



SATELLITE

Redmond Entwistle

Saturday, October 17, 8:00 pm

Gallery TPW

To perform a cinema

Jacob Korczynski

It shall suffice at present to define the performative as a statement that carries no significance beyond its actual time and place of utterance. The performative, in other words, designates a mode of direct address that highlights its own conditions of enunciation.¹

A broken tracking shot attempts to follow a circular line through the architecture around the intersection of Bloor Street and Lansdowne Avenue. Produced as a reflection upon the site of Gallery TPW, Redmond Entwistle's *Satellite* traces a geographic shift that is reshaping the role of the storefront space in the economies of contemporary art. Presented in Gallery TPW's current location on Ossington Avenue north of Queen Street West, *Satellite* brings two Toronto sites together in dialogue. Viewers are called to witness the sharp decline in exhibition spaces in the one neighbourhood and the repurposing and creation of new spaces in another. Here, on a Saturday evening, the gallery district of Queen Street West can be heard giving way to a new entertainment centre. And by mapping the Bloor West neighbourhood, *Satellite* is presenting TPW with its possible future.

To construct *Satellite* Entwistle filmed as many sites as possible within a 360 degree circle, cutting through buildings and other spaces located at the four corners of the Bloor and Lansdowne intersection. Whenever the artist was unable to gain permission to shoot a space, or he was confronted by a gap in the architecture, he inserted a corresponding duration of clear leader into the film, making the portrait of the neighbourhood inherently incomplete. While synchronous sound from each filmed location accompanies every photographed image, a variable and unique soundtrack that

sequences sound from field recordings in the neighbourhood accompanies the fissure interjected in the projected image through the clear leader. These audio interjections consist of interviews conducted by Entwistle while he attempted to seek permission to shoot, and audio clips linked to news stories in the area sourced from online press and Youtube. Similarly, Entwistle's recent projects, *Skein* (2008) and *Red Light* (2009), also deploy strategies of disjunction between sound and image to produce temporal portraits of New Jersey and Belfast respectively and incorporate elements of chance to underscore a performative gesture by the artist. The performative nature of Entwistle's work also relies on a situational strategy in which viewers gathered in one site are exposed to the sights and sounds of another. Entwistle employed this same strategy in *Paterson-Lodz* (2006), the project he presented during his first visit to Toronto just over a year ago, which examines the role of the Jewish populations in the 1905 revolution in Lodz and the 1913 Paterson Silk Strike. In the primarily imageless *Paterson-Lodz*, Entwistle negated the projected image through his use of black leader in long passages, as the field recordings from Paterson and Lodz unfolded on the soundtrack. In contrast, the clear leader deployed in *Satellite* not only transforms the screen into a temporary wall in the white cube, but during these passages it also illuminates the length of the gallery. In doing so, *Satellite* foregrounds the social contract of the cinema, which we enter into by agreeing to watch a film in public and in which the site facilitates both a private experience between viewer and image, and the socializing experience of being part of a collected public.

Satellite is a film-performance – it is both a viewing situation that has a set duration and a site-specific encounter with a set of moving images. In this regard, Entwistle's project extends beyond the

idea of an artist film to occupy the more specific genealogy of the artist project as cinematic site, such as Robert Smithson's *Toward the Development of a Cinema Cavern, or the Movie goer as Spelunker* (1971) or Marcel Broodthaers' *Section Cinéma* (1971). Entwistle effectively redraws the gallery floor plan through the placement of a rear-projection screen at the mid-point of the site, thereby eliminating the primary exhibition space for the evening of October 17, 2009. In this way, the rear-projection creates a doubled perspective – *Satellite* can be viewed by those who have entered the gallery, while also allowing for both the assembled viewers and the unfolding image to be observed by those who choose to remain on the street. Entwistle's makeshift cinema situation reveals – rather than conceals – two sets of viewers or viewing positions, and in this regard, *Satellite* echoes Dan Graham's proposed project *Cinema* (1981):

A cinema, the ground-level of a modern office building, is sited on a busy corner. Its facade consists of two-way mirrored glass, which allows viewers on whichever side is darker at any particular moment to see through and observe the other side (without being seen by people on that side). From the other side, the window appears as a mirror. When the light illuminates the surface of both sides more or less equally, the glass facade is both semireflective and partially transparent. Spectators on both sides observe both the opposing space and a reflection of their own look within the space.²

In Graham's proposal, and Entwistle's project, the construction of cinema – the staging or manifestation of the projected image – is displayed reflexively, as a presentation of film's process.

Through the architectural and formal properties of *Satellite*, a cinema is formed that emphasizes disjunction, in contrast to the unified experience that the viewer is sutured into when watching a conventional narrative film. As a film that is constantly in the process of folding and unfolding itself via structures of repetition, *Satellite* could be seen as sharing the same spirit and strategies with Structural/Materialist film, in which the meanings derived from the produced images and sounds are effected by the specific properties of the viewing and listening situation. As a performance that is different for each viewer as she/he moves through and around the two-hour projection, *Satellite* functions as a porous text that is open to fragmentation and multiple readings – each viewer reflecting on their relationship to both the recorded site, the performance site, and the broader geography of the city as a whole. In transforming Gallery TPW into a cinema situation without seats, the traditional frontal configuration of the auditorium that facilitates a single perspective on the image is eliminated and viewers are encouraged to occupy multiple positions. More importantly, they are encouraged to interact and initiate dialogue as they become familiar with the images and sounds of *Satellite*.

Before arriving in the city to begin his residency at the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto, Entwistle's original project proposal was based upon an experience that he often encountered in New York City's Chinatown, close to where he lives and works. He initially wanted to focus specifically on the storefront spaces where different diaspora communities gather and are encountered whilst viewing satellite television, hence the title, *Satellite*. Although Entwistle's project now serves as a neighbourhood portrait that extends beyond a specific storefront use, the title still carries meaning, as it now references the combined ideas of periphery

and marked boundaries. The title also references the act of going against the grain and presenting a counter-strategy. The object-based authority of the gallery is typically turned over to the discursive collective experience only when it reinforces the authority of the former through education initiatives or adjunct programming that animate exhibitions. Furthermore, the migration of artist-run centres and other contemporary art initiatives into the satellite neighbourhoods of the city has often been cited as a form of gentrification that displaces the neighbourhoods of diasporic communities. In her essay, "Is a Museum a Factory?" Hito Steyerl frames the losses and gains of discursive spaces that have accompanied the disappearance of factories and the subsequent conversion of these sites into multifaceted institutions for the dissemination of contemporary art.³ A similar comparison could be made in the way in which artist-run centres and other contemporary art initiatives enter the spaces of peripheral neighbourhoods due to reasons of economics and real estate, and in doing so, once again frame the storefront as a collective space for dialogue and discourse. The erasure of the cinema as a collective experience in the face of the ongoing migration of moving images from film to video is concurrent with the desire of artist-run centres such as Gallery TPW to support more time-based practices. While adaptable to the presentation of projects across media, new patterns of viewership emerge as institutional space is absorbed. "Cinema inside the museum," claims Steyerl, "thus calls for a multiple gaze, which is no longer collective, but common, which is incomplete, but in process, which is distracted and singular, but can be edited into various sequences and combinations."⁴ Engaging with the exhibition space as a platform for a time-based project, Entwistle's project responds to Steyerl's observations. *Satellite* does not lend itself

to easy documentation, will not be encountered vicariously, and cannot be revisited. In this regard, if you are encountering this text after the performance of *Satellite*, then this writing reflects a kind of failure: the failure of an audience to assemble, and the failure of this project to occupy time, rather than space. This text can only serve as a fragment of a performance that was received collectively. These fragments may circulate in your mind for future reference and may migrate as footnotes in future texts, but in the end, I suppose you had to be there.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Eric de Bruyn, "The Museum of Attractions: Marcel Broodthaers and the Section Cinéma" in *Art and the moving image: a critical reader*, edited by Tanya Leighton (London: Tate Publishing; In association with Afterall; New York: Distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, 2008), 114.
- 2 Dan Graham, "Cinema (1981)" in *Rock my religion: writings and projects, 1965-1990*, edited by Brian Wallis (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 168.
- 3 Hito Steyerl, "Is a Museum a Factory?" *e-flux journal* 7 [June 2009]: 2.
- 4 Steyerl, 8.

Redmond Entwistle is an artist-filmmaker currently living in New York. Entwistle employs documentary and abstract modes of film-making, often investigating histories of social displacement and creating portraits of cities anchored on the invisible or the implied. Recent works include *Monuments* (2009), *Skein* (2007), and *Paterson-Lódz* (2006). Entwistle studied at California Institute of the Arts and the Whitney Independent Study Program. He has presented projects in recent group shows at Miguel Abreu Gallery (NY), Nought to Sixty (ICA, London) and has an upcoming solo exhibition at Art in General (NY).

Jacob Korczynski is a curator based in Toronto where he is currently the Programmer at the Images Festival and a member of the Pleasure Dome collective. He has curated projects for the Art Gallery of York University, the Dunlop Art Gallery, Vtape and SAW Gallery, and his writing has been published in *Border Crossings*, *C* magazine, the *Fillip Review* and *Ciel Variable*.

Redmond Entwistle's *Satellite* is co-presented by the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto and Pleasure Dome as part of the Gallery TPW series *You Had to be There*, an intermittent series of events looking at the relation between liveness and images.

FILM CREDITS

Cameraman	Justin Lovell
Swing Grip Assistant Camera	Mikhail Petrenko Adam Crosby
Sound Recordists	Daryl Buttineau Kevin Brown
Production Assistants	Raj Nandy Erin Wolfson

Special thanks to all of the establishments for their cooperation with filming.

Cham Shan Buddhist Temple
Ciros Restaurant and Tavern
Discount Optical
Kara Altin Coffee Shop
Great Furniture
NuCool Tattoo
Toronto Free Gallery
Britten Memorial Church
Boli Productos and Cybercafe

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