

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

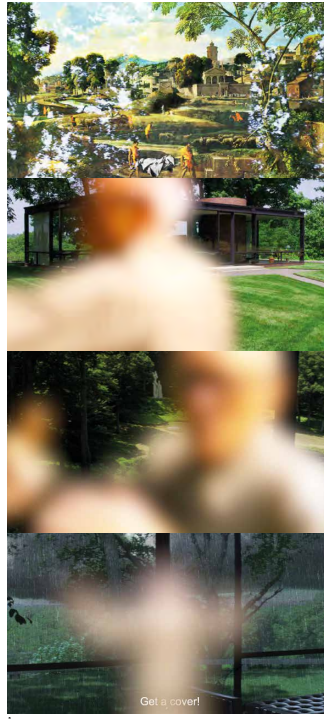
Lauren Cornell, "we have always been in the..." *Mousse Magazine*, June, 2015

## Mousse Magazine

- 1 Rachel Rose, *A Minute Ago* (still), 2014. © the artist. Courtesy: Pilar Corrias, London
- 2 Ben Russell, *Creations in the Deciduous* (still), 2015. Courtesy: the artist
- 3 Rachel Rose, *Pallades in Pallades* (still), 2014. © the artist. Courtesy: Pilar Corrias, London
- 4 Rachel Rose, *Sitting Feeding Sleeping* (still), 2013. © the artist. Courtesy: Pilar Corrias, London
- 5 Ben Russell, *Atlantis* (still), 2012. Courtesy: the artist
- 6 Ben Russell, *Let Us Preserve in What We Have Received Before We Forget* (still), 2013. Courtesy: the artist

### A CONVERSATION BETWEEN LAUREN CORNELL, RACHEL ROSE AND BEN RUSSELL

**Rachel Rose** (b. 1981) lives and works in New York. Rachel Rose's videos and installations address how we define ourselves, the boundaries between the self and the other, the relationship between the physical and the virtual. Her work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New Museum, and the Institute of Contemporary Art. Her most recent work is *A Minute Ago* (2014), a video work that explores the relationship between the physical and the virtual. Her most recent work is *A Minute Ago* (2014), a video work that explores the relationship between the physical and the virtual.

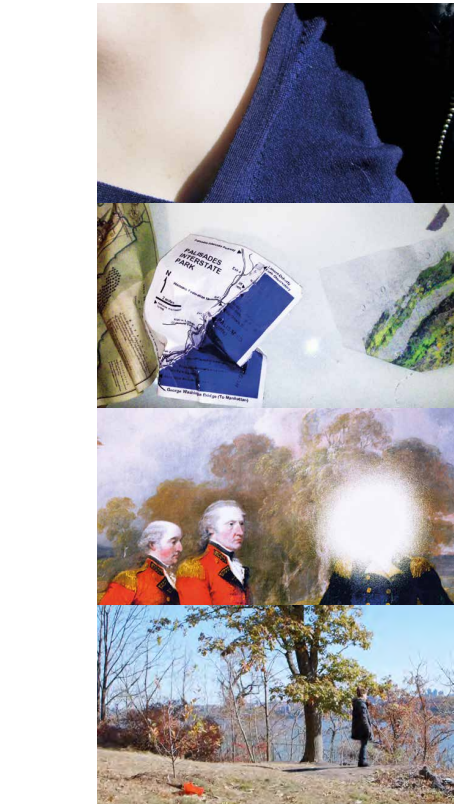


The moving image works of Rachel Rose and Ben Russell are marked by sharp cuts, dense layers of effects and deep feeling manifest on-screen: their camera's gaze can shift from the innards of the earth to the sky in one quick sequence and often seems to embody the tremors of an anxious and restless state of mind.

### WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN THE END TIMES



**Ben Russell** (b. 1976, USA) is a media artist and curator whose film, installation, and performance works address the relationship between the physical and the virtual. His work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New Museum, and the Institute of Contemporary Art. His most recent work is *Creations in the Deciduous* (2015), a video work that explores the relationship between the physical and the virtual.



### WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN THE... R. ROSE, B. RUSSELL

Una conversazione fra Lauren Cornell, Rachel Rose e Ben Russell

**LAUREN CORNELL** Question of source material: where does your footage come from? How much is original and how much is found?

**BEN RUSSELL** Shot for a 15mm film that I made in 2008 from the excess frames of a 35mm Richard Pryor stand-up feature. I've only ever shot and edited images that I've recorded myself. Most of the real pleasure I get from making films comes from isolating new images and sounds in the course of production, and while I'm sure that we are by now deeply over-saturated, that there is some sort of ethical fail in adding more wreckage to the junkpile, I'm not quite ready to give this up.

**RACHEL ROSE** I always start with original footage I've shot. I consider the camera movements and lenses to be materials—so it's important that I have control over the main footage sources. Usually I intend to work with only this, but as the video materializes, I sometimes find I can't express certain movements, rhythms and surfaces with everything I've shot. When I'm editing, I'm constantly reworking the underlying feeling, structure, and question of the work. The feeling is lived out in the edit. And in this way, I always end up working new tactics, techniques and—new pieces of footage.

**LC** The feeling is lived out in the edit? speaks to how central editing is to your overall work.

**RR** I like to map out the edit before I shoot, the most important initial step in my process is actually labeling. I tend to take a few weeks to meticulously label and code every piece of footage, even the most seemingly unusable, minute sections. This gives me a deeper understanding of what I've shot, and it builds in time for me so I can consider each shot with greater perspective. I can see that a shot that I might have intended to be about one thing actually registers as something completely different, or that something has slipped in, changing the composition and color—like a red sweater slightly visible in the left of a frame that's supposed to be a close-up of an astronaut suit. Seeing and taking time during the process of labeling, I'm able to describe the shot in more dimensions—as being about redness, about material, about dimensions. Then when I edit, I'm using this awareness to complicate and simplify the feeling of the work, over and over again.

**RR** Is this the point at which you conceive your installations? They often carry over the dynamics from the videos into built environments.

**RR** In the earliest stages of the video, from when I start the research, I think about and treat the installation as the materialization of the structure of the edit. In this way, it co-evolves as the edit does. Each part of the apparatus of viewing—the projector, the screen, the sound, the seating, the natural light and dimensions of the space—is reconfigured differently for each video.

**RR** Had a pretty long run of thinking about filmmaking as performance, of relying more on production than on what happened in post, but of late I've been much more of a gatherer than a hunter—choosing to edit, stepping aside to let time and retrospect reduce whatever I've uncovered into a more coherent body. The technological fact of filming with an 16mm camera means that my images and sounds are often recorded non-synch, that they are disconnected from each other from the very beginning. This material separation helps to expand the conceptual gap between event and meaning, allowing for my soundscapes to become more dynamic, emotional, symbolic. Even when I make use of a literary frame to broadly organize sound-image relationships, I will reserve a lot of space for some seriously tentative AV collisions.

**LC** Regarding "serious imitation," Ben, you've previously described your work as "psychic ethnography" for the way it exchanges the objectivity associated with documentary for a more deeply subjective viewpoint—the idea, as I understand it, being that the work is more a sociology of your mind than of another culture. And yet, even from within this paraverse, politics of representation remain. How do you gain access to the communities you document, and how do you think through their portrayal?

**RR** It's always been clear to me that to represent is to misrepresent—that filmmaking is necessarily a set of uneven power relations, that the way forward is clumsy and ethically ungrounded at best. In spite of or in light of this, I've consistently tried to avoid any/all objective claims by treating my filmed subject as one of many subjects present—one that exists parallel to material, audience, and author. This is what the term "psychotic ethnography" means to me—it's a methodology, a way to allow for the apparently objective facts of existence to be constantly reframed by radical subjective experience.

As for access, it happens through what anthropologists call agents and what producers call fixers. These points of entry may vary from place to place, but it is always necessary to be present for a while before I begin filming. Working with actual humans in actual spaces means staying aware of my presence as author, in compensating my collaborators for their time, in keeping a careful distance from the ideological trap of the document.

I tacetly lavori di Rachel Rose e Ben Russell sono caratterizzati da tagli netti, effetti densamente stratificati e una forte carica sensoriale, evidente sullo schermo: lo sguardo del loro obiettivo si sposta dalla viscerale della terra al cielo in un'ultima veloce sequenza che sembra spesso commuoversi l'innanzi di uno stato mentale ansioso e inquieto.

**LAUREN CORNELL** Parliamo della domanda sulla provenienza del materiale: da dove arriva il "giusto" quanto è originale e quanto "trovato"?

**BEN RUSSELL** A parlo un film 16mm che ho realizzato nel 2008 a quattro tagli scarti della ripresa su pellicola 35mm di un monologo di Richard Pryor, utilizza e monta sempre e soltanto immagini girate da me. Una delle cose che mi piace di più del cinema è isolare immagini e suoni nuovi in fase di produzione. Anche se sono certo che viviamo in un'epoca più che scarse di immagini, e che da perfino in qualche modo eticamente sbagliato aggiungere altra spazzatura al mucchio, non sono ancora pronto ad abbandonare questa pratica.

**RACHEL ROSE** Io parto sempre da immagini originali girate da me. Considero materiale anche i movimenti di macchina e gli obiettivi in genere tendi a lavorare esclusivamente con questo materiale ma, nel momento in cui si materializza il video, mi capita di non riuscire a esprimere determinati movimenti, ritmi e superfici con il mio girato. Quando passo al montaggio, tendo a rinvocare costantemente l'atmosfera generale, la struttura e il motivo del lavoro. L'atmosfera si materializza durante il montaggio. E questo mi porta spesso a elaborare tattiche, tecniche nuove e nuove sequenze di immagini.

**LC** "L'atmosfera si materializza durante il montaggio" a la conferma di quanto sia importante il montaggio nel suo lavoro.

**RR** Anche se tento a progettare il montaggio prima di iniziare a girare, il momento più importante nel mio processo è in realtà la classificazione. È un processo che, oltre a farmi capire meglio ciò che ho girato, si approfondisce nel tempo consentendomi di visualizzare ogni immagine in una prospettiva più ampia. Mi rende conto che un'immagine che nelle mie intenzioni doveva riguardare una certa cosa, può manifestarsi in realtà un'altra del tutto diversa, o che lo spostamento di un elemento nell'immagine influenza la composizione e il colore - ad esempio un maglione rosso appena visibile a sinistra di un'inquadratura pensata come primo piano di una testa di astronauta. Osservare e soffermarmi sul processo di classificazione mi consente di descrivere l'immagine in modo più dimensionale e - evidenziando il colore rosso, il materiale, la goffaggine. Quando passo al montaggio, uso questa consapevolezza per complicare e semplificare ripetutamente l'atmosfera del lavoro.

**LC** È questa la fase in cui concepisci le tue installazioni? Spesso riprodottono negli ambienti costruiti la dinamica presente nel video.

**RR** Fin dalle primissime fasi del video, quando inizia il processo di ricerca, penso e tratto l'installazione come la materializzazione della struttura del montaggio. In questo modo l'installazione e il montaggio evolvono in parallelo. Ricorrigo ogni elemento dell'apparato visivo - il proiettore, lo schermo, le sedie, la luce naturale e le dimensioni dello spazio - in modo diverso per ogni video.

**RR** Per molto tempo ho continuato a vivere la cinematografia come una performance, preoccupandomi più della fase di produzione che di ciò che accade in post-produzione. Ultimamente, invece, mi sento molto più raccolto che cacciatore - giro per montare, mettendomi da parte per lasciare che il tempo e il senso di poi rivelino a me lo scoppio

