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TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2007

Earth of the People

Mardkants yerkire / Earth of the People (Artavazd Peleshian, 1966)(via [Daniel Hayes](#))

POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ 10:41 PM 1 COMMENTS

essence

"I make films and videos that are short experiences in transformative time. I strive to capture an active and immediate emotional state during shooting, often by photographing seemingly mundane activities. In editing, I distill the images to get to what I would call "emotionally charged nodes". This process begins with a recognition of the emotional and rhythmic potential of an image, continues as I sequence the images, and finishes with the rendering and juxtaposition of these images against the filter of a carefully constructed soundtrack. The sounds are never the sound heard while recording the image. Rather, the soundscape is a construction that seems to come from the visual image but, in reality, works to isolate the

emotional potential of the images. My films and videos are not ideas that are then executed. They are elaborations of active engagements with a present moment that is already past. In many ways, my work is more similar to the process of image construction in poetry, music, and painting, than it is to that of narrative or argumentative forms of filmmaking. It is a process that allows viewers to invest a great deal of their own imagination and memory, their own emotion, into these audio/visual episodes. It is that process of creating an image in the mind of the viewer--the psychological filling-in of the imagined space, not the actual photograph of a space--that interests me the most."

-Leighton Pierce.

Eight of **Leighton Pierce's** recent, short digital video experiments were screened during the AIFF last week. My memory of these already-evasive films is fading fast (it is unforgivable that I now can't recall the soundscape of most of these films, and it is an element that's as important as the image in Pierce's films - he was a musician before he was a filmmaker) and I'm left with rushes of exuberant colours and enigmatic forms and a strong desire of discovering some of them again (esp. *Viscera*, but also *Water Seeking Its Level* and *A Private Happiness*). Transitions between images are indecipherable here and they exist in a seeming flux, like the subject of water-as-an-element which these films keep returning to. At times, it seems Pierce is capturing the beauty, the ecstasy contained in matter before its inevitable disappearance (*Evaporation*, *Wood*), while in others his work comes across as a wondrous, childlike rediscovery of the world (literally in *Fall*, and also *Water Seeking Its Level* with its precious exclamation "Dad, look!") or documentaries on the assemblage of memories (*A Private Happiness*, *Viscera*). Each of these short works is an exploration of such transient rhythms in a specific environment (the hotel room in *A Private Happiness*, the backyard in *Wood*, the stream in *Water Seeking Its Level*), seemingly refracted and folded such that the captured quotidian moment becomes protracted, eternal. This is perfectly rendered in *The Back Steps* which repeats a lush, dissolved shot of Pierce's children - a girl and a boy, dressed for Halloween - as they joyously move down steps into the wilderness that is the backyard, "a moving Velasquez", as Jon Jost himself **notes**. And then there is *Viscera*, an astonishing piece on the recreation of a presence through remnants of their being, memories of their gestures, as molded in the impressionistic contours of light. A film built upon cascading refractions. The film dissolves in the memory as one watches it and (perhaps compounded by my own increasingly treacherous short-term memory) now I barely have any concrete recollection of it at all...

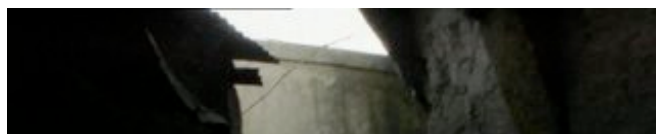
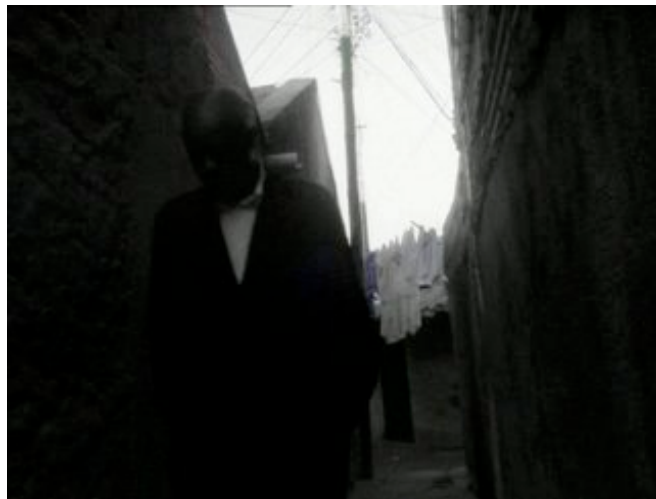


POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ : 10:04 PM 1 COMMENTS

MONDAY, JULY 30, 2007

passing through ruins...

... in *Colossal Youth* (Pedro Costa) and *Still Life* (Jia Zhang-ke).







POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ : 7:50 PM 9 COMMENTS

FRIDAY, JULY 20, 2007

Metamkine

Heinrich Deisl:

Metamkine deal with a rudimentary, even archaeological understanding of cinema and music in order to arrive at the essence of the respective medium... The musical rhythm loops, which are at times perceived as pulsating, other times below the perception threshold, do not fall into the trance-like, repetitive machine beat of techno music. (Metamkine) view rhythm as layers of sound, sound colouration, drones or sequencing which, apart from intensely territorialising the body, at the same time also captures the largest human hearing organ, the skin, by making use of the complete frequency range....

Since 1987 the French artists Jérôme Noetinger, Christophe Auger und Xavier Quérel have been working together as Celulle d'Intervention Metamkine. Their performances have a rather haptic air about them, since they exclusively handle various Super8- and 16mm-films and vintage synthesisers. What makes them differ from other formations is simply that Auger and Quérel, by manually controlling projectors, convert them practically into visual instruments which enter into spontaneous interaction with the analogue music and by doing so, significantly determine the overall composition... Operational sounds such as the clattering of projectors blend in with partially crude analogue layers of sound or sound fragments of the prefabricated magnetic tapes; at times the smell of (un)intentionally burnt filmstrips fills the air. The filmstrips, which are edited as loops, are self-produced or found footage, and through the choreographies which are evaluated in extensive rehearsals, they generate a performative image space

in which the depicted transforms into a sculptural replica. Adding to this, Metamkine work with a set of mirrors, so that through extra deflections and refractions the projections are ad infinitum expanded, fragmented, bent – beyond recognition.

More [here](#). Also see: [Yann Beauvais](#).

It was an ecstatic performance. I'm not entirely sure *how* they were doing it but whatever I saw that night was a result of live transformation of mostly original material on 8mm and 16mm. I could count four projectors and two mirrors, perhaps there were more. The above paragraphs offer a much better description of their aesthetic than I can at this moment...



POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ : 12:14 AM 0 COMMENTS

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2007

prelude

As part of the 39th [Auckland IFF](#), La Cellule d'Intervention Metamkine will be performing their Lettrist experiments and live celluloid transformations tonight. I'm intrigued by the tantalising images on their [site](#) - I think I'm going for this.

As always, there's several films on the programme this year which I'll be seeing over the next two weeks (while taking no time off work, by the way), but, strangely, few which I'm truly excited about. I think I'll get into the swing of the festival once the actual encounters with the films begin... Bitter disappointment over the films that were surely left out to make room for the many hip documentaries and audience favourites that decorate the programme has by now subsided and given way to an anxiousness over keeping up the energy levels (what's Olaf Möller's secret when it comes to this?!) to experience whatever *is* screening - *Killer of Sheep*, for instance, with Charles Burnett in attendance (that alone makes up for any programming fuck-ups this year). Also on the bright side, the festival's more experimental selections continue to impress: along with Metamkine, there's a selection of films by [Leighton Pierce](#), a handful by [Danny Williams](#), and perhaps a couple others which I have to look into. Plus Weerasethakul, Jia, Oliveira, Lynch, Ferran, Serra, Van Sant, Sissako... OK, so maybe now I'm getting excited... In the meantime, I've just received a package from a cine-comrade (to borrow a term from Zach Campbell) containing the latest works by Ossang and Noureddine, so perhaps, if time allows, I'll watch these soon and tell myself they also screened at the festival. Just as long as I'm not betrayed by my inertia...

POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ : 1:01 AM 0 COMMENTS

FRIDAY, JULY 13, 2007

#100



Above: A phantom materialises at the will of the spoken word in Eugène Green's *Le Monde vivant* (2003), and Monteverdi's '*Lamento della Ninfa*' (Cantus Cölln et. al.), which makes several appearances in Green's *Le Pont des Arts* (2004).

Even though theatre and cinema can arrive at the same spiritual result, the means they use are completely different, and even opposite. That's why I had problems in the theatre. For me the reality of theatre is always based on something completely false, and assumed as such; that is, for the theatre to be real, the actors and the audience have to be aware at all times that they are in the theatre, and that they are using and recognizing codes: it's through the absolute falsity of these codes that they arrive at an absolute truth. Whereas in the cinema - which is of course also a representation - the basic raw material is always a reality, whether it's that of a human being, an inanimate object, some sort of material, a tree, or an animal: in every case, the shot contains a real energy. The specificity of cinema is to capture fragments of reality, and to make the spectator see in them things that he wouldn't have been aware of had he observed them in their natural context. That's why for me cinema is always a spiritual expression: it can make you see things which are invisible in the material world...

A psychological interpretation is always false. If you manage to capture the inner truth of a human being, you always capture a mystery which resists analysis. But psychology is rational analysis, and psychological acting is a rationalization. An actor thinks: I'm supposed to be angry, and he's going to do something with his voice or his body to show he's angry, thinking at the same time that the audience mustn't realise he's thinking about it: that means there's an intellectual process between his inner energy and what he shows. Whereas I want the words to hit him and release his emotions directly: I want the emotions to be absolutely real and authentic, coming from his inner life, with all its mystery, which is the thing that interests me the most. In that I resemble Bresson, I think.

- Eugène Green

A couple more links for now: Christoph Huber in *Cinema Scope*, and Ken Chen in *Film International*.

POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ : 10:46 PM 2 COMMENTS

MONDAY, JULY 02, 2007

another loss

"I have a hundred stories to tell, one for each character in *A Brighter Summer Day*..."

- Edward Yang (1947 - 2007)





POSTED BY MUBARAK ALI @ : 11:40 PM 0 COMMENTS

AS I WAS MOVING AHEAD...

- ◆ The Academic Hack
- ◆ Adventures in Modern (Re)Collection
- ◆ Ainda não começámos a pensar
- ◆ Alicia y los espejos
- ◆ El Amante
- ◆ Anotações de um Cinéfilo
- ◆ The Art of Memory
- ◆ The Auteurs' Notebook
- ◆ Le blog de Serge Toubiana
- ◆ Blogs & Docs
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- ◆ El Camino de Méséglise
- ◆ Chained to the Cinémathèque
- ◆ chungking express
- ◆ Cinebeats
- ◆ cinemacomcana
- ◆ Cinemasparagus
- ◆ Le Colonel Chabert
- ◆ Concentrated

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