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Nosferatu Still Haunting Without Characters

Published: June 7, 2013

Mark Moore Gallery proudly presents the World Premiere of "Untitled #160 (Balcombe)" (2011-2013), the latest video work by gallery artist Josh Azzarella, from the classic film "Nosferatu". This work was a juried selection for the forthcoming Moving Image Video Art Fair In London.

Known for work that explores the power of context in the authorship of memory, Azzarella oftentimes utilizes seminal moments in pop culture and news media to create accessible confrontations with historiography. From his videos and photographs, Azzarella meticulously extracts characters, shadows, and audio from each frame of a well known event or film. The resulting visuals consist of altered background scenes haunted by the absence of familiar narrative, and pose provoking questions about the disturbingly similar dissemination of fact and fiction.

In Azzarella's newest project, F.W. Murnau's 1922 German Expressionist classic "Nosferatu" undergoes a comprehensive transformation. Adapted from Bram Stoker's gothic novel "Dracula" (1897), Nosferatu is considered a silent masterpiece of psychological terror. Over the course of two years, the artist has painstakingly erased all evidence of the characters - including their reflections and shadows - from the original footage, along with the film's infamous soundtrack and expository intertitles.

Azzarella has re-built the vacant space left by his extractions pixel by pixel, constructing an alternative rendition of the film that exemplifies his mastery of digital construction through perfectly accurate imitation and craft. Added to each panorama is a reconstructed version of the original Erdmann scores and ambient noises that reflect the atmosphere of the original film.

The outcome is an uncanny 90-minute portrayal of the original classic that identically matches Murnau's lighting, film quality, and resolution, but abolishes its pioneering storyline and figures. Despite the absence of these key elements, the film's eerie and dark nature is practically amplified through Azzarella's manipulations—doors open mysteriously, curtains sway, and dawn breaks to ominous music, heightening the tension of implied action. The viewer watches each scene with the feeling of anticipation, the desire to see something spectacular occur without the gratification. With Count Orlok absent, the gothic architecture and gloomy backdrops assume a characterization of their own, unsettled in much the same way as the viewer—waiting for the film's antagonist to emerge yet unable to coax him into existence. Viewing the video, one gets a sense of how existential characters, Vladimir and Estragon must have felt as they waited for Godot.

In an interview by Marielos Zeka, Mark Moore Gallery, Josh Azzarella states, "The loss of the original score certainly disturbs the work's intended form, and arguably renders it incomplete. There have been several reconstructions of the score based upon Erdmann's notes, and they have been performed and released in recent years. I'm utilizing one of these reconstructed scores as a minimal accompaniment to the new ambient sound that I have created. In the work, the score is placed quietly in the rear speakers, and at times isn't audible at all with the newly added ambient sound. As expected, I've modified several moments in the reconstructed score to fit what is needed in the work."



Source: <http://www.eyesin.com/artists/2013/nosferatu-still-haunting-without-characters/>