MIACA
Moving Image Archive of Contemporary Art

@BankART Studio NYK

First part 6:00-7:00   About argos, video archive in Belgium

Second part 7:10-8:30   Screening program
Deframing // Ideological spaces and artistic strategies of mental dissent

Guest lecturer: Paul Willemsen:
Paul Willemsen (°1959) is a Belgian curator and critic. He studied film at the Rits Academy in Brussels, worked for various magazines and institutions in Europe. Since 1996 he is artistic director of argos, a Brussels interdisciplinary centre for art and audiovisual media (www.argosarts.org).

argos - genealogy of a video archive. Talk by Paul Willemsen, director of the Brussels based audiovisual art centre argos, on the institution's archival and preservation policies. argos (www.argosarts.org) is one of the major art video archives in Europe. Besides preserving art works on electronic and digital support the institution is known for a wide range of activities that include exhibitions, screenings, performances and other events. His presentation will be followed by 'Deframing - Ideological spaces and artistic strategies of mental dissent', a screening program that will show samples from the argos collection. This program gathers work from five artists that deframe ideological spaces and reconsider politics of representation. Participanting artists are Charley Case, Justin Bennett, Messieurs Delmotte, Ken Kobland and Eddo Stern

□First Part
About argos:

- mission
As an interdisciplinary centre for art and audiovisual media to create a production, presentation and preservation platform for the contemporary Flemish and international audiovisual and visual arts, and more generally all forms of artistic expression moving on the crossing point with the audiovisual media. Nationally and internationally to create dynamic climate in aforementioned domain by means of a development-oriented approach, creating synergies between various assignments. To track characteristic developments in the audiovisual and visual arts, and socially speaking visual and media culture as a whole, in a

critical way, to provide a frame of reference and interpretation to the public.

- strategic and operational goals
* At a time when the audiovisual media are omnipresent in the arts, to take up the role of an authoritative sector institute, nationally and internationally.
* As a knowledge centre and an intermediary in the art sector working from a specific niche, to span a bridge with other actors in the domain of the arts, science, culture and society.
* To take up a guiding function in the continuous critical reflection on the role media technology plays in the cultural and social transformation.

☐ Second part
Screening program curated by Willemsen

Deframing // Ideological spaces and artistic strategies of mental dissent

Ideology is a certain experience of the universe and our place in it which serves the production of existing power relations. Furthermore it fixes and congeals existing relations. This program compiles works from five artists that deframe ideological spaces and reconsider politics of representation. Charley Case raises the issue of globalization and neo-liberalism from the enclave of counter-communities. Justin Bennett subtly tackles the European political system, whereas Messieurs Delmotte more bluntly parodies exotic tourism and the post-colonial condition. Ken Kobland muses on our modernist beliefs in progress and Eddo Stern points out how popular culture and fantasy computer games seize our collective conscience and blur more and more the distinction between (historical) fact and fiction. The videos have not only a mental dissent with ideology in common but share also a particular interest in the cathartic as a liberating force of subjectivity.

Friday, June 18, 1999, City of London   Charley Case. Belgium, 1999, b & w,
   8'12"

An inside account of a public meeting in London that attracted more than hundred thousand activists campaigning against global capitalism. Images of joy and ecstatic jubilation, rage and anger, disenchantment and delusion structured around the four elements: fire, air, water and earth. "While the elite gangs of state and capital become evermore faceless, their fear of the faces of the everyday resistance grows. Yet, somehow the victims of their power - the poor, the oppressed, the broken and desolate - are always voiceless and are always faceless. Today we shall give this resistance a face: for by putting on our masks we reveal our unity; and by raising our voices in the street together, we speak our anger at the facelessness of power." (Charley Case)

Berlaymont Dreaming   Justin Bennett. The Netherlands, 2004, colour, 20'20"

The Berlaymont building, seat of the European Commission, is a symbolic centre for the European quarter of Brussels as well as for Europe itself. Formally interesting is the fact that the original modernist architecture has been renovated and foreseen with a new 'skin' or rather an armour plating, changing the outward appearance while preserving the inner form. Bennett sees this as mirroring the expansion of Europe in general. In *Berlaymont Dreaming*, Berlaymont/ Europe is pictured as a modernist utopia, where the transparency of architecture is a metaphor for democracy itself. The building is empty, but it hums softly to itself. It dreams of its future uses, its future occupants, dreaming that it might one day be open to all, but knowing that its gigantic security machine regulates the flow and access of people just as the air conditioning regulates the flow of air and heat. The sounds of empty buildings and their machines sometimes filter in with sounds coming from outside through ducts or through the windows. Bennett layers images of the Berlaymont and its inhabitants over images from other buildings of the Belgian capital that are either in use or that are already demolished. The image and sound sequences are composed by a machine that chooses sounds and images which build up, overlap and then fall away again. Thus the machine constructs its 'dreaming' - an imaginary ephemeral architecture.

Tourist Renouncement   Messieurs Delmotte. Belgium, 1994-2004, colour, 18'48"

The video *Tourist Renouncement* was originally recorded in 1995 in Togo, as part of the project *Afrikanisch-Europäische Inspiration*, set up by Togolese artist El Loko who was living in Germany. For two months eight artists from various countries in Europe and Africa worked on this cultural exchange. Delmotte filmed his actions, seeming like a grotesque interpretation of the historical relationships between the two continents. In his performances he plays the white man among other things, randily riding up a tree, later sawing down another with a theatrical gesture, then triumphantly shoving his pale behind in a mosquitoes' nest. *Tourist Renouncement* caricatures hypocritical European tourism, promising a paradise in Africa, whereas a large number of Africans, basing themselves on the same false delusions, chase after an 'European dream'. The film has been re-edited, almost ten years after the material was filmed and it is situated between a documentary, a fictitious account and video art.

The Shanghaied Text   Ken Kobland. USA, 1996, colour and   b & w,   20'00"

In *The Shanghaied Text*   Ken Kobland reflects on our 20th century notion of civilisation and progress. These are set against an apparently indifferent nature that continues to be calm and unchanged in the face of the struggle for dominance. In a radical visual gesture, Kobland superimposes archive footage of peasants in China, revolutionary heroes from

early Soviet films (Dovjenko's *The Earth*), excerpts from Westerns (Zinneman's *High Noon*), newsreel footage of the May '68 student riots onto austere, seemingly benign landscapes. Pornographic images of the female body are also projected onto the landscape, eroticising the land and suggesting both the symbolic colonisation of the female body and the notions of the 'mother country'. A manic anti-narrative that encapsulates the civic and sexual passion of colonialism and revolution.

Vietnam Romance Eddo Stern. USA, 2003, colour, 19'09"

Eddo Stern's interests lay in new modes of narrative and documentary, and in cross-cultural and cross-media representation in film, computer games and Internet culture. His works examine the military and fantasy computer game genres for their cultural and social roles in the play of politics and pleasure. *Vietnam Romance* is compiled from the sources available on the computer desktop environment - games, graphics and music (a use of game tools called 'Machinima'). A remix of the Vietnam War experience with a MIDI soundtrack, computer game clips and references to film classics like *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*, *Vietnam Romance* is a digital condensed simulation of the Vietnam War, at the intersection between reality, fantasy and history. Stern plays not only with ideas about the mediation of history, but also with the fact that we increasingly experience the world through artificial constructions, that in turn prompt a form of false nostalgia.