



Modern Amusement

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THE HEALTHY WORLD OF PRIMITIVE BUILDING METHODS

DIGITAL VIDEO : 2 MIN 10 SEC EACH ROTATION : BLACK AND WHITE : STEREO SOUND : 1999

This video features an interior space from 860 Lake Shore Drive, 1951, by Mies van der Rohe being penetrated by black vertical 'sticks' the height of the floor to the ceiling - an installation represented as a stop-animation video sequence. The video opens to the pristine empty room with the narrative forming the virtual installation of several sticks until most of the space has been articulated through an imposed system of perspective. Bruegel's painting *Return of the Hunters* uses a similar device in the prominent black trees that advance into the picture plane, the trees and the sticks both serve to make a two-dimensional image optically jump to three-dimensions. The English landscape architect Capability Brown insisted on the presence of cows in his landscape designs, in so doing the viewer always had a standard reference with which to judge the scale of the design. The process of measuring the room using the stick as a finite rule serves to compare two commodities against one another - a European designed Modernist building in North America measured and defined in terms of a stick, a primary building material.

The title of this work is taken from a speech by Mies van der Rohe given in 1938, when "in his inaugural address to the students of Armour Institute", he urged them back into 'the healthy world of primitive building methods, where there was meaning in every stroke of an axe, expression in every bite of a chisel.'" [1] As the son of a mason it is reasonable to suggest that by 'primitive' van der Rohe had materials (and associated building methods) like machined stone, timber, steel or marble in mind. This quote is employed to prompt possible interpretations of van der Rohe's concept of 'primitive building methods' - read in this instance as primary rather than 'primitive', the intention is to specifically question the lack of African architectural influences on Western architects during the first half of the twentieth century when compared to the huge influence African art had on European artists. Why was Western architectural design during this period wholly unaffected by and disinterested in African architecture? There were few, if any, studies in Africa between 1900 and 1950 that focused specifically on architectural practices. The only references from this period are photographic documentation of settlements and passing mentions in anthropological studies. The remarkable political and economic centres of Fes, Aksum, Sana'a and Ife, amongst others, remained 'undiscovered' till the 1970s. [2]

After 1945, Modernist architecture advanced towards its conclusion with the support of the post-War American economic boom - the International Style, in particular, became a symbol of affluence and peace. Within this context the Bauhaus émigrés developed the Style along vastly different lines to Le Corbusier, the only one of the major pre-war architects left in Europe by 1939. Whereas van der Rohe was faced with a consumer boom that required an architectural image of success, Le Corbusier was compelled to meet the primary needs of a society devastated by war. A context which allowed his socialist ideas to be applied. While van der Rohe was wooing corporate America, Le Corbusier was experimenting with forms other than the geometric purity of his prewar style. 1951 saw the completion of van der Rohe's Lakeshore Drive Apartments, an early example of the lack of distinction between building types of the International Style - glass blocks for living or working in, functionalist structures that give no visual clues as to their function. An absurdity much like designing a geometrically perfect, rectangular car and then writing 'this is a hatchback' on its sides. Yet this is a basic tenet of the Style (the usage branding of buildings) - either literally on the exterior like the Pan Am building by Gropius or more subtly in the title, like van der Rohe's Seagram Building. Completed three years after the Lake Shore Drive Apartments, the Seagram Building is a 'seminal'

example of the eminently exportable form of the International Style that post-War corporate America fell in love with:

The extreme simplicity and elegance of his (van der Rohe's) works had a glamour, lacking in the works of Le Corbusier...which developed easily into the austere impersonal imagery we associate with his (van der Rohe's) style... copied and interpreted all over the Western world, a measure of his success as the architect of capitalism. [3]

A gushing statement that is only partially accurate, for although Miesian forms were copied 'all over the Western world', they were obviously exported elsewhere. The International Style descended after 1960 into the lamentable travesty that was Functionalism in its later form - a standardized design sold as cost-effective and exported (under the direction of property developers and not architects) to every major city in the world during the 1960s and early 70s, ostensibly despite local context or function. As one van der Rohe biographer states "structure alone is retained, and the structure is assigned a value independent of such particulars as site, function and to some extent climate and materials." [4] The employment of exotic architectural modes within the context of the so-called 'periphery' represents a strategic non-engagement with the vernacular. A Miesian glass box in Lusaka or Sao Paulo, for instance, is an architectural status symbol for the agency and power of the West. A local company that employs this design communicates status by association and their desire to emulate the West - to be modern and aloof despite their context. This act is much like wearing a three-piece suit on a Lusaka street in January. In the southern hemisphere the contextually inappropriate Miesian design functions much like a greenhouse in summer and a freezer come winter - only habitable through substantial climate control at considerable cost.

The same year van der Rohe began the design of the Seagram Building, Le Corbusier completed Notre-Dame-du-Haut - "his use of curves shows a complete change from his earlier geometric style and suggests a primitive, mystical inspiration." [5] Criticised by some for its expressive irrationality, Notre-Dame-du-Haut was praised by others for its invention: "Functionalism and Miesian structure are available as universal disciplines for anyone who cares to use them. Le Corbusier's later work, on the other hand, is not imitable..." [6]

The year after van der Rohe completed the Seagram Building, Le Corbusier began designing the Legislative Assembly in Chandigarh, India. The design for the Courts of Justice evidence Le Corbusier's concern with the locally specific problems of site and climate. The angular concrete façade keeps the interior cool and shields against strong sun, while the substantial curved roof extending out over the façade protects the building from seasonal heavy rain. Yet Le Corbusier's designs in India were dismissed by some as "...being massive concrete, are not seriously challenged in their influence by Miesian forms of steel, in countries where building techniques have so far remained primitive." [7]

"Mies van der Rohe was Director of Architecture at Armour Institute in Chicago (later renamed Illinois Institute of Technology) from 1938 to 1958.

[1] Cantacuzino, S. ; "Great Modern Architecture"; Studio Vista; London; 1966; p. 46

[2] See Anderson, D.M. and Rathbone, R. (Eds); 'Africa's Urban Past'; Oxford; 2000

[3] Hollingsworth, M.; "Architecture of the 20th Century"; Bison; London; 1988; p. 99

[4] Drexler, A.; "Mies van der Rohe"; George Bräsliser Inc.; New York; 1960

[5] Hollingsworth, M.; "Architecture of the 20th Century"; Bison; London; 1988; p. 111

[6] Cantacuzino, S. ; "Great Modern Architecture"; Studio Vista; London; 1966; p. 7

[7] Ibid.



Return of the Hunters
Pieter Bruegel : 1565
© Koninklijk Museum, Vianen



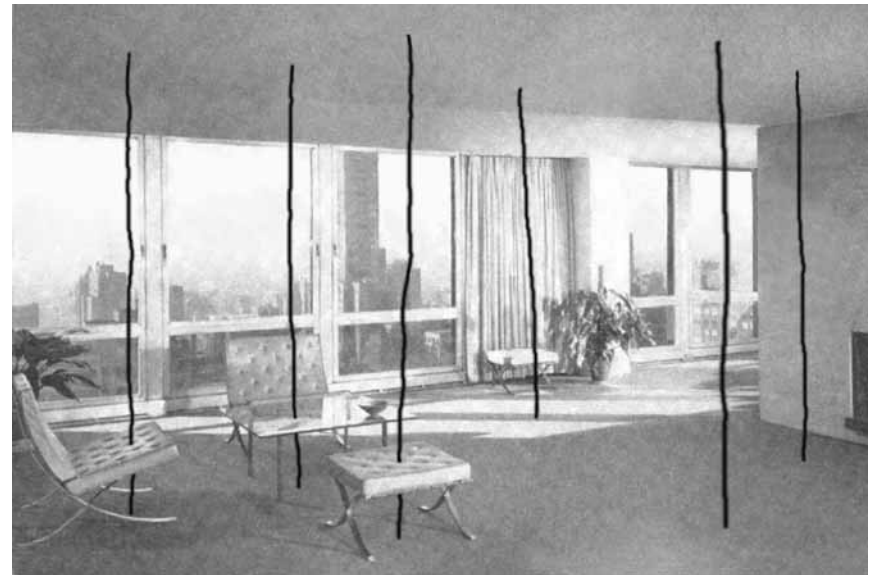
Tenement Houses
Sarajevo, Yermen : 1987
© Julia's writer



Algiers
Jacques Tati : 1967
© Polka Cinema



Interior of a Circular House
Mozambique : 1910
© Henemann



Original photograph © Hedrich Blessing

THE REVEL FOX

SUPER 16 MM TO DV TRANSFER : APPROX. 10 MIN EACH ROTATION : COLOUR : STEREO SOUND : 2004

...fades in to the opening shot from black....

roll title and credits

hold 2 seconds....

cut credits....

Scene 1 of 1

opens to: A medium length shot of a corner area of a neutral white cube gallery space. In a heap on the floor several metres from the corner lies a disassembled standard, collapsible domestic laundry drying rack made of wood and vinyl.

continues: ...Revel Fox and assistant enter shot and walk up to the disassembled laundry rack to begin the reassembly.

continues: ...the progressing reassembly process (cable ties are employed as the structure is reassembled).

continues: ...once the rack has been reassembled Revel Fox and assistant walk off shot...

ends with: ...the assembled rack standing in the space.

.....hold 6 seconds.....

.....roll credits.....

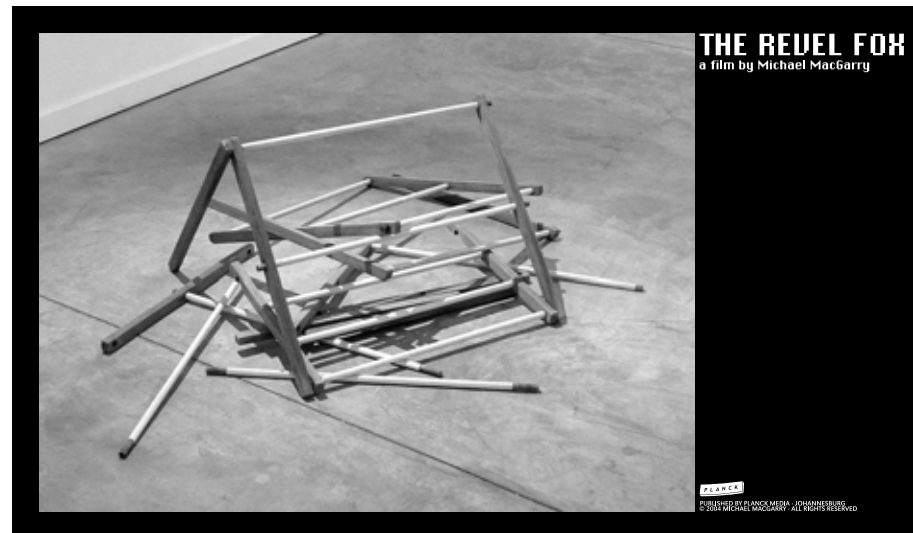
...fade to black.

This project constituted the filmic re-presentation of a live action - an attempt to dismantle the autonomy and temporality of a staged event by mediating the primary experience of the performance through video and sound recording. The planned, formal construction of the video consisted of one static medium length foundation shot throughout with the progressive linear narrative conditional to the reassembly of a laundry drying rack. The video would have been silent except for any dialogue between Revel Fox and his assistant.

The Revel Fox planned to feature the imposition of a standard laundry drying rack into a neutral white cube gallery space. The drying rack was conceptually framed according to function and design – the former is obvious while the latter was defined as a pseudo-Modernist sculptural idiom in the vein of Fuller's geodesic domes; Brancusi's Endless Column; Duchamp's readymades or Sol LeWitt's form of Minimalism. Yet to define function purely as an obvious domestic object belies the rack's complicated construction - the process of reassembly would have been taxing and to some extents a structural puzzle. Hence the proposed need for an assistant with cable ties.

The employment of cable-ties to secure the structure during the reassembly would have rendered the collapsible feature of the original design void. The utilitarian domestic object would have been 'fixed' by a renowned architect – as Warhol produced the office building as art object, my intention was a similar 'treatment' of the drying rack – but rather than film the laundry rack for eight hours, I instead planned to record the approximately ten minutes it might have taken for a renowned architect to reassemble it. An act that despite the film's title would have refigured the domestic contrivance, and not the architect, as art-object. This ridiculous application of over-qualification intended to refigure the architect simply as a reassembly technician to critically access the relative positions and merits of prominent, singular creative producers - particularly within the uniquely uncritical architectural discipline in South Africa. In the context of the white cube gallery space and in the presence of the mechanics of video and sound recording, the actions and intentions of Revel Fox would have been serious. However my framing of that recording would not have been -The Revel Fox was planned as a conceptually motivated trap that would produce a readymade.

Revel Fox passed away on Monday 13th December 2004 aged 80 years old.



American Pavilion
Buckminster Fuller : 1967
© Canadian Government Tourist Bureau



Sculpture Seris 34
Sol LeWitt : 1967
© Leo Castelli Gallery, New York



Wassily
Marcel Breuer : 1927
© www.bauhaus.de



Endless Column
Constantine Brancusi : 1938



Empire
Andy Warhol : 1964
© Warhol Enterprises

RECLINING FIGURE, 1959

DIGITAL VIDEO : 1 MIN EACH ROTATION : BLACK AND WHITE : STEREO SOUND : 2000

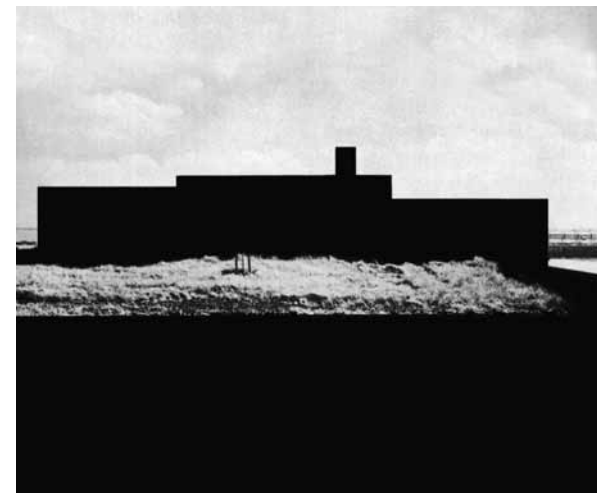
This work consists of an image of the exterior of a 1959 Gerrit Rietveld building being gradually blacked-out through a sequential stop-animation process. The blacking-out of the exterior within the linear horizontal and vertical design of the building acts as a means of colouring within the lines. Thus reducing the Modern design to a game of spot-the-difference, shifting the image from representing a building to being a flat shape. In so doing, corrupting Rietveld's characteristic handling of three-dimensional space, for in the last sequence the view is of an ambiguous shape that prompts the viewer to both recall the original design and to form new associations with the final image.

The proposed title of this work, *Reclining Figure, 1959* aims to link the first image of Rietveld's building with the final blacked-out image, perhaps vaguely reminiscent of a reclining Henry Moore sculpture. Both Rietveld and Moore were Modernist singular 'geniuses' working at the same time during the previous century. The imposed link between the two aims to deconstruct Nikolaus Pevner's notion that "a bicycle shed is a building, Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture" [1] - the construct that buildings only become architecture when they transcend the utilitarian and ultimately approximate 'useless' works of art.

[1] Hatje, G. (Editor); "Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture"; Thames & Hudson; London; 1963



Reclining Figure
Henry Moore; 1945
© The Henry Moore Foundation



Original photograph © Vijluf, Rotterdam

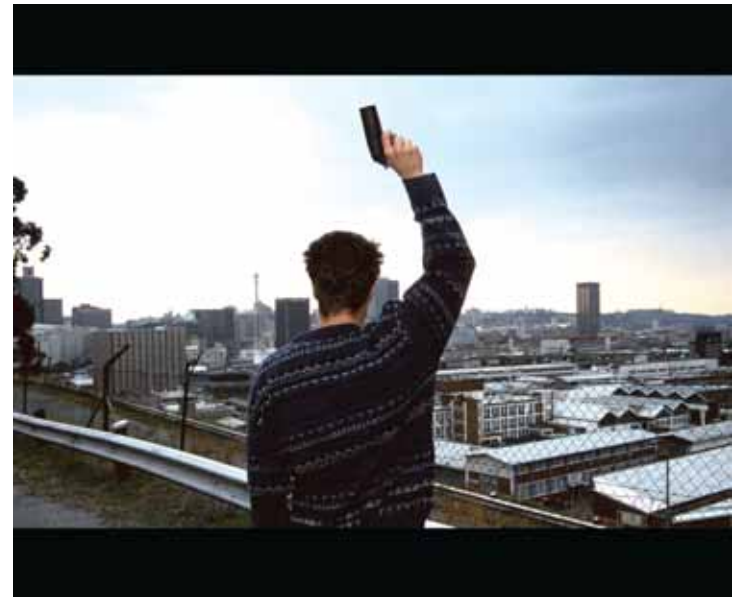
THE TWENTY SECOND JOHANNESBURG BIENNALE

SUPER 16 MM TO DV TRANSFER : 20 SEC EACH ROTATION : COLOUR : STEREO SOUND : 2004

The video opens to a long shot of the high rises to the west of Johannesburg's central business district from on top of a mine dump just south of downtown. The camera slowly pans across the urban vista for ten seconds – heading from left to right. A solitary figure with their back to the camera appears to the right of the frame (medium length shot) holding a marine flare gun above their head, the panning shot doesn't stop and as the figure is in the middle of the frame they fire the flare, a puff of smoke appears as the flare launches off camera. The pan continues past the figure for a further ten seconds taking in the low-rise industria to the east. When the whole panning shot has reached twenty seconds it fades to black and the video ends.

The title of this work denotes the length of time this Johannesburg 'biennale' lasted – just twenty seconds - but also doubt for a future time when the city might in reality be hosting a 22nd international art biennale. The camera, and hence the viewer, are looking north in this video - a reference to the historical and ongoing European support and interest in South African arts as well as the large number of once-local artists that now live and work in Europe. The flare as an overt signifier of distress represents an absurd endeavour to attract the attention of these parties 9000 kilometres away. The patent meaninglessness of this act is a product of my own view of the unfortunate, but perhaps only temporal, improbability of Johannesburg hosting a further 20 biennales*. As well as a cynical metaphor for what I think is a means used to accrue cultural capital within sectors of the local art world fixated on the 'north' as a singular source of validation and opportunity.

* Johannesburg has hosted two international art bienales – in 1995 and 1997.



UNTITLED (VIEW FROM THE CN TOWER)

COLOUR INKJET PRINTS : 750 X 500 MM : 2002

The CN Tower presents an opportunity to view a city from a uniquely unconventional perspective – either through the panoramic windows out to the horizon or better, through a section of glass floor to the tiny cars below. Yet if you are a foreign tourist to Toronto then you have more than likely flown in an aeroplane and been witness to even more remarkable vistas, and at considerably more risk. Despite nearly a century of public air travel; skyscrapers; hot air balloons; airships; hang-gilding; parasailing; skydiving and the near public thoroughfare that has become Everest; Kilimanjaro and the Materhorn, there remains a constant attraction to manmade spectacles like the CN Tower – the world's tallest building is visited by two million tourists a year.

Skyscrapers, both achievable and fantastical, have loomed large in prophetic fiction. Plans to supersede the world's tallest skyscraper of the day (currently the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur) have frequently appeared as novelty segments in world news throughout the last century. The current skyscraper forecast is the 'megastucture' – an impossibly huge edifice that architects propose will supply everything a dweller could need or want from work and leisure. Had it been built, Sir Norman Foster's 1999 proposal - The Millennium Tower in Tokyo Bay - would have been 800 metres tall, three times the size of the Eiffel Tower. But most of these ostentatious plans are usually the result of egomaniacal fantasy - like Le Corbusier's Radiant City or Wright's Mile-High Illinois. However, the pursuit of scale as a visual signifier of affluence and power still holds its appeal. The high-rise metropolis is the recurring setting of where the people of tomorrow will be (or 'should' be) living - usually all driving cars in the sky and living in minimally furnished apartments hundreds of stories in the air. From Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* to *Bladerunner* and *The Fifth Element* a constant signifier of the future is always high density living at great scale, usually a melting of Tokyo and New York.

Until the fateful Hindenberg crash of 1936, airships were a central component of these future forecasts and briefly a reality - a silent, luxurious mode of transport that signified the modern, urban and mechanised future for the first quarter of the previous century. As a viable mode of public air-travel, the airship was among the first aircraft to allow citizens to view their cities as never before, a visual phenomenon akin to the first images of earth from space. For the Russian photographer, Boris Ignatovich, a sightseeing flight over Leningrad in 1931 presented startling new possibilities for unconventional perspectives, he produced a series of aerial views in which the city is rendered as an abstract, constructivist composition. At the time of my sightseeing visit to the CN Tower in 2002 I had never heard of this relatively obscure Russian, but I had been given a small monograph of one of his contemporaries - namely Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who during 1928 made a series of at least five photographs taken from the Berlin radio tower. One particularly arresting image from this series, *Untitled (view from the Berlin Radio Tower)*, shot in gloomy winter light led to the three snapshots I took whilst on holiday in Toronto.

Peter Ustinov deemed Toronto 'New York built by the Swiss', an apt description, the city is inimitably well-ordered, clean and ruthlessly regimented by a grid plan that marches inland from the northern shore of Lake Ontario. Despite a mid-sized downtown district of numerous high-rises, most notably The Dominion Centre by Mies van der Rohe and the Toronto City Hall, the majority of the city is mid to low scale development that spans outwards rather than up. The modest skyline is made surreal by the towering stature of the CN Tower that succeeds not only in dwarfing its surroundings but also disappearing into low cloud. The view of Toronto from across the bay of Lake Ontario at Niagara-on-the-Lake sees the tops of several high-rises just visible above the horizon line, their summits taper off on either side of the CN Tower giving the impression of an urban island seemingly built for the sole purpose of providing this structure with a suitable base.

The section of glass floor on the first public access level of the CN Tower is most patently a tourist directed attraction. This kind of tourist market reasoning presupposes that if public access to the upper reaches of the world's tallest structure is not incredible enough, the visitor should also be given a chance to soil themselves whilst looking directly down on the city 400 metres below. This a uniquely sublime experience,

it is definitively "a sort of delightful horror". [1] The glass floor represents, as a tourist idiom, something akin to glass-bottomed boats or helicopter safari tours offered to sunburnt tourists at overpriced tropical resorts and nature reserves. The glass is the medium between exposure and comfort - the contained spectacle, adventure and excitement without the real physical threat or involvement - it forwards thrilling entertainment over real hazard. This view can be projected further: from glass-bottomed boats to the CN Tower's glass floor and by extension to glass-hull aeroplanes, a popular Modernist-era design feature of the sky-cars we should supposedly all be driving by now. It need not be said that such aeroplanes are as unlikely today as sky-cars were during the 1950s Popular Science conjecture on life in the future and yet this is the very appeal of the CN Tower's glass floor. It is a unique circumstance to experience something similar to a glass-bottomed gondola of a painfully slow-moving airship nostalgically cruising the Modern metropolis. The lives of its citizens become entirely inconsequential seen from such altitude. The views from the panoramic windows of the CN Tower present a similar sense of nostalgia for a distant and optimistic past, one that forecast extensively on how future generations would live their lives post-2000 and to various degrees seemingly still influences our present expectations and disappointments.

2001 has changed our lives: the way we travel, the way we build buildings, the way we see our world. It has shown us a darker side, which challenges our easy assumption that life must inevitably get faster and easier... Thirty years ago, the film director Stanley Kubrick encouraged us to expect that by 2001 we would be travelling to the moon in rocket ships like hotels, with the speed and convenience of a flight across the Atlantic. The world has indeed become a smaller place in the last 30 years. Yet we aren't shuttling to the moon just yet. And down here on Earth it has taken my colleagues and me longer to make our way into Afghanistan than Kubrick envisaged for his entire space odyssey. [2]

According to the future forecasts of the 1960s, life after the year 2000 would be dominated by the issue of leisure time. Social scientists engaged in lengthy debates around this issue: what would happen when people worked less, retired young, and had a surplus of free time? Maybe wax the sky-car or take in a round of virtual golf. Alvin Toffler proposed that society would even need 'leisure counsellors' to treat rampant apathy and indolence. In our time-obsessed age of instant deadlines and gratification this conjecture could not be more implausible. The return to the tourist present, vaguely shop-soiled by comparison with utopian visions, is a physical one whilst standing on the CN Tower's glass floor, watching tiny cars creep very much earth-bound past a frozen golf course and onwards to office blocks or double-storey townhouses. The only movement on this glass-hull gondola is the dizzying effects of vertigo. A lack of movement comes with the realisation that the mechanics of Western urban living have not shifted very far from when Moholy-Nagy climbed a freezing Berlin radio tower to get a better view of the citizens below as they caught trains to work, walked to the shops or drove to double storey townhouses far off camera. The contemporary utopian visions of an effortless modern future-present, still strongly influenced by those of the past, are available to and lived by those with the agency to do so. The vast majority essentially live in the realm of 'a better life with analogue', and only aspire to the lifestyle of product-based consumerist 'bliss' forwarded by advertising - a medium specifically constructed to induce mass inadequacy and unattainable desire. The frozen golf course, busy over-head freeways and low-rise expanse I photographed from the CN Tower remind me most of the minutely incremental shifts in human progression. That the commute to and from home through various forms of Wright's Broadacre City, in an earth-bound vehicle accompanied by dreams of better, will be a Western, urban constant for a considerable time to come. Hopefully the future shift will be in *who* is driving and *who* is home-owning.



Untitled (view from the Berlin Radio Tower)
Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, 1928
© Hattula Moholy-Nagy



Metropolis
Directed by Fritz Lang, 1927
© UFA



Hindenburg American Line
Print advertisement, 1934
© Luftfahrt Zepelin G.m.b.H.



CN Tower
Toronto, completed 1976
© www.cntower.com



Baker City
F. Strothman, 1900
© Archigram



Shinkhabada and factories of a Leningrad industrial Complex
Boris Ignatovich, 1931
© Museum Ludwig, Cologne

[1] Burke, E. "On Taste, On the Sublime and Beautiful, On the French Revolution"; Collier, New York, 1909; p.114

[2] Simpson, J.; "Journeys Into The Unknown"; bbcworld.com; 2003



HEART OF DARKNESS

DIGITAL VIDEO : 105 MIN : COLOUR : STEREO SOUND : 2000

This project features Nicolas Roeg's 1993 film adaptation of Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* filmed through a kaleidoscope with the original audio left intact. *Heart of Darkness* was first published in 1902, while Nicolas Roeg's film adaptation was released in 1993. Conrad's novel enjoys considerable academic and popular interest in the West and has been credited by leading literary scholars to be "among the half dozen greatest short novels in the English language". [1] But outside this framework the appeal is considerably less:

I am talking about a book which parades in the most vulgar fashion prejudices and insults from which a section of mankind has suffered untold agonies and atrocities in the past and continues to do so in many ways and many places today. I am talking about a story in which the very humanity of black people is called in question. [2]

By retaining the film's original audio, the narrative of Conrad's story (from which the screenplay was created) is kept intact. The kaleidoscope lens however reduces Roeg's visuals to an ever evolving and shifting colourful pattern, reminiscent of the vague, generic 'ethnic' fabric prints popular in tourist markets. The vital visual component of the film has been interrupted for the purpose of questioning Roeg's decision to shoot a film about colonial Africa on location in Belize in South America. What were the motives behind choosing to make a film in 1993 based on *Heart of Darkness* and to then decide to film it on the wrong continent?

[1] Gerard, J.; Introduction to "Heart of Darkness"; New American Library; New York; 1950; p.9

[2] Achebe, C.; "An Image of Africa: Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'"; in Moore-Gilbert, B.; Stanton, G. and Maley, W. (Editors); "Postcolonial Criticism"; Longman; New York; 1997; p. 121



WHITE SKIN, BLACK MASKS

DIGITAL VIDEO : 2 MIN EACH ROTATION : COLOUR : STEREO SOUND : 2000

This short video features a white male engaged in a series of arbitrary acts in public spaces in downtown Johannesburg whilst wearing a photostat copy of a mask made by the Fang people. An African tribe Chinua Achebe stated to be “without a doubt among the world’s greatest masters of the sculpted form.” [1] Art historian Frank Willet details this mask’s history and influence in the West as follows:

Gauguin had gone to Tahiti, the most extraordinary individual act of turning to a non-European culture in the decades immediately before and after 1900, when European artists were avid for new artistic experiences, but it was only about 1904-5 that African art began to make its distinctive impact. One piece is still identifiable; it is a mask that had been given to Maurice Vlaminck in 1905. He records that Andre Derain was ‘speechless’ and ‘stunned’ when he saw it, bought it from Vlaminck and in turn showed it to Picasso and Matisse, who were also greatly affected by it. Ambroise Vollard then borrowed it and had it cast in bronze...The revolution of twentieth century art was under way! [2]

The revolution in question signalled the beginning of Cubism and ultimately of Modern art in the West: “Picasso had discovered an art which was essentially conceptual (he called it ‘raisonnable’), and Cubism emerges as a fusion of the conceptual or rational element in African art with Cézanne’s principle of ‘realisation’ of the motif.” [3]

I remember seeing a newspaper advertisement in 1994 for a prominent South African corporate entity which featured a photograph of several members of their staff and a caption that read: ‘We’ve been affirmative since 1992’. I distinctly recall that of the 6 or 7 staff featured one person was a black man and another was an Indian woman, the rest were all white. Although dated, this advert does evidence how perplexed about transformation and intimidated by the new dispensation white business was in 1994 and on the face of it continues to be today, despite staggering political, social and economic reform. Within specific South African corporate contexts the calculated use of affirmative action can, at institutional levels, be defined as the strategic masking of entrenched, white economic power with the visual signifier of politically corrected ‘blackness’. While it needn’t be said that a redesign of South Africa’s economic architecture is patently needed to ‘de-whiten’ white business and to fast-track the career trajectories and opportunities of merit designated individuals, there remain ongoing fundamental problems with implementing and facilitating this transformation. The responsibility of white corporates is to establish black business partners that add value and experience as a means to jointly forge sustainable enterprises, but habitually this practice is strategically and unethically defined by white business as the ability to secure government favour through the political connections of specific partners and acknowledgment via the façade of empowerment. Yet simultaneously, most arguments

against affirmative action and empowerment perpetuate the myth that ‘natural’ forces of progression will achieve socio-economic transformation. These are complex fields with no patent solutions and subject to the numerous vested interests and institutional policies shaping them, while *White Skin, Black Masks* communicates my concern with these broad issues, the context represented in the video is a fictional street-level, micro view of them.

Fanon’s essential text *Black Skin, White Masks* first published in 1952, in part details the descriptions of inadequacy and dependence felt by black people in a white dominated world. *White Skin, Black Masks* could be seen as a critical mimicry of the guilt and paranoid neurosis of post-apartheid mentalities within sectors of the white minority formally in power. The video shows a white male’s strategic masking of his race with a symbolic ‘blackness’ (of cultural and historical importance) in several public spaces in downtown Johannesburg:

The postcolony is made up not of one coherent ‘public space’. Nor is it determined by any single organising principle. It is rather a plurality of ‘spheres’ and arenas, each having its own separate logics when operating in certain specific contexts: hence the postcolonial ‘subject’ mobilises not just a single ‘identity’, but several fluid identities... [4]

The act of masking, central to *White Skin, Black Masks*, is a critical assessment of the spatially-specific, and associated racial paranoia born of an inherent inadequacy and fear within sectors of the South African white minority. The employment of the Fang mask functions as a metaphoric self de-whitening by the corporate white male for strategic ends that mimics the institutional uses of affirmative action and black empowerment detailed above. This mask is a form of camouflage, but it is also a contested, loaded object defined by a problematic history of appropriation and abuse: “I have always admired people working in France at the turn of the twentieth century in their ability to appropriate African iconography, the masks and sculptures, into the formal language of their work without having to deal with the loaded questions which follow...” [5] But ironically the act of masking is rendered void by the Fang mask’s white hue, denying its strategic use and resulting in the white male in the video, despite wearing the mask, retaining the racial signifier he is trying to conceal. “The white man is sealed in his whiteness”. [6]

[1] Achebe, C.; “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness”; in Moore-Gilbert, B., Stanton, G. and Maley, W. (Editors); “Postcolonial Criticism”; Longman; New York; 1997; p. 122

[2] Willet, F.; “African Art”; Praeger; New York; 1971; pp. 35-6

[3] Read, H.; “A Concise History of Modern Painting”; Thames & Hudson; London; 1974

[4] Achille Mbembe referenced in Ranger, T. and Werbner, R. (Editors); “Postcolonial Identities in Africa”; Zed; London; p. 1

[5] “William Kentridge”; Phaidon Press Ltd; London; 1998; p. 108

[6] Fanon, F.; “Black Skin, White Masks”; Pluto Press; London; 1986; p. 11



Les Femmes d'Alger
Pablo Picasso - 1901
© The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Mask made by the Fang
Artist and date unknown
© Société des Arts et Musée de l'Homme

ONE MAN STRUGGLES, WHILE ANOTHER RELAXES

HUMAN BONE : 70 X 20 MM : 2004

A miniature container ship carved from human bone is a fictional, hybrid cipher for the financial power shaping the contemporary global market place - with particular focus on the consequences for the African continent. The container ship is an overt symbol of the mechanics of globalisation¹, plying the global trade routes that silently criss-cross the world seemingly un-noticed. Although insidious, the trajectories of global capital can be traced back to the vested economic and geopolitical policies that institute and maintain them. Founded on a so-called 'periphery' and 'centre' binary, global capital is generally reducible to the relative positions of supplier and buyer - with price, access and quota controls held by the latter through subjective trade agreements:

The reach and penetration of contemporary forces of production and apparatuses of control and management also produce spaces which, because they offer little to global economies, start to fall apart and become factories of poverty no outsider would dare to enter. A geography of control and inequality increasingly shapes zones of relative order and influence set against other zones of unruliness and structural violence. [1]

Historically the practical, spiritual and cultural uses of animal materials (specifically bone, ivory and horn) in primary traditional cultures have been extensively recorded. Contemporary applications of these materials exist in limited form in the few primary traditional cultures still in existence but the majority tends toward the curio and ecotourism markets - with subject, medium and formalism conditional to market taste. The function of human bone in this project relates to several fields: 1) As a critique of the representational myths of cannibalism in Africa during the colonial era. The image of Europeans in safari clothing and plinth helmets being boiled alive by 'savages' with bones through their noses still endures as a defining Western construct of the colonial conquest of Africa. With conquest came the assumption that Europeans venturing to Africa faced certain death, either by disease but more likely the local population. This assumption also had influence in the 19th century over the restriction of Africans into European states for the same reasons, citing fear of foreign disease, 'savagery' and potential lawlessness as justification. Conquest was highly profitable and 'over there', but its inverse was never dreamt of. 2) As a manifestation of death (natural or otherwise) the bone serves as evidence, in so much as a human death made this small carving possible. Specifically carving a container ship from this loaded material gives testimony to the possible cause of the death or disaster, vaguely reminiscent of the cinematic convention of the murder victim, during their dying moments, melodramatically writing their killer's name in blood. 3) As a pseudo-anthropological specimen, the carving constitutes a re-figuring of this field's recent politically correct 'celebration' of contemporary artefacts from traditional cultures that evidence the inherent binary construction of contemporary subjects realised in primary materials. The primary / modern binary of the ship carving promotes a critical assessment of this construct as well as "...the colonial-era argument that Africans, rooted in the past, cannot adapt to modern cosmopolitan life." [2] Yet the reality is that contemporary imperial modes of production and trade have reinforced Africa's colonial era subjugation through a process of exclusion and exploitation: "...Many Westerners, convinced of fundamental differences, have increasingly shut the (African) continent out of their consciousness, except for a lingering interest in its wildlife and in the rural arts of tribal villages." [3] The suffering alluded to in the morbid material of the carving represents a hypothetical effect of contemporary contact between the African primary and the technological monolith of globalised trade - an overt metaphor for who (still) comes out on top.

The endemic dislocation of people through global capitalist practices is a central grievance of anti-globalisation proponents. One characterised by economically and politically motivated domestic

migrations from rural areas to urban centres and contingent with the global migrations of 'boat people'; illegal immigrants; refugees and asylum seekers engaged in hazardous trans-border crossings. This issue impinges upon the question of nationalism and in turn on the construct of the 'global village' - "while some in the West herald the end of the nation-state, that formation remains dominant, both in the West and in the rest of the world." [4] Colonialism lasted five hundred years, followed by various forms of twentieth century political internationalism which rapidly developed into contemporary globalisation following the 1973 oil crisis, a global turning point that followed one of the most important political processes of the previous century - the nation-state independence achieved by numerous African colonies during the 1960's. This is a uniquely reductive chronology and entirely conditional to both the specific framing of the temporal compression evident in the carving's inherently binary construction and to the critical analysis of the construct that packages the world as a rapidly shrinking, 'global village'. A construct characterised by representations of ethnicity as diverse but essentially metropolitan and Western in outlook; mobile IT tools and telecommunications (both business and lifestyle); an increasing ease and relative economy of global travel and an abundance of free time. But however 'global' this construct might be marketed as, it is largely only a lived experience in the West and within sectors of those countries outside this distinction with various grades of First World infrastructure. A 'shrinking' globe is proportionally relative to an ever increasing divide between those with access to the mechanics and luxuries of a 'global village' and those without, the former reducible to capital value and the latter largely conditional to or excluded by Western economic and geopolitical policies.

The primacy of human bone next to the highly complex engineering of a modern container ship, serves as an obvious metaphor for the very disparate positions the First and Third Worlds occupy. But to lay the blame for Africa's current dynamics on the legacy of colonialism or the growing discord of globalisation is redundant - neither are solely responsible. The focus is not on assigning accountability, nor motivating reminiscence for a pre-colonial Africa. Rather the temporal compression evident in the pseudo-cultural object from a fictional historical primary culture grafted to a generic contemporary container ship prompts the viewer to intuit how Africa's future-present is in a sense, a re-run of its colonial past.

Tribal Africa has always had a reactionary smack to it - particularly in the hands of people who have tamed it militarily - only to celebrate its totems as decoration. But even freed from these immediate associations, the idea of an innocent classless Africa is highly problematic. There is a nostalgia within it, whether in a painting by Preller or its invocation by black consciousness groups, a reference to a state of grace which is pure, and ignorant of the constraints and processes of Africa in its dominated state. This idea of a pre-European Africa of innocence is firstly false and more importantly it obscures the strange contradictory relationship between Western conquest and the tribalism that still endures.

[5]

¹The term 'globalisation' defined as a world in which finance is the dominant form of exchange and control as opposed to power being negotiated through politics. See: O'Tuathail, G. and Luke, T.; "Present at the (dis)integration: Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in the new world order"; *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*; Vol. 84; 1994; pp. 381-398.

[1] Simone, A. M.; "Globalisation and the identity of African urban practices"; in Judin, H. and Vladislavic, I. (Editors); "Blank - Architecture, Apartheid and After"; NAi Publishers; Rotterdam; 1998; p. 174.

[2] Wright, G.; "The Ambiguous Modernisms of African Cities"; in Enwezor, O. (Editor); "The Short Century: independence and liberation movements in Africa 1945 - 1994"; Prestel; Munich; 2001; p. 225.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ahmad, A.; "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality"; in *Race and Class*; Vol. 36; 1995; pp. 1-20.

[5] "William Kentridge"; Phaidon Press Ltd.; London; 1998; p. 108.



"Smells good, Who is it?"
© www.pdion.com



Flagship
Mediterranean Shipping Company; 2002
© MEC Ltd.



Africa
German origin; 1903
© E.V.Z.



Jungle Soup
Polar Corp.; 1979
© Crazy Labels



"Right, Let's start with 'Failure to wear a crash helmet'."
Galle Cartoons; 1973
© Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd.

LA TENDA ROSSA

SUPER 16 MM FILM TO DV TRANSFER : 25 MIN EACH ROTATION : BLACK & WHITE : STEREO SOUND : 2004

In 1926 an expedition led by the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (who in 1910 became the first man to reach the South Pole) and the American adventurer Lincoln Ellsworth had crossed the North Pole in a dirigible piloted by Gen. Umberto Nobile. Had not Richard Byrd, three days before, made his controversial claim to have reached the North Pole in an aeroplane, Nobile's would have been the first flight over it. In 1928, encouraged by Mussolini's regime, Nobile made plans for another voyage to the North Pole in a newly designed dirigible the *Italia*, which he hoped would land at the Pole and return to base at Spitsbergen, as well as explore the still largely uncharted frozen landmass. Nobile made thorough preparations, including the selection of a potential rescue party of nine Alpine soldiers, chosen for their expertise in the snow. Having started in Milan, the *Italia* reached the North Pole on May 24, 1928, on board was a crew of 16. High winds prevented the *Italia* from landing, and then, as the crew began their return to base, an elevator jammed, causing the dirigible to lose hydrogen. The craft gradually became heavier, and 180 miles from base it began to drop with increasing velocity towards the ice. The resulting crash separated the gondola from the hydrogen envelope which, with six men inside, drifted upwards out of sight and was never found again.

There were nine survivors of the crash, almost all had multiple broken bones. They had some provisions, a four-man tent and a radio set, but were otherwise at the mercy of the elements and polar bears. After 10 days on the ice floe, their SOS appeal was heard by a Russian farmer listening on ham radio, and half a dozen nations - including Norway and Soviet Russia - sent out search parties. Their efforts to locate Nobile's party - by now drifting with the ice - were, however, largely uncoordinated, and nine of the rescuers lost their own lives, most notably Amundsen, whose aircraft disappeared over the Arctic Ocean.

The Italians were slow to respond, the petty jealousies of the army, navy and air ministries meant that Nobile's rescue party of nine Alpine soldiers were not permitted to scout for the survivors until June 3rd, when they set out in two-man patrols. These patrols were sent to investigate a possible location of the "red tent", as Nobile's camp became known, from the aniline dye he had smeared on his bivouac in the hope of making it more visible. (*The Red Tent* was used as the title of the 1971 film about the expedition and rescue, starring Peter Finch as Nobile and Sean Connery as Amundsen). On June 12, much to the soldiers' frustration, a dispute between the service ministries led to their being recalled to the ship. Not until a week later did an Italian pilot manage to locate the red tent and drop supplies. Nobile was then picked up by a Swedish flier, but the aeroplane crashed when the Swede returned for the others and he had himself to be rescued. The remaining five survivors, by now stranded on a rapidly melting floe, were finally taken aboard a Russian icebreaker after spending 49 days in the icy wastes. Three survivors had set off earlier to try to walk to Spitsbergen, only two were later found by plane, one of their number having dug his own grave in the ice before lying down to die. The fact that the other two had survived for another 12 days without food led some to believe that they had subsequently dug up their companion and eaten him. In all 18 men died during Nobile's expedition, and the subsequent rescue efforts. Nobile's rescue party of nine Alpine soldiers were hailed as heroes on return to Italy, where the Fascist press otherwise portrayed the expedition as a serious blow to national pride. Nobile, however, was vilified - not least for having agreed to be rescued before his crew - and he ultimately emigrated to Russia. His reputation was not restored until after the fall of Mussolini.

This project is an illogical, logical conclusion to the current themed *Survivor* seasons, '*Survivor: Pearl Island*' and '*Survivor: All Stars*', through a hybrid reframing of the failed imperial project that was Gen. Umberto Nobile's attempt to land the dirigible *Italia* at the North Pole in 1928. *La Tenda Rossa* proposes a hypothetical where-to-next scenario for the series: '*Survivor: The Arctic*'. An absurd location no doubt, but essentially the last terrain available. In many senses its ideal - a visually arresting location free of distractions, immunity challenges might present a problem, but not necessarily. The slim

prospect of seeing scantily-clad young Americans on syndicated television is a serious obstacle to achieving the network's required Nielson ratings, there are perhaps also ways around that. Now in season 7, the romanticised *Robinson Crusoe* or *Swiss Family Robinson* franchise is hopefully over - *Survivor* has convincingly destroyed the idyllic deserted tropical island myth. This has led the search for new frontiers to become quite ridiculous. *La Tenda Rossa* synchs the search by *Survivor*'s producers for new locations and themes with early 20th century exploration. Although not in terms of Alexander the Great's sorrow at having no more worlds to conquer, but more in relation to the ridiculous quests of contemporary explorers for new places to simply go to, new things to do - never mind explore. Mike Horn on a bodyboard in the Amazon River, Sir Richard Branson endlessly attempting to circumnavigate the globe in a hot air balloon or Sir Ranulph Fiennes walking across the Antarctic continent. These endeavours have a tragedy to them vastly different from the loss of life that characterised earlier exploration, usually due to projects that can only be described as rare combinations of stupidity, narcissism and danger. There is a total pointlessness of purpose - these men are too late, their projects and ambitions are dated and quite sad. Why are Westerners still doing these things? The appeal is obviously based, in part, on a nostalgic association with a specific past characterised by larger-than-life heroes and a time of possibility and optimism - the opportunity for 'worlds' to be discovered. Today these acts of exploration are fundamentally second or even third hand, amply-sponsored narcissistic endeavours to perpetuate the great-man-of-history-template that so characterised the first half of the previous century. For the aegis of exploration is, today, more closely directed towards the individual than ever before - the role and association with individuated Western nation-states with regard to such projects is considerably less than during the Modern period. It is no longer the individual, with nation-state support, cataloguing vast tracts of terrain for his mother country - today it's the heavily-sponsored and media-savvy man motivated by misdirected ego, ambition and boredom. All traits that underwrote previous explorer's endeavours, but the explorers of today are made more vulgar and ridiculous through the absence of the naivety and optimism that characterised those of the Modern period. Today you'd think white men would have learnt something from history - that this particular avenue of ego building and money wasting would have ceased. Yet, there continue to be endless projects with the singular distinction of achieving nothing, save for allowing white males to endure bizarre hardships for extended periods, and concluding with the act of sticking a flag in the ground somewhere remote. Or rather two flags - one, the mother country and the other, the sponsor.

Its the blurring of the fine line between entertainment and crap that makes the *Survivor* series such a uniquely American affair - or rather so American as to make it unremarkable. It is the opposing, but somehow synchronous, binaries of its approach and outcome that make it so. Being blindingly naive to a large degree but simultaneously underwritten by a process of scheming manipulation aimed at engineering saleable product - is a duality that defines most American enterprise. What is fascinating about the programme is that it constitutes a reversal of the normative responses to a survival situation, namely to seek and attain rescue at the soonest possible chance. *Survivor* participants compete to stay in this cycle of survival and in so doing, extend their exposure to malnutrition, physical hardship and discomfort. The basic premise of *Survivor* can be reduced and unpacked as follows: Take 16 Americans to a remote location, divide them into two groups and tell them to live in shacks, constantly bicker, eat poorly and compete to remain in this context for 39 days - then give the last one left a million dollars. All the while filming the contestants and actively manipulating how they live and interact. This produces raw footage which is further manipulated and constructed into saleable product, and in turn is broadcast, through syndicated licensing, across the globe. And lots of people watch it. Many, many more don't - rather than 'play' *Survivor*, they have to live it - but without the possibility of reward or media attention.



Production still from Shipwrecked British 'reality' television series - 2000 © The Face



Sir Edmund Hillary on Everest 1953 © NGS



Survivor: The Amazon Season 6 - 2003 © CBS Entertainment



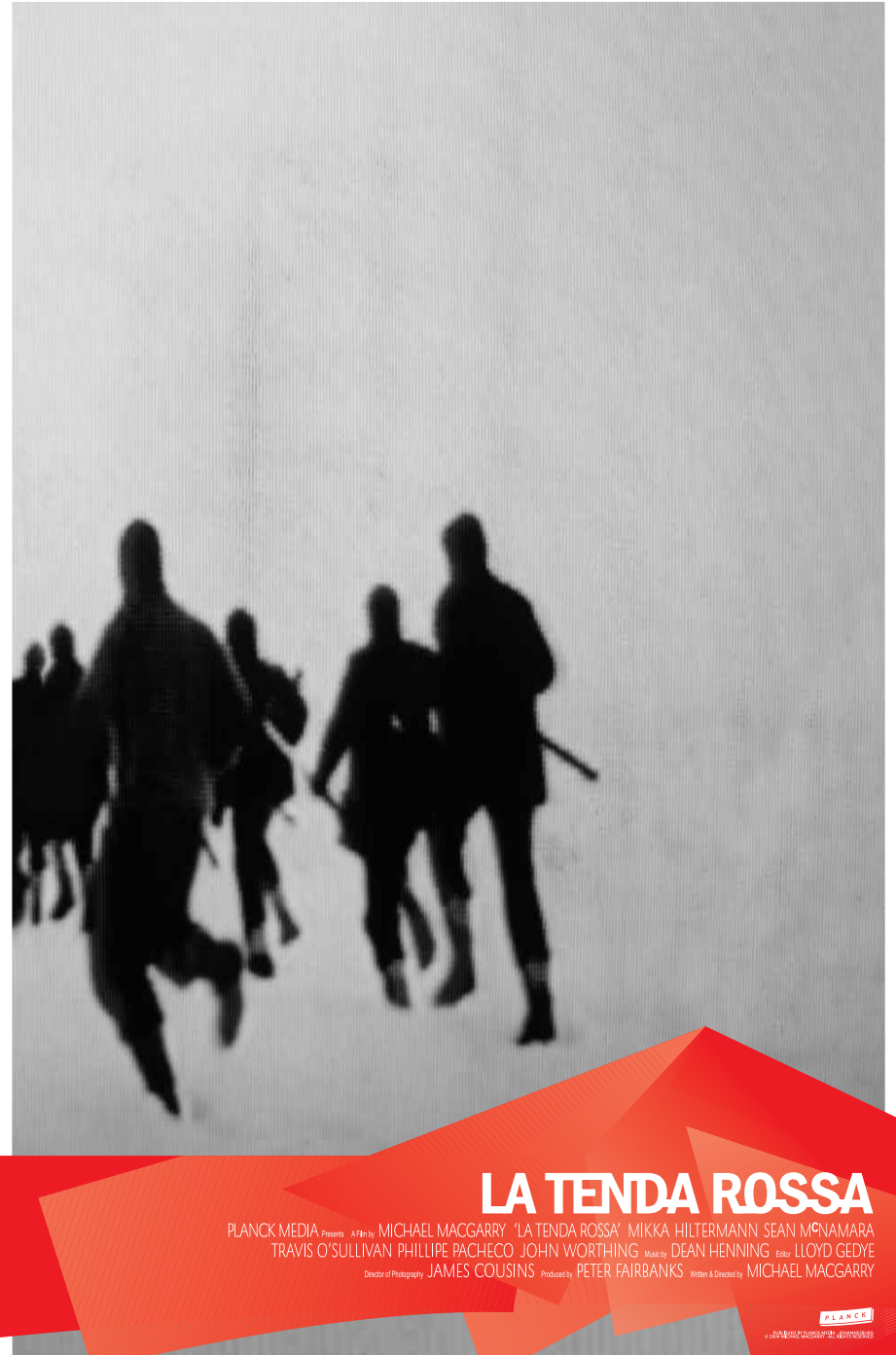
The Wreck of the Hope (detail) 1933 © George David Friedrich - 1842 © Cologne Museum



Still from THX 1138 Director George Lucas - 1975 © LFP



Scott and crew - Oates, Bowers, Scott, Wilson and Evans 1911 © Poppe-Atlas



LA TENDA ROSSA

PLANCK MEDIA Presents A Film by MICHAEL MACGARRY 'LA TENDA ROSSA' MIKKA HILTERMANN SEAN MINAMARA TRAVIS O'SULLIVAN PHILLIPE PACHECO JOHN WORTHING Music by DEAN HENNING Edited by LLOYD GEDYE Director of Photography JAMES COUSINS Produced by PETER FAIRBANKS Written & Directed by MICHAEL MACGARRY

PLANCK

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Soll from Shackleton
2003
© BBC Films



Remains of Noble's 'red tent' after rescue
1928
© Garnet Museum



Survivor: The Amazon
Season 6, 2003
© CBS Entertainment



US Navy 'A type' dirigible
San Diego 1941
© US Coast Guard



U.S. researcher near AWS Antarctica
2003
© USGS



Survivor: The Amazon
Season 6, 2003
© CBS Entertainment



Gen. Umberto Nobile
1924
© Louloue



Mika Horn in Esch, Greenland
1911
© Mondo of Camera



International Antarctic Research Station
2003
© Jacques Masson



Sir Ranjap Thomas
Antarctic, 1998
© Time Life



The Hindenburg over Friedrichshafen
1935
© Zeppelin Museum



Norwegian trans-Arctic team
1997
© Paramount Pictures Inc.



Soll from Shackleton
2003
© BBC Films



Nuclear submarine USS Skate at the North Pole
1958
© US Navy

Nobile Tribe

Sven Anderson, 34 - Accountant
Mitch Buchanann, 29 - Computer Programmer
John Covington, 23 - Office Assistant
Peter Keating, 38 - Marketing Executive
Ross Pritchard, 19 - Student
Matt Reinhardt, 25 - Advertising Sales
Chuck Roark, 30 - Electrician
Bob Smithson, 45 - Mechanical Engineer

La Tenda Rossa is a 20-30 minute short film shot on black and white Super 16mm film to digital video transfer with stereo soundtrack. The film will feature eight principle characters gradually reduced in number to five, then three, then two. The cast will be white, North American males between the ages of 19 and 45. The b/w look and feel of the film will be nostalgic and historical but in the mode of a contemporary documentary or reality television series - the context and wardrobe will support the latter. With the narrative representing a 'highlights package' of a standard, eight week *Survivor* series - but there is no voice-over narration and few highlights. *La Tenda Rossa* represents a fictional, 'themed' *Survivor* series, in the mode of *Survivor: Pearl Islands*. The link between the Arctic setting and the title of Nobile's 1928 tragedy is merely applied, it is a superimposed theme - although the location, b/w film, number of contestants and duration of the survivor's involvement do link back to the original event.* *La Tenda Rossa* is both a mock-*Survivor* series (*Survivor: The Arctic*) as well as a 'making of documentary' - the opening scene is from the point of view a person driving an all terrain vehicle heading through the icy wastes to the 'set' - the art directed and entirely stage-built 'red tent'. This scene introduces the context of the film and the nature of its subject matter - the Arctic, the production of a reality television series and the contestants within that series. In this scene are briefly shown the mechanics of producing a big budget television series, the production crew and equipment feature as backdrop to the contestants being introduced to their new 'home'. The mechanics of production don't appear again until the final scene. In keeping with the testimonies of previous *Survivor* contestants, coping with the effects of boredom is the primary feature of the film - very little happens. Micro narratives unfold as the contestants sit around and talk but these have no real life - the men look forward to meals and immunity challenges that alleviate the sloth - they even become slightly animated before tribal council, but for the most part they remain in the tent waiting. By a peculiar twist of fate none of the contestants are voted out at any of the early tribal councils - each time a vote is tallied, each contestant receives a single vote. The producers initially find it curious that each contestant would vote for themselves - but after several weeks they begin to get nervous and increasingly desperate to avoid making this series the most boring on record. Finally after six weeks the boredom reaches a critical point, and three contestants decide to leave the red tent and venture out into the white void in search of the production crew's base camp, convinced they can sometimes faintly see it on the horizon. From this point on, the film oscillates evenly between the survivors in the red tent and the three slowly dying of their own hubris out in the open. The survivors in the tent continue their silent protest by voting for themselves and are eventually removed from the set and sent home with the thanks of the network - the producers having decided to cut their losses and move production to the next themed series - *Survivor: The Reagan Years* - that research indicates as less likely to bomb. The three contestants out on the ice continue to search for the camp they are convinced was straight ahead of them. Having taken meagre supplies, and now in the beginning of their second week, their situation is dire. Sensing possible redemption from the network and the saviour of the series in the plight of the dying three, the producers don't have them recalled, but instead watch the inevitable with growing delight at finally the prospect of real drama and action. In the final scene one of the three, Peter Keating - a 38 year old marketing executive from Pomona, California - dies of exhaustion, having been walking aimlessly, to the disgust of the producers, for nearly two weeks. Yet now he is their star, a gruesome death might actually save the series. The final scene of the film starts as a close-up of the remaining two contestants with their backs to the camera, kneeling over the body of Keating. While they are eating him, the camera slowly zooms out - it takes in the second unit cinematographer, a sound technician, two grips, a producer and a 'script' supervisor standing nearby. Once the zoom out reaches 30 metres from subject, the credits begin to roll.

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While piety is nice, it's human nature to think for one's own pleasure and survival - altruism is always a servant to self interest. Because, if a man can't think for his own good he is less likely, not more, to think of the good of others. Foregoing pleasure isn't pious, but sterile, and leaves only bitterness for the survivors. But, in the context of reality television this seems acceptable, since man needs some drama to highlight his own pitiful existence. Isn't that why men take to exploration in the first place?

* The time period to be increased from the standard 39 days to 49 - the latter being the length of time Nobile's party occupied their red tent. The total number of contestants to be reduced to one tribe of 8 - the number of survivors that occupied Nobile's red tent.



Survivor: Thailand
Season 4, 2002
© CBS Entertainment



Tent left by Roald Amundsen and crew at the South Pole
1911
© Paul Emile Victor



Poster for The Red Tent
Dir. by M. Kalotzov - 1971
© Paramount Pictures Inc.



U.S. researchers near Mount Markham, Antarctica
2003
© USGS



The full cast of Survivor: Pearl Islands
Season 7, 2004
© CBS Entertainment



Advertising poster for Dirigible
Dir. by Frank Capra - 1932
© Columbia TriStar



Sir Ernest Shackleton
1922
© NHM



Sir Edmund Hillary and Sir Vivian Fuchs
McMurdo Station - 1958
© British Antarctic Survey



Nobile's dirigible Italia docked at Spitzbergen
1928
© Expeditions Patentes Françaises



Soll from The Red Tent
Dir. by M. Kalotzov - 1971
© Paramount Pictures Inc.



Byrd at Little America, Antarctica
1918
© Huntington



Survivor: The Amazon
Season 6, 2003
© CBS Entertainment



Sir Vivian Fuchs and team
Mt. Herick, Antarctica - 1957
© British Antarctic Survey



Soll from Shackleton
2003
© BBC Films



Soviet political poster
Ministry of Labour - 1922
© The Smithsonian Institute



U.S. anthropologist conducting research in Greenland
1959
© Columbia University

ROBINSON CRUSOE X6

COLOUR INKJET PRINTS : 820 X 540 MM : 2001 - 03

After living in Dublin for a while in 2001 I became nostalgic for tropical plants. Before leaving Durban I saw a photograph of the palm trees that decorate the palace of Versailles in summer, I naively thought that as long as there was a place to set tropical plants the weather and the experience in the north would not be so miserable. The Turner Curvilinear Glass Range at the Dublin botanical gardens has a section dedicated to South African flora – amongst other things it consists of succulents and fynbos, but no palm trees. While a botanical longing initially provoked this project, detailed below are the ideas and products generated after my first visit to a European greenhouse.

The Turner Curvilinear Glass Range, completed in 1864, stood dilapidated for decades before being extensively renovated in 1998 seemingly as a by-product of the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom period in Ireland and is today a popular site for city breaks and tourists. The Glass Range was designed by Richard Turner, the British engineer also responsible for the Palm House of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in London. Completed in 1848, the Palm House underwent a major upgrade during the 1980's to install new ventilation, heating and humidification systems, today it contains mainly tropical woody plants laid out to represent the rainforests of America, Africa and Australasia. The Eden Project, situated 250 miles south west of London, opened in March 2001 aiming to be an educational and recreational facility – it cost £ 88 million to build and attracted 1.97 million visitors in its first year. It has since become the third most popular tourist attraction in the United Kingdom. The greenhouse in Joubert Park, Johannesburg is currently in a state of serious disrepair – but is scheduled to be refurbished through the locally based GreenHouse Project (GHP) at an estimated cost of R 26 million, with the Danish Cooperation for Environment & Development providing the majority of the funding. Despite its poor condition, portrait photographers working in the area regularly use the site as a backdrop. Joubert Park was one of the first open spaces for Johannesburg's inner city - proclaimed in 1906 but planned in 1887 and named after the Boer War hero, Commandant-General PJ Joubert. It is today surrounded by overcrowded flatlands beleaguered by high unemployment and crime, accordingly it affords residents a much needed city retreat – with around 20 000 people using the park each month.

In Britain during the colonial era, the greenhouse served as a catalogue of conquest - a zoo for plants. It provided the British public a chance to witness first-hand the 'exotic' produce of their empire. Through colonial taxonomy - the attribution of names and classifications - and allied natural sciences [of which botanical gardens were very much a propaganda tool] Britain aimed to claim ownership over this newly 'found' nature. Ultimately this artificial ownership would be used for the ideological purpose of making Britain's colonial power seem to be a 'natural' power.† The term 'nature' however is a construct, a notion that supposes all living things to be alien and subordinate to the order of Man:

Taxonomy, i.e. the classification of the natural world, is a system of order imposed by man and not an objective reflection... its categories are actively applied and contain the assumptions, values and associations of human society. [1]

The use of the construct of nature for political and economic purposes relates to the practice, during the eighteenth century, whereby Britain's landowning class communicated their status, wealth and power by manipulating the tradition of landscape painting. Economically and politically empowered landowners commissioned paintings of idealised landscapes to manufacture their own optic of rural England, such images functioned as propaganda - perpetuating the land rights status quo as well as the myth of the empty landscape 'unspoiled' by the working classes. In so doing they variously forwarded the political agendas of their class through strategically fabricated views of rural life over the reality of entrenched socio-economic disparities - Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews* of 1750 depicts an affluent couple proudly displaying their land that is equally a declaration of privileged tenure as it is a naturalistic landscape.

"Man, we have decided, is the labouring animal whose ability to create values depends upon his infinite capacity to buy and sell: his time, his work, his very life. From this point of view, adventure is, at

best, a recreation." [2] During the Age of Enlightenment, labour and speculative thought replaces adventure as the accepted creator of essential value. The increasing commercial activity of the bourgeoisie during this period generated a wave of prosperity and brought a greater degree of self-confidence in the burgeoning western European middle classes. A by-product of this process was the establishment of leisure time - independent wealth allowed for recreation and speculative thought which in part was manifest in the development of the modern novel that as "a genre is devoted to leisure, and to a definition of individuality which depends upon leisure." [3] The modern critical disregard for adventure literature is premised on the notion that grand narratives of action and adventure cannot reveal an individual's true character and humanity. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is an early example of this tenant, for it is fundamentally "an adventure novel without an adventurer." [4] The character of Crusoe is the embodiment of middle class domestication and values:

...the story of a man who is thrown, after many perils and adventures, alone upon a dessert island. The mere suggestion...is enough to arouse in us the expectation of some far off land on the limits of the world...There is, on the contrary, staring us full in the face, nothing but a large earthenware pot. [5]

Defoe's representation of the colonial experience details, for the most part, a European shipwreck survivor's experiences on an initially uninhabited island in the Caribbean and his eventual return home. The descriptions of the island's flora read something akin to the inventory of a greenhouse, Defoe's narrative is located within a manufactured 'natural' environment that is pure fiction when compared to the reality of Caribbean flora and fauna. Having never been to the Caribbean, Defoe describes an ideal island articulated in terms of the colonial construct of the Arcadian paradise – a mythical island where food is bountiful, manicured forests and grape vines can be found and a colony of penguins live, amongst other inconsistencies. Central to this Arcadia is the absence of an indigenous population – the paradise is 'lost' once such a group appears, but being "an earthen-ware pot" saves Crusoe - he plans, strategises and ruthlessly battles for the retention of 'his' island. Initially, Crusoe domesticates an already tame island – he maps his terrain, builds endless shelters, hunts goats and plants wheat – but later, through his domestication of the figure of 'Man Friday', he gains an ally and ultimately passage to the mainland: "His victory over the powers of geography characterises the book...in *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe shows Crusoe founding a settlement of European colonists...the ethos of colonialism was never more tellingly dramatised." [6]

Robinson Crusoe x6 are hypothetical conclusions to Defoe's series – Crusoe's ongoing ramifications have taken concrete form as greenhouses – becoming the homes of the various colonies Crusoe began founding in his second novel of the series. These fictional descendants of the original Crusoe inhabit several versions of a developed form of refuge specific to the northern hemisphere. But the greenhouse also represents a unique form of captivity too - Crusoe's spawn are inmates in their own prisons - captives of their inherited middle class domestication, isolation, paranoia and labour as they endlessly establish and ramify new colonies:

Robinson Crusoe never stops building walls. For twenty-five years of the 'silent life', he ramifies, reinforces, camouflages, and naturalises the walls of his enclosure...His walls become inventive and passionate, displaying an almost magical capacity to grow on their own...They naturalise themselves into a green, womblike dome, nature domesticated into a wall. [7]

The formalist constant of a lone figure in 'nature' portrayed in *Robinson Crusoe x6* overtly references the landscape tradition of the sublime experience of the natural realm for ironical effect. These descendants of Crusoe are photographed at the time of sublime epiphanies in fabricated environments of their own design - this visual shorthand intends to address the irrational fear and representational violence inherent in Defoe's novel by implying the defensive character of the greenhouses as being a product of "a sort of tranquillity tinged with terror." [8]

Are you able to assume a position transcending the natural world or are you subject to it as a part of it? The Romantics admit the latter, in as much as the terrified awe they sometimes represent comes from the apprehension of the natural world's absolute indifference to human will or presence. The little figures we see from behind in Friedrich's paintings are witnesses of sublime events but also underline the fact that the pictures represent something unrepresentable. [9]

The overarching formalism of *Robinson Crusoe x6* is, however, as naturalistically representative and objective as possible, fulfilling a mimetic function as evidence for a hypothetical case, akin to the fruits of a private investigator's labour. Though these photographs offer "no generic exception to the usually shady commerce between art and truth" [10] – "the world can never quite look like a picture, but a picture can look like the world" [11] and hence the ongoing role of 'compromising' photography as the pre-eminent tool of blackmail leverage. The staged, flat realism of *Robinson Crusoe x6* relates to the interchange of objective and subjective aspects in colonial illustrations of the unique flora and fauna of the colonies, in particular the drawings commissioned by the British Navy on Captain Cook's tours in the Pacific:

I cannot... but lament how very imperfect many of our accounts of distant countries are rendered by the relations being unskilled in drawing...I cannot but wonder that any person, that intends to visit distant countries, with a view of informing either himself or others, should be unfurnished with so useful a piece of skill. [12]

True...Cook himself, [was] more concerned with scientific than artistic observation, and in their work, geographic discovery led to imperial conquest. Still, the imperative to observe accurately, in sketch or painting, the habit of realism...informed European artistic vision, while helping Britannia to rule the waves. [13]

* As well as the public in the British colonies once the construct of the botanical garden as an institution and strategic tool had been established and exported. † The trajectories of these first greenhouses can be traced to contemporary sites like The Eden Project in England and the Biosphere I and II projects in the United States which perpetuate the scientifically, economically and politically motivated British institutional precedent.

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[5] Virginia Woolf quoted in Ellis, F. (Editor); "Robinson Crusoe, Twentieth Century Interpretations"; Prentice-Hall; New York; 1969; p. 21
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[9] "Stan Douglas"; Phaidon Press Ltd.; London; 1998; p.9
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[11] Gombrich, E. H.; "Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation"; Princeton University press; Princeton NJ; 1972, p. ix
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Robinson Crusoe
Daniel Defoe - 1968 edition
© Farrer House



Traveler Looking over the Sea of Fog
Crazer David Friedrich - 1818
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Castaway
Directed by Robert Zemeckis - 2000
© Twentieth Century Fox



Mr and Mrs Andrews (detail)
Thomas Gainsborough - 1750
© The National Gallery, London



The Biosphere II Centre
Sonoran Desert, Arizona - 2002
© The National Gallery, London



Survivor: The Amazon
Season 6 - 2003
© CBS Entertainment



The Crusoe Residence, London SW6, September 2002



Robinson Crusoe in Dublin Botanical Gardens, June 2001



Robinson Crusoe in The Eden Project, Cornwall, November 2002



Robinson Crusoe in Kew Gardens, London, May 2002



Robinson Crusoe in Durban Botanical Gardens, January 2004



Robinson Crusoe in Joubert Park, Johannesburg, August 2003

SPIDERMAN

COLOUR INKJET PRINT : 700 X 600 MM : 2003

This project concerns a refiguring of the Modernist-era, American superhero *Spider-Man* within the contextual specifics of Johannesburg – the ‘New York of Africa’. The title of the project references the numerical value of eyeholes in the paper bag mask; Marvel’s arachnid protector of NYC and the aesthetic dressing of physical oddities like *The Invisible Man*, *The Elephant Man*, and the other NYC superheroes *Batman* and *Superman*.

As a visual signifier of embarrassment a brown paper bag on your head could be motivated by social *faux pas* or physical eyesore (pimples; cold sores or deformity). The physical oddity of both his appearance (the eight eyes) and his ‘abnormal’ position atop a high-rise in downtown Johannesburg, accounts for this *Spiderman*’s embarrassment and awkwardness. A small part of him thinks the mask would not be as necessary if he were standing on Sandton Tower, still a freak but also a bastion of the corporate world overlooking the ‘city’. But, like his namesake in New York, this *Spiderman* is equally the savior of the metropolis as he is its captive. What can *Spiderman* do in the suburbs? Robbed of the skyscrapers that allow rapid mobility and cinematic vistas, this low-rise terrain belongs to the ubiquitous electric fences, boom gates and cruising security guards of the northern suburbs.

The design of the bag mask is equally a pseudo-Cubist rendering of a face – the economy of circles for eyes and a rectangle for a head – as it is a terrorist’s ski mask. Particularly those of *One Day in September*, the 1999 documentary of the terrorist attacks on the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. The polar opposites of terrorist identity concealment meets public savior constitutes something akin to the presence of *King Kong* or *Godzilla* in New York as representing both prey and predator - the city as captivity and as target. This *Spiderman* is both threatened by and threatening to ‘faceless’ urban crime - provoked by an insecure, defensive reaction to an environment perceived as hazardous, with the mask as a form of mobile refuge.

The original Peter Parker lived in the suburbs, went to high school and after being bitten by an irradiated spider (a casualty of modern energy and military requirements) he mutated into the first superhero to be born without his powers. His turf later became the skyscrapers of Manhattan, the freak transformed into the protector of the metropolitan public. As the construction of suburban ordinary and metropolitan extraordinary so defined Peter Parker’s life, this *Spiderman* is equally duplicitous. He ‘works’ downtown Johannesburg and lives in the leafy northern suburbs - a captive of the former and a product of the latter.

The names *Spider-Man*; *Superman* and *Batman* are trademarks of Marvel Comics Ltd. 2003



The Invisible Man
Starring Claude Rains : 1933
© Twentieth Century Fox



King Kong
Directed by E. B. Schoedsack : 1933
© RKO Pictures



One Day in September
Directed by Kevin MacDonalid : 1999
© Warner Home Video



Spider-Man
Starr Lee : 1962
© Marvel Comics Ltd.

LHR to JHB

DIGITAL VIDEO : 10 MIN EACH ROTATION : COLOUR : STEREO SOUNDTRACK : 2004

Like most, this project has several basic starting points - a television advert for beer and a developed sense of self-loathing. For most of 2001 and 2002 I lived in Europe, one year in Dublin, the other in London. I worked as a graphic designer and actively participated in the ongoing brain-drain affecting South Africa's development. In London I saw a television advert that showed several Britons adrift at sea in a small inflatable dingy who were obviously the survivors of some wreck or accident. The narrative of the advert concerned not the horrors of survival but rather their thirst for the particular brand of beer being promoted. The dialogue was not the desperate, stereotypical lifeboat statement of 'Water! Water!', but rather 'Brand of beer! Brand of beer!' It was a lame advert, as most are, but it looked really good, as most do. The polished formalism initiated my thinking on a possible fictional narrative for a video that could articulate, as well as mimic, the voluntary South African alienation and London-induced drowning of identity I was experiencing at the time.

LHR to JHB begins with a view of the open sea at dawn, after several seconds the camera pans across to a standard commercial life raft adrift at sea. The title and the presence of the life raft allude to a fictional 747 crash landing into the sea en route from London to Johannesburg. On board are numerous versions of myself: young; educated; white; middle-class South Africans returning home from London - some with saved money, others with property in England and most with one eye on their return ticket. The narrative concerns three survivors of this fictional accident - 230 passengers and crew died following an explosion a little while after an improbable, but successful, crash landing in the Mediterranean Sea half-way between Africa and Europe - an emotional position I unsuccessfully claimed to occupy for most of my time in London.

The three survivors swim to and occupy a deployed life raft issued to all 747's in the event of a crash landing at sea. After a day on the raft they sight possible rescue but all attempts to make themselves visible fail and they continue to drift. A slow leak sustained during a nighttime collision with a piece of plane causes the raft to slowly deflate. Over several hours the raft sinks and the three survivors, after initially treading water, give-up any prospect of rescue and promptly drown. The final shot is of the open sea at dawn, matching the opening shot and allowing the loop to seamlessly begin again. The preselected three must then repeat their unsuccessful return home from London - endlessly and without resolution.

Some of the South Africans I met in London saw themselves as 'economic refugees', citing a developing economy coupled with an apparent lack of employment opportunity and security as motivating factors for leaving the country. The fatal passage, in the video, of these three South Africans between so-called 'centre' and 'periphery' represents an ironic mimicry of the economically and politically motivated (and often perilous) gravitation of 'boat people' from North Africa to Southern Europe; from the Caribbean to the United States and from the Far East to Australia. These awkward colonials trapped in a life raft are no more plausible as 'boat people' as are

their claims to be economic refugees. Their mortal journey from centre to periphery is directionally opposite to the typical migrations of 'boat people', coupled with the fact that they are going home to family and hot weather to spend saved-up Sterling, aided by a favourable exchange rate. Most South Africans move to London because of familial connections, the language advantage or want of 'a change of scene' but not because they face certain political persecution or poverty in their home country.

A life raft is an advanced tool for survival, but in the context of this project, continued existence is defined as the retention of identity, with the raft as the metaphoric means to do so. Having chosen to be isolated and adrift as participants in the South African brain-drain, and over time to give-up attempting further rescue (a return to habitual self), the three survivors turn in on themselves and dissolve like effervescent tablets into the sea. Hence, the metaphoric drowning of their vague identities - a process that occurs in some affected antipodes living within the societal bosom of the former coloniser.

A life raft is a specifically developed form of refuge (look to J.W.M. Turner's studies of boats in raging storms and Rembrandt's *Christ in the Storm on the Lake of Galilee*, 1633). The term refuge defined as physical protection in an environment perceived as hazardous, but a life raft is also a unique form of captivity too, for the visual symbolism of prospect is embodied in the distant, unattainable views of the horizon (look to Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa*, 1819). Gericault's portrayal of the survivors of the doomed Medusa straining to attract the attention of the distant speck of a tall-ship on the horizon represents a frozen moment of desperate optimism and potential rescue. However, having an historical knowledge of the actual event portrayed causes the moment to defrost - the viewer 'knows how this one ends' and moves on. But perhaps they are not informed and instead, linger for a bit longer unsure of how it all ends. The tension and power of Gericault's image comes from the smallest element of the painting, the ship is so tiny and so far away that surely it cannot possibly see the raft in the vastness of the ocean? But it does and the real survivors of the Medusa were saved - but nearly two centuries later Gericault's figures are still stretching to the horizon unsure of their fate. For exhibition *LHR to JHB* is projected as a loop which hopes to mimic the narrative freeze of Gericault's painting, however the medium of video also allows for a linear narrative within a broader circular one. The three survivors do all drown at the end of each individual segment but its continuous looping is constructed as a circular narrative, whereby the opening shot of the empty sea at dawn is identical to the closing shot of the empty sea at dusk - the loop is seamless. The survivors are stuck in a limbo halfway between Europe and Africa - they dissolve into the sea in the final scene only to be proverbially resurrected the 'next day' as the loop begins again at dawn. Reminiscent of the plight of Prometheus, they are doomed to eternally relive their fatal journey without the finality of either death or rescue.



The Kon Tiki Expedition
Thor Heyerdahl - 1950
© George Allen & Unwin



The projected crash site of LHR to JHB



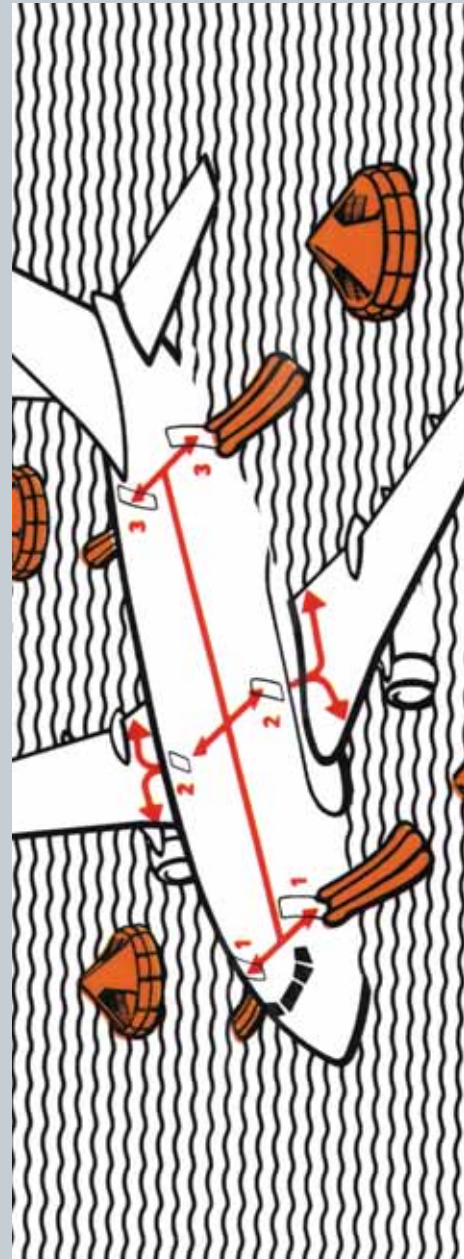
Indonesia 'boat people' off the Australian coast, 2001



The Raft of the Medusa
Théodore Géricault - 1819
© The Louvre



US Air Flight 127 wreckage investigation, 1992
© Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



LHR to JHB

PLANNED BY MICHAEL MACGARRY "LHR to JHB" JAMHURI BOOVENS
PETER MACHEN ALEXANDER WAERS AND DEAN HENNING LLOYD GEOTE
EDITED BY STUARTRAE PRODUCED BY RIKE SITAS DIRECTED BY MICHAEL MACGARRY

PLEASE
DO NOT REMOVE THIS LABEL FROM THE VIDEO

Characters:**Justin Quim**

A high school graduate originally from Durban, he was returning to South Africa for the first time in over a year. He was living in London with his sister in Earl's Court and worked in construction. He had never been abroad before going to London and hoped to save up enough money to visit Australia before his work visa expired.
Deliberate, physical, clumsy.

Michael Gibson

A journalist originally from Johannesburg, he was returning to South Africa for a short stay. He worked two copywriting jobs, but planned to some day command a London-based publishing enterprise. He had a British passport and had been living in London for almost 6 years in Old Street.
Quiet, active, scheming.

Robert Mayes

An IT consultant originally from Cape Town, his mum lives in London, he was returning to South Africa for the short holiday to see his father he took every year since moving. He hated London but saw the decision to live there as a means to some sort of ill-defined end. His stay was of indeterminate length, having lived in London over 3 years already with a work visa sponsored by his employer. He planned to buy property in London and eventually move back to South Africa, but only after having secured a British passport. He lived in King's Cross.
Brisk, rapid, nervous.

-----starts-----
fade in from Scene 8

SCENE 1

747 flight from London to Johannesburg has crashed into the Mediterranean sea: stuck half-way between Africa and Europe.

- 1A open to: (just before dawn: no visible sun) a medium shot of the empty sea to the horizon.
- 1B cut to: (still just before dawn) close-up shot of Justin swimming through the sea, comes to a deployed life raft and gasps for breath. Justin languidly drags himself over the tubing and remains lying on the raft floor, just a foot sticks out.
- 1C cut to: (7:00) medium shot of Robert swimming slowly up to the raft and is helped over tubing by Justin. Some excited dialog from Justin.
- 1D cut to: (8:30) medium shot of Michael swimming up to raft and is helped over again by Justin [kneeling next to tubing] and Robert, who at the start of the shot stands in the canopy opening covered by a space blanket. Once in the raft Michael is talked to by Justin and Robert – Michael removes jersey and is then given space blanket by Robert.

-----fade out to black and into-----

SCENE 2

sight of rescue - this scene has most action – quite long with numerous shots + actions – cut in mid-defeat.
Scene opens to a medium close shot of whole raft, jerseys and shirts are draped over the raft's canopy to dry – flaps are tied up. A bright, sunny summer day - 11:30 throughout.

- 2A open to: medium close shot of Justin sitting with back to camera on the raft tubing with a t-shirt on his head.
- 2B cut to: close-up of Michael speaking abstractly more to himself than to the others – asking where they are from, what happened to plane, what they should do next.
- 2C cut to: close-up of Robert sitting with back against tubing, speaking abstractly – in part responding to Michael's dialogue, but also just small talking.
- 2D cut to: close-up of Michael and Justin standing, speaking abstractly and looking around to the horizon - asking each other where they're from, what just happened to plane, what to do next, etc. Michael sits down – Justin looks around for several seconds then shot cuts.
- 2E / 2F cut to: medium close shot of raft – all are lying about in the sun. Michael and Justin are just visible in the sun, mostly heads, shoulders and arms visible above the tubing. Michael comes out to deploy the drogue, he is aided but mainly just watched by Justin and Robert glancing up [profiles] and distractedly talking from behind the tubing. During the process of untying the drogue tow, Michael looks out of the picture plane and then behind him into the picture plane at the horizon to the right, something attracts his attention, he holds both hands [the drogue and line still in his hands] to his face to help block the sun.
- 2G / 2H cut to: close-up of Michael squinting then eyes widening, then shouting and waving – ear: left, eyes: right – lasts several seconds, looks over his shoulder.
- 2I cut to: medium close shot of raft - Michael waving madly with drogue in hand and shouting, he then grabs a jersey from the raft canopy and waves both drogue and jersey several times over his head at the distant ship/plane he sees, Justin leaps up almost immediately and stands next to him – Michael points as soon as Justin is standing and both shout and wave hysterically - Justin having grabbed a long sleeve shirt off the raft roof – a second after this emerges Robert and scrambles to the other side of the raft with a t-shirt in his hands, he looks for a moment at the horizon and then begins waving frantically [he is just visible above the roof on the other side of the raft] Robert looks back at the others and smiles a huge, manic smile then returns to waving.
- 2J cut to: close-up of a deranged looking Robert with desperate grin and big eyes.
- 2K cut to: shot of raft with all three waving for several seconds then Justin stoops back into the raft's interior. Robert also stoops into interior to get space blanket – Michael remains outside waving.
- 2L cut to: close shot of raft interior with Justin rifling through contents of survival pack spread on raft floor – Robert steps into shot briefly to grab the space blanket then exits (wait 1 beat) then Justin briefly looks up and shouts ["that's what I'm getting!!!!"] in response to Michael shouting off-camera. Justin grabs a flare looks at it briefly and rushes out.



- 2M cut to: close shot of raft - Justin emerging quickly from raft interior with flare in his hands – lots of talking and shouting – shouts to Robert [waving space blanket] and Michael. Justin reads the instructions and Michael glances across briefly.
- 2N cut to: close-up of Justin's shakey hands holding flare and running finger along printed text.
- 2O cut to: close-up of Robert looking at Michael and Justin [off-camera] for a moment from other side and shouts to both [“dddddoooo iiiiiitttt!!”] – space blanket flapping next to his face.
- 2P cut to: medium close shot of raft – Michael and Justin, talking lots, both respond to Robert - both look up and shift apart as Justin holds the flare above him [looking into the picture plane] and fires. A flare shoots up off camera.
- 2Q cut to: (14:00) vertical shot of flare shooting up into the air.
- 2R cut to: medium close shot of raft - all three watching intermittently up and down between the flare above and the ship/plane at horizon level – all three have stopped waving since Justin fired the flare. Scene ends with all three looking up and down checking on both the flare and the ship/plane at different times – Michael has hands on head - Robert looks back despondently at others waves blanket twice lamely and the scene ends.

fade out to black and into...

SCENE 3

Indicates boredom, failing hope and defeat.

- 3A open to: (dawn) close shot of the side of the raft [hold several seconds] – Michael sticks his head out of the canopy and scans the horizon – (wait 1 beat) then talks [“nothing...”] – (wait 1 beat) – Michael looks behind him back into the raft – out of picture plane - and says [“...it's still early though”].
- 3B cut to: (12:00 noon) medium shot of dead-still raft – Robert is lying against tube with back to camera, has t-shirt on his head [all that is visible] - no movement on raft for several seconds and lots of baking sun – space blanket is tied to roof [flapping in the breeze] Justin appears out of the shelter [also wearing t-shirt on his head] and stands for a while scanning the horizon [while lightly leaning against canopy roof] talks to Robert as he exists shelter and while looking around. Justin abandons effort to search for possible rescue after picking at his upper arms and chest for some seconds [facing camera], he yawns and then sits down again. During search he is intermittently talking to others.
- 3C cut to: (10:00) stereotypical western film genre shot of baking sun filling the view [with multiple lens refraction].
- 3D cut to: (13:30) close-up profile of Justin's head bent against the raft tubing asleep, mouth a bit open - baking in the sun, Michael can be seen in the background also lazing.

cut to...

SCENE 4

Sinking A

- 4 opens to: (14:30) raft is quite deflated indicating a puncture to the tubing – some attempts to re-organize, Michael jumps into the water to look along edges of raft under the water and also to check the inflation cylinder. Robert and Justin remain on the raft, hanging over the tubing.

cut to...



Visual references sourced online

SCENE 5

Sinking B

- 5 shot of: (15:00) raft is further deflated – Michael is treading water and still checking tubing [lots of pointing to others and talking] - Robert lies across flat part to try to find where the puncture is while others talk to him. Justin is also in the water and dives under the raft to check for leaks – then scene cuts.

cut to...

SCENE 6

Sinking C

- 6 shot of: (15:30) Robert, Justin and Michael are treading water – the raft has completely deflated and is merely a black and orange shape on the sea's surface. Justin tries to climb into the middle but just sinks [there are still a couple of small pockets of air]. Lots of talking, shouting and pointing.

cut to...

SCENE 7

The raft has sunk.

- 7 shot of: (16:00) Robert, Justin and Michael are threading water – there is no sign of the raft - scene opens with them quite close together [close shot at almost sea level] – they look beaten and worried – lots of talking and looking at the horizon, both out of the picture plane and to the horizon.

cut to...

SCENE 8

Closing scene.

- 8 shot of: (just before dusk: no visible sun) a medium shot of the empty sea to the horizon. The raft has sunk, Justin Quinn got cramp and drowned first, Robert Mayes drowned a few hours later due to exhaustion and like-wise Michael Gibson succumbed to death by drowning forty minutes later.

...iris out to black...
 ...after 1 beat iris into opening shot of scene 1 [empty sea at dawn]...
 ...and the loop begins again...



Visual references sourced online

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