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Thursday, May 7, 2020

Discussion, launch and video program



© Donigan Cumming, Exit Interview (2014).

Donigan
Cumming

discussion

Live on YouTube at 7 pm

The discussion will happen in English and will be accessible in ASL (American Sign Language).

As part of the dv_vd screening series, Vidéographe and Dazibao are pleased to present a discussion between Donigan Cumming and Mike Hoolboom regarding Cumming's video work from 1995 to the present.

Following this conversation, *The Unrelenting Eye*, a program of works by Cumming will be available to view online through Vithèque. This program highlights some of the ways in which Donigan Cumming undermines the documentary as a form within the form itself: the radicality of the situations he films, his blatant use of staging, on-screen direction given to the actors, self-filming, and explicit references to filmmaking processes.

[Access the discussion here](#)

The discussion will be available later on Vithèque.

program

THE UNRELENTING EYE

Watch for free on [Vithèque](#) from May 7 to July 7, 2020

***My Dinner with Weegee (2001)* – 36 min. 26 sec.**

***Wrap (2000)* – 3 min. 30 sec.**

***Shelter (1999)* – 3 min. 22 sec.**

***The Seven Wonders of the World (2018)*
– 18 min. 59 sec.**

(Videos with French subtitles)

[Watch the program here](#)

In *My Dinner with Weegee*, Marty, a man in his mid-seventies, talks about his life in New York as a young Catholic pacifist and trade unionist, reminiscing about his encounters with various artists and activists. In light of the old man's stories, Cumming looks back on his own radicalism. The documentary is made up of startling scenes in which the artist crudely depicts Marty's different sides – one moment a brilliant speaker and the next an idle alcoholic. Here, the artist treats time nonlinearly so that these states transpire almost simultaneously. As we abruptly shift from the intellectual to the ailing man and back again, the stark contrast between Marty's two sides is emphasized by means of proximities within the editing. Marty seems to be condemned to this unending and fatal loop.

Cumming likewise defies filmmaking conventions through the use of repetition and by detaching sound from image in

Wrap, which features the protagonist, Gordie, recounting an assault. Two sound recordings play one after the other. In the first, which is synced with the image, the protagonist convincingly simulates stuttering. This serves as an audio representation of the technical problems of the second recording, a degraded digital file taken from the video *Voice: Off*, also featuring Gordie.

In *Shelter*, the artist exposes the power relations at play between the observer and the observed in conventional documentary representations of the disadvantaged. In this work, we witness a mysterious meeting between Cumming and an injured man taking refuge in a bus shelter. The artist asks about the man's condition but quickly loses interest in the story he tells. Over the course of this 3- minute video, Cumming's discourse shifts from empathy to mockery and nonsense. Having recorded the necessary sound for his work, he leaves the scene without looking back.

The program concludes with Cumming's most recent work, *The Seven Wonders of the World*, which was created using a compilation of observations, encounters and stolen moments. In an expressive use of editing, the artist combines live action footage, drawing and animation, and uses superimposition and slow motion. This documentary collage acts as an absurd yet passionate protest against illness and death.

launch

This program accompanies the launching of *Body-to-Body: The Works of Donigan Cumming*, a new series of digital publications and video compilations produced by Vidéographe.

Comprising all 26 videos made by Donigan Cumming to date, as well as images of his installations, photographs, drawings and collages, this publication takes an interdisciplinary approach in order to highlight the common threads that unite the artist's different bodies of work. It also features essays by Zoë Tousignant and Fabrice Montal, which examine Cumming's work in the context of art and film history, an audio interview with the artist by Jean Perret, and a number of sound works. The selected texts and documents testify to Cumming's creative fervour, his desire to constantly destabilize and to relentlessly draw from the margins of society, from the watchable, as well as on his own works.

This publication was made possible thanks to the support of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

[Buy the publication here](#)

artists

Donigan Cumming is a Montréal-based artist whose multimedia practice includes photography, sound, video, drawing, text and collage, among other mediums. His work addresses themes such as the body, the boundaries between truth and fiction, taboos of representation, and social engagement.

Cumming began his career making sound installations and photographs in the 1980s. Early solo exhibitions included *Reality and Motive in Documentary Photography* (1986) and *Moving Still* (1999). In 1995, he began to work with video and in 1996 he was awarded the Telefilm Canada Award for Best Canadian Discovery (Festival du nouveau Cinéma, Montréal, 1996). His work has been shown in Canada and abroad, including at the New York Video Festival, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Modern Art. His work has been the subject of numerous monographic exhibitions and retrospectives and has been referred to in numerous theoretical works and reference books. His photographs and videos have been acquired by the permanent collections of museums and institutions in Quebec, Canada, and around the world. donigancumming.com. donigancumming.com

Mike Hoolboom began making movies in 1980. Making as practice, a daily application. Ongoing remixology. 100+ movies, many redacted. Since 2000 a steady drip of bio docs. The animating question of community: how can I help you? Interviews with media artists for 3 decades. 30 books, written, edited, co-edited. Local ecologies. Volunteerism. Opening the door. mikehoolboom.com

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