

REGEN PROJECTS

Kothenschulte, Daniel: „Jeroen de Rijke & Willem de Rooij“, in: Flash Art, Vol. XXXIII, Nr. 215, November-Dezember 2000, S. 97.

JEROEN DE RIJKE & WILLEM DE ROOIJ

“IF ONE ABANDONS oneself to the magic of a sequence of images, having no truck with a foolish plot, and forgetting the pretext for their appearance, then one has a new pleasure to savour. Images: a moving landscape.” René Clair was putting in a plea for “pure cinema” when he wrote these lines in 1923. And he found it in every single place where a camera was allowed its head and given a chance to do what it was best at: capturing the world’s sense of its own movement and making it poetic using only technical means. The only place where these images were not to be found was in so-called art cinemas.

Dutch artists Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij are obvious descendants of René Clair in the insatiable delight they take in the simple miracle of a planned film sequence. Their cinema is closer to Lumière than to Méliès, and like the inventors of cinematography they use their new work to capture us and whisk us away to the exotic delights of a far-

away place. Here they save a piece of time from passing into oblivion by applying the apparent precision of their apparatus. And like Lumière, they bring far more back from their expedition than they came to look for. Their work *Bantar Gebang* shows a rubbish dump near Jakarta as the first ray of sunshine strikes it, and for ten minutes follows the lives of the people who live on and around it. The colour stock’s delicate pastels lead intoxicated viewers to ask ethical questions about the legitimacy of their aesthetic sense of happiness when faced with such misery.

De Rijke/de Rooij understood at an early stage that cinema has to be reduced to a minimum if it is to be recognized as such in the context of art. Just as Beuys reached for an ancient telephone when he meant communication, they prefer ragged-edged images on a bare wall to technically perfect cinema projection. The art public would probably not think an image was still cinema if it was too perfect.

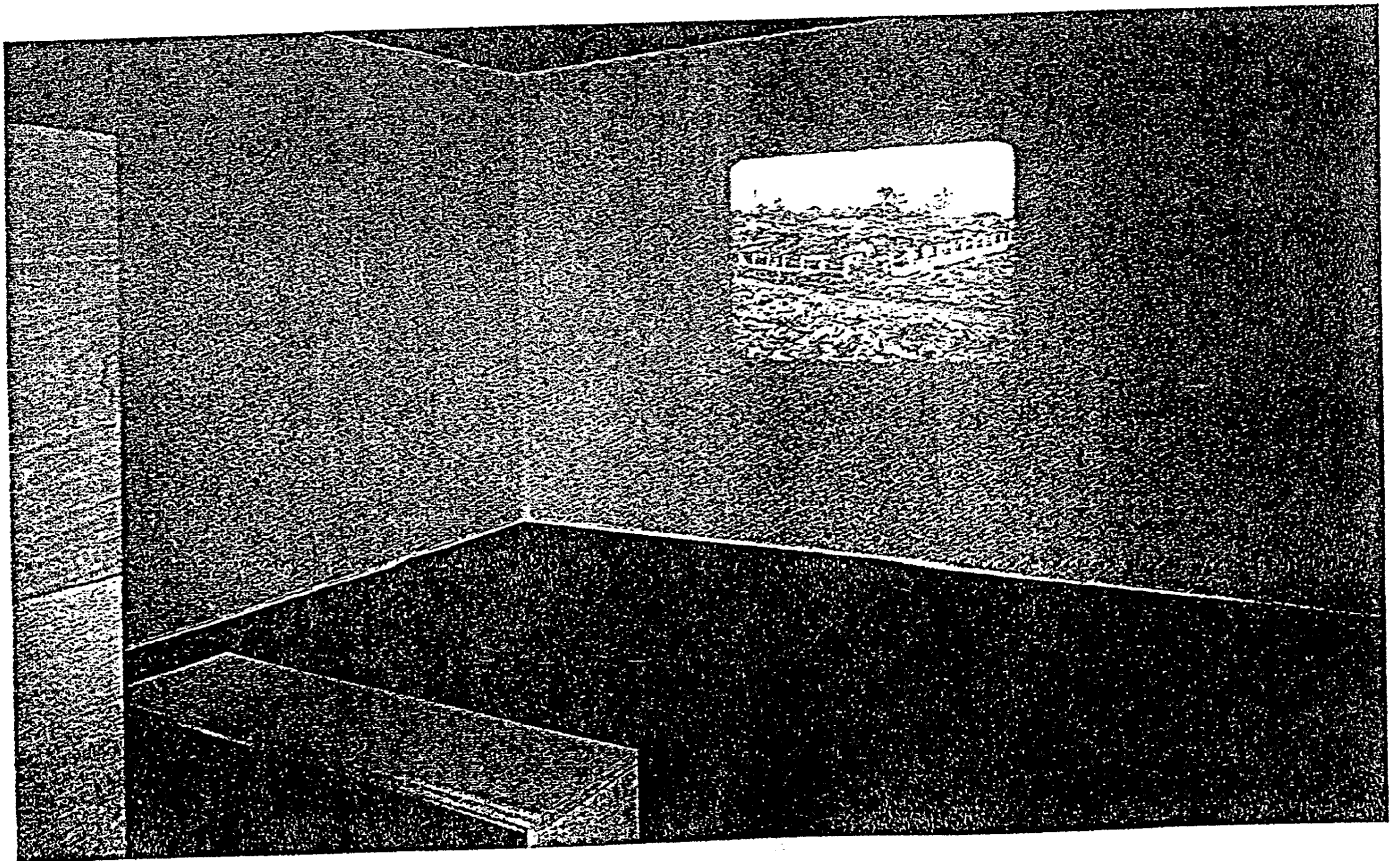
This time they took the reduction as far as showing visitors to Art Basel a 3-minute trailer in 16 mm format rather than the actual 35 mm work, which lasts for ten minutes.

The Baseler Versicherungen jury — the insurance firm set up and funds the art prize — were not amused: they awarded — as we see from the press release — their prize to the long version, even though no one had seen it. A triumph of the imagination that would surely have delighted René Clair.

Daniel Kothenschulte

(Translated from German by Michael Robinson).

Foolish plots still distort people’s vision when they are faced with the miracle of cinéma pur. But for German critic Daniel Kothenschulte a whole number of fine artists like De Rijke & De Rooij have started trying to take the narrative function out of that auratic experience of cinema altogether; therefore the experience can be placed in the context of art.



Bantar Gebang, 2000. Filmstill. Courtesy Daniel Buchholz, Cologne.

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