

## PROGRAM 2

### Passion in Work

#### Oliver Husain

*Item Number*, 2012, 16 min.

“Ladies and Gentlemen: The performance that you are about to see will begin in two minutes. The story is laid out for you right here: a straight line. It will unfold exactly like the line I’m walking on right now. A fine line between success, in our terms, and complete disaster.”

Two minutes before the show. An actress is waiting for her performance. Stuck in a repeating loop, her monologue with the mirror unravels—when the curtain opens, it will reveal the exit door instead of the auditorium. Kirtana Kumar’s styling—her pasty white face powder and the pale green dress—gives her a ghostly appearance, evoking Indian cinema of the 1950s and ‘60s. The overall colour scheme is based on *Navrang* (1959) by V. Shantaram. Its star Sandhya could be seen as the ghost *Item Number* wants to channel. (Oliver Husain)

#### Credits

Cast: Kirtana Kumar, Pia Bunglowala, Sneha Prabha, Avni Sethi  
Executive producer: Kalpana Kumar  
Assistant director: Shreyasi Kar  
Camera: Amith Surendran  
Assistants: Shabeer Ahammed, Meghana Srivastava  
Costume design: Julie Kagti  
Wardrobe: Sathish  
Hair and makeup: Anita Appu  
Assistants: Joanna Joseph, Eshwari  
Set construction: Vishwas Kashyap  
Assistants: Sunil Kumar, Ganesh Shankar  
Painted backdrop artist: Santosh Panchal  
Gaffer: Krishna  
Light and crane assistants: Selvam Saddiq, Anand, Farouq, Raghu Kumar, Guru Mallapa, Ambarish, Saveendra, Sanghamesh, Somashekar, Shivo  
Driver: Harish  
Filmed at YOLK STUDIO Bangalore  
Production assistants: Srinivas, Ravi, Nanjappa  
Production stills: Roy Sinai  
Sound recordist: V. Badrinath  
Sound design: Michelle Irving  
Acknowledgements: Shai Heredia, Jen Hutton, Suresh Jarayam, Mohit Kaycee, Mukul Kishore, Viola Klein, Sam Mohan, Iris Ng, Urfii Prasad, Charles Reeve, Marj Rodrigues, Yashas Shetty, Lisa Deanne Smith, Carol Weinbaum, Markus Ziegler

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**Cana Bilir-Meier, Liesa Kovacs, Lisa Kaeppler**  
**in collaboration with Nora Jacobs**

*NORA*, 2014, 11 min. 28 sec.

A young woman tells of her restlessness and exhaustion resulting from her—allegedly—self-determined (artistic) everyday life. Within a monologue that is staged as a rehearsal, the text increasingly separates itself from the character of Nora. Possibilities regarding the deferral of perception and of modes of identification of the viewer with the protagonist are tested. *NORA* oscillates between seemingly authentic moments of a staging and a document of a rehearsal's performativity. The artists write: “*NORA* is a critical reflection of an increasing demand for authenticity in regard of the contemporary job (market) situation, where unlimited creativity, smart self-marketing, self-motivated productivity as well as innovative ways of living and working become increasingly important. One can hardly distinguish between “labour” and “non-labour” any longer. Is everybody an artist? Has the notion of “being an artist” turned into a model for capitalist society?” (Cana Bilir-Meier, Lisa K  ppler and Liesa Kovacs)

Credits

Script and direction: Cana Bilir-Meier, Lisa K  ppler, Liesa Kovacs  
Cast: Nora Jacobs  
Camera: Kilian Immervoll  
Editing: Liesa Kovacs, Lisa K  ppler  
Sound: Mira Lu Kovacs

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#### **Keren Cytter**

*The Victim*, 2006, 5 min.

Sabeth Buchmann writes on *The Victim*: “[The video shows] the methodology of rehearsal as a system-related format: it consists of soft beginnings and dangling endings. Script and film are short-circuited in a feedback loop, within which the resulting narratives emerge as an endless series of modulations.”

In *The Victim*, the production of the film (the shooting by the crew and the instructions of the director) intersects with its actual plot, in which a woman must choose between her lover and son, both of whom are played by the same actor. The blurry footage, bad acting, universal action and clichéd dialogues culminate in an explosive event: The son/lover commits suicide at the dinner table. But, without sentimentality, the loop of the video begins again and the whole scenario starts anew. Clichéd sentiments are a byproduct of great dramas, which are broken down into trashy home video aesthetics. The loop here is the quasi-technical metaphor of clichés; with each repetition the video suggests truth while simultaneously stripping itself of it. (Keren Cytter)

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**Susanne Sachsse**

*Serious Ladies*, 2013, 21 min.

“Because this ideal of an attractive but not whorish white woman, in a good marriage but not self-effacing, with a nice job but not so successful she outshines her man, slim but not neurotic over food, forever young without being disfigured by the surgeon’s knife, a radiant mother not overwhelmed by nappies and homework, who manages her home beautifully without becoming a slave to housework, who knows a thing or two but less than a man, this happy white woman who is constantly shoved under our noses, this woman we are all supposed hard to resemble—never mind that she seems to be running herself ragged for not much reward—I for one have never met her, not anywhere. My hunch is that she doesn’t exist.” (Virginie Despentes, *King Kong Theory*)

Credits

Story and script: Susanne Sachsse

Cinematography: Nazli Kilerci, Susanne Sachsse

Editing: Ruth Schönege

Cast: Susanne Sachsse, Juan Luis Milego Castellanos

This work was originally screened as a video installation as part of the *Living Archive project*, Kunstwerke Berlin, 2013.

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### Carola Dertnig

*Some exercise in complex seeing is needed*, 2012, 3 min.

Whoever swims with the current has already lost. Whoever lets themselves drift along is wasting their energy. Some exercise in complex seeing is needed shows a person pushing back against the current, though they're apparently unable to move an inch. A contradiction? Not at all. Dertnig's film about swimming against the current creates an energetic resonance in the regularity and duration it renders, but this is above all a visual manifestation of the antonym of random, aimless action's senselessness. At the same time, no excessive demands are made of this duality as a basis of meaning, interpretation or content, as such expectations are far from this work's intention. The film has been reduced to a minimalism that enables it to convey the complex stress and strain of daily work done on it. The statement is put quite succinctly: It's better to swim against the current and mark time, as that sharpens the concentration and series of movements. Which brings us to the performative.

By means of the soundtrack, Dertnig reveals a highly personal index of past performances and with that an attitude toward reference systems. They're always subjective and reflect personal preferences and regard, etc., at best comprising a little cosmos that one can take part in. Their alphabetical almanac of terms, clichés and references—such as for the Suffragettes, Duchamp, the quote attributed to Emma Goldman (“If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution,” which long ago became the name of a mobile feminist curatorial platform again, though it also refers to her own work as a curator): Dertnig recites it in the particular rhythm of rap to give her tag cloud an additional frame of assertion, that of trial, the attempt as an essential moment in performance. Trial is also a struggle against the loss of the political; trial is Dertnig's constant state. (Carola Platzek)

Translation from German: Steve Wilder

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