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La Vitesse et La Pierre
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La Vitesse et La Pierre
Igor Zimmerman | Frode & Marcus
Curated by Frances Wilkinson
Shot in deserted areas of the world that reflect the isolation of its characters, La Vitesse et Le Pierre (2000) deals with themes of alienation and fragmented identities. Solitude links the two characters: Iris's struggles to fit into society while Bernhard has lost control of gravity, and floats around according to his own internal logic. The Sahara desert becomes the physical representation of the barren landscape in Iris’s head, while the blue man runs endlessly across the terrain, on a never-ending journey with neither goal to reach nor end in sight. There is no satisfaction or relief for Iris, or for the so-called personification of her mind, Bernhard.

La Vitesse et Le Pierre is a collaborative effort between Swedish film director Igor Zimmerman and self-described Scandinavian artistic-photographic-filmic duo Frode & Marcus. They wanted the filmmaking process to be an adventure, shooting the film in Stockholm, Sweden, Norway and the Western Sahara. Along the 3000 kilometres they drove through West Africa, they slept in the trunk of their car outside deserted towns, burned shoes in the desert and had long discussions with African border police about whether photography can be art (as explanation for having 30 kilograms of blue dye in their luggage).

The resulting film is the outcome of an experiment that explores the intersection of film and photography, a hybrid form that also comments upon the process of its production. Placed in a cinematic world, the characters are frozen in time, “like moving images, a hybrid form that also comments upon the process of its production.” The film is the outcome of an experiment that explores the intersection of film and photography, a hybrid form that also comments upon the process of its production. Placed in a cinematic world, the characters are frozen in time, “like moving images, a hybrid form that also comments upon the process of its production.”

Two general tendencies that appear within contemporary video installation can be seen in La Vitesse et Le Pierre. The first tendency is the self-conscious use of professional editing techniques and mainstream media imaging, evident here in the work’s appropriation of the highly stylized photographic techniques often seen in fashion photography. The second, more conceptually-defined direction, seeks to expose cinema and media cultures as constructed spectacles. La Vitesse et Le Pierre makes this revelation by drawing attention to the production process. The film gives the viewer the knowledge that, between each shot, much time and effort is dedicated to constructing each scene, despite it only being shown for a fleeting moment before it gives way to the next.

La Vitesse et Le Pierre is about convergence: the boundaries between the traditional roles of director, photographer and actor in this production are dissolved, as are the lines between film and photography, art and fashion. The result is a humorous yet melancholic, poetic and highly visual journey that uses an abstract narrative to comment on social conditions, as well as the processes of artistic production and technological change.

Bibliography


Royoux, Jean-Christophe. ‘Towards a post cinematic space-time’ in Sara Arrheius, Magdalena Malm and Cristina Ricupero (eds), Black Box Illuminated, Propexus: Stockholm, 2005, pp. 107-120


Frode & Marcus met while travelling as young men and then later at college in London, before they began collaborating in 2007. Frode Fjerdingstad is a Norwegian artist and Marcus Palmqvist began as a Swedish fashion photographer. Their collaborations weave surreal and abstract narratives with an underlying dark humour, contrasting older filming techniques such as VHS, with digital photography using highly stylized visuals influenced by Marcus’ photography training. They have exhibited collaboratively across Europe, including Barcelona, Moscow, Rotterdam, London, Stockholm, Steinberg and at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. They have also exhibited as part of Scope, New York and at the National Art Center in Tokyo.

Igor Zimmerman is a Swedish cross-disciplinary film director and self-described/director of special projects. He went to art school and studied graphic design and art direction but taught himself film-making by doing and by learning from people who influence him, such as director Paul Thomas Anderson and Spike Jonze. As well as films and interactive projects, he enjoys experimenting with different media, and creates sculptures and installations, including a Nike Sportswear sculpture. He has exhibited at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, The Lincoln Center, New York and Il Museo Guggenheim, Bilbao.

Frances Wilkinson