A time-based shot of a waterfall? In fact, what we see is just one of Photo Booth's backgrounds offered by Apple's Mac OS X operating system for users to take portraits, "selfies" and photographs of themselves with a diverse range of still and moving sets. Extracted from the software and filmed by an analog camera; the texture of these images, their symbology and connotations are automatically shifted. This work looks into the archeology of media, digging up contemporary images produced by digital technologies and challenging our perception of movement, and its authenticity, vis à vis the natural or cultural "effect" in media. As an anecdote, Apple very recently released OS X Yosemite operating system with the image of this waterfall as a wallpaper, making the artist' work and random focus on this specific image from Photo Booth somehow prophetic.

Grey Noise, Dubai

Continuing with landscapes, *La mer* is one of these unforgettable shots that marked generations of video artists looking at time-based video and the moving image. In 1991, Ange Leccia shot the film by shifting his camera ninety degrees, granting this natural movement an unusual verticality. Similar to all the works presented in this exhibition, the geographical location doesn't really matter, it is above all a reality made abstract, a movement becoming matter. The regularity of the movement with no beginning and no end was often compared to a pulse that is not heard but seen, an allegory of life manifesting in the essence of movement, an ever generating gesture of a wave, drawing and erasing and in appearance strangely alluding to the graph of a heartbeat.

The notion of waiting as it manifests in Michael John Whelan, Albrecht Pischel and Ange Leccia's works is intricately related to the possibilities of the filmic tool to capture motion as much as it is intertwined with philosophical and existential questions.

Booked The Movie is one of Karmelo Bermejo's series of projects based on spending public funding to reveal the absurdities of the financial system in today's art world. He literally interrogates the cultural and financial values of art by maneuvering mundane situations. His artworks are intrinsically related to financial transactions while critically looking at the way contemporary art is dealt with in the financial realm. For this work, the artist bought all the tickets for Saturday's number one ranked film at 10pm with public money, so that nobody can watch the film... The video, (the only part of the installation selected for this exhibition) is documenting an empty room from the beginning to the end of the movie... As we are watching the theatre waiting to be filled up or for something to happen, the film actually reveals the work to be a long shot in which the different intensities and rhythms of light coming from the screen on the empty seats are captured: the absence of usual movement, allows the manifestation of another form of spectacle to occur.

Wolk, the dutch meaning of 'cloud' is the title for Sanne Vassen's work that oscillates between the language of video and a filmed performance. Her work examines and attempts to capture the different shapes and properties that a movement can take. We see her throwing a blue pigment on the surface of the water. As we wait, the wind gives it a form and the water grants it a still reflection. These interstitial moments, characteristics of movement that is "in transition or transformation within a certain duration" as the artist defines it, are often triggers in her work.

Fading out in the landscape, an electric blue cloud floats lightly although its manifestation is a result of a confrontation between nature's usual movement and an external force.

The static shot of a hand is LucFoster Diop's *WE ARE ONE*. The artist filmed his own hand and the movement of his fingers progressively accelerating, changing rhythm or maybe even language. Hands and fingers are usually the most agile and nimble parts of the human body. Hand gestures can symbolize language, labor, trust, faith, destiny not to mention the number of esoteric rituals and superstitions associated to them. What interests us here is to simply meditate on this movement essentially communicative of a message until the hand stops and opens for a minute. This relation between motion and stillness in the simplest gestures of our bodies emphasize the fundamental and straightforward ways we communicate through movement.

In *The Travelers*, Pauline Bastard focuses on communication through text. We see landscapes and still lifes from postcards sliding slowly onto the screen. The images' stillness is animated by the words, sentences and descriptions found on the backside of the cards and placed in front of the image. This unusual juxtaposition of postcard images and texts impart to the different places an idyllic and poetic representation. Language as movement, breaking the stillness of fixed images, is stressed in this particular work.

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when all seemingly stands still can be seen as a silent and experiential exhibition exploring twisted connections between film, movement and the latent notion of waiting. In this context, a commission was made to Lantian Xie, to reflect upon the theme of the exhibition within the site specificity of the gallery space.

Dubayygeists is an intervention-based work comprising different images using the exhibition's space almost like a melancholic film set.

Xie's interventions gesture towards the daily movements of the city: its machines, factories, fast food services and distribution systems.

Americana Call Centre is a ringtone that was set on the mobile phones of Grey Noise's team from the recording of KFC UAE delivery center's automated customer hotline answering machine. The visitors might attempt to wait for the phone to ring during their visit to the exhibition...or take-away one of the *Hong Kong Restaurant takeaway menus* welcoming them at the entrance of the gallery.

In the exhibition space, *Spilled Mirinda* is firstly a drawing of a non-event, a still life drawn with color pencil then a physical encounter with this same non-event in the space of the scenography. These interventions, estranged from the atmosphere of the exhibition are exactly what entangle *when all seemingly stands still* with the specific context of Dubai.

Text by Amanda Abi Khalil