

ART

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I am an
artist
who
makes
Political
statements

Invisible Labour

Nicole Wermers interviewed
by Ellen Mara De Wachter

Grenfell

Morgan Quaintance

Levelling Up?

Laura Harris

Dora Budor

Profile by Tom Denman

generated worlds found elsewhere across the festival. Colectivo Los Ingrávidos's films serve as a welcome reminder of the political symbolism of breath – post-pandemic, post 'I can't breathe' – and of the opportunities art still presents, even within deeply flawed systems of production and dissemination, to be a powerful conduit for resistance.

International Film Festival Rotterdam took place between 25 January and 4 February.

Rachel Pronger is a writer and curator based in Berlin.

peter campus: myoptiks

In conversation with gallery director and curator Carlo Cinque, the pioneering US artist peter campus explains that he feels close to God when he is working with his camera. Visiting this meticulously curated and sympathetically installed exhibition at Milan's Carlocinque Gallery confirms campus's spiritual sensibility and supports his assertion. These new works are subtle, accomplished and, most significantly, profoundly contemplative.

The curator and artist have worked together harmoniously, selecting and installing ten new videos, what the artist describes as 'videographs', from a substantial body of material that was recorded in and around Bellport, near the artist's home on Long Island. The works are all carefully composed visual details of temporal fragments recorded at locations either on or at the edges and margins of water, including ponds and puddles. They are video recordings of fluid surfaces that present layers of colour, as much as momentary reflections that capture motion and refracted light, a macroscopic continuum that has been contained and held in the camera, before being enhanced, subtly processed and manipulated by the artist for the viewer to experience and contemplate.

campus has focused on the landscape for over 30 years, refining and developing his technique and approach. Despite his choice of medium, campus considers himself to be a painter and, insofar as his interest in the control and manipulation of light, colour and composition is central to this recent work, the films are also about movement – the containing, control and manipulation of time and motion. These additional (and traditionally non-painterly) aspects

are of equal importance to campus, an approach that he formulates as 'myoptiks'. It is the combination of these two activities, the framing of the image (from light, colour and composition to scale) and the framing of time (tempo, pace, movement and duration) in a complex yet harmonious set of relations that are at the aesthetic centre of this series.

campus's attitude to his camera and approach to videography is instructive. The camera's fixed and objective stare provides him with a creative and liberating opportunity. In the excellent catalogue that accompanies the exhibition the artist explains: 'The camera adds to my experience ... It increases my sensibility. It expands my senses and adds something I could not have known any other way.' Thus, the results of his recording sessions in the field become opportunities for subsequent discovery and interpretation at the post-production stage.

The Carlocinque gallery occupies two levels, the ground floor includes two works displayed on large video screens, establishing the exhibition themes and subject matter from the outset. The video *squassux puddle*, at just under five minutes, presents slender, gently swaying russet and sepia grasses reflected in a sky-blue pond surface, a scattering of ochre rocks visible beneath. The video *four oh two* includes, uniquely among the works on show, evidence of human activity when a train passes through the frame at a central point in the video, its transitory reflection transforming the colours and composition of the static shot. The duration of each work is significant, contributing to the viewer's experience of movement patterns and their relationship to the relative stasis in the overall framing. All works are looped sequences of varying length, the barely perceivable point of repeat marked by the briefest pause, or discrete vertical wipe.

Descending to the lower level, the main gallery space is also carefully choreographed. Video screens emit a soft glow, gently augmented with dimmed spotlights that provide a pathway for the viewer. The space is dark, soothing and silent, the visuals eloquent. Strategically positioned benches invite and encourage contemplation, and the viewer is rewarded in giving time to allow the works to unfold. Unconventional in shape, the gallery contains unique angles. The occasional supporting columns provide opportunities for some intimate viewing spaces: *sanctum*, for example, occupies its own tiny alcove, which must be experienced individually, and *ditch* is hidden around a corner away from the main group of works. *Strafe*, the only diptych in the exhibition, is sympathetically situated between two columns, with a centrally placed bench.

This outstanding presentation of campus's work also functions as an installation: the pieces support and contribute to each other, working individually and as a collective, coherent statement. Still producing and creating accomplished work, this exhibition is an affirmation of campus's continued significance to contemporary moving-image culture.

peter campus's 'myoptiks' was at Carlocinque Gallery, Milan from 3 October to 27 January.

Chris Meigh-Andrews is an artist, writer and editor of the forthcoming three-volume publication *Encyclopedia of New Media Art* for Bloomsbury Academic.



peter campus, 'myoptiks', installation view, Carlocinque Gallery, Milan

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Oreet Ashery
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