

## ***Portal Atop a Bus Stop***

curated by Erik Martinson

The appearance of a weathered VHS copy of *Hellraiser* atop a bus shelter on Old Kent Road in South London became a kind of urban legend, or at least a puzzle. Since this first occurrence in 2012, there have been other instances, other portals opening, visible from the upper level of double-decker buses. Copycats aside, the content of the bleached VHS case, Clive Barker's 1987 film, has at its core a puzzle box, the 'Lament Configuration'. This box, when solved, can suture dimensions. From the other side, the 'Cenobites', demonic in appearance, claim the clever individual for a suturing of another kind, between pleasure and pain. A pop mystery, the VHS tape in its odd placement, now a different sort of analog puzzle box, offers a detour on a routine commute. Portals, mundane or not, need a here and there, a clever body to pass through.

*Portal Atop a Bus Stop* is a screening of international artists' films and videos (im)materializing in various constellations for a multitude of sites.

### **Program:**

*JUST DO IT*, Avril Corroon (Ireland), 2014, 6:42

*The Eternal Quarter Inch*, Jesse McLean (USA), 2008, 9:00

*Slow Fragmentation*, Sam Smith (Australia), 2015, 5:30

*Δ HS. FS. ZWN-BS. NC. BS*, Paul Simon Richards (UK), 2014, 14:00

*Figure-ground*, Jean-Paul Kelly (Canada), 2013, 4:46

*Devil's Gate*, Laura Kraning (USA), 2011, 20:00

*Immortality, Home and Elsewhere*, Sasha Litvintseva (UK), 2014, 12:28

### **Details:**

Monday July 13, 2015

Screening/Talk: 3:30 - 5:30pm

Location: Red Barn Project Space, UCSB Department of Art, Room 1237

***Portal Atop a Bus Stop*** is part of an events series organized by Alice Wang for the class Exhibition as Medium, and is generously sponsored by the UCSB Summer Sessions Cultural and Enrichment Grant. Special thanks to the UCSB Department of Art Space Committee for their support.

## Program Notes:

### ***JUST DO IT, Avril Corroon (Ireland), 2014, 6:42***

*JUST DO IT* meshes reality with absurdist acts inflated within the bubble of the artist's Nike Air Max. The role of the artist in relation to the economy, labor and popular culture blow through the bubble's nitrogen pressured chamber. Estranging techniques are employed with humor in order to draw attention to the formal materials and process of the work's construction. By embracing the fantasy of heightened performance associated with the Nike air bubble, the artist indulges in her consumer fetishism. Nike Air Max can make you jump higher. Swoosh. (AC)

### ***The Eternal Quarter Inch, Jesse McLean (USA), 2008, 9:00***

Dipping between ecstasy and despair, transcendence and absurdity, this movie journeys to a hidden space where you can lose your way, lose yourself in the moment, lose your faith in a belief system. An exhausted and expectant crowd waits on this narrow span. It is not a wide stretch, but it can last forever. (JM)

### ***Slow Fragmentation, Sam Smith (Australia), 2015, 5:30***

In the past there was the horizon: a stable paradigm for orientation; a tool of modernity; a boundary to perception; and a constant reference point from which to hang ideas of time, space, subject and object. *Slow Fragmentation* re-documents the fictional sites of Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) as the ground on which to examine a shift towards vertical perspective and the destabilisation of human gaze. The video seeks to posit links between cinematic framing and the historical cultivation of landscape. (SS)

### ***Δ HS. FS. ZWN-BS. NC. BS, Paul Simon Richards (UK), 2014, 14:00***

*Δ HS. FS. ZWN-BS. NC. BS* is structured using techniques from clinical hypnosis and describes the internal mechanisms of a hallucination, through spoken word monologue with visual and sonic interference, manipulating the way that images are formed in the mind. The film attempts to describe notions of void, zero or null space. It consists of a montage of fragments of animation and performance. Two charismatic characters present monologues to viewer, ranging from the anecdotal to the metaphysical; the script includes abstract descriptions of language and its grammatical construction, musings on typography and the description of an acrimonious dispute with the RCPA regarding a snake. ...The title of the film consists of a list of discrete codes, which are commonly used in CSS web programming to produce a simple gap between two lines of text. Each of the codes are abbreviations for terms which partially describe a kind of void "Hard Space. Fixed Space. Zero-Width Non Breakable Space. Non Collapsing. Blank Space." CSS the language was first designed in 1994 by computer scientists working alongside Tim Berners Lee at CERN in Geneva, which is also the home of the Large Hadron Collider, a machine which is used to search for things that we cannot see: Dark matter, bosons, black holes etc. (PSR)

### ***Figure-ground, Jean-Paul Kelly (Canada), 2013, 4:46***

*Figure-ground* features hand-painted cells filmed in receding distance with a multi-plane camera. Each scene is derived from photographs published online and depicting the aftermath of a death associated—tangentially or directly—with the 2008 global financial crisis: the gruesome drug-debt murder of a child in an economically depressed region; the suicide of Bernie Madoff's son; an untreated, mentally distressed Iraq-war veteran freezes to death in a mountain stream after his manhunt for murder; the murder of Trayvon Martin; the cyanide suicide of a former Wall Street trader in court. The body of each individual is initially excised from the scene and later replaced by abstractions in regular form—a coloured square and an audio tone. (J-PK)

### ***Devil's Gate, Laura Kraning (USA), 2011, 20:00***

*Devil's Gate* explores the metaphysical undercurrents of a Southern California landscape scarred by fire. The film lyrically depicts the physical and mythological terrain of Devil's Gate Dam, located at the nexus of Pasadena's historical relationship with technology and the occult, and intertwining with its central figure, Jack Parsons, who some believe to have opened a dark portal in this place. The film merges an observational portrait of a landscape transformed by fire, ash and water with a fragmentary textual narrative, providing a view into man's obsession with controlling and transcending the forces of nature and spirit. It can be seen as unearthing a subconscious of the landscape, as the echoes of the past reverberate in the present and infect our perception and experience of place. (LK)

### ***Immortality, Home and Elsewhere, Sasha Litvintseva (UK), 2014, 12:28***

Weaving around a theory of immortality based on the premise that our lives are a summation of all the information we consume and process, gleaned from existing theories from a number of scientific disciplines, the film draws on my personal history's brush with a global nuclear disaster, to precipitate a meditation on the potential role of an individual in the imaginary film/event of our individual or collective death: as a protagonist, or as an extra appearing in a handful of frames at the very moment of their death. The (im)possibility of a singular setting for such an event is at question, and there is a temporal flattening accompanying the spacial flattening, both as a collapse of history implied by the end of potential futures, but also the flattening of time implicit in our fascination with ruin.... (SL)