

ARTFORUM



Tiffany Sia, *A Road Movie is Impossible in Hong Kong*, 2021, 7-channel HD video installation (color, mono sound), infinite loop. Installation view.

DÜSSELDORF

“Closer”

KUNSTVEREIN FÜR DIE RHEINLANDE UND WESTFALEN

Grabbeplatz 4

February 12–April 24, 2022

A schematic diagram of temporary walls demarcates the six axes of “CLOSER,” a group show curated by the Kunstverein’s new director, Kathrin Bentele. Scaled to fit a 16:9 image projection, the rectangular panels are installed as a series of partial enclosures, like miniature

cinemas, warranting a proximate encounter with each position. The selected works orbit the idea of intimacy across interpersonal and technological dimensions, offering correspondent takes on the conditions of communication by proxy.

James Benning honors the legacies of seven American outsider artists and an imagined prehistoric cave painter with *PLACE*, 2020, a homagic installation including a letterpress book, seven replicated paintings, and a film in which Benning’s lens stares from the roadside at each of the artists’ homes with unflinching placidity. Around the corner, in Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos’s *Scores for Carolyn*, 2019, a recitation of instructional scores is slowed and slurred to the point that one might doubt whether it is language at all. Like *PLACE*, *Scores for Carolyn* begets closeness through focusing the viewer’s attention, though, unlike the former, it calls on the dependency of that viewer.

Josiane M.H. Pozi addresses the connective dissonance of video communication in the newly commissioned film *2*, 2022, which sees the artist’s mother aim a handheld camera upward at her face for the duration of her commute to work. Inversely, Alejandro Cesarco’s silent documentation of a reunion with his first photography teacher, *Mirrored Portrait*, 2015, and Steffani Jemison’s *Figure 8*, 2021, stage unmediated encounters between filmmaker and protagonist. (In the latter, athlete and dancer Alexis Page holds the camera at arm’s length and swings her body around in figure eights for eighteen minutes, then asks, “This doesn’t make you sick, Steffani?”) Culminating in an infinitely looping seven-channel reconfiguration of *A Road Movie Is Impossible in Hong Kong*, 2021, by Tiffany Sia—CCTV-like videos of Sia’s sunrise hikes across Lamma Island—“CLOSER” circumnavigates the breadth of scrutiny in an exacting debut by Bentele.

— Olamiju Fajemisin

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