

A Walking Shadow

13 February – 6 April 2019

Blain|Southern Berlin

Owen Kydd
 Mark Lewis
 Amie Siegel
 Bill Viola
 Wim Wenders



Mark Lewis, *Things Seen* (detail), 2017

A Walking Shadow brings together five artists who approach the moving image in distinct ways, yet they all share an interest in how technology and environment alter our perception of individual figures.

Wim Wenders, known as both an influential filmmaker and for his work in photography, exhibits moving-image installations for the first time. *Same Player Shoots Again* (2019) is based on one of his first 16mm short films, shot as a student in 1967 in Munich. A soldier played by his friend, the young actor Hanns Zischler, trudges along the pavement, seemingly exhausted or even hurt, his gun dangling below his waist. As an observer you are unable to identify the figure as the camera does not reveal the face. The film was shot in black and then repeated five times, a reference (along with the title) to the five-ball structure of a pinball game, each repetition dyed in different colours: 'It did not really turn out a colour film', writes Wenders. 'Just a bit of blue, red, yellow and green along the road.' *Silver City Revisited* (2019) is a double-projection also derived from footage shot in 1968, during the artist's student days in Munich. A train station flickers in crepuscular light, while beside it an everyday street scene unfolds. Combined, there is an air of foreboding or possibility.

Owen Kydd's *Leader (flower seller)* (2016) similarly appears to be flickering into life, yet the figure remains motionless, with only her body and the flowers flashing with different textures and intensities of light. Kydd combines a street photograph with castoffs of 8mm films (from footage the artist James Welling's uncle made in the 1950's) to create a hybrid of documentary, fiction and fantasy, combining different technologies to create a haunting image of an anonymous figure. *Destiny* and *Gabriel* (2016) are the names of the two figures Kydd photographed, taking their names for the title of his work. Gabriel sits on a blanket, lost in thought, while beside him a video monitor shows dynamic patterns in a range of colours. Kydd filmed *Destiny* as she walked on the hill, then fed the footage through software to transform her movements into coloured abstractions.

Amie Siegel makes use of both found film footage and photographs in *The Modernists* (2010). Years of images by what the artist calls a 'shutterbug husband' depicts his wife at dozens of monuments and museums. The viewer starts to draw connections between the figure viewing and the sculpture that she views. As the viewer plays the game of identifying the famous locations or sculptures, the woman herself seems to take on the aura of an artwork that changes subtly over time. Siegel combines the film footage with photographs, conjuring a set of questions about gender, permanence and mortality, and how our perception of cultural artefacts shifts according to changing fashion and technology.

In Mark Lewis's *Things Seen* (2017) a woman emerges from a rough sea, monitored by a camera fixed on her movements. The camera becomes an almost predatory presence, prowling the beach as if to seduce its subject. The film alludes to how the female body has been depicted in the history of art and cinema, yet here the power relations are inverted by the powerful gaze of the subject.

A leading pioneer of moving-image art, Bill Viola made *Four Songs* in 1976, at the early stages of video technology. The artist calls the work 'a collection of four musical stories in allegorical form.' In each of the *Four Songs* (*Junkyard Levitation*, *Songs of Innocence*, *The Space Between the Teeth* and *Truth Through Mass Individuation*) the viewer watches a figure or figures interacting with the environment, generating a range of psychological effects. 'The aesthetic ideas expressed', writes Viola, 'are closely bound to the unique characteristics of state-of-the-art post-production video systems that existed in 1976.' Here the viewer will be engaged with seemingly unchangeable ideas about human psychology, yet experienced through technology that takes on a peculiar power because it is outdated.

Shakespeare's Macbeth famously described life as 'a walking shadow', 'a poor player, / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage ...' In each of the works in *A Walking Shadow*, we feel a sense of fragility and vulnerability of life, dimly offset by the power of technology to preserve the mortal figures in a permanent loop 'upon the stage'.



Wim Wenders, *Same Player Shoots Again* (detail), 1967
 Courtesy Wim Wenders Foundation

Notes to Editors

About the artists

Owen Kydd (b. 1975) lives and works in Los Angeles, US. Recent exhibitions include: *Owen Kydd: Time Image*, Casemore Kirkeby, San Francisco (2016), *Photographies Perpétuelles*, Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal (2015), *Owen Kydd, Stark Installation*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014), *Pico Storefronts*, Torrance Art Museum, California (2011).

Mark Lewis (b. 1958) lives and works in London, UK. Recent exhibitions include: *Mark Lewis: Canada*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2017), *Above and Below*, Le Bal, Paris (2015), *Invention au Louvre*, Musée du Louvre, Paris (2014), *Pull Focus*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, (2013). He is co-founder and co-director of Afterall, a publication and research organisation based at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, London. Lewis represented Canada at the 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009, with *Cold Morning*.

Amie Siegel (b. 1974) lives and works in New York, US. Recent exhibitions include: *Amie Siegel: Winter*, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2017), *Amie Siegel: Strata*, South London Gallery (2017), *Quarry*, Audain Gallery, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B.C. (2017), *Amie Siegel: Double Negative*, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich (2016), *Amie Siegel. Part 2: Ricochet*, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2016), *Amie Siegel: Provenance*, MAK, Vienna (2015), *Amie Siegel: Provenance*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US (2014), *Amie Siegel. Part 1: Black Moon*, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2011).

Bill Viola (b. 1951), lives and works with his long-time collaborator and wife, Kira Perov, in Long Beach, California, US. Recent exhibitions include: *Bill Viola/Michelangelo*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019), *Bill Viola -Vía Mística*, Museo de Arte Abstracto, Church of San Miguel, Church of San Andrés and Church of Las Angélicas, Cuenca (2018), *Bill Viola*, SESC Center, São Paulo (2018), *Bill Viola: Selected Work 1977-2014*, Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou (2017), *Bill Viola: Retrospective*, Guggenheim Bilbao (2017), *BILL VIOLA: Life After Death*, Stavanger Art Museum (2017), *Bill Viola*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2015).

Wim Wenders (b.1945), lives and works in Berlin, DE. Known for films such as *Paris, Texas* (1984), *Wings of Desire* (1987), and *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999). Recent exhibitions include: *Early Photographs 1960s-80s and Weltreisender* (film retrospective), METRO Kinokulturhaus, Vienna (2019), *Instant Stories. Wim Wenders' Polaroids*, The Photographers' Gallery, London (2017) and C/O, Berlin (2018), *Wim Wenders*, Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (2015), *Wim Wenders: Places Strange & Quiet*, GL Strand, Copenhagen (2014), *Wim Wenders. Appunti di Viaggio*, Armenia Giappone Germani, Villa Pignatelli, Naples (2013), *Wim Wenders: Photographs*, Fundació Sorigué, Lleida (2013), *Pictures from the Surface of the Earth*, Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow (2012).

About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an expanding roster of international artists and is the exclusive representative of the estates of Lynn Chadwick and Avigdor Arikha. Recent exhibitions include Bosco Sodi, Chiharu Shiota, Jonas Burgert, Mat Collishaw, Henning Strassburger, Sean Scully and Ali Banisadr.

Blain|Southern
Potsdamer Straße 77-87 (Mercator Höfe)
10785 Berlin

Tuesday – Saturday: 11am – 6pm
+49 (0)30 6449 3151 0
www.blainsouthern.com

For further information on the exhibition,
Please contact Honor Westmacott at Blain|Southern Berlin
T: +49 (0)30 64493 1510
M: +49 (0) 174 90 97 537
E: honor@blainsouthern.com