

A large, circular, illuminated structure, possibly a stadium or arena, is shown at night. The structure is lit from within, and its reflection is visible on the wet pavement in the foreground. The sky is dark, and there are some lights visible in the distance. The overall scene is a nighttime view of a large, circular building.

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The Cinematic Eye
An international visual arts project





A summer's evening... You're taking a stroll through your own neighbourhood, lost in thought. Suddenly you spot a back-lit photo filling a display window; it seems oddly familiar. As you approach it, you realize that it's a life-size still taken from a famous film scene. You're engrossed. A humdrum spot down the road has been lit up too. What's happening, you think, what have I missed? Every single detail impresses itself upon your retina, until your attention shifts to another illuminated image in the distance...





The cinematic eye

There is a growing amount of interest in the influence that film exerts on the work of contemporary artists. Take, for instance, the exhibition Cinema, cinema which took place 6 years ago in Van Abbe Museum and explored the relationship between video(art) and cinematographic narrative. Curator Jurriaan Benschop of Amsterdam's Rialto Filmtheater also expressed an interest in the relationship between film and contemporary art when he invited artists to select films for screening and talk about them. A numbers of classics, such as the films of Alfred Hitchcock, were alluded to conspicuously often.

The ever increasing stream of media images and impressions that flows our way in urban life has improved our ability to construct our own version of reality. It took Hitchcock, for example, far longer to unravel his plot that it takes us to unmask the murderer. If complicated political issues can be encapsulated nowadays in simple one-liners, so too can films be reduced to a couple of scenes.

Video artist Douglas Gordon singled out that chilling moment in Hitchcock's Psycho where the lead is stabbed in the shower, and drew it out to a full 24 hours. What made that fragment so unforgettable and meaningful that it become entrenched in our collective memory?

The cinematic experience is a dual experience, at once synchronic and diachronic. The synchronic experience involves making sense of a film as you follow it scene by scene. The diachronic experience is a flash of recognition that has nothing to do with the plot itself. Thoughts such as: "Hang on, I saw that actress on the box yesterday"; "What a nice café they've filmed it in" or "Did I lock my car?" are simply triggered by what the lead does. Something in the image resonates with the viewer's memory or personal frame of reference.

International Art Project

SYNC! is the brainchild of art dealer Frans Oomen, artist Hans van der Pas and ARTWALK AMSTERDAM, who consider both the synchronic and diachronic eye relevant to contemporary visual arts, be it video or “still” art. (Still art is, after all, “edited” by the viewer as s/he moves along the exhibits.) The focal point of SYNC! is film fragments brought together by artists of national and international renown. The artists will be invited to choose scenes from films and documentaries that typify their vision of the cinematic eye and to create and/or exhibit a piece of work which they feel bears a relationship to their choice.

SYNC!'s activities can be enjoyed in any order whatsoever. One of the activities will be a captivating city walk around the *Staatslieden*-area of Amsterdam. Life-size stills taken from the selected films will be plastered on and around ARTWALK's display windows. (These display windows will be turned into light-boxes.) In addition projections and monitors will be visible from various locations outside. ARTWALK's exhibits will intermingle with everyday life, which is, after all, increasingly lived as a film.

The city walk will begin and end at the former gas plant Westergasfabriek, whose “Zuiveringshal” will play host to another important component of SYNC! - namely an exhibition intended to bring together the work of artists who bear a common relationship to the cinematic eye. Works will include: Mirjam Oosterbaan's drawings of panorama sized scenes that resemble stills from pre-war animation films, only more morbid and absurd; Tobias Rehberger's replicas of sports cars (cheap-looking Lamborghinis and Porsches), reminding us of James Bond. In addition Pierre Huyghe's video work 'L'ellipse' (in which the older Bruno Ganz will re-play a scene from an earlier film) has been provisionally programmed too. The “Zuiveringshal” is a compelling exhibition space, conducive to the synchronic experience: the visitors can view the art as they wish, but at the same time they will be directed by, for example, the position of the small cabinets on the huge floor space, the surprising vistas and passageways.





In the SYNC!'s catalogue a visual essay will be included. SYNC! will create, through the city, a trail of locations which will be lit up like a film-set and photographed. The locations will be chosen by a professional location scout (who will take the artists' film choice into consideration) and concentrated in and around the Westergasfabriek site. The result will be a "partial image" in the catalogue that could serve as a storyboard for the spectator. One could even say that the exhibition, the city walk and the storyboard are all conducive to the "synchronic" experience, while the diachronic experience takes place between the individual viewer and the separate works of art.



48HRS

SYNC!'s most special event will be *48HRS*, to be held in the Gashouder on the Westergasfabriek site. Those films and documentaries selected by the artists will be screened in full over two whole days. In addition the space will provide an opportunity for reflection and for encounters. The film programme, organised in collaboration with Filmhuis Cavia and Ketelhuis, will be supplemented by forum discussion, all sorts of performances and other activities.

It is SYNC!'s ambition to explore the meanings that fragmentary experience gives rise to. Our desire for unity is insatiable, against our better knowledge. Perhaps that is the reason why we are so attracted to the fragmentary. We recognise the past of our dreams in ancient ruins far more than in old edifices which have remained in tact, and which (were it possible) would actually be more mysterious to us. That which is incomplete is still in the process of being created, just as we are. Every fragment conceals a promise, which is why we create new fragments time and time again. A work of art is necessarily provisional: a slice of time, of space, of a thought process. We love these fragments because they are the remains of a meaningful (allegorical) whole hidden somewhere in the future.

Cut! It's a wrap!

SYNC! The trailer

Between the 7th of July and the 26th of November, the SYNC! team organized the exhibition SIDEWINDER, a solo by rising star Stefanie Schneider, who will also participate in the larger, 2007 edition of SYNC!. It served to put the concept to the test, and to work on business connections. The exhibition was much appreciated by the audience.

There are film enthusiasts who are able to dish out dialogues from their favorite movies word by word. Those who look at the photo series of Berlin/Los Angeles based artist Stefanie Schneider (1968), will immediately understand from what source they originate: classical road movies, preferably the slightly surrealistic ones as e.g. David Lynch makes them. Again and again traveling serves as a metaphor for the American Dream: feeling freedom on seemingly endless roads, being tempted by mysterious hitchhikers, interchangeable happy endings by arrival. The women in her work play with their cliché sexual role, but try to escape from the spectator's dominant view. Schneider, being trained as a film editor, alludes to this iconography, but makes it appear just to vanish again.

Stefanie Schneider mainly uses old materials (celluloid and Polaroid). The result of her work is somewhat unpredictable. The overexposed images aren't reproductions of an existing New World, but are like traces of cinematographic imagery, inscribed in collective memory.







ARTWALK AMSTERDAM

ARTWALK is an artists initiative (founded by Holger Nickisch) that specialises in projects for public space, art in neighbourhoods or art in the streets. ARTWALK operates as a point of convergence where current developments in contemporary art, context-specific social interaction, city-planning and architecture take on new relationships.

ARTWALK has been in operation since 2002. During the last four years, 25 storefront exhibitions (showing more than 250 artists) have been realised in combination with other activities, such as performance, works in public space, installations and education. ARTWALK's programming exists through collaboration between many artists, guest curators and diverse organisations: the city districts, other artists initiatives, housing associations, small businesses, social workers, different neighbourhood groups and funding organisations.

City renewal raises many questions. What is the role of art in the city and in the neighbourhood? Can artists deliver lasting contributions to societal and political problems? ARTWALK views art not as a means to hide policy that falls too short, but as a process and methodology that reacts to current changes in culture and society. The central focus of ARTWALK is the contribution of the artists. They develop ideas to fill, expand, and occupy space; concepts that use the storefronts to engage the public with their work. Artists involved on the national and international level experience making an installation for ARTWALK an artistic challenge.

The art route offers artists a unique supplement in the established exhibition scene. There is no other place in Amsterdam where art is shown in public space in this way. ARTWALK doesn't focus on incidental projects, but rather consistently investigates the possibilities of art that plays with its surroundings.

(translation by: Renée Ridgeway)



SYNC! is een initiatief van :

Frans Oomen - www.mo-artgallery.nl

Stichting ARTWALK AMSTERDAM - www.artwalkamsterdam.nl

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text of ARTWALJ by Holger Nickisch

kleurenfotos uit de fotoserie SIDEWINDER van Stefanie Schneider

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