

MARCELLVS L. - VIDEORHIZOM

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Since 2002 Marcellvs L. (*1980 in Belo Horizonte/ Brazil) has been working on what he calls the VideoRhizome – a series of (so far) 28 short video pieces that neither follow a chronological sequence nor link together in content. The only thing all these works have in common is the way they were made: the camera is mounted on a tripod and captures what is happening in front of the lens, sometimes in sharp focus, sometimes blurred into abstraction, depending how far away the subject is. The parameters of each work are the same: all the situations filmed arise from everyday observations that the artist stumbles across spontaneously – and so none of the works involves a script, “real” actors or a narrated plot.

It is this tension and ambivalence, between random choice and tight control, that provokes the vitality of these works; the strict principle underlying the conditions of production is an essential ordering feature that binds the works together.

The Concept

The concept of the “rhizome”, which Marcellvs applies to his video series, dates back to an idea conceived by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Felix Guattari. In 1976 they borrowed a technical term from botany, designating a mass of roots that lacks hierarchy because it does not spread outwards from a single main stem, to explain their model of a decentralised, open and ever evolving network. It has no beginning and no end, and constantly expands by ceaselessly forming new links with other networks.

Marcellvs’ VideoRhizome should not, however, be understood as illustrating the idea that Deleuze and Guattari explored in depth in their key work “A Thousand Plateaus” in 1980. Rather, the artist sees the production of these separate works and their unusual pattern of distribution as developing the argument further and adapting it artistically.

The random, undirected aspects of the theory are not merely reflected in the spontaneous discovery of places and situations. Highlighting the absence of connection across the series, the titles of the works derive from fourdigit numbers that are randomly acquired by rolling dice. These figures, in turn, are a key factor in the distribution of the works. In the town of production, the artist seeks the four-

digit combination in house numbers, post codes and telephone numbers – and wherever it appears, he will send a package containing a copy of his video to the household concerned. Not only does this distribution mechanism highlight the infinite reproducibility of the medium; it is also an act of propagation, although there is ultimately no certainty that the tapes ever reach their destination: “In the end, it doesn’t matter who receives them, how they are received or what the purpose is. What matters is the accidental and fragile encounter between occurrence and non-occurrence: between the one who produced the images, those who can be seen in them, and the one who receives the tapes via mail. To date, I have (...) mailed 3,300 tapes.”

Time and Duration

VideoRhizome, says the artist, is a life-long project. This is not just because it was set up from the outset as an endless sequence. Experimenting with a new form of temporality is a particular thread in Marcellvs’ artistic output. Minimal or constantly repeated movements and long sequence shots are therefore a central characteristic of the works, inviting spectators to enter the flow of the situation before them and to concentrate on the accompanying sound. Rather than waiting for something to happen, it is the waiting itself that is happening. The intention behind this approach is to create a new form of perception and visibility – aided by sound installations, which the artist also composes himself. This very painstaking and original use of sound and image enables spectators to comprehend time as a resource and to experience it like a sculpture that is shaped and modulated.