

MODERN ART OXFORD

TRANSMISSION INTERRUPTED

MODERN ART OXFORD SCREENINGS

30 Pembroke Street, Oxford.

Part Two – Wednesday 10 June, 6pm

Short video and film works by Jem Cohen, Claire Fontaine and Samuel Stevens.

Samuel Stevens, *Sin Papeles*, 2005, 10.22mins

Sin Papeles, 2005 tells the story of a hunger strike staged by migrant workers, without papers (sin papeles), in a small church in Barcelona by bringing together a second recording of its climax made in March 2001 and film footage of the location shot four years to the day. The subjective account of the event made by the artist in the form of a sub-titled narration is a process of personal reflection de-objectifying the subject of migration for the purpose of work, displacement and social order. The film is a reflection of the implications and realities of the aspects of the EU project that have created a fortress of Europe.

Samuel Stevens, *Atlantropa*, 2009, 19.33mins

A science fiction travelogue, *Atlantropa*, 2009 mixes fact and fiction by relating the bridge to contemporary news reports and a modernist architect's vision to dam the Straits creating a new continent from which the film takes its name. Having first been mentioned in science fiction by Arthur C Clarke the actual possibility of the Gibraltar Bridge has more recently been investigated by the United Nations.

Samuel Stevens is a London based artist, who is interested in how the visual language is established and how the work presents the audience with critical yet often poetic forms in film, video and still imagery. Individual works focus on and examine recurrent themes such as the politics and visual codes of landscape, borders, migration, and public space. Recent exhibitions include the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, China, 2008 and the 10th international Istanbul Biennale, 2007.

Claire Fontaine, *Palestine occupied*, 2008, 15mins

The words *Palestine occupied*, the characters made from matches patiently stuck into the wall and subsequently burnt, compose one of Israel's names fallen out of the vocabulary, gone out of use. The video documents the action of setting fire to the inscription and is projected behind the wall on which the performance itself took place. We become spectators of an ephemeral reanimation of the two words through the flame of the phosphorus of more than 35,000 matches whose heads now lay carbonised on the gallery floor.

Claire Fontaine is a Paris-based collective artist, founded in 2004. Working in neon, video, sculpture, painting and text, their practice can be described as an ongoing interrogation of the political impotence and the crisis of singularity that seem to define contemporary art today. Recent shows include, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2009, The Kitchen, New York, 2008, and Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv, 2008.

Jem Cohen, *Little Flags*, 2000, 6mins

Jem Cohen shot *Little Flags* in black and white on the streets of lower Manhattan during an early '90s military ticker-tape parade and edited the footage years later. The crowd noises fade and Cohen shows the litter flooding the streets as the urban location looks progressively more ghostly and distant from the present.

Jem Cohen, *Blessed are the dreams of men*, 2006, 9.15mins

An unidentified group of travelers move through unknown landscapes for unclear reasons, accompanied by increasing anxiety and the music of Andy Moor (the Ex). “The film spontaneously materialised during an editing residency in a time of great national malaise. Though the piece wasn't shot in the U.S., it had something to do with my feelings about America. But what is this: religious allegory, eco-nightmare, travel document, tip of the hat to Sandor Krasna? Probably all of the above, clues to be found in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 11.”

Jem Cohen is a New York-based filmmaker/media artist whose works are built from his own ongoing archive of street footage, portraits, and sound. His films and installations often navigate the grey area between documentary, narrative, and experimental genres. Recent exhibitions include Robert Millery Gallery, New York, 2009, LUX, London, 2008 and Vienna International Film Festival, 2007.

Screenings selected by Allia Ali, Exhibition Organiser as part of the exhibition *Transmission Interrupted*, which continues at Modern Art Oxford until 21 June 2009.