Chapter 4

Event-sites and Documentary Dislocations

If we subscribe to a notion of place as an intersection of social, economic and political relations, rather than a bounded geographic location, where and how does artistic engagement with the context of the exhibition start? How do such works coalesce to form a meaningful ‘exhibition’ for the biennial visitor when the experience of place itself is an event in progress? ... And furthermore, how do context-specific projects and artworks become meaningful outside the signifying context of the exhibition?

Claire Doherty, ‘Curating Wrong Places’.1

Location is ... by definition the site of performativity and of criticality rather than a set of naturalised relations between subjects and places.

Irit Rogoff, ‘The Where of Now’.2

Introduction

In a recent analysis of curatorial practices concerning place, Claire Doherty cites a number of projects that have given rise to films, including The Battle of Orgreave (Jeremy Deller, 2001), One Flew Over the Void (Javier Tellez, 2005) and When Faith Moves Mountains (Francis Alÿs, 2002). Writing in 2007, she defines these works as amongst the ‘most significant projects to respond to place of the past five years’, producing dislocations that have been meaningful ‘beyond the specifics of Lima, Orgreave and Tijuana/San Diego’.3 Elsewhere, Doherty explores the issues raised by the documentation
of Alÿs’ project, in which 500 volunteers moved a sand dune about four inches from its original position in Ventanilla, an area outside Lima, Peru. As a contribution to the third Bienal Iberoamericana de Lima in 2000, she notes that both the live event and the film that documented it were required to ‘resonate in a highly charged local context and translate to a global Biennale culture’. For projects like *When Faith Moves Mountains*, which exist in multiple forms from the outset (as event and as document) she also distinguishes between ‘originating’ contexts and ‘displaced’ contexts.

Drawing upon Doherty’s work, this chapter examines the relationship between site, document and location in several examples of artists’ cinema works, many of which seem to operate between originating and displaced contexts. The majority of these works appropriate modes of address from documentary film and television and some are also directly concerned with themes (such as migration or globalization) that are commonly explored through documentary media. But even though they may evoke the aesthetics of documentary; in terms of cinematography, narrative structure or the use of location sound, or even incorporate interviews, voiceover, archive footage, direct address to camera or dramatic re-enactment, these works rarely claim to be ‘documentaries’. This chapter is organized into two parts, the first of which focuses on a selection of works, by Laura Horelli, Tacita Dean, Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor (also known as desperate optimists) and Jeremy Deller, all of which originated as public art projects. Each one was commissioned by a publicly-funded agency or organization for exhibition in a publicly accessible, non-gallery, context. All of these works incorporate some element of what might be conventionally termed ‘location shooting’ and three were initially exhibited in close physical proximity to the shooting location. The fourth project (Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*) is more ambiguous because it was a live event staged largely for the purposes of documentation in the form of a film directed by Mike Figgis. My argument...
is that these processes of production and exhibition give rise to the hybrid formation of an ‘event-site’.

The second part of the chapter focuses on works by Pierre Huyghe, Stan Douglas, Melik Ohanian and Gerard Byrne, which involve reconstruction, remaking, re-staging or re-enactment. These four works were all developed for museum, gallery or biennial exhibition contexts, rather than ‘off-site’ or overtly ‘public’ projects or commissions. But, like Deller’s *The Battle of Orgreave*, each work refers to events that have already been depicted or documented in some public form, whether as Hollywood film drama, Latin American Third Cinema, political documentary or magazine article. The works of Deller, Dean and others assert the production location as a *literal site*, to use the terminology offered by James Meyer and discussed in Chapter 1. This second grouping of works, however, implies a more open-ended and *functional* engagement with multiple, dislocated sites of documentation, dramatization and publication, where the alignment of the ‘event-site’ with notions of authenticity is called into question. My use of the term ‘event-site’ is also informed by Pierre Huyghe’s claim that the ‘replay’ now supersedes the event itself, to the extent that representation of the event is now routinely incorporated into the conception of the project.\(^5\)

Before addressing the relationship between site, event and document, some broader issues concerning the concept of location in both installation practice and film production should be noted.

**Installation, Location and the Site-specific Project as Film Set**

In her analysis of site-specific art and locational identity, Miwon Kwon describes a ‘thematisation of discursive sites, which engenders a misrecognition of them as natural extensions of the artist’s identity’.\(^6\) In this instance, the ‘legitimacy of the work’s critique [of site, institution or context]
is measured by the proximity of the artist’s personal association (converted to expertise) with a particular place, history, discourse or identity, etc (converted to content)’. In other words, the artists’ relationship, not only to the ‘specific’ site or context of production but also a succession of other sites and contexts, provides the frame through which it is interpreted, particularly by critics and commissioners. This is somewhat similar to the operations of seriality in modernist art, where individual works are legible only through reference to the series. Sometimes, however, these personal associations actually become the *substance* of the work, determining the logic of its production, as in the case of *Das Totes Haus Ur*, an ongoing work of art by Gregor Schneider in which the artist continually reconfigures the interior of his own home. While Schneider’s work does not feature in Kwon’s analysis, perhaps because it seems to belong to the category of ‘installation art’ rather than ‘site-specific art’, *Das Totes Haus Ur* does figure prominently in Claire Bishop’s *Installation Art: A Critical History*, where it serves to illuminate an important distinction between location and ‘set’. Bishop notes that even though Schneider’s work is literally, as well as metaphorically, tied to a specific dwelling, it does not resist commodification; instead the rooms are reproduced by the artist as ‘dead limbs’, complete with further alternations and revisions, and installed in galleries, museums and private collections.⁷

Like all installation works, the rooms of *Das Totes Haus Ur* undergo a process of (re)construction within the space of gallery or museum once they are detached from the original house. So while the museum or gallery may serve as the actual location of exhibition, this location is secondary to the imaginative *setting* of the work (Schneider’s house). Here, installation remains integrally linked to its ‘place of origin’ and offers access to an interior space that is closely aligned to the physical presence of the artist without posing any particular challenge to established conventions of
authorship or commodification. Many forms of installation practice, however, explicitly counter this recourse to the body of the artist as site of meaning. The key example in Bishop’s account is the work of Mike Nelson, which is broadly comparable to that of Schneider in terms of scale, materials and mode of construction.

In addition to various works for galleries and museums, Nelson has developed large-scale site-specific installations for non-gallery contexts, such as *The Deliverance and the Patience*, devised for and installed in a former brewery in Giudecca during the Venice Biennale in 2001. As Bishop notes, his work is often marked by a critical stance towards the commodification of art and experience, as well as an overtly cinematic and dream-like quality. Unlike Schneider’s ‘dead limbs’, Nelson’s installations do not derive their meaning primarily from proximity to his own body, imagined or otherwise. Instead, the citation of literary, historical and popular cultural references serves to establish connections with much broader networks of inquiry. So in *The Coral Reef* (2000), for example, Nelson explicitly references an array of subcultures, social groups and belief systems, ‘the alternatives that form a substrata (a coral reef) beneath the “ocean surface” of global capitalism in the West’. In addition, Nelson’s work is often characterized by the reorganization of established boundaries and the relocation of entrances and exits, which further complicates the dynamics of place, position and location. This strategy was employed in the design of the installation spaces for *Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted* at the ICA in 2001; Nelson built an elaborate succession of passages and rooms, incorporating a number of dead ends, which proved particularly disorienting for those familiar with the exhibition space.

The notion of the installation as a ‘set’, in the sense of a stage for the exploration of subjectivity, recurs in Bishop’s account. It is integral to her claim that certain forms of installation art can produce a sense of dislocation
or fragmentation while at the same time ‘instating’ a unified subject through their insistence upon the bodily presence of the viewer. In Bishop’s model it is the status of the installation as a constructed set that enables an oscillation, and even antagonism, between fragmented and coherent subjectivities. So, as discussed in Chapter 1, ‘installation art does not just articulate an intellectual notion of dispersed subjectivity (reflected in a world without a centre or organising principle); it also constructs a set in which the viewing subject may experience this fragmentation first-hand’. This concept of the set requires elaboration in relation to site-specific art because it suggests certain parallels between site-based practice and the use of non-studio locations for film and television production both of which require the cooperation and material support of various civic agencies and authorities for their execution. It is not unusual for commissioned site-specific works to involve the temporary reinhabitation, or re-purposing, of familiar public sites. Yet this does not mean that such works necessarily emanate from, or originate in response to, a specific site. In fact, the directors of Artangel note that ‘place or location, whether a natural or architectural environment has always emerged at different points’ in the development process; sometimes, it is a starting point and sometimes it remains ‘abstract until very late’. This suggests that, even in projects that are experienced as site-specific, locations may have been scouted and secured in a manner that is not radically different from standard practice within the film and television industry.

Site-specific works may also evoke aspects of cinematic experience even when they do not involve the moving image. In a text that accompanied documentation of a selection of Artangel projects, Bishop describes the various rituals that shape the experience of art outside the gallery. Initially comparing the journey towards an Artangel project to a kind of ‘pilgrimage’, in keeping with the organization’s use of religious terminology, she then
reverts to a different metaphor. She suggests that preparations in advance, such as gathering maps etc., acquire a ‘quasi-cinematic charge’. Locations for film and TV production can be chosen specifically because they feature recognizable landmarks or closely resemble the settings that feature in the narrative, serving to enhance verisimilitude. The prominent use of recognizable locations (particularly those that are coded as ‘foreign’ or exotic within the diegesis) has also been identified as a feature of post-classical film production during the 1960s. In an analysis of European co-productions during this period, Tim Bergfelder identifies a shift away from the classical narrative paradigm and a return to the genre formulas of the 1910s, particularly the episodic adventure serial. The most successful version of this revival is, he argues, the James Bond series, which has replicated the ‘attractions of the European adventure film [such as] foreign locations, special effects stunt acrobatics ... on a gigantic and epic scale.’

While it might seem somewhat implausible to compare an Artangel project to a James Bond film, Bergfelder’s analysis is interesting for its re-conceptualization of the location as a spectacular ‘attraction’. In cinema studies, the term ‘attraction’ is widely associated with Tom Gunning’s analysis of the overtly ‘presentational’ modes of address that are found in early cinema, revived in certain forms of avant-garde film and also (according to Scott Bukatman), invoked by the use of visual effects in post-classical genres such as science fiction. Once location is understood in the sense of ‘attraction’, it is possible to see how site-specific art projects might evoke the tensions between narrative and spectacle that are integral to the pleasures of certain post-classical film genres. Furthermore, these tensions might occur instead of, or perhaps in addition to, the oscillation between the fragmented and coherent subjectivities that Bishop identifies in installation. This phenomenon is most relevant to those projects where the parallels between the location shoot and site-based artwork are actually
foregrounded, as in the case of *The Battle of Orgreave*.

**Documentary Desires and the ‘Event-Site’**

Writing in the early 1990s, Michael Renov laments the ‘relative impoverishment of a *documentary film culture*, an energized climate of ideas and creative activities fuelled by debate and public participation’.\(^{15}\) In recent years, however, documentary has emerged as a point of connection between practitioners and researchers in the fields of visual art, ethnography and visual anthropology to the extent that in a publication from 2008 Renov notes a ‘remarkable vitality within the realm of contemporary non-fiction media ... bringing the documentary world in ever-closer contact with the realm of contemporary art’.\(^{16}\) It is likely that Documenta 11 (2002) contributed to this renewed vitality by focusing attention on a diversity of intersections between artists’ cinema and documentary since the 1970s in a programme that included works such as *Naked Spaces: Living is Round* (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1985), *Handsworth Songs* (Black Audio Film Collective, 1986), and *From the Other Side* (Chantal Akerman, 2002).\(^{17}\) The documentary turn within art practice and curatorial discourse has also been paralleled, and perhaps even prompted, by the emergence of activist practices that are characterized by a pronounced trans-nationalism.\(^{18}\)

In recent years, Irit Rogoff has noted a shift in artists’ cinema towards a mode of practice ‘that informs in a seemingly factual way, but at slight remove from *reportage*’.\(^{19}\) Exemplified by the work of artists such as Anri Sala, Francis Alÿs, Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij, this work is associated with the exploration and articulation of ‘newly imagined realities’, which are not necessarily anchored within a particular location yet perhaps evoke certain ‘claims to the real’ associated with documentary.\(^{20}\) Noting that this type of work is sometimes characterized by a ‘level gaze of considerable duration’, she points out that, while this gaze may operate from the ‘edge of
the world’, criticality is not necessarily aligned with marginality. In fact, Rogoff suggests that in certain forms of documentary practice the marginal is often constructed in terms of ‘tumultuousness’. In this model, what she perceives as the conventional ‘western gaze’ becomes overwhelmed by what it ‘observes to be a chaotic or irrational logic of the elsewhere’\textsuperscript{21} a logic that is essentialized and placed outside the spatio-temporal order of the West. By contrast, she argues that a ‘level and therefore unsettling gaze’, such as that found in the films of de Rijke and de Rooij, seems to acknowledge the existence of multiple temporalities while also revealing ‘the co-joining of space and time’ in globalization.

At this point, it is useful to recall a number of ‘fundamental tendencies’ or ‘modalities of desire’ that Michael Renov has identified as particular to documentary, and which intersect and overlap in contemporary artists’ cinema. The first modality, the ‘record/reveal/preserve mode’ is linked to the need to represent a mimetic or ‘real’ quality that is ‘common to all of cinema [but] intensified by the documentary signifier’s ontological status’\textsuperscript{22} This desire sometimes finds expression in explorations of archival formations and in works that exploit or emphasize the indexical properties of film. The second modality is concerned with \textit{persuasion or promotion} while the third, the desire to \textit{analyse or interrogate}, is sometimes aligned to a Brechtian critique. I will return to the second and third modalities at a later stage (the fourth, \textit{to express}, is perhaps less relevant). But first, I want to explore the impulse to record/reveal/preserve as it clearly invites analysis in relation to site-specific projects that engage with the history of a particular place or community.

There are, of course, many precedents in artists’ cinema for the exploration of history through the archive or archival fragment. In her contribution to \textit{Ghosting: The Role of the Archive within Contemporary Artist’s Film and Video}, Lucy Reynolds traces the exploration of found footage as ‘fragment’
through the history of experimental film. Echoing Benjamin’s theorization of the archive, she argues that for Ken Jacobs, Abigail Child and Morgan Fisher, among others, the fragment is aligned with a process of multiplication rather than with disintegration or destruction. Reynolds questions whether the viewer ‘trained to perceive meaning through cinema’s unbroken narratives, can ... experience this cinema of fragments as anything more than a breaking down of meaning, and thus the onset of a pervasive sense of anxiety and loss’.23 One possible outcome is suggested:

It could be argued that the found footage film requires the viewer to become an archivist, transforming a passive state of perception into an active process of restoration, by piecing together new meaning drawn from personal memory, association and imagination.24

This address to the viewer as archivist is closely linked to the indexical qualities of found footage and so might not seem directly relevant to all of the works under discussion in this chapter. But if the fragment is understood through reference to Benjamin’s distinctively spatial exploration of the ruins and debris of the arcades, other processes of multiplication may emerge in the interplay between event, document and the multiple sites of production and exhibition.

Uriel Orlow, another contributor to *Ghosting*, is more interested in the role of the artist (than the viewer), who is characterized as an ‘archive thinker’ engaged in the deconstruction of the notion of the archival. To search the archive is, he suggests, to experience it as continually slipping away – a dynamic that becomes apparent in works such as Susan Hiller’s *The J. Street Project* (2002–2005), an inventory of 303 roads, streets and paths throughout Germany that bear a name which refers to a former Jewish presence.25 Existing as a video work, a book and a series of photographs, Hiller’s project explores the limits of memorialization, particularly in the
traditional form of the public monument or memorial, which may actually suppress rather than preserve memory. According to Orlow, Hiller ‘creates a milieu for memory, a visual archive; a conceptual, time-based “space” where remembrance becomes possible.’\textsuperscript{26} But he does not fully address the formation of this time-based space or identify exactly where and how it comes into being. The concept of the ‘milieu’ for memory is derived from Pierre Nora’s 1989 article ‘Between Memory and History: \textit{Les Lieux de Mémoire},’ which actually claims that there are ‘no longer \textit{milieux de mémoire}, real environments of memory’ and instead only ‘lieux’ or ‘sites’ of memory.\textsuperscript{27}

According to Nora, these lost ‘milieux’ are exemplified by ‘peasant culture, that quintessential repository of collective memory, whose recent vogue as an object of historical study coincided with the apogee of industrial growth’.\textsuperscript{28} Prefiguring Huyssen’s analysis of mnemonic culture, discussed in \textbf{Chapter 3}, Nora argues that the prevalence of the material trace, exemplified by the monument, signals a shift from true memory to history. The boundary between memory and history is not entirely fixed, however, and the site of memory is itself characterized by its hybrid form, emerging at the intersection of the material, the functional and the symbolic. Within these categorizations, there are further distinctions: the material attributes of memory might be portable, topographical or monumental. Although the latter implies fixity, Nora emphasizes that monuments can be relocated without a loss of meaning, which is not the case with topographical ‘lieux’, which ‘owe everything to the specificity of their location and to being rooted in the ground’. Here, Nora cites as an example the conjunction of ‘tourism and ... historical scholarship’ in the location of the Bibliothèque Nationale on the site of the Hôtel Mazarin, in Paris.\textsuperscript{29}

The concept of the ‘\textit{lieux de mémoire}’ presents a number of challenges when thinking about the ‘event-site’. In Nora’s model, memory is resolutely aligned with the concrete as well as with spaces, gestures, images and
objects, while history is bound to temporal continuities, events and to what he terms as the ‘relations between things’. Artists’ cinema certainly encompasses an engagement with the concrete and the spatial, typically responding to or incorporating material traces of architecture or infrastructure. However, my analysis suggests that locations of production and sites of exhibition are very often chosen by artists for their generic significance (as spaces of labour, leisure, etc), indicating an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the ‘relations between things’. Instead of attempting to recover a ‘true memory’ (associated with the lost milieux of peasant culture) these works are marked by a productive tension between the functional and the symbolic, which may perhaps be most pronounced in works that do not privilege the material trace.

Dislocations of Labour and Leisure in Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan (Laura Horelli, 2002–2003)

Before extending my exploration of sites of memory and the event-site further, it is useful to consider an example of documentary practice in artists’ cinema that focuses more narrowly upon the spatial relations between people and things; through its strategies of production and exhibition. Laura Horelli’s Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan is a two-channel video work exploring the connections between two very different places, linked by the economy of the cruise ship. In the opening shot of Helsinki Shipyard, a worker surveys the construction area, exclaiming ‘it’s impossible to imagine that a cruise ship will come out of these small pieces’. This comment introduces a theme that runs through the work concerning the tension between the visible surface and less visible forces associated with flows of capital, labour and desire. Both videos consist mainly of interviews, some of which are conducted in a relatively casual manner that emphasizes Horelli’s presence within the same physical spaces as her subjects. The use of a
handheld camera at certain points also enhances the sense of immediacy, even urgency, communicated in her voice as she poses questions off screen.

Originating as a site-specific project, curated by Paula Toppila for the PR’02 [En Ruta] Biennale in San Juan and Bayamon, Puerto Rico (2002), Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan was first shown on separate monitors in Diner’s, a San Juan restaurant favoured by crew members from the cruise ships. It was subsequently included in Manifesta 5 alongside a broad range of works that explore the image of the ship, and the figure of the artist as sea-farer.30 Horelli conducted numerous interviews with workers in Helsinki and San Juan, almost all of whom are identified on-screen by name and job title, and intertitles are used to present factual information in support of her analysis of labour relations.31 The structure of the work, and the relatively didactic quality of the intertitles, aligns it to the persuasive (second) modality of the documentary film described by Renov. The textual insertions that punctuate the interviews frame the project within the discourse of sociological research but, because sources are not provided in the manner of an academic (or indeed journalistic) report, Horelli’s inquiry seems subjective, even idiosyncratic.
Laura Horelli

*Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan, 2002–2003*

2 channel video installation, 14:19 /17:39 min, colour, sound

*Courtesy Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin*
Although *Helsinki Shipyards* is interspersed with occasional shots of the cruise ships, many of the interviews take place in relatively mundane settings, such as offices complete with conventional desktop computers as well as plans and diagrams of cruise ships. The company has gradually moved away from the construction of heavy icebreakers towards cruise ships, which are characterized by ‘surface and luxury’. This shift provides the frame for much subsequent discussion about the changing nature of the production process, in which workers are under increased pressure to meet targets and deadlines. One of the managers explains that the company now competes on the open market for business, rather than negotiating for contracts at governmental level. Although it has become increasingly reliant upon subcontractors, often outsourcing elements of the production process, this change in production is not necessarily apparent to outsiders. A
subsequent discussion of pollution regulations also points towards the unreliable nature of the visible: the ships are not allowed to emit black smoke while travelling through Alaskan territory, even though visible smoke may actually be less dangerous than invisible emissions.

One of the engineers explains that the cruise ships are getting longer each year, partly to cope with the width restrictions imposed by the Panama Canal. Holding up a diagram of a ship’s hull, she explains that at the narrowest point of the canal there is often only half a metre on either side of the ship. The Helsinki shipyard is too small to accommodate the new ships, however, so these will have to be built elsewhere in the country. In another scene, Horelli asks a foreman in the ‘Interior Outfitting Department’ if he can imagine a floating city in the future. He replies that the ships are already floating cities, with everything but a parliament, and this statement is followed by a torchlight tour of the tiny cabins for the crew members, as though to illustrate the limits of this ‘city without a parliament’. Later, the focus shifts towards the experience of the passenger as a designer explains that the interiors are deliberately elaborate and excessive in order to ‘help the time pass’. One consequence of this focus on surface decoration, however, is that the construction workers experience a growing sense of alienation from the process of production – one man claims there is ‘no longer any sign’ of what he made in the finished ship.

*Port San Juan* opens with an interview with a cruise company representative, hinting at some of the constraints shaping this part of Horelli’s inquiry. As noted in an intertitle, the cruise companies selected all employees to be interviewed on board the ships, and only one (an unnamed beauty therapist) agreed to talk while off-duty. Even though the company representatives boast that they ‘own the bay’ of San Juan (capital city of Puerto Rico, itself a dependent territory of the US) crew and passengers are not necessarily familiar with the city. Many remain on board, unwilling to spend money on
food or afraid to venture out because they have been warned that San Juan is dangerous. The ships are sold as ‘destinations’ in themselves, so they do little to support the Caribbean tourism industry, with land-based visitors spending three times the amount of money onshore as cruise passengers. Again, in her questions to the crews, Horelli introduces the theme of the ship as ‘floating city’ and managers happily embrace the idea, proudly explaining that the ships even feature prison cells and hospital beds. In fact, as the intertitles point out, six of the eight major cruise lines in the Caribbean actually own private islands, offering (in Horelli’s words) ‘simulations of what the Caribbean supposedly was or should be’.
Laura Horelli

*Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan, 2002–2003*

2 channel video installation, 14:19 /17:39 min, colour, sound

*Installation view, Galerie im Taxipalais, Innsbruck, 2005.*

*Courtesy Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin*

This is followed by a series of excruciating exchanges with crew-members engineered by Anthony, a manager and ‘social host’, obviously assigned to monitor Horelli. At first he simply selects interviewees but he soon takes over entirely, exhorting ‘Ashley from India’, ‘Angela from Peru’ and ‘Daniela from Romania’ to proclaim their enthusiasm for the company. At various points, however, the camera appears to wander unsupervised, tracking across huge (and often deserted) restaurants, bars, theatres and casinos. Despite all attempts to stage-manage Horelli’s interactions with the crew-members, the life that many of them describe emerges as less than appealing. All seem to work seven days a week, from early morning to late at night, for a minimum of six months and, because the ships are often flagged in countries like Liberia, their employment rights are severely limited. It is difficult to see what the potential benefits might be for any employee with a degree of choice and mobility, but one brief exchange towards the film’s close hints at the hidden appeal of this artificial world. As she moves through one of the bars, a female worker gestures towards the city beyond the portholes. She exclaims, ‘I took three weeks on vacation – I was in Aruba, it was great, I cannot complain. But when I am inside, when I am on board I feel more secure – it’s weird isn’t it?’

As Irit Rogoff has noted, many artists have turned their attention towards the sea and shipping industries in recent years precisely in order to investigate global flows of labour and capital. But Horelli’s focus on the cruise ship enables a particularly self-reflexive exploration of the relationship between forms of material and immaterial labour, in which the practice of
documentary is directly implicated. In recent years, she has begun to explore a more participatory approach to her video work, partly informed by her experience of recording and editing *Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan*. In an interview with Marius Babius, she notes that some of the shipyard workers in Helsinki were curious about the funding of her project, and many were surprised that she had the resources to visit San Juan. At one point, she overheard one worker complain ‘she probably gets paid better than we do’ and this prompted her decision to become ‘more present in the work’. As a consequence, she subsequently focused on sociology as a form of labour that connects directly with her own practice, and is perhaps more attuned to the dynamics of complicity that are integral to her work.33 This shift in Horelli’s approach raises interesting questions with respect to those forms of artists’ cinema in which the activities of mediation and negotiation are obscured, rather than addressed.

### The Everyday and the Ephemeral in *Presentation Sisters* (Tacita Dean, 2005)

Tacita Dean’s signature style of extended takes, static cinematography and natural or ambient lighting clearly indicates her sensitivity to the time and space of production. This does not mean, however, that she is averse to using the various tricks that have long formed part of the documentary repertoire, and which necessitate the collaboration (or collusion) of her subjects, and I will return to this point later. Tacita Dean’s 16mm film *Presentation Sisters* was filmed in the Presentation Centre on Evergreen Street in Cork, which is home to a group of nuns belonging to the Presentation Order. The film was first exhibited in a former school house next to the Centre, alongside a series of dry-point works on alabaster, entitled *Presentation Windows*, which incorporated references to the architecture of the sacristy.34 Both the dry point series and the film continue...
to circulate outside this context and are not always shown together. At the Berlin Biennial in 2006, for example, *Presentation Sisters* was screened at regular intervals in a semi-darkened room on one of the upper floors of the Former Jewish School for Girls, the most historically loaded of the various ‘rooms’ on Auguststrasse that hosted the exhibition. The installation was relatively low-key, with little alteration of the former schoolroom interior beyond the construction of a projection booth.

*Presentation Sisters* occupies an interesting place within Dean’s practice both because of its origins as a publicly-funded art project and because it has been acknowledged as the product of a collaboration with its participants, who include the five members of the Presentation Order based at Evergreen Street. The film is both a response to a specific site, a complex of predominantly nineteenth-century buildings including a convent, chapel and graveyard, and a document of the daily life of the women who live and work there. Dean first became aware of the site when she was brought on a tour of the city by the project commissioners, and was attracted to the small picturesque graveyard. When Dean discovered that the site was still occupied, however, she was determined to include its inhabitants, who she perceived as the last remaining adherents to an old order.\(^{35}\) Her expectations in relation to the sisters were somewhat confounded, however, by the fact that they are actively engaged in reinventing their home as a resource for local communities and also a living memorial to their founder (Nano Nagle) who challenged the eighteenth-century Penal Laws by educating Catholic children.\(^{36}\)

The Presentation Order supported Dean’s project from the outset because they were aware of the historical and cultural significance of the site, and sought to promote awareness of it within the city and beyond. The Order was originally founded with a strong emphasis on outreach into the community, and the sisters’ participation in Dean’s film is very much in
keeping with this mission. According to Sister Carmel, one of the main collaborators, the main role of the Evergreen Street community is one of ‘hospitality’, offering an unexpected link to the discourse of relational aesthetics. The Presentation Centre is apparently widely used by a range of local groups, including women, recovering addicts, young people and recent immigrants. Yet the film actually features only the sisters and their housekeeper, so the various communities that benefit from the sisters’ ongoing hospitality remain as invisible as the artist and the production crew.37 During the research process, Dean showed the sisters some examples of previous works that might be relevant to the project. These included *The Uncles* (2004), which focuses on a conversation between Winton Dean and Jonathan Balcon about their fathers Basil Dean (1888–1978) and Michael Balcon (1896–1977).

Yet *Presentation Sisters* is in many ways much closer to Dean’s portraits of buildings or institutions, such as *Palast* (2004), which captures the play of light on the glass surface of the former Palast der Republik in Berlin, and *Kodak* (2006), which documents the final days of a film manufacturing plant in France. All three films are concerned with material traces of memory (monuments, buildings, machines) that are animated by mechanical forces and the movement of light as well as by the habits of their occupants and users. Each film is also marked by an anthropomorphic impulse: bringing something to life while at the same time mourning its transience. But while *Kodak* depicts a wholly interior world and *Palast* presents only the exterior, *Presentation Sisters* pays more attention to the boundary between them, attuned to the rituals of the sisters as they move between the building and its garden.
Tacita Dean

*Presentation Sisters*, 2005
Anamorphic 16mm, optical sound, 60 minutes
Courtesy the artist, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris and New York and Frith Street Gallery, London
*Presentation Sisters* opens with an image of the graveyard on a sunny morning in high summer, with Nano Nagle’s stone tomb visible in the background. There is little indication that this calm place is located in the centre of Cork city, apart from a barely audible hum of traffic in the distance. Although the buzzing of insects and the green grass seem to suggest a place that is very much alive, the first shot of convent is framed by the barren branches of a tree, hinting at a different mood. Soon, however, the convent comes to life, as the sisters’ ‘day’ begins to unfold, much in the manner of the early ‘city symphony’ films, and also pointing towards (more oblique) connections with feminist explorations of the everyday, most notably Chantal Akerman’s *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai de Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975). The combination of lush anamorphic cinematography and
domesticity also situates *Presentation Sisters* in relation to classical film melodrama in the era of Technicolor, and the framing of certain shots recalls the compositional strategies used by Douglas Sirk to suggest isolation or repression. A close-up of an upstairs window, against which a butterfly flutters, is particularly evocative of the melodramatic register, recalling the framing devices and other visual metaphors used by Sirk to signal the impossible desires of female characters.

Much of the action is relatively mundane, depicting each sister within her own domain (kitchen, dining room, garden or office) as the day unfolds, and then focusing on the meals and other rituals that they share. At one point, the sisters all leave the house and walk towards the garden in a line. The action appears slightly staged, perhaps because the camera remains static and at a distance, revealing the fact that the production process involved a degree of artifice. Although edited to give the impression of a single day, it was actually shot (with a crew of three camera operators) over three consecutive days, with additional location sound recording. The sisters agreed to wear the same clothes for the duration of the shoot in the interests of continuity, and this, combined with the unusually consistent weather, adds weight to the illusion. Certain sequences also emphasize the differences between the sisters, most obviously in a scene in which Carmel, Maeve and Helena watch a Gaelic football match on television. They are clearly engrossed in the match and their absorption is contrasted with that of Margaret, who is depicted cutting rhubarb in the garden in a scene filmed on another day. The re-ordering of events in the editing process is wholly conventional within documentary filmmaking, as is the strategy of re-staging. Michael Renov notes (with particular reference to Flaherty) that ‘the desire to retain the trace of the fleeting or already absent phenomenon has led the nonfiction artist to supplement [the] event-in-history with its imagined counterpart – the traditional walrus hunt of the Inuit which was
restaged for the camera, for example. So it should be no surprise to discover that Dean used several cameras and slightly restructured the order of events.

Yet both the subject matter of *Presentation Sisters* and the discourses of (material) authenticity that circulate around Dean’s use of 16mm film tend to amplify the ‘truth claims’ of this work. Dean herself has emphasized the relationship between analogue media and ‘description’:

Analogue, it seems, is a description – a description, in fact, of all things I hold dear. It is a word that means proportion and likeness, and is, according to one explanation, a representation of an object that resembles the original; not a transcription or a translation but an equivalent in a parallel form: continuously variable, measurable and material.

She goes onto assert a link between analogue media and embodied interiority, defining ‘analogue’ primarily as the opposite of ‘digital’, and largely acknowledging the elegiac and nostalgic quality of her investment in celluloid. Even though it focuses on a group of women who are clearly very much alive, *Presentation Sisters* is marked by an elegiac treatment of light. Its structure also suggests a literal and metaphorical descent into night. The interior of the house (actually an airy tall building located on a hill) seems unnaturally dark in many scenes, perhaps due to the extreme brightness of the July sunshine visible through doors and windows. As the ‘day in the life’ of the sisters progresses, the cameras dwell on the slow movement of light around the building, tracing reflections along the gloss-painted walls and across the glass-fronted bookcases. Eventually, the sun begins to set slowly in the hills and its last rays are captured in a mirror, with the steady gaze of the camera recalling Dean’s study of a solar phenomenon in *The Green Ray* (2001). The final shot is filmed from above the spire that adorns the chapel, as the city below gradually slips into darkness.
These closing shots are amongst the few to hint at the urban setting of the convent and there is only one other point in the narrative where the busy world outside is evident. This is a shot of Sister Helena, filmed from across the street as she walks down the road and turns into the entrance, wearing a traditional habit (not worn by the others) that acts as a reminder of an earlier era. Even though Dean was aware of the changing function of the Presentation Order with the city and the world beyond, her film does not address these issues directly. The place occupied by the sisters within the city is in fact shaped by some of the same processes of regeneration and spatial delimitation that give rise to initiatives such as the European Capital of Culture, discussed in Chapter 2, which provided the context for the funding and commissioning of *Presentation Sisters* in Cork in 2005. There is, however, one other allusion to the complex bonds between the sisters and the wider community; this is a scene involving the housekeeper Joan O’Halloran, who is depicted at work alongside Sister Maeve in the kitchen. Although credited as a collaborator like the sisters, Joan adopts a slightly different attitude to the filmmaking: while the other women valiantly attempt to ignore the camera, Joan looks directly at it. This section also features a hushed discussion between several sisters about the funeral arrangements for a nun in another community and, at another point, a shot of Sister Carmel sitting alone at the kitchen table. This is one of the very few occasions where she actually remains still on-screen. The framing of this shot and its placement in relation to the funeral discussion reinforces the fact that, although wholly engaged in the minutiae of the everyday, *Presentation Sisters* is attuned only to the traces left by the ‘present’ as it slips into the past.

**Re-enactment as Fiction and Event: Joy (Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor, 2008)**
Over the past decade, re-enactment and remaking have both emerged as significant strategies within artists’ cinema, prompting a range of articles, exhibitions and academic research projects. Adam E. Mendelsohn has suggested that this fascination with re-enactment is, paradoxically, a function of contemporary art’s fixation on the new. Noting that ‘art devotees are junkies that forever chase the new, the ancient, the authentic, the unique, the true, the weird’ he suggests that ‘perhaps the most ethereal, unobtainable “high” is access to the past’. The rise of the re-enactment may also signal a crisis of belief in the future, in line with the economic and social developments in the post-68 era. Chris Darke has also argued that the close of the 1990s was marked by ‘an excess of endtimes – centennial, millennial and digital’, which contributed to a ‘pathological’ dissection of film grammar and history, most obviously in relation to the work of Hitchcock. He cites a range of cinematic ‘returns’ within the realm of feature filmmaking, the most obvious being Gus Van Sant’s re-make of Psycho (1998). The work of Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor (also known as ‘desperate optimists’) operates somewhere between these contexts: circulating in film festivals but funded largely through public art structures. Joy is a short film commissioned by the Arts Team of Birmingham City Council, set in Handsworth Park and featuring a cast of predominantly non-professional performers drawn from the local area. It is one of a series of short films made by Molloy and Lawlor under the heading ‘Civic Life’, each of which was shot in a specific urban context. But Joy differs in certain respects from these earlier works because it was completed during the production of their first feature film, Helen (2008), and features elements of the same setting, plot and characters.

Joy opens on a small group of men and women in the middle distance, facing towards the camera. A girl in her late teens is at the centre of the frame, wearing a bright yellow jacket, while the others wear black jackets
marked ‘police’. The setting is a gently sloping hill covered with autumn leaves and in the distance another group of figures watches and waits. When the signal is given, the girl in yellow (identified as ‘Helen’) is directed to take up her position as the stand-in for ‘Joy’, leaving one policewoman alone in the foreground. Moving to one side, the policewoman addresses the camera with these words: ‘A girl has gone missing. Her name is Joy. She was last seen disappearing into the woods that back onto this park. She hasn’t been seen since’. She then explains that the discovery of a yellow jacket in the park has added a new urgency to the ‘quest to find Joy’ but her next words seem to suggest that this ‘urgency’ is mingled with uncertainty: ‘As far as we know, Joy is a beautiful caring and generous girl’, emphasizing that there are many things ‘we’ do not know.

This address to the camera solicits the participation of a live audience that is imagined to exist in the same ‘here-and-now’ as those participating in the police reconstruction: ‘We’re appealing to you today, as you watch this reconstruction, to cast your mind back to the day Joy disappeared’. But direct address soon gives way to another approach, as the music begins and the camera starts to track slowly right, moving over the shoulder of the policewoman and up into the air. The title (*Joy: A Film by Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor*) appears on-screen and at this exact moment another female voice is heard to issue the order ‘cue the stand-in’. When we next hear the policewoman, the soundscape is radically different – all diegetic sounds (of the park, the wind, the performers) have gone, replaced by voiceover and music, creating a sense of timelessness. The camera now continues its arc towards the right, moving slowly up and panning out over the park. ‘Today we are appealing to you’, the voice continues, ‘you must be our eyes and ears’, but this request only underscores the temporal ambiguity of this event.

The reconstruction begins to unfold, with the action now in slow motion; the
young woman in yellow begins to walk down the hill, moving towards the path where she embraces each one of her friends before parting. The sunlit parkland setting, combined with the use of slow motion, evokes another exploration of female adolescent friendship and disappearance: Picnic at Hanging Rock (Peter Weir, 1975). The tone of the policewoman’s voice changes, shifting focus from the ‘here-and-now’ towards some other time, as she describes how she deals with the anxieties of parents in this type of situation: ‘I tell them that young people go missing all the time. I tell them that statistically the numbers are in their favour’. As Helen hesitates before she steps off the path and into the park, the narrator gently suggests that ‘Joy may be one of those young people who wanted to get lost’. While the voiceover unfolds and Helen continues to trace Joy’s route through the park, various figures move in and out of the foreground: a boy rehearses a clarinet; three young girls play among the fallen leaves; a young man kicks a football towards her and she returns it. At one point, a group of young boys and girls assemble on the path and look directly into the camera as it passes, while the voiceover suggests that it is important to imagine the woods as ‘a good place, not a bad place’. Finally, the camera follows Helen as she continues up the hill. The light has changed, and the golden glow of the earlier scenes has given way to a much darker mood. Now that we are following her, we can no longer see her face, raising the possibility that the stand-in may herself have been replaced.

The spectral quality of the final moments is perhaps linked to the fact that Joy seems to constitute an allegory of Molloy and Lawlor’s own practice as filmmakers. Like the organizers of police reconstructions, they have developed an approach to filmmaking that relies upon the involvement of non-professional performers, often working within an explicitly participatory context of production. Commenting on this mode of production, Ben Slater has suggested that their films constitute a ‘spectral documentation’ of a
performance that is usually hidden: ‘the marshalling of camera, crew, actors, space and time [which] needs to be performed with the utmost precision and confidence’. While this might be true of many different practices, Molloy and Lawlor’s work is marked by heightened risk because they employ long takes (often more than ten minutes) and shoot on 35mm film.
Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor (desperate optimists)
Cast and crew of *Joy* (anamorphic 35mm film, 10 minutes, 2008)
Photo by Steve McClean.
Courtesy Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor

*Joy* is not the only film by Molloy and Lawlor to explore the theme of
disappearance, or to stage this exploration in a public space, and there are strong parallels between this and an earlier work entitled *Daydream* (2006). Like many of the films in the ‘Civic Life’ series, *Daydream* was funded partly as a public art project, forming part of a series of initiatives intended to support urban community development and regeneration. The opening scene takes place in a park where a group of children have gone missing, and the theme of being ‘lost’, in the sense of being dislocated from the familiar, provides a link between the various scenarios that follow. Some of characters are poised on the threshold of a new life (a new business is about to be launched, the members of a housing association meet in preparation for a building project) while others experience a much darker sense of dislocation.

Although there is no direct reference in *Joy* to the theme of urban regeneration, it is perhaps obliquely evoked in the voiceover description of the moment of transition from childhood to adulthood and the imaginative possibilities of being ‘lost’. *Joy* also articulates a transition in Molloy and Lawlor’s production model: a shift in balance between the various audiences that their work seems to address, if not actually constitute. These constituencies include the physically-situated audiences that are imagined during the commissioning and development of a public art project, such as *Joy*, and the audiences that are likely to experience the work on the film festival circuit. Both the theme of the ‘reconstruction’ within *Joy* and the continual oscillation in the voiceover between the ‘here-and-now’ and some other time articulate a certain self-consciousness about this split address. From this perspective, it is possible to read *Joy* as a reflection upon the tensions and interdependencies between two modes of film development and production (the public art project and the short film), and on the possibilities of exploring something in-between.

**Document as Event: *The Battle of Orgreave***
Devised by Jeremy Deller as a spectacular re-enactment event, commissioned by Artangel and staged on 17 June, 2001, *The Battle of Orgreave* focused on a particularly violent clash during the miner’s strike at Orgreave in South Yorkshire on 18 June, 1984. My discussion here primarily concerns the film of the event, which was directed by Mike Figgis and broadcast on Channel Four on Sunday 20 October 2002. Deller contributed to the production and editing of the film, and apparently conducted most of the research interviews, while also appearing on-screen as observer and interviewee. Yet he has never sought to assert his ownership over the film, just as he has never made any authorial claim upon the subject matter of the work, emphasizing that the event ‘existed in the public domain before it existed in the art world’.

Instead, he has noted that he wanted ‘to make a political film about the miner’s strike on the back of an artwork’, while simultaneously describing the film as ‘a good piece of evidence of the event’. The status of the film as a ‘piece of evidence’ is complicated, although not necessarily undermined, by the fact that its production served as the principal focus and motivation for many of the participants and organizers associated with the event.

Although Figgis’ film has not enjoyed the broad distribution of a commercial feature, and was only released on DVD by Artangel Media in 2006, it has been widely exhibited within contemporary art contexts, often presented alongside a much larger group of artefacts associated with the project. *The Battle of Orgreave Archive (An Injury to One is an Injury to All)* (2004) includes an extensive collection of documents and audio recordings, relating to the Orgreave re-enactment and the history of re-enactment culture in the UK, as well as various objects (posters, badges, clothing) associated with the miners’ strike. It also features a timeline of factual information and commentary on the strike, extending from the early 1980s to the present. The exhibition of the film alongside the *Archive* retrospectively reconfigures...
it as part of the original event, as well as re-inscribing it within the context of Deller’s practice. Nonetheless, it is constructed as a television *documentary* made for a television audience, alternating between interviews, archival material and footage of the re-enactment itself, rather than as a document of an artwork. Although there is no voiceover, extensive use is made of on-screen titles, archive material in the form of photographs, television clips and even time-lapse photography. The re-enactment itself was filmed partly with handheld cameras, but cranes and dollies are also used to offer a range of different perspectives on the same action. The editing and the music (at moments of heightened drama) both contribute to the development of a highly dramatic narrative structure, complete with exposition, denouement and resolution. This structure is broadly chronological, moving from preparations to rehearsals and culminating in a section identified as ‘The Re-enactment’, although the interviews tend to complicate this timeline. There is no indication as to when the interviews took place, although it is likely that they formed part of the research process conducted by Deller, and they serve as a means of moving the action along, establishing suspense and reinforcing certain claims made by participants in the re-enactment.
Jeremy Deller


Commissioned and produced by Artangel.

Photo by Martin Jenkinson

The film opens with a shot from a position just behind the ‘police’ frontline as it heaves and strains to the accompaniment of ominous drumming. Soon, however, the camera pans to reveal the slightly makeshift costumes of those behind the frontline, and the sense of dramatic realism dissipates. As the rest of the battlefield comes into view, on-screen text introduces the concept of the re-enactment and explains that ‘many of those taking part were veterans of the original conflict’. This is a significant claim, underscoring the existence of an ‘original’ event and asserting the authenticity of this re-enactment. The next sequence documents a briefing given to a group of former miners in a meeting room overlooking Barnsley football stadium, where event director (and former organizer of English
Heritage re-enactments) Howard Giles explains the concept and the tradition of the re-enactment. This sequence is crucial to the development of certain ‘characters’ within the narrative, many of whom are interviewed again at the Orgreave site as the re-enactment gets underway. The stadium setting itself is also significant and the camera pans across the empty arena from a great height, obliquely evoking earlier convergences between spectacular entertainment and re-enactment in both proto-cinematic culture and, more recently, in post-classical epics such as Gladiator (Ridley Scott, 2000).

Deller is then interviewed in an empty field, reflecting upon the origins of the project and his own personal relationship to the events of 1984, which hinges upon the memory of watching television coverage as a seventeen-year-old. A series of ‘experts’ are then introduced in other interviews, including David Douglass (identified as ‘NUIM Branch Secretary for Hatfield Main Colliery and Mining Historian’), Tony Benn (identified as ‘MP for Chesterfield 1984–2001’), Mac McLoughlin (‘Ex-miner and Former Police Officer’) and Stephanie Gregory (‘Former Chairperson of the Rotherham Miner’s Support Group’). Douglass’ role is primarily to situate the events at Orgreave in June 1984 in relation to the miners’ strike and the economic and social policies instigated by the Thatcher Government. Douglass is depicted in an office surrounded by files and documents, framing him within the narrative as keeper of evidence rather than a direct witness to the event, making overt reference to archival history and practice.

McLaughlin, the only participant who can attempt to articulate the experience of the police during the events at Orgreave, emerges as a particularly isolated figure. An ex-army serviceman as well as ex-miner, he explains that he was motivated to join the police force in 1983 in order to serve his community, but soon realized that he and his fellow recruits was being trained as strike-breakers. His contributions, along with those of
Stephanie Gregory, highlight the destruction of the mining community and the trauma experienced by many different groups affected by the events at Orgreave. As the narrative unfolds, many contributors explore the possibility that the period actually constituted an era of ‘Civil War’ because of the way in which the strike, the Thatcher Government’s tactics and the media coverage contributed to the creation of deep divisions that are not yet resolved. This notion also comes to fore in the emotional contributions from a group of former miners at the re-enactment site, many of whom claim that Nottingham workers who profited from the strike have sought to claim the memory of the strike by participating in the re-enactment. The documentary also highlights the consequences of Margaret Thatcher’s provocative claim that the striking miners constituted an ‘enemy within’, incorporating a segment from a Newsnight interview conducted in July 1984. Thatcher claimed that the industry had to be ‘modernized’, a position refuted by Douglass, who points out that mining in Britain was already highly mechanized by the early 1980s. In fact, the closure of the mines gave rise not only to resistance in the form of strikes, political campaigns and activist film and video, but also a process of ‘museumization’ through which educational displays on the history and culture of the miners found their way into the display cases of museums and other public institutions.51 Deller’s exploration of re-enactment culture in the staging of the event and in the formation the Archive, is directly informed by these developments but also attuned to the complex processes of meaning-making at work within popular cultural practices.52

Returning to the film itself, Claire Bishop identifies a pronounced and disconcerting ‘clash in tone’ between the fairground atmosphere of the re-enactment and the emotional interviews with former miners and their supporters. She seems to celebrate this clash, emphasizing that the project as a whole ‘unworks’ community by re-opening the wound created by the
original events, rather than offering some form of catharsis. Deller certainly seeks to distance himself from a tradition of public art practice that is concerned with the rebuilding of social or communal bonds. In an interview that forms part of Figgis’ film, he insists that the event ‘isn’t about healing wounds. It’s going to take more than an art project to heal wounds’. In fact, this comment marks one of the few references to the event as an *art project*; a tacit acknowledgment of the fact that it was not perceived by locals in that way. Most of the participants are wholly focused on the production of the *film* and this is particularly apparent at the outset of the rehearsal process when Ken Wyatt (‘Ambulanceman of Orgreave’) delivers a speech welcoming the re-enactors to the town and emphasizing the need to ‘put on a good show’ for the local audience but also ‘for the cameras’. There is a very strong sense that the filming of an accurate re-enactment at the site of the original event will somehow correct the public record distorted by media representation. Howard Giles, director of the event, emphasizes that there should be no ‘spin either way’, particularly because in this case ‘the reportage wasn’t quite as accurate as it should have been’. The footage broadcast by the BBC showed a group of miners throwing stones, followed by a police charge, but in an apology released in 1991, the BBC admitted that the order of the shots was reversed, ‘in the haste of putting the news together’.

The film also explores the historical relationship between conflict and media representation and, at various points, a shared repertoire of cinematic images of war begins to surface. For example, in a sequence involving experienced re-enactors and former miners, the ‘police’ are advised to beat their shields in an intimidation tactic derived from Zulu warriors, evoking scenes from the film *Zulu* (Cy Endfield, 1964). At another point, in a moment of light relief, a former miner shouts ‘I am Spartacus!’ at one of the organizers and then collapses in laughter. There are also definite links
between Deller’s project and the work of Peter Watkins, which explores the staging of conflict as a means of maintaining public order, perhaps most notably in *Culloden* (1964) and *Punishment Park* (1971). As is well known, Watkins works largely with non-professional actors and often recruits members of special interest groups to play particular roles in his films. In more recent works, such as *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* (2000), he favours the use of a makeshift studio over the naturalism of location shooting. There are also significant differences between Watkins’ approach to casting and the strategies employed in the re-enactment at Orgreave. Watkins’ generally recruits non-professional performers who share an ideological connection to the characters they portray, just as in *The Battle of Orgreave*; most of the former miners are playing ‘themselves’. But in Deller’s event, several of the miners were persuaded to supplement the small ‘police’ group to counter any tendency for the re-enactment to turn into an actual fight.

Perhaps more importantly, Watkins and Figgis employ very different approaches to the use of the interview. In *The Battle of Orgreave*, the interviewers are usually off-camera but in *La Commune (Paris, 1871)*, they are continually on-screen, occupying a prominent and deliberately unsettling place in relation to the diegesis, taking up the position of ‘TV reporters’ even if the events they are covering took place prior to the twentieth-century. Figgis also does not shy away from certain tactics associated with the ‘docu-soap’ genre, such as the development of specific characters. This is most apparent in the coverage of the rehearsal and performance of the re-enactment, which is experienced from the perspective of a small selection of ‘characters’. This strategy allows Figgis to explore a conflict between the experienced re-enactors, deputized as group leaders in vaguely ‘managerial’ roles, and the former miners, who are inexperienced as re-enactors yet essential to the authenticity of the event. The tension between these positions becomes apparent in two exchanges involving re-enactors.
Struggling to assert his authority over the group of former miners, a young middle-class man explains that he is nervous because this event is ‘ultra-realistic’, while later, a ‘police officer’ in the frontline points out that the former miners are connected by shared experiences and pastimes. Rather than actually acknowledging the shared trauma of the strike and unemployment, he simply notes that many of the former miners continue to drink together in the same pubs and support the same football teams. Nonetheless, he seems to recognize that he lacks a strong connection with his fellow re-enactors. This focus on class difference could be in keeping with Deller’s strategy of ‘unworking’, as theorized by Bishop, but the management of the event ensures that that these conflicts also operate as dramatic devices within the production of a temporally coherent document.

**Mediated Histories and Multiple Copies: The Third Memory (Pierre Huyghe, 1999)**

*The Third Memory* opens with an FBI warning against copyright infringement, punishable by fine or imprisonment, but the repetition of this image across two screens hints at the possibility that these laws might not readily extend to the realm of the gallery or museum. In fact these restrictions are repeatedly flouted through the incorporation of clips from *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, 1975), depicting the attempted robbery of the Chase Manhattan Bank in Brooklyn on August 22, 1972. The robbery was led by John ‘Sonny’ Wojtowicz and the event was dramatized with Al Pacino in the role of ‘Sonny Wortzik’. Shortly after the release of the film, Wojtowicz publicly contested its accuracy in a letter first published in *Gay Sunshine: A Journal of Gay Liberation* in 1976 and subsequently republished in *Jump Cut* in 1977. In the same letter, a copy of which was included in Huyghe’s installation along with news clippings and footage of the actual bank robbery, Wojtowicz also protests against his treatment as a prisoner.
and the violation of his contract with Warner Brothers. *The Third Memory* ostensibly provides Wojtowicz with the opportunity to tell his own story in relation to the robbery and its media coverage, as he inhabits the multiple roles of narrator, prompter and choreographer of the action. But the short running time (approximately ten minutes) allows limited scope for exposition, let alone contextualization. Both the staging and editing of *The Third Memory* tend in fact to undermine Wojtowicz’s charge of *Dog Day Afternoon* as an inaccurate representation: when the ‘original’ and ‘re-enacted’ scenes are placed side-by-side, the similarities are overwhelming.

The opening shots take place in a brightly-lit studio set, complete with cashiers’ desks and vault, but the action also extends outside the limits of the set into the darkness beyond. In addition, Wojtowicz is often framed in mid or wide shot so that the floor and ceiling of the set are visible. There is no attempt at naturalism: Wojtowicz addresses the camera directly and the actors step in and out of character on cue and repeat the lines that he feeds them. This introduces the vague possibility that *The Third Memory* is a re-enactment of the original film shoot, rather than of the robbery. It is also relatively easy to identify thematic and formal connections with Huyghe’s earlier work *L’Ellipse* (discussed in Chapter 1), also concerned with the use of locations, the structure of cinematic time and space and the theme of doubling. The status of ‘double’ and ‘original’ is never fully resolved in *The Third Memory*. At one point, Sonny refers to *Dog Day Afternoon* as the ‘real movie’, but he also claims that he and his ‘troops’ borrowed many of their tactics from *The Godfather* (released in the spring of 1972), which they saw in preparation for the robbery. In many respects, Huyghe’s work also constitutes a kind of ‘double’ of the analysis of Lumet’s film provided by Fredric Jameson in ‘Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: *Dog Day Afternoon* as a Political Film’. Originally published in 1977, Jameson’s article briefly explores the possibility of splitting Lumet’s film into two
separate versions: a ‘neo-realist’ documentary on one hand and a ‘glossy robbery film’ on the other.  

Pierre Huyghe

*The Third Memory*, 1999

double projection, Beta Digital, 9’46”

Courtesy Galerie Marian Goodman Paris / New York
In general terms, Jameson reads cinema as one of many narrative forms that are integral to the ‘figurability’ of class consciousness but also contribute to the ‘reprocessing’ of social and class conflict. For this reason, he is less interested in the ‘overt political content’ of the narrative than in the inscription of power dynamics in the spatial and social relations between the various characters and settings. The allegory that he describes is initially spatial; the branch office of the bank is envisaged as a ‘colonized space ... with its peripheralized and marginalized workforce,’ while the conflict between the local Police lieutenant and the FBI officer stands for the erosion of local and state-wide power structures by a faceless and decentralized power network. These power relations are further allegorized through the casting of key roles in which ‘Sonny’ (representing the marginalized workers) is played by the star (Al Pacino), Moretti the Police Lieutenant is played by a respected character actor (Charles Durning) and Sheldon the FBI officer is played by a ‘faceless’ unknown (James Broderick). It is this aspect of Jameson’s analysis that seems to most closely anticipate the exploration of
authorship, characterization and performance that runs through *The Third Memory* and Huyghe’s practice as a whole.

Several commentators have noted a recurring concern with performance and authorship in Huyghe’s work, most notably in *Blanche-Neige Lucie* (1997), which questions the ‘property relation of self as “one’s own”’

and in *Remake* (1995), a re-filming of Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* in which the actors attempt to recall and reproduce the action in the original film, shot-by-shot. Jean-Christophe Royoux notes that *Remake* articulates Huyghe’s interest not only in the notion of collective memory but also in the figure of the actor as a ‘free-time worker’, whose labour is specifically associated with the time and space of leisure. According to Royoux, cinema serves as a ‘huge public archive’

that is integral to the formation of ‘spaces of common reference’, where the imaginary and the real intersect, compose, and decompose. Television, however, is associated with a very different form of temporality, constituting:

[a] time of continuous representation whose programming is the negative (copy) of a typical day in the life of the average worker. As a dominant model of the staging of the real, the programming of free time seems more than ever to be based on the model of work time.

This model is clearly at odds with the public service ideal, organized around the social and familial rituals that make-up the typical ‘day’, instead, it describes the experience of television in a post-public service era characterized by flexibility. Royoux’s theorization of television also introduces the possibility of other ‘negative’ copies of the ‘typical day’. *The Third Memory* actually hints at the existence of such a copy through a doubled image of a bank vault complete with floor-to-ceiling metal bars: one vault belongs to a scene from *Dog Day Afternoon* and the other is constructed in the studio. This generically inflected image evokes another
space that is neither wholly private nor wholly public: the space of the prison
cell. Wojtowicz actually served a total of fourteen years in prison and he first
saw Lumet’s film (by special permission) while he was incarcerated,
prompting him to begin his letter-writing campaign. The threat of prison is
present in *Dog Day Afternoon* but it is never directly represented on screen.
In *The Third Memory*, however, the event of the robbery is inseparable from
Wojtowicz’s experience of prison, where he lost not only his physical
freedom but also all ownership of his life story.

**Dislocating Sound and Image: September 11, 1973 _ Santiago, Chile, 2007 (Melik Ohanian, 2007)**

Melik Ohanian has employed various forms of appropriation and re-making
in his work, without necessarily engaging in a straightforward ‘re-enactment’.
This ambiguity is particularly apparent in *September 11, 1973 _ Santiago,
Chile, 2007*, a two-channel work that appropriates both a three-minute
fragment and the entire soundtrack of *The Battle of Chile: Part 2* (1977),
directed by Patricio Guzman. Before exploring the structure of Ohanian’s
work in more detail, it is necessary to briefly contextualize Guzman’s film.
*The Battle of Chile* is a trilogy that documents the overthrow of the Allende
government; the footage was smuggled out of the country and made into
three documentaries in Cuba during the mid-1970s, released internationally
but banned in Chile. Guzman has continued to focus on the events of 1973
and their historical representation and, twenty years later, he returned to his
native country to screen *The Battle of Chile* and conduct a series of
interviews with young people as well as several people who appeared in the
original films. This process formed the basis for a new documentary entitled
*Obstinate Memory* (1997).  

Guzman is not the only political filmmaker whose work has served as a
source and point of reference for Ohanian. *Invisible Film* (2005) is an earlier
two-channel work in which one video consists of the soundtrack to Peter Watkins’ film *Punishment Park* (1971), displayed as white text on a black background. Set in a dystopian and not-too-distant future, Watkins’ film mimics the form of a documentary and it depicts an experiment in social control in which those charged with social order offences are offered the chance to evade prison by enduring two days in a desert nicknamed ‘Punishment Park’. The other component of *Invisible Film* is a single static shot of a 35mm projector in a desert; there is no screen and no audience and the only sound is the whirring of the projector and the distant, muffled audio of *Punishment Park*. As the sun sets and the desert slips into darkness, the beam of the projector becomes more pronounced but the film itself remains ‘invisible’. This work can be read partly as a pointed comment on the ‘invisibility’ of Watkins’ film, which received only a limited distribution when it was first released. But although it is marked by an elegiac quality, there is no real way of knowing that the film being projected is indeed *Punishment Park*. Similarly, the site of projection might be any desert, so it is impossible establish a definite connection to the production location used in Watkins’ film.

**Melik Ohanian**  
*September 11, 1973 _ Santiago, Chile, 2007*  
HD video on DVD with surround sound. 90mn  
photos © Vartan Ohanian  
Courtesy the artist / Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris / Yvon Lambert, New York
Ohanian’s recent work seems to be more directly concerned with the temporal structure and form of documentary. It also invokes the concept of ‘suture’ associated with 1970s psychoanalytic film theory through its exploration of the coup as a cut or break. The theme of the ‘cut’ also figures in Guzman’s original film, which frames the events of September 1973 as an
unprecedented break in Chile’s long-established and (in Latin American terms) unique tradition of representative democracy. In *September 11, 1973 _ Santiago, Chile, 2007*, sound and image are again dislocated across two channels: the installation at the Venice Biennale consisted of a flat screen monitor with speakers suspended on one wall of a darkened room, opposite a large scale video projection. The monitor presented the soundtrack of *The Battle of Chile* in the form of subtitles, accompanied by audio, while the clip from Guzman’s film and the footage of present-day Santiago was projected. The projection opens with a shot of two teenage boys sitting on the edge of a pavement singing directly to the camera in Spanish; although the words are not translated, the tone is gentle and slightly mournful. The scene shifts to ‘Santiago, Chile – 1973’ and the opening credits for Guzman’s film appear, followed by (black and white) footage of people running towards the camera, accompanied by the sounds of sirens and distant gunfire.

The voiceover narration of Guzman’s film, delivered in French and subtitled in English, explains the events preceding the coup from a perspective that is clearly sympathetic to the Allende government. The narrator points out that an unsuccessful coup was staged on June 29, 1973, resulting in the deaths of 22 people. As a soldier on-screen appears to take aim at the camera, the voiceover continues: ‘An Argentine journalist films his own death. He also records two months before the final coup, the true face of a sector of the Chilean army’. The shot is interrupted and the screen fades to black before reverting to Ohanian’s footage of present day Santiago, in which ordinary people go about their business on the streets and in the subways. The highly animated audio track from Guzman’s documentary continues to emanate from the speakers on the opposite wall, creating a very different sense of space and time.

The relationship between past and present is not simply one of contrast, however. This is because the subtitles from Guzman’s film appear on both
screens and ambiguous parallels emerge when they are overlaid on the contemporary footage. As Guzman’s narrator describes the entry of tanks into the city in 1973, the present day movements of cars and pedestrians observed from above acquire a sinister cast. Later, when protesters loyal to the Allende Government chant the phrase: ‘use a heavy hand!’; the camera lingers on the passive hands of commuters as they travel up the escalators in a busy station complete with ‘revolutionary’ murals. Many of the locations referenced to by name in the documentary also appear on-screen, including the La Moneda Presidential Palace, and the industrial ‘belts’ where workers’ cooperatives attempted to defend the Allende Government. This strategy recalls the oscillation between narratively- and discursively-motivated settings theorized by Paul Willemen. It also calls attention to the structure of Guzman’s documentary, in which the (failed) coup of June 1973 functions as a dramatic device, prefiguring the events of September.

September 11, 1973 _ Santiago, Chile, 2007 offers a more open-ended exploration of temporality, exploring the complex processes of memorialization and erasure that shape the formation of national history. This becomes particularly apparent in a sequence set in the Headquarters of the Communist Party of Chile, where the camera picks out the portraits of both Allende and Fidel Castro before dwelling on an array of ‘lieux de mémoire’: from graveyards, graffiti and statues of Allende in the city streets, to the street signs at the sites of former cooperatives and the television studio that hosted debates between the opponents and defenders of the Government. This is not a roving ‘spectral’ camera, however, and Ohanian’s use of static shots suggests detached observation rather than some kind of haunting. The latter part of the work is also marked by a shift in tone towards a more polemical mode of address, closer to that of The Battle of Chile. At one point in Guzman’s film, a group of union delegates debate whether all industries should be nationalized. A contributor representing the Allende
Government position tries to explain that this is not possible because of ‘international relations’, pointing out that Chile’s external debt is fixed by ‘Swiss capitalists’ at the Club de Paris. His opponents argue that this logic will not persuade the workers, whose concerns are more ‘local’ – demonstrating the historical precedent for contemporary anti-globalization struggles in South America and elsewhere. At this moment, the mood of the present-day city depicted on-screen seems to change as members of a new generation of activists gather on the streets, carrying banners for the Communist Party along with other organizations. The atmosphere is buoyant, even festive, before the arrival of armoured vehicles and mounted cavalry in riot gear.

The final section of *The Battle of Chile* focuses on the (sometimes covert) role of the news media in the formation of a democratic public sphere, detailing the subsequent exposure of the CIA’s involvement in the coup, including the financing of protesters against the Allende government. As Guzman’s narrative approaches September 11, 1973, the date of a plebiscite intended to determine public support for Allende, present-day Chileans (mainly men) browse through the daily newspapers in a public archive or library. Then the temporalities of both films appear to briefly converge, not in some imagined future, but on September 11, 2001. In the most pronounced sign of an authorial ‘voice’ in Ohanian’s work, a stop-motion montage presents a series of framed newspaper clippings, each of them a front-page spread depicting the Twin Towers on fire. Later, as the voiceover is describing the bombing of radio masts on the day of the September 1973 coup, Ohanian’s camera documents the empty stands and dusty interiors of a sports stadium in present day Santiago. In the closing minutes of his film, however, the demonstrators are again gathering on the city streets, suggesting the continual renewal of the country’s democratic tradition and apparently answering the call to arms issued by Guzman: ‘The Battle of Chile
has not ended’.

**Landmarks and Relics: Inconsolable Memories (Stan Douglas, 2005)**

If Ohanian’s project of re-making is marked by a polemical stance, then Stan Douglas’ work offers a striking contrast in tone. *Inconsolable Memories* is a two-channel 16mm film installation that draws many narrative elements from Tomas Gutierrez Alea’s 1968 film *Memories of Underdevelopment*, one of the first films to be produced in post-revolutionary Cuba, itself adapted from a celebrated novel by Edmundo Desnoes. Set in 1962 against the backdrop of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Alea’s film centres on Sergio, a white intellectual who remains in Cuba after his wife and family leave for Miami. Living in the Focsa apartment building, once a symbol of modernist progression, he walks around Havana remembering and imagining events, and questioning his relationship to the present. The original film is also distinctive for its blurring of boundaries between fiction and actuality: in a scene that seems to fold actuality into fiction, Sergio attends a public roundtable discussion in which writer Edmundo Desnoes appears as a participant. Alea makes extensive use of freeze-frames, often interspersed with montages of still images that are highly reminiscent of Chris Marker’s *La Jetée* (1962). At one point, clips from various other films, all featuring female nudity, appear to rewind and play again. This action is loosely motivated by the fact that some of the characters work for the Government and are involved in viewing and reviewing censored scenes, but it also highlights Sergio’s active fantasy life and attachment to the past.
Stan Douglas

*Inconsolable Memories*, 2005

16 mm black and white film, sound, loop;
2 synchronized film projections; 15 permutations at 5 minutes 39 seconds

© Stan Douglas

*Courtesy David Zwirner, New York*
In Douglas’ version, the action has been transposed to 1975 and 1980, the latter being the year of the Mariel Boat lift when thousands of Cubans, including a group of convicts, left for Miami from the port town of Mariel outside Havana. Sergio, recast by Douglas as a black architect, is one of the convicts offered the opportunity to leave for the US, but he decides at the last moment to remain in Havana and, like the protagonist of Alea’s film, seems to live in a world of memory and regret. Like a film that has been reconstructed from memory, *Inconsolable Memories* echoes and amplifies certain self-reflexive strategies that are already present with Alea’s film, such as the use of narrative ‘loops’ to articulate Sergio’s experience of time.\footnote{Fragments of television broadcasts and newsreel are also found in both works, although they tend to be more jarring in Douglas’ version.}

Certain elements are faithfully reproduced, such as the sequences where
Sergio observes the outside world through binoculars. In both versions, the apartment is the centre of the action; the setting for a succession of temporally ambiguous interactions that are often accompanied by voiceover. There are, however, significant differences between the two versions in relation to production and exhibition. Within *Inconsolable Memories*, the theme of the temporal loop is articulated *materially* through the projection of two intermeshing film loops onto the same screen within the exhibition space. Both loops consist of series of black-and-white film sequences and blank film and, as they are unequal in length, fifteen different permutations of the narrative (each 5.39 minutes) are created.\(^{64}\) At various points, the soundtrack of one loop overlays the picture of another, while at other moments, two-line titles are generated through the conjunction of the loops, creating phrases (such as ‘An Endless Problem’, ‘Another Situation’, ‘A Familiar Adventure’, ‘A Tropical Problem’, ‘A Forgotten Situation’) that suggest mistranslations of Hollywood film titles or pulp novels.\(^{65}\) There are also significant differences in the realm of location shooting. Alea’s film makes use of highly mobile camerawork, capturing Sergio’s point of view as he moves through the city streets, parks and cafes. In contrast, Douglas relies almost entirely on studio production, making extensive and overt use of back projections, models and sets so that all of the settings appear highly unstable. This strategy heightens the sense of spatial dislocation introduced within the original film, recalling the fact that, at one point, Alea’s Sergio scans the streets of Havana with his telescope, reflecting to himself that ‘suddenly, it looks like a set, a cardboard city’.

Although each ‘permutation’ of *Inconsolable Memories* is relatively short, it is still difficult to piece together the sequence of events as they unfold in the ‘present’ and Sergio’s recollections. The scenes set in 1975 centre on events surrounding the departure of Laura (Sergio’s wife) and his friend Pablo. Echoing Alea’s film, Sergio travels to the airport with Pablo in the latter’s car.
In Douglas’ version of the scene, the overt use of back projection serves to disconnect the car from its surroundings so that the passing landscape is reduced to a series of images. At one point, Pablo adopts the manner of a gangster and tears a banknote in half, explaining that its serial number will serve as a primitive code. Later, he sends Sergio a package that causes him to be arrested and imprisoned for four years. The main ‘prison’ scene, echoing a shot from Alea’s film, suggests a theatrical tableau in which years are compressed into moments. In one exchange with his fellow inmates, Sergio mentions the ‘code’ that he used with Pablo in order to establish his credentials as a criminal. One of the other prisoners mocks this method, pointing out that a pattern is bound to appear through repetition – suggesting a comment on Sergio’s reminiscences as well as the form of Douglas’ work.
Stan Douglas  
*Inconsolable Memories, 2005*  
Installation view at Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE  
16 mm black and white film, sound, loop;  
2 synchronized film projections; 15 permutations at 5 minutes 39 seconds  
© Stan Douglas  
*Courtesy David Zwirner, New York*

In 1980, Sergio gets the chance to leave for the US along with other
prisoners but, instead, returns to his apartment, now occupied by Elena. In order to avoid arousing suspicion, he claims to be an acquaintance of a neighbour (Jimmy) but this chance remark appears to lead to his downfall as Jimmy then pursues and stabs him, accusing him of a mysterious crime that is never fully explained. Through this violent act, absent from Alea’s film, and the transposition of the narrative to the 1980s, Inconsolable Memories invokes another cinematic representation of the Mariel boatlift, which is also a type of ‘remake’. The opening sequence of Brian de Palma’s Scarface (1983), which was scripted by Oliver Stone, incorporates elements of newsreel footage of the boatlift and speeches by Castro denouncing the departing Cubans. De Palma’s film derives certain narrative elements from the 1932 film of the same name, directed by Howard Hawks and based upon the life and death of Al Capone. However, the lead character is not an Italian-American rising to power in the New York underworld, as in the original Scarface. Instead, Tony Montana (played by Al Pacino) is one of the many thousands of former prisoners rejected by Castro as an impediment to the progress of the revolution. On his arrival in Florida, Tony actually describes himself as a ‘political prisoner’, and his initiation into the Miami underworld is achieved through a political assassination. The moment of transition from the world of the Cuban exile to that of the upwardly-mobile gangster takes place in an exterior scene at a fast-food stand, below a huge and vividly coloured image of ‘Havana’: one of an array of destabilizing visual devices used in de Palma’s film which include back projections and elaborate camera movements. While Sergio cannot leave Havana because he is haunted by his past, Tony seems to embrace a particular vision of the future by embarking on a life of crime in which the ‘underworld’ converges with ‘high finance’. Ultimately, however, he fails to let go of some attachments, remaining pathologically fixed upon his own sister.

Sergio is also troubled by his relationships with women, but he is a far less
aggressive figure than Tony Montana. In both versions of the story, he is a philanderer who is vulnerable to illogical and self-destructive attachments, which are centred upon places as well as people. Of the many fragments of the past that permeate Sergio’s world in Inconsolable Memories the most significant is the Focsa building itself, an iconic symbol of Havana’s ‘modernity’ at a particular moment, which Sergio cannot seem to escape. He is continually reminded of the past as he moves around the apartment, often alighting upon physical relics such as a photograph of Anna (an ex-girlfriend). The relationship between photographic image and memory is explored in a scene in which the photograph seems to come to life. Anna is walking towards the camera and then she and Sergio are pictured together at the entrance to the Ciudad Libertad. This is one of the few shots in Inconsolable Memories that seems to situate Sergio within the physical setting of Havana. Even so, it is not entirely reliable as evidence of his presence within the city because a very similar image of Ciudad Libertad actually features among a selection of colour photographs by Douglas, exhibited alongside Inconsolable Memories. Dating from 2004–2005, all of the photographs in the series depict landmark buildings that are referenced in the work, either directly or indirectly. Many are accompanied by lengthy captions, which chart the history of these buildings as they circulate within conflicting value systems. The Habana Libre/Havana Hilton Hotel for example, has fulfilled many functions, from hotel to command post to embassy and, finally, hotel again.

These images cannot be misread as a form of ‘location research’, asserting the authenticity of the sites appearing in Douglas’ film. This is because the exhibition also includes another photographic image, presented separately: a single aerial shot of the ‘Set for Inconsolable Memories’ in Vancouver. This is not the first time that Douglas has highlighted the city’s status as a location for film production and the inclusion of this image emphasizes the
processes of substitution at work within Douglas’ practice, both in the selection of film and television locations and in Sergio’s own experience of place. Sergio continually experiences waves of dislocation that seem to be spatial as well as temporal. At one point he observes that ‘they used to call Detroit the Paris of the Mid-West’, recalling Douglas’ earlier exploration of spectral memory in *La Detroit* (1999), and later, as the camera surveys the decaying La Rampa quarter, he continues this process of substitution, explaining that ‘if Havana was the “Paris of the Caribbean” then La Rampa was the Left Bank’. These comments articulate a process of spatial dislocation, whereby the ‘margins’ are continually situated and re-situated in relation to the colonial, or post-colonial, ‘centre’. It is for this reason that Sergio (in both versions of the story) constantly returns to the Focsa building, mapping the shifting relationship between underdevelopment, modernity and progress as he sifts through his memories, embarking on real and imagined journeys within the apartment and the city beyond.

**The Future Past: 1984 and Beyond (Gerard Byrne, 2005-2007)**

Described by Gerard Byrne as a ‘reconstruction’ rather than a re-enactment, *1984 and Beyond* consists of a video and an accompanying photographic series. It is one of a number of works by Byrne to be based upon material from a popular magazine. In this instance, the source is a discussion entitled ‘The Future of Life’ published by *Playboy* magazine in 1963 and featuring twelve prominent science fiction authors, including Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury. The reconstruction has been performed live on at least one occasion but my focus here is on the video, which features a group of English-speaking Dutch actors, costumed in conservative 1960s clothing, including pipes and other props. Exhibited as a three-channel video, on flat-screen monitors, this work is marked by more than one form of
repetition. This is because a slightly different selection of ‘chapters’ is presented on each of the three monitors, so that it is impossible to view the entire work without seeing some scenes at least twice.

Gerard Byrne

1984 and Beyond, 2005–07
Production Still
Courtesy the artist and Green on Red Gallery, Dublin
Gerard Byrne

1984 and Beyond, 2005–07

Three-channel video installation, nonlinear duration (approx 60 minutes total), twenty black and white photographs.

Dimensions variable.

Installation shot Kunstverin für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 2007

Courtesy the artist and Green on Red Gallery, Dublin
George Baker describes Byrne’s reconstructions as attempts to extract ‘stories’ from the mass-media by seizing upon forms of communication (such as the advertorial or the staged symposium) that were never actually intended to function as models. A key element within this practice is the artificiality, or ‘in-authenticity’ of the dialogues, which were not intended to
be performed, ‘autonomizing further these already autonomized structures’. The reconstructions recall certain aspects of Renov’s third modality of documentary desire (to analyse or to interrogate) because Byrne is explicitly concerned with the forms and processes of mediation that are involved in the production of documentary texts. The performances in 1984 and Beyond are non-naturalistic in a recognizably ‘Brechtian’ sense and the actors deliver their lines like a series of monologues, emphasizing their status as ‘authors’. T.J. Demos has emphasized the deliberate lack of authenticity in their delivery and the camerawork, noting that the cast ‘mispronounces some English words, and their over-articulate deliveries smack of edited prose rather than spontaneous speech. Moreover, the camera cuts directly to each speaker already in focus, with a precision that betrays careful choreography’.

In fact, 1984 and Beyond makes no attempt to mimic the conventions of documentary or reportage, even withholding some basic information about the event because it lists the participants in each ‘chapter’ as a group rather than identifying them individually on screen. Byrne also introduces elements of extemporization or improvisation, departing from the published transcript to include several scenes that are devoid of dialogue. The most significant of these is a scene in which seven participants observe each other as one of them performs the well known jazz tune ‘Take Five’. Elsewhere, the characters are pictured speaking on the phone in a glass-walled phone booth, searching through files in a library, conversing with each other out of earshot or smoking in the sculpture garden. The action is also interspersed with close-ups of sculptural objects, which seem to constitute wordless commentaries upon the discussion. The ‘Take Five’ sequence, reprised at a later point in the work, is amongst the most intriguing of these wordless interludes. First released as a single in the early 1960s, this piece of music is significant for its unusual time signature, but also because it encapsulates
the mood of popular intellectualism that *Playboy* sought to project at that time. There are also several disruptions to the ‘1963’ diegesis in this scene, in the form of male and female observers and passers-by in contemporary clothing rather than the cardigans and business suits worn by the performers. These interruptions in the diegesis also highlight the absence of women from the discussion, pointing to the circumscribed visions of the future offered by the *Playboy* articles as a result.

Byrne has often exhibited photographs alongside his reconstructions. In the case of the images that accompany *New Sexual Lifestyles* (1998-2002), also based on a *Playboy* roundtable, he notes that the photographs ‘work as a dialogue with the video, on the one hand they substantiate the work contextually and spatially, and on the other they operate like out-takes, a slightly detached vision that operates at a different speed. They also serve to physically index the fact that this is a re-construction. They evidence the contemporary situation of the video.’ Byrne’s photographs cannot be described as production stills; they rarely feature the performers and do not always depict the locations that feature in the reconstructions. In some instances, they may refer to a publication source, but not necessarily as any guarantee of authenticity. The first of Byrne’s film reconstructions, for example, entitled *Why it’s Time for Imperial, Again* (1998–2002), refers to an event that probably never even took place. It is based on a *National Geographic* ‘advertorial’ for the Chrysler Imperial car, featuring an encounter between Lee Iacocca and Frank Sinatra. The action is performed three times, as the actors move through a series of exterior and interior locations marked by post-industrial decline. It is generally exhibited alongside a series of photographs that depict both the original advertorial and the spines of various tattered back issues of *National Geographic*, displayed on a bookshelf.

Many of the photographs in the *1984 and Beyond* series were taken in
America, while the reconstruction itself was filmed in two different locations in the Netherlands: filmed at the Provinciehuis building designed by Hugh Maaskant (from 1959–1971) in the city of Den Bosch, and at the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo. The latter includes a sculpture pavilion originally designed by Gerrit Rietveldt for the Sonsbeek International Sculpture Exhibition (1955) and rebuilt at the museum in 1965, where it now houses several works by Barbara Hepworth. The reconstruction is staged so that the participants appear to move fluidly between these settings, alternating between the glass, steel and stone interiors of the Provinciehuis and the more prosaic space of the pavilion at the Kröller-Müller, where they congregate amongst the sculptures to smoke cigars. In a discussion that recalls James Meyer’s distinction between literal and functional sites as well as Paul Willemen’s analysis of discursively and narratively motivated settings, Lytle Shaw has emphasized the ‘uncontestable actuality’ and the excessive literalism of Byrne’s objects and ‘emphatically present stage sets’. Although Shaw is referring specifically to the use of theatrical props and sets in an earlier work by Byrne, In Repertory (2004–2006), his analysis of literal presence can be extended to the set of 1984 and Beyond. The locations at the Provinciehuis and the Kröller-Müller Museum have clearly been chosen for their ‘functionality’, their capacity to signify an engagement with modernism and its associated ideas. Yet like the performers in Byrne’s re-constructions, whose attempts to embody the ‘literal truth’ of archival objects generate a sense of artifice, the locations also acquire a performative quality. This tension between the functional and the literal, at the level of setting, gives rise to a process of counter reading so that these architectural signs become unstable and dislocated from familiar histories.

**Conclusion**

Returning to Doherty’s distinction between ‘originating’ and ‘displaced’
contexts, referenced at the outset of this chapter, it would seem that the
production location is figured as a source of authenticity in certain works.
However, there are inconsistencies in their self-conscious use of the
documentary idiom, particularly in the case of Dean's *Presentation Sisters*
and Figgis' film of *The Battle of Orgreave*. While both works present their
subjects as participants or even collaborators, they share a tendency to
downplay contradiction in the interests of a coherent narrative. This is
perhaps most obvious in Dean’s work, where the Sisters are relentlessly
aligned with the past, rather than in a process of actively negotiating the
future. In *Helsinki Shipyard/Port San Juan*, Horelli takes up the more
traditional role of interviewer, engaging in face-to-face encounters with her
subjects. But her interactions with the crew-members suggest that at least
some of them lack any engagement with the ‘here and now’ that extends
beyond the confines of the ship. In *Joy*, a public park serves both as the site
of a participatory public art project and the location of a film shoot and, as
though indexing a process of transition in the work of Molloy and Lawlor, the
performers are both the ‘stand-ins’ for others and the ‘stars’ of a short film.
While other works involve the re-making of an earlier film or the
reconstruction of an earlier event, *Joy* employs the narrative device of the
crime scene re-enactment to explore the tensions and differences between
performance and participation. In the process, this film seems to extend the
exploration of splitting and doubling evident in the treatment of *setting* in
other works (including those discussed in Chapter 3) into the domain of
social relations.

Many of the works discussed here have been exhibited alongside archival
materials or related art works such as drawings or photographs. In the case
of *The Battle of Orgreave*, this strategy acts partly as a counter-narrative to
the film, emphasizing the fact that the ‘originating context’ cannot be
reduced to a single or specific event or site. By exhibiting a photograph of
the Vancouver studio where *Inconsolable Memories* was filmed, as well as displaying images of the various locations recreated for the purposes of back projection, Douglas appears to shed light upon his production process while actually generating further ambiguities. The contextualizing materials that Huyghe presents alongside his installation of *The Third Memory* assert the existence of competing histories and claims through making reference to Sonny’s everyday life in prison. In some works, however, it is the interplay of multiple screens within the architectural space of the installation that generates a critique not only of documentary claims to the ‘real’ but also of the processes through which the specific site (in the form of the production location or the exhibition context) comes to stand in the place of the ‘real’. In *September 11, 1973 _ Santiago, Chile, 2007*, Ohanian relies primarily on the interplay between disparate, and physically dislocated, sound and image sources in order to articulate the limits of documentary footage. But in the case of Byrne’s *1984 and Beyond*, the boundaries between the literal and the functional site are explored by separating the work into component elements (still photograph, performance and projection) to be recombined in various ways, and through the staging of the action across the two different locations of the Provinciehuis building and the Kröller-Müller Museum. Echoing the oscillation between discursively and narratively motivated settings identified by Paul Willemen in the avant-gardes of the 1970s and 80s, these locations become at the same time functional and undeniably specific.