



1+1+1

Issue Two, Summer 2005



The Trouble with Talkies

As a group Double agents is based on the belief that there is a value in dialogue. Not as the means to simply exchange prior knowledge or to rehearse an existing position, but as a means to generate something out of the contingent, interrogative and improvisational quality of the process. This openness allows ideas to form in the act, for the discovering of ideas and as a way of thinking (out loud).

The exhibition *The Trouble with Talkies* is born out of this belief and organised around a simple premise, decided collectively as an instruction from which the show, and what it might be capable of, could develop. Each of us brought into discussion, through email and face to face meetings, a work that we might somehow consider for this project. What criteria we might be using to select these works was the subject of our first exchanges. And in a way this was one of our interests – how do artists look at and think about other artists work, and how might they create a group exhibition that they select as a 'curatorium'?

Would proposing works with which we have some kind of dialogue result in a show of favourites? Did they represent works to which we aspire? Were they alibis – reference points we might use to think about something we were making ourselves, to help explain 'where we were at that moment' (too neat an analogy maybe, but that these proposals were made subject to our interests 'at that moment only' is worth underlining, as the relevance of these choices might be subject to some quite specific and only very current preoccupations).

We continued – were these works proxies? Standing in for ourselves or for work we might have hoped, or even tried, to make? Were these works that, if we were to choose two, would somehow plot points between which we might find our own work – not quite this, but then not quite that either?

In truth many or all of these criteria played their part and we didn't try to agree an overarching rationale – curation by committee wasn't the point and neither was a feigned consensus – we didn't aim to agree or even to converge our interests (and we don't think the show pretends that). Instead the specifics of our own interests, preoccupations, expectations, fascinations and blind spots (embodied in the works we had proposed) became apparent in the light cast by those of others.

And this is the ambition for the show – that a similar dynamic exists here as did in the conversations out of which the show has emerged. That the particularities of each of the works, particularities perhaps otherwise latent, are made apparent, in the similarities and differences between them, in this temporary moment of bringing them into dialogue, here.

: Double agents

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Jitka Hanzlová *Untitled, 1993* (dancing with goat)

We're standing somewhere in a field – I think with a gate just behind us – and maybe there was a cry a few seconds ago – 'Look! We want to show you something!'
And perhaps half an hour before this someone noticed a goat loose in a field and a father calls out to his child that, before dinner, could she go quickly and do something about it?
A responsibility then quickly turns to play, catalysing the present of this image. Words that have accumulated are temporarily suspended by an exhalation of laughter. And in the midst of that exclamation there is a brief silence where artist, viewer, girl and goat all steady themselves together – poised – a centring of relationships across a fulcrum; between those of belonging, and those evolved from the fall away from another.

The photographic series, *Rokytník*, that this image comes from is usually presented with the additional information that *Rokytník* is the northern Bohemian village where Hanzlová grew up and that she returns to it after exile, to a place and people that were once 'home' – in order to see it again. Or not 'again,' for this seeing is now completely conditioned by perspectives from the space outside it – time spent growing up away from it – disconnecting from that earlier experience of a place and its community. With this knowledge we can come close yet must remain within a certain distance.

With the collapse of Soviet authority in 1989, Czechoslovakia regained its freedom through a peaceful 'Velvet Revolution.'
On 1 January 1993, the country underwent a 'velvet divorce' into its two national components, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Jitka Hanzlová made her *Rokytník* photographs between 1990–1994.
The extent of the impact of these significant political changes on a rural village like *Rokytník* is ambiguous, but for a child, let alone a goat..? This image contains almost a catalogue of desired innocence and a wonder at the possibility of imperviousness – a brief event that, determinedly, we might hope to view outside the vicissitudes of history.

Leaving 'home' we can only return to it incompletely, always remaining to some extent exposed and detached from it. Standing out. As if kindly empathising with this condition a girl and goat begin to dance in the foreground, extraordinarily, standing up and standing out from the horizontal plane of the field and the distant background. Yet, despite this sympathetic performance the contingency of goat, girl and landscape becomes increasingly clear. Whilst a stray thread on the girl's sweater pays homage to the goat's saucy tail, their expressions suggest trust has allowed vision to enjoy self-communion. Goat and environment are especially linked: its momentary anthropomorphic posture seems to give it a strange control over the entire landscape. Pan and pantheism. There is a track receding up a hill between the girl and goat, a cheeky echo of the silhouette of the goat's face. The sunlight is strong but where is the shadow of the goat? A shadow cast by the goat's brow suggests that the background landscape continues through the girl's head, dematerialising her. The goat's gaze also pursues this same contour, as though checking that all is in alignment. This precipitates the drift downhill of the entire village beyond it, which appears to be caught in a slow, sweeping, glacial flow ending out of view in the centre left of the image. All the background verticals skew leftwards. As if in harmony with the dancers they sway to a hidden tune. If we don't believe in this veering landscape then the absolute verticality of the dancers must be a wish – a lie told through their framing...in which case these two dancers are already falling. Yet, they are strangely rooted too. The girl's right leg is quite bent (to balance, and encourage the next move), her torso straight, yet her foot is able to remain flat on the ground.

And how is this goat so white, so clean? Its back in the sunlight looks like the bleached dissolution of the photograph. Or a soft rip across the image, of one removed.

Here is a place where the children and goats dance in a jubilant display of lightness whilst the adults remain out of view.
There is no way that this image seeks to expose our real distance from it, to remind us that we have returned but are no longer part of its space. It has built itself from precisely the opposite intention.
Because of looking but not belonging, a girl and goat perform in a kind attempt to include us in their special trick. Standing out (like us) and up they inadvertently generate an image that reveals the totally fluid indivisibility between themselves and their place. A relationship we have left. We cannot simultaneously see and be part of this space. We can just keep seeing more.

I'd emailed Jitka to check on the exact title of the picture I had been calling 'girl dancing with goat' and at last here was a reply:
"It is not a girl, it is a boy!"

Adam Chodzko



Jitka Hanzlová
Untitled
1993 from the series *Rokytník*

Talk is Cheap

Some Notes on Freedom of Speech and the Ethics of Listening in *Route 181* by Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan

Freedom is hot verbal currency these days and much is claimed or done in its name; it has become what in French would be called a *pas-se-partout*, a key to all doors. George W. Bush used the word freedom 42 times during his second inaugural address as US president earlier this year; the speech lasted only 21 minutes which amounts to two freedoms per minute. As an abstract and modern notion (i.e. not physical freedom from slavery or oppression) freedom is a product or indeed aim of the Enlightenment project; it was sloganised during the French revolution in *égalité, liberté, fraternité* (equality, freedom and familia/national ties) and canonized in the same year in relation to speech as the first amendment to the US constitution. Thus freedom of speech represents something like an after-thought, a belated realization, or indeed, a Derridean supplement... Since then, freedom of speech has been promoted to a fundamental human right and is now embedded in many constitutions and charters worldwide, often bundled with the right to information. Yet this double freedom of expression and information is by no means an absolute one; there are many interests, be they political or economic, that it may not interfere with. Moreover, while speech – if it is permitted – can come about as a spontaneous act, access to information on the other hand – even if it is considered a right – always takes place in a controlled environment. Not only if speech is to be free and informed is it dependent on access and thus subject to various control-mechanisms; also on much more subtle levels, many conditions are necessary for freedom of speech to be possible in reality. These political, cultural, educational, social and economic factors evade easy quantification. In *Archive.Fever* Derrida notes how access to archives can be seen as a measure of democratization.¹ In addition, I would argue that conditions need to be created where newly accessed information can also be circulated freely and sensibly, that is, without being used as a propagandistic instrument. In allusion to Benjamin's historical index of recognizability,² one could speak of a historical index of utterability; a marker of moments in time and place when certain things can be said.

For decades, many facts of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict have remained unspoken, not only in both communities but also internationally. While the phenomenon of the so-called 'new historians' has begun to demystify certain aspects of official history, much remains still unspoken.³ Moreover, in recent years there has certainly been a lot of talk about Israel/Palestine, and indeed leaders of the two communities have also begun to talk to each other (if only intermittently). However, the absence of real freedom of speech on both sides of the conflict can still crudely and sadly be measured by the fact that speaking their mind can (and has) cost people their lives.

Defying this, Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan set out to hear people speak about their experiences in this complicated land, tell their stories, convey their understanding of the present situation as well as their ideas of the past, their hopes for or resignation vis-à-vis the future. Traveling from the south to the north of Palestine/Israel on a virtual line which follows the UN borders of the never implemented 1947 partition plan (resolution 181), the film-makers encountered anonymous Israelis and Palestinians freely speaking their mind. In the project notes of *Route 181*, the four and a half hour filmic document of their journey, Khleifi and Sivan write: "The voices of those forgotten by official discourse will, we hope, be heard – the voices of those who nonetheless constitute the majority in both societies, those in whose name wars are fought." Viewers might not agree with what people say in the film; we might be shocked, surprised, saddened and hopeful. However, one of the most powerful reactions the film provokes stems from the sheer fact of hearing people speak; they dare say things which might be considered treacherous by some in their own communities. What we witness first and foremost is the act of faith constituted by free speech.

In the first chapter of his *On Interpretation*, Aristotle writes: "Every sentence is significant [...], but not every sentence is a statement-making sentence, but only those in which there is truth or falsity. There is not truth or falsity in all sentences: a prayer is a sentence but is neither true nor false. The present investigation deals with the statement-making sentence; the others we can dismiss, since consideration of them belongs rather to the study of rhetoric or poetry. (350BC/1928)" This linguistic 'snobbery' (or descriptive fallacy as it is called) remained largely unchallenged for over two thousand years. Amongst the first to oppose the Aristotelian prejudice against non-judgmental language was Thomas Reid who began considering other types of sentence in addition to judgments. Reid's technical term for prayers, promissings, warnings, forgivings, etc., is "social operations". Sometimes he also calls them "social acts", and opposes them to "solitary acts" such as judgments, intendings, deliberatings and desirings, which are characterized by the fact that it is not essential to them that they be expressed and by the fact that their performance does not presuppose another "intelligent being in the universe" in addition to the person who performs them (1894/1969).³ Therefore, social speech acts are significant for two reasons: not only are they independent from notions of truth and falsity, they actually dismiss these as irrelevant categories or classifications altogether. In addition, they introduce a vis-à-vis into the speech act, an addressee. The ear of the other, the act of listening is the condition, the *raison d'être* of this kind of speech. While the rights or wrongs of solitary speech acts belong to the realms of information and morality, the social speech act operates in the mode of address, prompting an ethics of listening. Levinas describes the face-to-face encounter as the primal moment from which all language and communication springs. The face of the other in its expression and mortality summons me and pronounces that we are responsible for others. The appearance and

awareness of otherness as well as the emergence of ethics itself is thus localized in the face-to-face situation.⁴ Only face-to-face can my hearing become an act of listening. The other's voice commands me to listen, and by addressing me, makes me into a witness of its utterance. As a consequence I become answerable. This does not mean that I actually need to answer, but I am irrevocably drawn into the responsibility of having been addressed. As such, having someone who listens, rather than someone who answers can be considered as the first condition for dialogue.

Much has been made in Middle East commentary of the lack and/or promise of dialogue. *Route 181* exposes the false premise of this. The film-makers' aim is not to reconcile opposing sides, nor to make them talk to each other; what they do instead is more modest, but also more radical. They simply listen to what people have to say. And it is their act of listening which creates the very conditions for what is being said and how it is being said. Khleifi's and Sivan's presence and attention allows the people they encounter on their journey to address them and in turn address us, the viewers. The real exchange which thus occurs lifts the weight of communication under which the region (and the world) so agonizes; the informational, the solitary speech act is turned into an address, a social operation. What we hear is more powerful than facts or judgements; we are face-to-face with people's warnings, prayers, forgivings and despair. In *Route 181* the *mise-en-abîme* of official discourse modifies the quality of listening and implicates us, the viewers, in what is being said. Like the film-makers themselves who have rejected tribal allegiances, we begin to hear with the ear of the other. This creates a critical shift from what is being said to how we listen to it. Indeed, at a time when so much has been said about Palestine/Israel but much less has actually been heard, the quality of listening takes on crucial importance. What the encounter with the 'protagonists' of *Route 181* makes us realize is that we don't just need new historians or new histories; we also need an ethics of listening. Talk is cheap – the privilege and skill of listening is hard-earned.

Uriel Orlow



Route 181
2002

1 "If [the public] is only allowed freedom, enlightenment is almost inevitable. For even among the entrenched guardians of the great masses a few will always think for themselves, a few who, after having themselves thrown off the yoke of immaturity, will spread the spirit of a rational appreciation for both their own worth and for each person's calling to think for himself." Immanuel Kant, *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment* (1784)

2 "There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation. A contrario, the breaches of democracy can be measured by [...] *Excluded Archives*." Jacques Derrida, *Archive.Fever* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

3 "For the historical index of the images not only says that they belong to a particular time, it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time." Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)

4 The new historians whose re-appraisal of official history and/or propaganda since the late 1980's has ushered in a Post-Zionist debate, include amongst others Baruch Kimmerling, Joel Migdal, Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé, Tom Segev and Avi Shlaim

5 of Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith, *Elements of Speech Act Theory in the Work of Thomas Reid* (History of Philosophy Quarterly 7, 1990)

6 of Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1979)

Cecily Brennan's Collapsing Can

We were speaking about the impulse to self-harm, that point of desparation when words fail or seem pointless in the face of an overwhelming loss that cannot be named or worked out into language, when the weight of being turns in on itself. And sometimes the presence of this pain needs to become visible, to register itself on the surface. So if it doesn't erupt onto the skin, then maybe it needs to be placed there differently...self-harm as a form of self-care... Later, bandaging the cut, becomes a sign of taking care...speaks of the hurt that's there, for all to see and not see.

And we were thinking about Kristeva's *Black Sun*, the beauty of its language and the bleak sadness and beauty of the figures she outlines there, the sense of slowness as a warding off of worse; a holding off of further damage; the image of darkness seeping and how practically one might make it come about.

Cecily is working on a series of experiments regarding the transformations caused by a build-up of energy and pressure, both from within and without. One piece is a recreation of the Hero's Engine. Here, the water in a blown-glass container is heated to boiling point and released as steam through two 'arms' on its side. The Hero's Engine begins to rotate as the steam is released until it spits and hisses and spins more and more frenetically. Coins hop about from over-heating; a woman seems to recede into a space that recalls Holbein's *Dead Christ in the Tomb* as black liquid seeps out from underneath her.

But my favourite experiment involves a small red can. It held a small amount of water. Heated up, the water evaporated, leaving a vacuum. Slowly, under the atmospheric pressure which is just that of everyday life the can begins to buckle before keeling over and falling off its little stand with a thud that is both bleak and funny at the same time.

Jaki Irvine



Cecily Brennan
Collapsing Can
Video
2005



Cecily Brennan
Hero's Engine
Video
2005

Anthony McCall's Miniature in Black and White (1972)

Amongst all the works of art that are in some way important to us – to the way that we talk about our own work, between ourselves and with others, how we think about it, and how we make it – there is a significant number of them that exist for us now only as images in catalogues, descriptions and references in essays and books, and through anecdote, word of mouth and something approaching legend. Some of these are films that do hold out the promise of a screening at some point in the future (Warhol's twin screen *Poor Little Rich Girl* for instance, or Jordan Belson's *Re-entry*), although some pieces of cinema seem to be always beyond viewing (Pierre Chenal's collaboration with Le Corbusier from 1931 *Architecture Aujourd'hui* being a prime example). Some are buildings, Erich Mendelsohn's Rupenhornm House or Richard Neutra's Moore House, which, it's just possible, we might visit sometime. But other pieces are site-specific works that are likely never to be reconstructed, or works that have apparently disappeared (Robert Irwin's *Scrim* pieces of the mid 1970s, or Fred Sandback's New Haven Studio pieces from the late 60s). Finally this list of rare experiences might well include Fabio Mauri's *Without Ideology* series, and the exemplar, the Pasolini piece in which a 16mm copy of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* was projected onto the body of Pasolini himself.

Two points emerge here. The first is that we have no idea whether these pieces are as interesting as the photographs and what we have heard of them suggests (bearing in mind that not actually seeing the work can produce some strange misreadings). The second is that although it might be a cliché that a photograph of thing is not the thing itself, it actually appears to be a cliché we happily ignore every time we discuss these works which have now become utterly familiar to us, even though in some cases we have seen just a single image taken from an exhibition. And so, it's easy to be tempted to imagine or presume that through these photographs or 'Chinese-whispers' we 'know' the work, yet when we actually encounter it directly we realise what a bizarre idea this really is.

In September last year we were invited to take part in a public 'in conversation' with Anthony McCall at Tate Britain to coincide with the staging of his film installation *Long Film for Four Projectors*. This was a piece that we were very familiar with, but only from pictures and descriptions. To see this work was a revelation, the sheer physical presence and durational experience of light and effect as one faces the projector beam to witness 'solid light' made a mockery of our expectations and made us want to see other pieces all the more. One of these pieces was *Miniature in Black and White* – of which we had only seen a small pencil drawing. When we went to Paris in October last year to meet with Anthony again, *Miniature...* was included in the Centre Georges Pompidou show at La Maison Rouge. Again this was a work that we had read of and talked about, but to see it made obvious one of the most significant aspects of McCall's practice, and an important corrective to a tendency to use the catalogue or the art magazine, the description or anecdote, or in fact anything at all, as a substitute for the experience of the work itself.

Miniature in Black and White is a work that seems to exist at the point at which talking stops, or is superseded or overwhelmed by something other than the easily describable. It is a difficult piece to watch (that is, to try and see it as a sequence and to infer development) or to look at (not as a sequence but as a set, of individual images, changing but without necessarily developing). It's difficult because of the complications produced by the afterimage. Not only are the images (the 'proper' ones on slide) so brief as to barely be there at all but the accumulating afterimages seem to thicken on our eyes and produce intermediate, superimposed, 'reverberations'. Combined with the repetitive, highly rhythmic, mechanical clunk of the slide projector as slides rise and fall the work also seems to create a viscerally experienced reverberation via its soundtrack – which is in effect a pulse. What then is it that we are looking at exactly? Can we look at an afterimage? Or are we left to try to 'see through' these traces? Are we actually experiencing a form of pulsion as much as an image? *Miniature in Black and White* confronts us with the phenomenon of the persistence of vision, a condition which, it could be argued, is the very foundation of film as a mechanism and an experience, but it does so with a simple slide projector and raises questions about how a work in one medium can critique the fundamentals of another.

Although not included in the exhibition itself *Miniature in Black and White* was cited in the catalogue to *Slide Show* at The Baltimore Museum of Art, Feb. to May 2005; a show of artists' work with slide projection prompted in part by Kodak's announcement that they would no longer be manufacturing slide projectors.

Miniature in Black and White has been shown several times abroad but only once in the UK, it's first showing, at Gallery House in London, as part of *A Survey of the Avant Garde in Britain* in 1972. A show including the work of David Hall and Tony Sinden, Gerard Hemsworth, John Stezaker, Jon Bird, William Raban, and Stephen Willats among others.

Graham Ellard and Stephen Johnstone



Anthony McCall
Miniature in Black and White
1972

Öndivatbemutató (Self Fashion Show) by Tibor Hajas (d.1980)

Tibor Hajas is an artist know n for his extreme actions, in *Dark Flash* , a performance held in Warsaw in 1978 Hajas hung from the ceiling by the rope bound to his wrists. In his hands he held a camera. As the blood drained from his hands and cut off his circulation, Hajas photographed his audience until he passed out. Had his audience not finally cut him down, the artist might have died. His film documents their indecision. John P Jacobs

I first encountered Öndivatbemutató last November at a symposium held in Prague. It was shown as part of a presentation by Miklos Erhardt from Budapest who was highlighting the achievements of the Béla Balázs Stúdió, that was somehow an anomaly under Communism – there was no obligation to show works to the public and therefore no censorship, to the extent that the studio encouraged artists to freely experiment in the medium of film.

Within the framework of a symposium dedicated to questions around artistic infrastructure in the 'former East' Öndivatbemutató struck me as a work that provided a counterpoint to current discussions around the artist, audience participation and site, expressed by artists as well as theoreticians within contemporary art. Inviting this work into *The Trouble with Talkies* was a snap decision, one that was made as much in relation to where-I-was-then, and reflects that moment when a work becomes something else that triggers a set of discursive relations.

I didn't know then, what I know now – namely that Hajas was mostly known as the producer of actions that bore out a relationship to Viennese Actionism. But as John P Jacob has noted 'The resemblance of Hajas' work to the Viennese Actionists' does not extend far beyond appearances. ... Hajas' performances challenged audiences against the danger of moral and intellectual passivity. While the role of the spectator in the Viennese Actionism is basically compliance.'

The point of retelling this anecdote has little to do with Hajas body of work and more to do with the precarious nature of that snap decision, and living with it. In today's curatorial climate it is frequently the artist that precedes the work, fuelled by those qualifying principles that attribute value and kudos to the amalgam of artist/art/curator. The experiment for me then becomes a liberation from a tacit agreement that demands of us that we pursue the right thing at the right time. That the passivity that Hajas was so keen to call into question is as prevalent here as it was there then, speaks of a necessity to place ourselves from time to time in our very own Öndivatbemutató.

Lisa Panting



Tibor Hajas
Öndivatbemutató
16mm film made in the Béla Balázs Stúdió
1976

Notes on *Itch* by Locky Morris

'A fiction allows us to grasp reality and at the same time what it hides.'
Marcel Broodthaers

I peer down the lens of a photographer's loupe, where a mound of silver shavings nests in a shallow depression on the top surface of a white plinth. Here lies the residue of an action that has erased/defaced the face value of something, something which has been rendered valueless. On the other hand through the erasure of this surface that which has been revealed carries the significance of its undoing. Locky Morris renders a speculation upon the precarious nature of free will, taking a chance, luck of the draw. Through this action which has defaced the surface reality of things we are brought to speculate; what if ...

I think of Marcel Broodthaers as a likely precursor to the likes of Locky Morris in two respects – first of all he establishes a critical relationship between media, drawing, film, sculpture photography including 'forms of the outmoded' and asks important questions related to value. In A voyage on the North Sea Art in the Post-Medium Condition Rosalind Krauss discusses Broodthaers' work in relation to a practice of primitive cinema. She speculates 'what is at issue in the context of a medium is not just this possibility of exploiting the fictional to unmask reality's lies, but of producing an analysis of fiction itself in relation to a specific structure of experience.' Her discussion of Broodthaers practice and method, his unfolding of form e.g. from the film to the book make me think of how Morris has rigorously questioned his material production and how the social world is held in dialogue with the conceptual decisions he makes interrogating every medium he employs to attempt to articulate the uncertainties of daily life.

I call Locky Morris to ask if we can include *Itch* in The Trouble with Talkies. During our conversation on the phone he tells me there are loads of dogs in Derry – and he has his own dog story.

'A double dilemma. A romantic gesture even. My dog and my girlfriend's dog buried amongst the roots of pinetrees. One died from old age, the other clipped by a taxi. I buried them close to-gether, one in a coal bag, the other in a binliner. Both exhumed now due the new Pinetress housing development. I don't know where they ended up, or the pine trees for that matter. I remember crying and pleading with my mother that I would spend my pocket money on dog food for the rest of my life if she let me keep him. Something my brothers take great delight in reminding me of every now and then. I got my way in the end though and the dog rewarded me by vomiting behind the sofa due to excitement.'

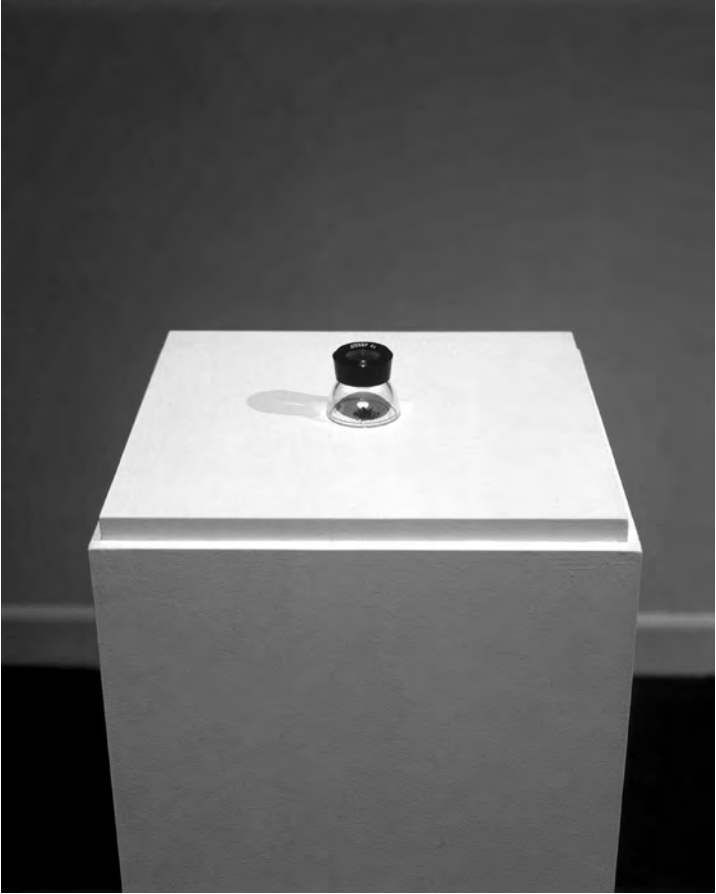
There were three works in Locky Morris' solo show The work of a dog at the Context Gallery in 2000. All articulated an immediate sense of place, time and event. On the right wall of the gallery, bits of a dog-chewed super ball lay glistening on a spotlight shelf in the signature work of the same name. Next to the shelf through earphones we could hear sounds of a dog making great effort over something. Up to a Hundred the second work facing the gallery door had a wasted football placed on top of an upturned hi-fi speaker, hung slightly above eye level, playing a recurring eighteen minute loop of Morris attempting to keep to a football in the air until finally he makes it one hundred kicks. All three figured an aftermath – a residue – something used up, ruined.

When I visited the exhibition with John Seth we were working in Derry and coincidentally using chance as a significant aspect of our working method. We seemed at some level to share similar concerns but whereas our project was predicated upon our being unfamiliar with the location Morris uses his local knowledge of the everyday life of his neighbourhood. Bliz-aard, 1990 in which David Hammons depicts himself standing in Cooper Union Square in New York selling snowballs or Travelling exhibited at the White Cube, 2004 – where a basketball is bounced around the gallery space leaving marks on the walls come to mind. Hammons and Morris both speak for the local – and make work that that is reflexive to the specific shifting social, political and cultural conditions of their communities in response to in dialogue with.

Born in Derry in 1960, where he continues to live, Morris has developed over 20 years a practice that also transcends the politics of the immediate location. *Itch* reflects how chance plays out in all our lives and although the political climate has shifted in Northern Ireland and the world has stopped holding Derry under the microscope, there remains economic and cultural conditions that challenge the lives of those who live there.

Back at my desk, I use my loupe to trace the motionless journey of Broodthaers' boats, clocks, rain... and scan each frame one by one. The loupe seals off what I am looking at in its small glass walls – my eye is held close into the image focusing differently the other shut a half gaze half light half dark. I see an imprisoned idyll – mountains, valleys and rivers in microcosm – a panoptical vision of a fantasy world.

Anne Tallentire
With thanks to John Seth



Locky Morris
Itch
1999



Marcel Broodthaers
La pluie
1969
Image courtesy of Maria Gilissen



David Hammons
Bliz-aard Ball Sale
1983
Image courtesy of Jack Tilton Gallery