

THE RYDER

Resting Transmissions / Eyes Above, Bodies Below / Nice night for a walk

This July The Ryder presents three video programmes, each running a week in the gallery. Nine artists will present their works in: *Resting Transmissions* (5 – 9 July), *Eyes Above, Bodies Below* (12 – 16 July), *Nice night for a walk* (19 – 23 July).

Resting Transmissions presents works engaging with histories and practices of television. Industrial modes of production and dissemination are intercepted and reinterpreted, shifting and activating viewership. With its semi-lucid self-made counter-narratives, this programme unfolds like an atypical night of broadcast. Featuring work by: Kathryn Elkin, Wendy Geller, and Su Hui-Yu.

The programme *Eyes Above, Bodies Below* suggests there are many ways in which eyes may be separate from bodies; there are many ways bodies swap and narratives switch. The works present combinations of vision, bodies inscribed with self-actuated stories as well as scripted strands from above. Cartesian dualism is both affirmed and confronted, fluidity seeps up as stories hop hosts, sending out beacons. Featuring work by: Deirdre Sargent, Maha Maamoun, and Stephanie Comilang.

Nice night for a walk presents works that excavate material from circulating film franchises, and their resulting pop-cultural sediment. Particular moments, cyborgs, and the onscreen presence of Arnold Schwarzenegger are remobilized. Metallic mirrored surfaces emerge that reflect ossified references, surrounding and reworking them. Featuring work by: Jenna Sutela, Daniel Cockburn, and Frank Heath.

The series: *Resting Transmissions / Eyes Above, Bodies Below / Nice night for a walk* is curated by Erik Martinson.

Opening Reception: Tuesday July 4, 2017, 6:00 – 9:00pm.

Programmes:

1

Resting Transmissions

(5 – 9 July)

Michael's Theme, Kathryn Elkin, 2014, 7:47

Six, Wendy Geller, 1986, 4:07

The Upcoming Show, Su Hui-Yu, 2012, 17:14

2

Eyes Above, Bodies Below

(12 – 16 July)

Traveling, Deirdre Sargent, 2016, 5:16

2026, Maha Maamoun, 2010, 9:00

Lumapit Sa Akin, Paraiso (Come To Me, Paradise), Stephanie Comilang, 2016, 25:46

3

Nice night for a walk

(19 – 23 July)

RI JIRI I O WA NU RU DAINICHI T-1000, Jenna Sutela, 2016, 2:15

WEAKEND, Daniel Cockburn, 2003, 7:15

RI JIRI I O WA NU RU DAINICHI T-1000, Jenna Sutela, 2016, 2:15 (repeated)

The Hollow Coin, Frank Heath, 2016, 12:13

1

Resting Transmissions

There's comfort in the pulsating hum of bars and tone. Vertical stripes of colour vibrate imperceptibly, a mirror to test and correct the signal before it goes out. Pre-broadcast, these test patterns replicate order, propping up a top-down finished product, and the promise of a uniformly shared yet isolated experience. The comfort of bars and tone comes through the regulation they impose. However, their audio-visual hum is only a guideline, intent unseen by end-users. Signal interference is possible by active minds receiving the transmissions. Gaps open up, the source is not as locked as it seems. Just as a turn of a knob sends colours into disarray, edits can loosen, dialogue can take place when only a monologue was intended. Post-broadcast, everything becomes a little less linear.

The works in *Resting Transmissions* engage histories and practices of television. Industrial modes of production and dissemination are intercepted and reinterpreted, shifting and activating viewership. Semi-lucid self-made counter-narratives emerge. This programme unfolds like an atypical night of programming. Remote is lost, eyes are glued, mind is hovering, body is sinking into the couch.

Up first, *Michael's Theme* (Kathryn Elkin) is a chat show, or the anticipation of one. Unaired clips from 1970s show *Parkinson* depict the offhand 'live' moments trimmed for not being 'live' enough, while a temporally separated guest anxiously waits to go on, punctuated by hiccups of jazz. Next on, *Six* (Wendy Geller) fragments of scenes and characters from a number of films one can imagine encountering through syndication. Unified through one performance, fraught moments from *Sunset Boulevard* are sutured with *Night of the Living Dead*. It's domestic cupboard-cinema for the small screen. Finally, the broadcasting day concludes with *The Upcoming Show* (Su Hui-Yu), which starts when the station goes off the air. Reflecting on the televisual context of Taiwan in the 1980s/1990s, the test pattern becomes a multi-coloured launch pad for floating and self-envisioned programming that comes on when the industrial model needs its rest.

Resting Transmissions programme notes:



***Michael's Theme*, Kathryn Elkin, 2014, 7:47**

Michael's Theme uses previously unbroadcast fragments from the opening and closing of several episodes in the first two series of *Parkinson* from the 1970s. The work explores the talk-show convention of revealing the mechanisms of television-making, as well as the notion of improvisation within the 'recorded- as-live' TV format and within the repeated live renditions of the jazz theme tune in those earlier episodes. These excerpts and the theme tune for the programme are used as a point of departure to consider the relationship of a live studio audience, crew and talk show host each to other, and how their complicit relationship anticipates the audience who will watch the deferred broadcast.' (KE)

Kathryn Elkin (born in Belfast, 1983) is a graduate of Glasgow School of Art (2005) and Goldsmiths College (2012) and former LUX Associate Artist (2013). Elkin's performance and video works concern role-playing and improvising, alongside experiments with the outtake and clowning on set. She has an ongoing interest in shared cultural memory (as produced by popular music, television and cinema) and the melding of this information to biographical memory. She was a participant in the BBC project *Artists in the Archive* in 2014, and completed a solo exhibition at CCA Glasgow titled 'Television' in 2016. She has shown work throughout the UK, including ICA, Tate Modern, Collective Gallery, Transmission, S1 and CCA Derry.

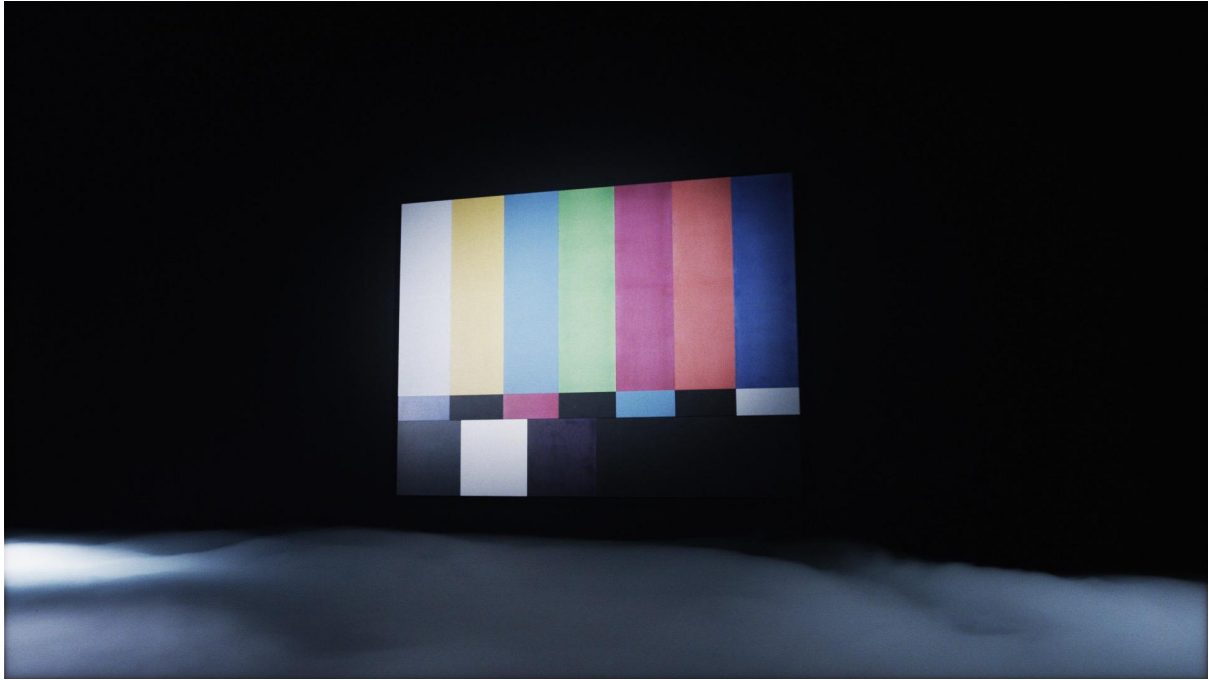


***Six*, Wendy Geller, 1986, 4:07**

Six recreates dramatic shots and actions from six classic and “B” movies recreated, acted and produced in a 3 foot by 3 foot closet by the artist. *Six* replaces the movie industry’s elaborate sense of artifice with a concentration on the emotional drives behind each scene. The characters portrayed all display dual and split personalities. What a feat of double displacement for the actress whose work already requires identifying with and consuming a constantly shifting series of subjects. (VP)

Wendy Geller was born in Winnipeg, Canada in 1957. She received her B.F.A. from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and a M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego. Geller's work has been exhibited in the United States, Europe and Canada. In addition to her work as a video artist she was an Assistant Professor at the Kansas City Art Institute from 1987-1990, during which time she also curated a major show of international videotapes for the Charlotte Cross-Kemper Gallery. Geller died in 1996. The Wendy Geller Fund was established by her family at Video Pool to assist members in the completion of independent works.

With thanks to Video Pool Media Arts Centre.



***The Upcoming Show*, Su Hui-Yu, 2012, 17:14**

Up until the end of the 1980s, Taiwan had only three television stations, and all were operated by the martial law government. And unlike today, television stations did not broadcast programs around the clock, but rather would display a colourful test card at night. Still a child at the time, I associated these mysterious patterns not only with the end of the television day, but also with the end of my day. That was an era when everything, including both time and space, was closely controlled by the government, and information traveled more slowly. *The Upcoming Show* is a fictional television program that might have mysteriously aired sometime in the middle of the night after programming had officially ended. The video contains appropriated and recreated segments from variety shows starring television personalities popular in the 1980s and 90s, and invites viewers to revisit those days when television still rested at midnight. (SH)

Su Hui-Yu was born in Taipei in 1976. He obtained an MFA from Taipei National University of the Arts in 2003. In his videos, he explores both mass media's impact on viewers, and the projection of viewers' thoughts and desires onto media. He draws from his experiences of being surrounded by media that range from movie, TV culture, advertisement, state apparatus, terrorism, self and other, body, projection of desires, and illusion and reality. His work has been exhibited at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, MoCA Taipei, San Jose Museum of Art in California, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, and Power Station of Art in Shanghai. In 2017, his work, *Super Taboo*, was invited to the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) Tiger Shorts and a solo screening of his works called "The Midnight Hours" was also presented.

Eyes Above, Bodies Below

On 26 November 1977 the Southern Television broadcast in the UK was interrupted. Audio from an unknown source broke through the local news presenter's routine reporting. A voice announcing itself as 'Vrillon, a representative of the Ashtar Galactic Command' presented viewers with a warning: 'All your weapons of evil must be removed.' After warning of 'false prophets' the voice urges the people of Earth 'to listen to the voice of truth which is within' that in turn will bring forth 'the path of evolution.' Before the transmission ends, Vrillon admits: 'We have watched you growing for many years as you too have watched our lights in your skies.' Regular audio resumed without further interference during an episode of *Looney Tunes*, just as it was ending. 'That's all, folks.' Widely considered a hoax, no one came forward to take responsibility. A call for action against self-destruction, the peaceful message of Vrillon also brings a kind of comfort: there is some being above, watching. Apparently, some below have even watched back.

There are many ways in which eyes may be separate from bodies. There are many ways bodies swap and narratives switch. The works in *Eyes Above, Bodies Below* present combinations of vision, bodies inscribed with self-actuated stories as well as scripted strands from above. Cartesian dualism is both affirmed and confronted, fluidity seeping up and emerging. Stories hop hosts, sending out beacons.

A YouTuber speaks of a divided America in *Traveling* (Deirdre Sargent). A divine message of warning is channeled for views, for spread; a drone eye floats above a flooded street scene bearing witness, surveying from a safe vantage point. A subject appears in Ann Gillis, her body's opacity shifts revealing older and younger versions simultaneously occupying the same planar space, speaking a unified tale of migration in opposing languages. Next, temporal locality shifts to the future, which is the past to the protagonist's present in *2026* (Maha Maamoun). Drawing a scenario from *The Revolution of 2053* by Mahmoud Osman, a *La Jetée* style stationary time traveller is still in frame, eyes gauzed over, describing the frenetic movements near the site of the Pyramids. Non-temporal tourists, with their busy bodies populate the area, while behind a virtual wall buttressed by surveillance, a whole city crumbles and lives. With the final shift, a ghost-drone called Paraiso surveys Hong Kong, tracking and uploading missives from Filipina migrant workers in *Lumapit Sa Akin, Paraiso/Come To Me, Paradise* (Stephanie Comilang). For successful transmission of videos, photos, and messages home, Paraiso needs to find the subjects of this docu-fiction in one place. It seems bodies sharing space makes the signal stronger, while confronting the isolating effects of economic migration. Day-off gatherings of the workers provide content for the meandering and lonely eye-vessel, each a part in this equation becoming mutual nodes for the circulation of data, of home.

Eyes Above, Bodies Below programme notes:



***Traveling*, Deirdre Sargent, 2016, 5:16**

Traveling begins with a black screen and the voice of a middle-aged woman known as, GracieGirl7. A message of damnation that she believes she received from the divine is netted across the video and fractured by the story of two other female characters who act as one, an elderly and young version of the same woman. They tell life stories that become indecipherable from one another. The video presents life as a naturally psychedelic experience that spans multiple bodies and eras, swirling factual and fictional narratives. (DS)

Deirdre Sargent (b. 1985, Boston, MA, USA) is an artist living in Brooklyn, NY working with sculpture, photography, and video. She holds a MFA from Yale University and a BFA from Pratt Institute. Recent solo and two-person shows include *You Should Know When to Laugh*, 315 Gallery, NYC; *Island Girl on Video*, AC Institute, NYC; and *Usamlkpda*, The Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH. Selected recent group shows include *Coping Copy*, Konstanet, Tallinn, Estonia; *From an Object Into an Active Subject*, Alexander's Garage, Brooklyn, NY; *The Sputtering, Human-Shaped Machine*, Good Work Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; *Noise*, ETAA Studio, Seoul, South Korea; *Providence & Co.*, Union Docs, Brooklyn, NY; and *Optic Nerve 14*, Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami.



2026, Maha Maamoun, 2010, 9:00

Based on a text from the novel *The Revolution of 2053*, by Egyptian writer Mahmoud Osman, and referencing a scene from Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), a time-traveller recounts his vision of the future of the Pyramids area, and by extension Egypt, in the year 2026 - a vision that strains to reach beyond, yet remains severely confined by the present's imaginal constraints. (MM)

Maha Maamoun is a Cairo-based Egyptian artist. In addition, she works collaboratively on independent publishing and curatorial projects. Maamoun co-founded with Ala Younis the independent publishing platform called Kayfa-ta in 2012. She is also a founder and current board member of the Contemporary Image Collective (CiC). Maamoun's latest project, *The Subduer*, which combines photographs and literary texts to explore the power of the sublime in contemporary Egyptian bureaucracy, will be shown in Art Basel's Statements, June 2017. Her work was widely shown in exhibitions and biennials including: The Time is Out of Joint – Sharjah Art Foundation (2016); Here and Elsewhere – New Museum (2014); Objects in Mirror are Closer than they Appear, Tate Modern (2012); 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012); Mapping Subjectivity, MoMA.



Lumapit Sa Akin, Paraiso (Come To Me, Paradise), Stephanie Comilang, 2016, 25:46

Lumapit Sa Akin, Paraiso (Come to Me Paradise) is a science fiction documentary that uses the backdrop of Hong Kong and the various ways in which the Filipina migrant worker occupies Central on Sundays. The film is narrated from the perspective of Paraiso, a ghost played by a drone who speaks of the isolation from being uprooted and thrown into a new place. Paraiso's reprieve comes when she is finally able to interact with the women and feel her purpose, which is to transmit their vlogs, photos, and messages back home. During the week she is forced back into isolation and is left in an existential rut.

The film uses Hong Kong's dystopian maze like structures that the Filipina migrants re-imagine and focuses on the beauty of care-giving but also explores how technology is used as a pivotal way for the women to connect - to each other but also to loved ones. Raising questions around modern isolation, economic migration and the role of public space in both urban and digital forms, the film transcends its various component parts to offer a startling commentary on the present, from the point of view of the future. (SC)

Stephanie Comilang is an artist living and working in Toronto and Berlin. She received her BFA from Ontario College of Art & Design. Her documentary based works create narratives that look at how our understandings of mobility, capital and labour on a global scale are shaped through various cultural and social factors. Her most recent films '*Lumapit Sa Akin, Paraiso*' (2016) is a science fiction documentary about Filipina migrant workers in Hong Kong. It has been screened at Asia Art Archive in America, New York; S.A.L.T.S., Basel; UCLA, Los Angeles; Images Festival, Toronto; and Art Athina in Athens.

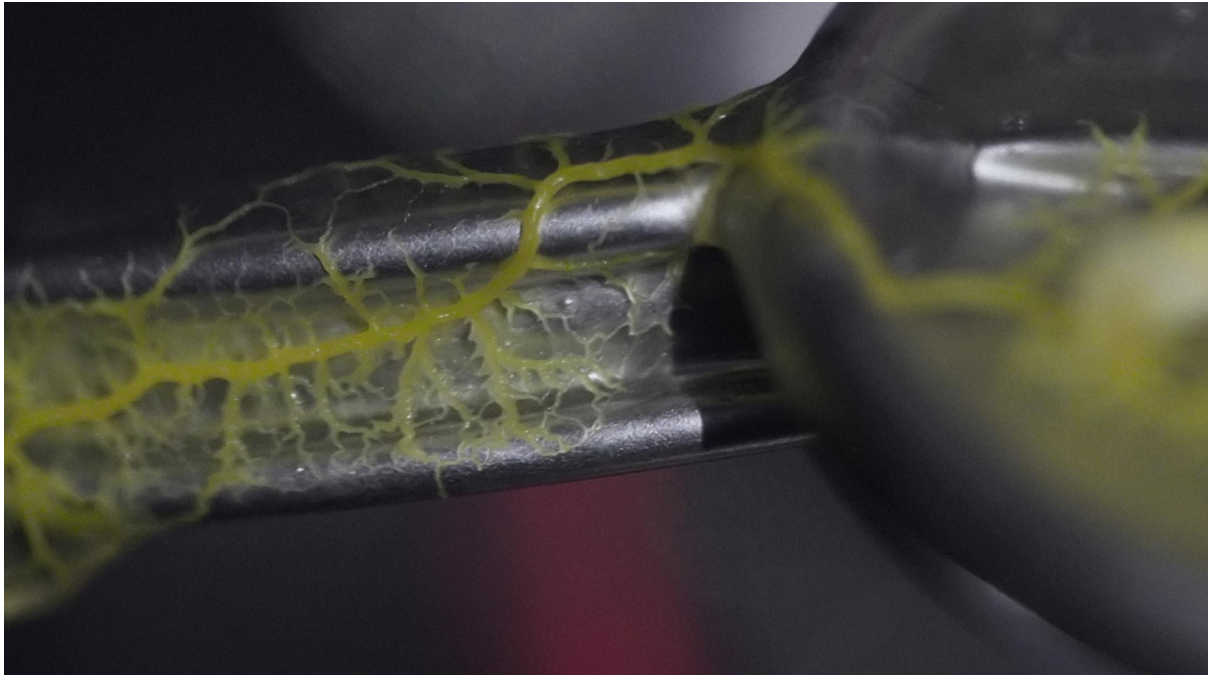
Nice night for a walk

When Bill Paxton died on February 25, 2017, a cartoon circulated online celebrating a genre film claim that only he and one other actor could make. Paxton had roles in three prevalent sci-fi/horror franchises, in each case being 'offed' by the trademarked creature: *The Terminator* (1984), *Aliens* (1986), and *Predator 2* (1990). The cartoon depicts forlorn versions of the eponymous characters: a Xenomorph (Alien) pouring out a brown paper bag clad bottle at a grave while Arnold Schwarzenegger's leather jacketed Terminator stands back to one side, bottle in one hand with the other on heart, the Predator appearing as his gestural bookend. An actor with an expansive career beyond these films, Paxton's inadvertent achievement in the eyes of genre fans performs as trivia. Some say it stretches facts. Paxton's blue-haired punk in *The Terminator* isn't visibly dispatched by the mission-driven cyborg. In the scene the recently time-travelled Schwarzenegger-bot approaches the punks, fully yet discretely naked. Paxton's character jokes: 'Nice night for a walk.' The lumbering mass of bio-machine repeats: 'Nice night for a walk.' Fully dispatched or not, it doesn't end well for Paxton's punk.

Aside from the strange meta-mourning for an actor by narratively separated fictional assailants, this cartoon becomes a node of convergence for both fan-fiction and the figure of an actor as holder of fictional traces. Franchised and spreading, these films become reiterated, repurposed in online forums and other media: many nights, many walks. Further to this, actors and their performed characters may become living agents of the fictional beyond the frame. Extrapolated, vertical pathways that variously intersect begin to coexist alongside narratively propelled linearity.

The works in *Nice night for a walk* sprout from moments of layered media sediment. Their metallic mirrored surfaces reflect back their ossified references, while surrounding and reworking them. Forming pathways to seek its food source, slime mold propels itself through a maze like structure of spiritual significance in *RI JIRI I O WA NU RU DAINICHI T-1000* (Jenna Sutela). The vibrant green tendrils, working as a decentralized system, secure efficient routes. Like a highlighter pen, their growth traces a map for the survival of the whole, which is paralleled in clips from *Terminator 2* where globs of T-1000 seek to reform to complete its mission: liquidity continually morphs around danger, becoming dangerous, unstoppable. Footage from another Schwarzenegger vehicle, *The 6th Day*, is loosened and reworked in *WEAKEND* (Daniel Cockburn). Following the inference of the source film's title, a calendar structure is imposed: the creationist metaphor applied to the sci-fi narrative of cloning is broadened to consider the relationship of an artist to materials. In this case, video clips and editing are divinely employed until the acting agent within the frame makes a Promethean gesture towards self-actualization. A payphone becomes the locus for an unraveling tale in *The Hollow Coin* (Frank Heath). The boundaries of a system fading from operation and memory are tested as the protagonist speaks to the complaints department about a 'coin' lost in the phone used by the caller. Intrigue mounts as the false coin is revealed to contain footage on a SD card: a phone booth in a field that erupts in flames. The protagonist needs the fake coin back, after using it to pay for their present call; a paradoxical time loop reminiscent of *Terminator 2* is introduced. Sparking embers of molten metal transplant and dissolve the archaic phone box in the nickel's footage, just as they claim the heroic cyborg of the referenced film: lowering with a thumb up to a future dystopia unwritten.

Nice night for a walk programme notes:



***RI JIRI I O WA NU RU DAINICHI T-1000*, Jenna Sutela, 2016, 2:15**

A video loop based on footage of Orbs, a series of sculptural artworks in which spherical mazes juxtapose *Physarum polycephalum*, or the “many-headed” slime mold, with organizational and spiritual charts.

The video focuses on the Minakata Mandala, a shape drawn by a Japanese naturalist named Minakata Kumagusu, who collected slime mold samples for Emperor Hirohito in the 1920s. In a letter to a Buddhist monk, Kumagusu represented his view of the world through the mandala drawing: “With humans placed at the center of the diagram, our ability to comprehend causal connections between things diminishes as they are located further outward from the center and our awareness of them becomes more tenuous.” The mandala is also a manifestation of the limits of anthropocentrism and the existence of systems beyond cause-and-effect chains of connection.

Here, Kumagusu's mandala is chromed and spatialized in reference to T-1000, a robot from *Terminator 2* that likens to the slime mold: a self-reconfiguring, many-headed system, liquid inside and shape-shifting gel-like structures outside. A chant, or a sounding mantra accompanies the amalgamation of these two cultural references, or forms of organization, and the slime mold's body as it slowly extends itself around them. (JS)

*Concurrently on view in *Nam-Gut*, Jenna Sutela's exhibition at Banner Repeater, through July 30th.

Jenna Sutela's installations, text and sound performances seek to identify and react to precarious social and material moments, often in relation to technology. Most recently, she has been exploring exceedingly complex biological and computational systems, ultimately unknowable and in a constant state of becoming. Sutela has exhibited her work at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, The Institute of Contemporary Arts London, and The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, among others.

Camera and editing for *RI JIRI I O WA NU RU DAINICHI T-1000*: Mikko Gaestel.



WEAKEND, Daniel Cockburn, 2003, 7:15

A videotape whose sole audio/video source is *The 6th Day*, a Hollywood feature film about cloning. *WEAKEND* subjects Arnold Schwarzenegger to a cruel series of digital replications until the Sabbath arrives, the videomaker rests, and Arnold gets to speak for himself: a desperate critique of self-indulgent video art. (DC)

Daniel Cockburn is a Canadian filmmaker and video artist. His feature *You Are Here* won top prize at the European Media Art Festival and has been compared to the work of Charlie Kaufman, Jorge Luis Borges, and Philip K. Dick. His performance *All The Mistakes I've Made* was developed during a DAAD-Berlin residency. It toured internationally, and was followed up years later by a sequel called *All The Mistakes I've Made, part 2*. He lives in London, where he is a 2017 Associate Artist in Residence at Acme Studios, and a 2017 Fellow in Film Practice at Queen Mary University of London.



***The Hollow Coin*, Frank Heath, 2016, 12:13**

The Hollow Coin explores roles of authority in public space and the intersection of personal and historical narratives. The video combines documentary footage of New York City's rapidly disappearing network of payphones with audio of a covertly recorded telephone exchange between an actor and an unknowing bystander. In the surreptitiously captured conversation an attempted "information leak" is infused with an absurd story and a historical anecdote. The work's title refers to a Soviet spy who was apprehended in 1953 after mistakenly paying his newspaper delivery boy with a hollow coin that contained a microfilm of an encrypted message. Throughout the video a parallel sequence of events reveals that images from the video itself have been stored on an SD card concealed within a hollow coin and inserted into the payphone from which the call was made. (FH)

Frank Heath (b. 1982, St. Joseph, MO) lives and works in New York. Recent exhibitions include *Blue Room*, Swiss Institute (2017); *Backup*, Simone Subal (2014); *A Tale of Two Islands*, The High Line, New York (2014); and *Matter out of Place*, The Kitchen, New York (2012). *The Hollow Coin*, has been shown at International Film Festival Rotterdam (2017), Festival International du Film de La Roche-sur-Yon (2017), Sarasota Film Festival (2017), International Film Festival Message to Man and Experimental Film Festival Kinodot (2017). The film was awarded Best Documentary Short at Indielisboa (2017) and the Deframed Audience Award at Kurzfilm Hamburg (2017).

With thanks to Simone Subal Gallery.