

the exhibition “Landscape of Belief” is more in line with reading than with observing works by Rene Magritte, whose images appear in several of Calvino’s book covers. *Landscape of Belief* is not an exclusively digital show since it also proposes another perspective on multimedia. In the same manner, it could be argued that this exhibition corroborates original aspects of virtuality. It is not an installation in the surreal sense, it does not ignore the increasing relevance of intervened documents, and does not delve into science fiction, but some of its aspects fuel the oneiric. Bravo generates ethereal “states” through digital means but she does not specifically define the components. She decided that each of her installations should be executed in editions of 3 plus 2 A.P. (artist’s proofs), with the exception of the properly entitled *Paisaje de Creencia* (Landscape of Belief), which is a single work plus 1 A.P.

Everything happens simultaneously with individual rhythms. The various *Estudios para Paisaje de Creencia* (Studies for Landscape of Belief), are approached as prints, as newspaper contacts with typographic skyscrapers, as past architectural studies. The installation in glass with successive layers of the same image, the projection of words and the velvety darkness, converge both towards a conceptually approached romanticism and to the scene of a film. Monika Bravo is one among several artists whose metamodernism is partly generational and partly expected. These artists that have crossed the bridge between the pre- and post-digital periods have emerged with a different sensibility; they bear a smaller share of cynicism than the previous generation and mind the value of honesty. They are not free from the conventions of the art market but their conceptualizations are developed in parallel to it. Monika Bravo’s works attend to a motivational subtlety. Hers are not the phrases used by orthodox conceptualists, but are dematerialized reflections instead, ideas that are left suspended while they are being considered.

For those who have not seen the exhibition, there is, on the one hand, the experience that comes from viewing the installations frontally, and, on the other, the experience in which the dislocated planes, resulting from approaching the same images from a three-quarter view, are transformed, reordered and become aligned as the viewer moves to view the piece frontally. The time that it takes to transition from perception to another is important for an artist like Bravo who usually creates time-based installations. This does not indicate the dominance of the ideas or words that appear in the work. An allusion appears, contributes something, establishes doubt and vanishes in the space so we move to the next idea/word, without definitely stopping in any.

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GRACIELA KARTOFEL

## Lina López and François Bucher Cristin Tierney Gallery

From January 15 to February 21 the Cristin Tierney Gallery presented the “Wormhole: Lina López and François Bucher,” an exhibition that consisted of the video *La nuit de l’homme* (The Night of Man) and a group of works that emerged from the collaboration of both creators. The show inaugurated the Black Box program of the Cristin Tierney Gallery, an initiative centered on showcasing the proposals of artists

working with new media and the moving image, which is part of the institution’s annual program.

Spatially speaking, the central piece of the exhibition was Bucher’s video *La nuit de l’homme*, which occupies the first and largest room of the gallery. This work dating from 2012 is part of the explorative and inquisitive spirit that ran throughout the exhibition and that revised the mechanisms by which knowledge is constructed and the way in which we understand, and are limited by, the notions of what is “real” or “true.” The film is a fragmented narrative in which events of a “mystical” nature turn out to be the common thread: a medium in Poland embarks on a mission to Egypt guided by a spirit—identified as the Sumerian god Enki or father of Earth—that manifests itself through her; contacting a man on a sacred mountain in Peru also becomes part of the story. To which end? To save humanity from an impending cycle of destruction. All told from the perspective of someone who has had a shamanic initiation ceremony in Colombia. And, as the story progresses, the narrative attends an experience in which the line between those things assumed as reality and those regarded as supernatural is inevitably blurred. This 80-minute film also combines the genres of fiction and documentary precisely to engage viewers in that logic that revisits those notions on which we base our own understanding of the world.

Earlier works by Boucher already offered a multidimensional understanding of the universe and of time and space. His reference to the idea of “the duration of the present interval” proposed by Mexican psychophysicologist Jacobo Grinberg-Zylberbaum already demonstrated that way of approaching his work. Grinberg-Zylberbaum developed his entire research in close connection with the esoteric experience, shamanism, meditation, yoga, and other spiritual traditions. His explorations point to the malleability of time, and thus, to the possibility of expanding the present moment—that space where the ephemeral and the eternal, the material and the immaterial coexist— notions that are present in the video and that address the quote from Borges that appears at the beginning of the film. Likewise, Grinberg-Zylberbaum also expresses the idea that energy and matter are interchangeable and, therefore, two minds could influence one another without the need for anything physical to mediate and regardless of the distance that exists between them.

In this manner, this video proposed the conceptual presuppositions that the other works in the gallery’s second, and smaller, exhibition room were also going to address. Therefore, viewers were already immersed in the logic of the proposal by the time they entered that second exhibition space. And it is there where we found the conceptual nucleus of the show: *Wormhole*, the work that gave the exhibition its name. It consisted of a group of works from 2014 and 2015 that were the result of the collaboration between López and Bucher.

The term “wormhole” refers to a concept in physics also known as “Einstein-Rosen Bridge.” It is a hypothetical topological feature of space-time that would essentially be a shortcut through those two dimensions. A wormhole has two exits that are connected to a single conduit through which matter could possibly move. Based on this idea, López and Bucher established a connection between an Egyptian tomb—located in the Valley of the Kings in Thebes—that belonged to Ramses V and Ramses VI, and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, a seed bank also known as Noah’s Ark that



## François Bucher and the hidden meaning of things

The Colombian proposed in Cicus within the Festival 'Ubiquitous', a return to the ancient sciences.

BRAULIO ORTIZ SEVILLA | UPDATED 27/05/2014 - 7:29

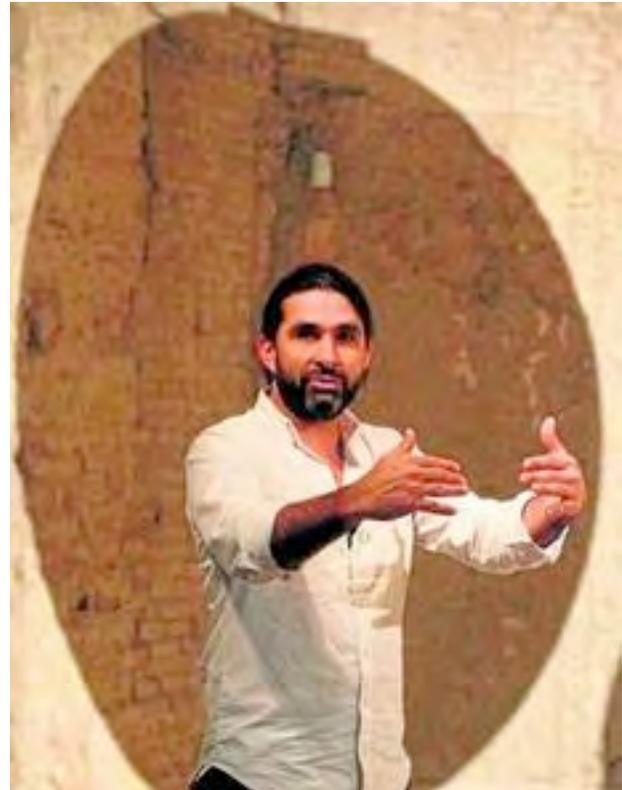


1. One of the most striking parts of the route is inspired by Helmholtz resonators. 2. based on 'La Jetée' series, the film by Chris Marker. 3. The author, in a guided tour of the exhibition, which can be seen until June 26. 4. One of the experiments that the author who lives in Berlin translates sunlight.

François Bucher Colombia (Cali, 1972) prefers that on visits to exhibitions and contemplation of his works, the viewer is not guided by reason and will leave feeling, be seduced by poetry. In *The duration of this (Notes on frequency)*, the sample has opened at the headquarters of the Centre for Cultural Initiatives, University of Sevilla (Cicus) as one of the most interesting claims the Festival of Art and Digital Culture *Ubiquitous*, this creator claiming ancestral knowledge that progress has tried to bury returns to bet on the mystery and the science "is not understood as science today." Bucher, a frequent creator in major international fairs, returns to Seville, where his work has been seen through the gallery Alarcón footman with a raised appointment with the curator Lina Lopez - "here" he says, "the notions of curator and artist blur" - which incorporates the links between man and the sun and defends a conception of the most intimate and away from mercantilist notions and today dimensional time. The exhibition will be open until June 26, it uses an Indian parable at the beginning of the tour to mark the artist's intentions. In the story several blind people approach an elephant; each playing a different part of the elephant and provide a different animal image. A project managers like to think that the sample begins where the story: *The duration of this* explores "the relationship with knowledge as a whole, beyond its particular aspects" and the works that are exhibited in the Cicus would point "a forgotten knowledge, a magical science, a science of the irreducible". Bucher has transformed the room into a stunning first solar observatory playing with the reflection of the light filtering through the windows to remember a concept of time beyond the clockwork. The creator has translated that atavistic relationship of man with the sun in various experiments: builds a kind of pyramid with different intensities with which a ray of the sun has shone stay for a day, using prism decomposes the seven colors that

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make up light , chain sectors of circles that symbolize the minutes of clarity that occur in every month of the year ... A sundial, spheres representing noon on both solisticios and the two equinoxes or an analemma, the figure illustrates the path of Sun in one Earth year, are other proposals which reserves this gallery. At the end of this room awaits one of the most shocking moments of *the duration of this* : bronze spheres inspired by Helmholtz resonators and have made following equations German physicist who investigated the frequencies of sound and tone investigations. Another reference that handles Bucher's *La Jetée* , the cult of Chris Marker. This classic is the starting point for a series of albums that are arranged in a different scale. Each piece is a reflection about time: a drop falling on the water and reflects a wave in the ceiling, the grooves of a tree trunk to reveal the years, an Iberian petroglyph or a reel of film-a tribute to Tarkovsky who said the cinema allowed sculpting in time, an idea that fascinates Bucher, who studied film in Chicago make this installation. Bucher's interest in magic is revealed in a series that reinterprets the rainbow tree A legend of the Kogi Indians of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. This sacred plant with pink and violet leaves, which become butterflies in the wind, leads to one of the most beautiful moments of the itinerary, closed with a word, *Logos* , shown inverted and finds its meaning in the reflection in the Water: Bucher, always invites us to look beyond to find the hidden meaning of things.





ONLINE PUBLISHED ARTICLE

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## FRANÇOIS BUCHER REDISCOVERS THE ARCHAEOLOGIST DANIEL RUZO AT THE 55TH BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

François Bucher (b. 1972) is the artist chosen to represent Colombia at the Latin American Pavilion -ILLA of the 55th Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte- la Biennale di Venezia, at the invitation of the curator Alfons Hug, who presents the exhibition "The Atlas of the Empire".

The vision created by Hug explores the new geopolitical aspects of contemporary art, the experience of cross-fertilization between Latin American and European artists, presenting the theme with a communicative and expository structure that is complex and intriguing, and from which the constant dialogue between cultures emerges.

François Bucher, in perfect consistency with this concept, exposes a large video installation titled "The Second and a Half Dimension – An Expedition to the Photographic Plateau", made in 2010. The work of this Colombian artist is based on the narrative of Olivares Severiano, who is not just a simple guardian, but a true trustee of the historic memory of the Marcahuasi plateau in Peru, a mythical place situated at 4,000 meters above sea level.

Bucher, directed by the historic park's tutor, traces the steps of Daniel Ruzo's famous exploration. In the fifties, Ruzo was the first person who discovered this place full of ancient sculptures: huge blocks of natural rock sculpted in a distinctive technique that reveal, according to the sun's position, anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and mythological figures.

Bucher meticulously reconstructs Ruzo's scenes and theories, investigating details of history, and reviewing the footprints of his investigation. In this way he exposes next to the video a photograph of the explorer's terminated file, and a letter from the Royal Society of London containing the explanation of Ruzo's new methodology, which represents his scientific contribution to archeological investigation. Both refer to a sensational discovery: knowing that from the negative of a photograph one could see other figures in relation to the positive. From this there arose a curiosity to better understand what was later

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denominated the “park of sculptures with figures”, named so because the human faces and the animals carved in the stones are only visible on certain hours and seasons of the year, since they were made with a technique that took into account the rays of the sun and the moon.

As Halfons Hug and Paz Guevara, the project’s co-curator, write in the exhibition catalog of “The Atlas of the Empire”: “Bucher returns to the paths and hills that Daniel Ruzo has already traveled, and uses his work, ‘The Second and a Half Dimension - An Expedition to the Photographic Plateau’, to guide us in an exercise of perception that takes place between the observer, the rock, the Sun, and the Earth’s axis, revealing the photographic aspect of this experience – since it is an impression of light – and the convergence of man, the world and the cosmos”.

François Bucher lives and works in Berlin, Germany, and Paris, France. He is an artist, writer, co-editor, and founder of “Valdez Magazine”. His video work is consistently linked to the construction of history, politics, and the moving image’s transition from cinema to television. His interest is especially centered on ethical questions, such as the thin line between violence and the image of violence. He has presented his work all over the world, and has worked internationally at institutions and festivals, including Tate Britain (London), the Indonesian Independent Film Festival, and the Kassel Documentary Film Festival.

François Bucher’s work can be seen at the Latin American Pavilion -IILA at the 55. Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte - la Biennale di Venezia, Islet Arsenal, until November 24, 2013.



## Colombia: François Bucher

LATIN AMERICAN PAVILION AT THE 55TH VENICE BIENNALE

2 YEARS AGO

**François Bucher** (Colombia) follows the explorations of Daniel Ruzo on the Markawasi plateau in Peru. In the fifties, Ruzo, a Peruvian cryptologist and anthropologist, discovered an ancient park of stone monuments on this Andean plateau. The huge blocks of natural rock sculpted in a distinctive technique display their anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and mythological shapes only when the rays of the sun shine on them at specific times and seasons of the year. Bucher recorded the account of custodian Severiano Olivares during a visit to the plateau. Olivares pointed to each of the sculptures in the park and described the figure it represents, the point from which it should be viewed and at what time of day and year, as well as who discovered it and the date of the finding. Most of the shapes were discovered by Ruzo and Olivares's father, who was Ruzo's assistant. In his book, *The Fantastic History of a Discovery: The Stone Temples of a Vanished People*, published in 1974, Ruzo censured the mainstream scientists of his time, who were more interested in the trip to the Moon than in understanding the history of humanity. Bucher returns to Ruzo's paths and hills and uses his work, *The Second and a Half Dimension - An Expedition to the Photographic Plateau*, to guide us in an exercise of perception that takes place between the observer, the rock, the Sun and the Earth's axis, revealing the photographic aspect of the experience – as an impression of light – and the convergence of man, the world and the cosmos.

*The Second and a Half Dimension - An Expedition to the Photographic Plateau*, 2010, Detail of the installation.



culturebase.net

## Heike Gatzmaga: Interview with François Bucher, December 2008

The real lesson of art is how to live

"I come with a beard," he texts, shortly later the door opens to Café Sankt Oberholtz in Berlin's Mitte. He storms inside, dressed in a simple parka and long black hair, the very image of Ché Guevara. It is not just the beard. The man glows like a revolutionary. He sits down at the table and feverishly tells me about his latest project. He has just seen the film stills from a trip to his native Colombia. "Cali is the Silicon Valley of Colombia. Have you heard of the telenovela 'Without Tits, There's no Paradise?' Everybody in the world comes here for cosmetic surgery. Cali has gone to hell, it has fallen prey to a rampant materialism, a culture of appearance!" But he has just made peace with his home town. Because it was there, that he recently experienced the "best night of his life." François Bucher clearly is not an artist who produces complacent art; he pushes the limit to find answers.

He could indeed boast of his success. Bucher has exhibited throughout the world. But instead of talking about his success, he tells me about his home town Cali. Here everything comes together, not just his personal history. "Cali is a crystallization of the world," he says, he was raised by two professors as a sheltered child in a place akin to the South of the United States, a place of sugar cane plantations, tepid swimming pools and barbecues.

But the bubble of security soon burst. By the late 80s, the Cali cartel was in full control of the city. The social structure of the city was reorganized. Suddenly, he says, there was social mobility, people from another social class and race were driving their own Ferraris and Jaguars. A great deal of hatred was circulating. Bucher, who was in his teens at the time, learned what fear was. Going to a disco with a beautiful girl meant, he says, jumping out of a window if you wanted to save your own life. Four or five of his acquaintances, one of them a dear friend, were killed in incidents involving the mafia.

Today, he invokes that lost time, but back then he wanted to break away from it. Bucher left Cali behind to "reinvent himself". In 1999, he earned a degree in film studies from Chicago. He shot his first film as a Whitney Fellow in New York, moved to Brooklyn and stayed there for five years. In the city he loves and which, as he says, "drives you completely", he found his motifs. His first film, "Twin Murders" (1999), focused on a symbolic parricide. The film, which he worked on for two years, was like a self-initiation for him. In 2001, when al-Qaida pilots smashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, and post-9/11 America drifted off into an hysterical and xenophobic national trauma, Bucher shot the 30-minute video "White Balance (To think is to forget differences)" (2002), a bitter parody of the U.S. war rhetoric.

Colombia continues to hold an attraction for him. In "Haute surveillance" (2007), a two-channel installation, shown during the exhibition "Rational Irrational" at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in 2008, Bucher again turned to violence in his homeland. Also "Haute surveillance", a title alluding to Jean Genet's play of 1949, is a montage. Interviews follow news clips, landscapes and signs create moods. A few professors, a young charismatic lecturer: all are witnesses, reporting about 1999, when a wave of violence claimed three victims on the university campus of Medellin. The interviewees exude an aura of helplessness. Then two students write a screenplay in honor of the

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poet Genet: their Medellin of the 90s mirrors Genet, Genet mirrors Medellin. Fiction and reality blur, but only in fiction a lasting crescendo of horror becomes real.

"The ethical individual may need to break moral standards," says Bucher, as he drinks his latte macchiato and continues to ponder the Cali Sodom and Gomorrah. This time he has returned with filmed interviews of his friends – intense images from his perhaps most intense trip. They are beautiful, meditative. Again they deal with violence, the "disease" of Cali, but also with his own healing. Of all things, he finds it through drugs. "The Indians are gaining influence and are negotiating with the government. The shamans have also returned to the cities, bringing with them medicine from the earth," says the artist. They bring Yage into the city, also known as vine of souls or vine of death. The intoxicating drink is deeply rooted in the cultural experience of Colombia and its neighbors. Even his mother and sister had tried the drug many years ago. The vine of souls purifies the soul, he says, physical symptoms such as vomiting are also part of the experience. Nonetheless it is a safe form of intoxication, because the shamans which see the drink as the gate to the spiritual world, accompany those who are taking such a trip. Bucher films and writes, transforms his experience into art. Yage is a revelation for him. His trip reconciles him with Cali, because it was there he experienced the "most beautiful night of his life". In the holy ecstasy of the vine of souls, he sees something, perhaps an all-pervasive beauty that takes away the fear. "You need to have a relationship with the image; you have to follow the form, which is always there. Staying present with this beauty is crucial – not to move from the present ... The real lesson of art," he says, "is how to live. You have the choice between love and fear, there is no other choice. "

## In The Poem About Love You Don't Write the Word Love

Centre for Contemporary Art

The overwrought title of this show – ‘In The Poem About Love You Don't Write the Word Love’ – sounded like a manifesto for metaphor. In fact what curator Tanya Leighton's selection of works shared was the desire to explore slyer forms of political engagement via the sin of omission. The exhibition was almost essayistic in making the case that political art should not be a finger-pointing, heart-on-sleeve affair. The works' strategies were crablike; the enemy was the literal because, the show suggested, there is no such thing.

The exhibition, comprising works by over 30 artists, was characterized by films, folds and fictions. Of the many moving image works, spread across the gallery and CCA's cinema programme, Walid Raad/The Atlas Group's and John Smith's might be emblematic. Raad's *I Only Wish That I Could Weep* (2000) is a compilation of video sunsets filmed on the seafront in west Beirut, wrapped in the fiction that the footage was shot by a sentimental member of the Lebanese security forces. In Smith's *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976) an east London street scene has a voice-over that seems to direct all the actions of the people and objects on-screen, turning random bustle into careful choreography. While in many respects antithetical, both works use their droll, unnerving narratives to foster a disbelieving curiosity in the face of everyday, ephemeral surfaces. Even complete fidelity to the facts can be harnessed to decidedly subversive ends, as in Sharon Hayes' videos (provided in take-away form) of her reciting from memory four messages originally recorded by Patty Hearst while held hostage by the Symbionese Liberation Army. With a pedantic off-screen chorus pouncing on any tiny deviation from the original, Hayes' performances make you wonder if the spirit can survive literal representation.

The folds were best exemplified by François Bucher's *Readymades with a Fold* (2004), which consist of little else: photographs of magazines folded to juxtapose ads and earnest features, cover and contents. Images bleed when this 'pornography of proximity' is laid bare: a Paris Hilton porn video facing off with an Abu Ghraib image, a shot of the Israeli 'security wall' and a publicity photograph of a celebrity trapped in a bubble. They doodle enjoyably with the crass conventions of segregation, while perhaps sacrificing a little of their bite by taking the form of high-gloss digital

### About this review

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By *Mike Sperlinger*



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photographs rather than being exhibited, lepidoptera fashion, as splayed objects.

There was a strain of the baroque in the show, taken up in works such as Lucas Ospina's *Manrique Versus Ospina: In A Poem About Art, A Curator Doesn't Write The Word Curator* (2005). Ospina, in the spirit of Jorge Luis Borges' reviews of non-existent authors, presents a show-within-the-show about the fictional artist Pedro Manrique Figueroa, 'precursor of collage in Colombia'. But the tendency towards the intricately oblique was most elaborately and brilliantly displayed in Gareth James' *Get Real Estate* (2003), a work that served to knit the whole show together. Three plywood tables support Perspex cubes, each with a two-way mirror on one side, containing complicated origami sculptures: a half-collapsed building, a truck surrounded by ring-fencing and a collapsed dome. Three pencil drawings on the wall look like floor plans but can eventually be discerned as implausible diagrams of how the sculptures were cut from single sheets of paper. Opposite them are two framed newspaper pages, which contain the source images for two of the sculptures: a report on a collapsed dance floor in Jerusalem and an article about a Garibaldi memorial in New York. But again content bleeds, so for example *Sweat Equity* (2004) the title of the sculpture based on the Garibaldi memorial, is derived from an article on self-build housing which appears on the same page of the newspaper. With its complex imbrications, delicate display and labyrinth of allusions, *Get Real Estate* looks as much as anything else like an impossibly ambitious attempt to fold together all the contradictory elements of Hans Haacke's oeuvre, from Minimalism to property polemic.

More than any other artist in the show, James seemed to match the curatorial desideratum, nodding to early Conceptualism, while married to political content. (The number of alumni from the Whitney Independent Study Program involved, including Bucher, Hayes and James, suggested a certain lineage.) Leighton's target was also obvious; the many documentary-makers manqués and soapbox preachers currently trading as political artists. The alternative proposed is playfully high-minded, though a world away from relational pieties. Perhaps Leighton herself, in a catalogue text that invokes the French critic Serge Daney's distinction between the 'image' and the 'visual', is more programmatic than the art she puts forward; but she has staged a show that seriously challenges prevailing trends and makes a credible case that 'commitment', in straightforward terms, is a canard. Art's battalions advance in motley array, and their engagements are rarely decisive.

**Mike Sperlinger**

CRISTIN TIERNEY

# ARTFORUM

## François Bucher

02.18.02

AUTHOR: GREGORY WILLIAMS

01.10.02-03.02.02 *Location One, New York*

In the Face of Crisis

Like a surprising number of artworks that respond to the World Trade Center attacks, François Bucher's video project *White Balance (to think is to forget differences)*, 2001–2002, was conceived and partially produced before September 11. A fast-moving collage of sight and sound, it focuses broadly on the topic of power and privilege by forcing the collision of disparate forms of public discourse. Snippets of political speech, Hollywood promotional hype, street interviews, radio commentary, and various other sound fragments are sampled and loosely stitched together with both found visual material and new footage. Bucher, an artist-in-residence at Location One (which is situated at a relatively short remove from Ground Zero), took to the streets and recorded people doing what they often seem to do in moments of crisis: haggling over prices for memorabilia while simultaneously searching for a way to understand and come to terms with the tragedy. *White Balance* may not offer any answers, but it does evoke a number of ways of thinking about the fraught search for meaning that has unfolded in the United States in the wake of the destruction of the World Trade Center.