

# REGEN PROJECTS \*

Myers, Holly, "Truth in Motionlessness," Los Angeles Times, November 9, 2001

## Los Angeles Times

**Truth in Motionlessness:** Although the two works in the current exhibition by **Jeroen de Rijke** and **Willem de Rooij** at Regen Projects should technically be classified in the medium of moving pictures—one is a 10-minute 35-millimeter film and the other a 20-minute video—it might be better to think of them as photographs in disguise. Rather than exploring the capacity of film and video to convey movement, action or performance, this Dutch team, appearing in its L.A. debut, composes long, static shots of nearly motionless subjects. They're photographs extended into time.

The film, "Bantar Gebang," features a single slightly elevated, long-range shot of a shantytown built on a rubbish heap near the city of Jakarta. The walled compound, a dingy patchwork of tin roofs and shaky construction, seems to have arisen spontaneously from the piles of trash that fill the foreground. Scavenging birds flutter around the two paths that intersect at the entrance, near the center of the composition, and passersby cross occasionally, usually alone or in somber pairs.

The video, "Junks," consists of six three-minute portraits of men—junkies, presumably—whom the artists met in a bar in Amsterdam's red-light district and persuaded to pose in exchange for a beer. Each is filmed from the shoulders up against the same

dingy, wood-paneled wall. Some watch the camera steadily (and unnervingly), others look around anxiously and one dozes off.

One senses that De Rijke and De Rooij chose their medium as a way of coercing their viewers to look closely at images we might otherwise process in a glance. Both works are charged with a deliberate tone of exoticism that spawns a series of complex questions as we watch: Who are these people? What kind of lives are they living? What kind of place is this? And how much of this can we hope to discover in a single image?

The images themselves are on the dry side—carefully composed but far from eye-catching. But they are surprisingly absorbing and do ultimately reward the patient viewer, if not with answers, then with a satisfying stimulation of curiosity.

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*Regen Projects, 629 N. Almont Drive, Los Angeles, (310) 276-5424, through Nov. 24. Closed Sundays and Mondays.*