



BLIND MATTER: ON THE ECONOMY OF IMAGES

CURATED BY GEORGE CLARK

Screening dates:

**Sunday 7 August, 10am-4pm Monash Open Day
Then every Saturday until 17 September**

Duration: 60 mins approximately, looped

Blind Matter draws together a diverse range of works in which filmmakers and artists have sought to explore the economies of images. From reflections on the potential of plastics – the trade of fossils, creation of images of desire – to new worlds mined within virtual spaces, these works complement *Nicholas Mangan: Limits to Growth*, and the way in which the exhibition reflects on the relationship of art and abstraction to processes of value creation. Taking its title from Victor Hugo's statement 'Man makes blind matter serve him', the program seeks to reflect our relationship to matter in an age of globalisation and the increasingly mediated nature of our interactions with matter.

George Clark is an artist, curator and writer. He is currently completing *A Distant Echo*, a feature length film shot on 35mm in various Californian deserts that explores themes of identity, culture and the construction of history in collaboration with musician Tom Challenger. Clark has previously collaborated with Luke Fowler and Beatrice Gibson on film projects. His curatorial work is focused on exploring and expanding histories of film and video practice globally. He was assistant curator of film at Tate Modern (2013-2015) where he curated numerous retrospectives and thematic seasons. He is a member of the advisory board for the BEFF / Bangkok Experimental Film Festival and one of the curators of BEFF 6 (2012). He curated the Lav Diaz focus at the AV Festival (2012); *INFERMENTAL* for Focal Point Gallery with Dan Kidner & James Richards (2010) and co-edited the book *A Detour Around Infermental* (2012). Currently he is working with Circuit Artist Film and Video Aotearoa New Zealand developing a new series of artists moving image commissions for 2016.

The Power of the Market: The Pencil

Milton Friedman, USA, 1980, 2.30min



'Look at this lead pencil. There's not a single person in the world who could make this pencil.' - Milton Friedman

In his famous polemical parable of the pencil, the economist Milton Friedman, describes with awe the wonders and supposed inevitability of the free market as a means to both liberate people and eventually bring about world peace. This short speech, extracted from the 10 hour PBS documentary series *Free to Choose*, seen in the light of the recent financial crisis, displays the utopia thinking behind neo-liberalism. In regarding the simple pencil, Friedman describes the global labour and industry behind it, demonstrating that interconnected markets cooperated across language, religion and belief, enabled by the 'magic' of the market to create this simple product.

La chant de la styrene / The Song of Styrene

Alain Resnais, France, 1959, 19 min



This early essay film by Alain Resnais is a celebration of the potential of plastics. Shot in striking colour, the film is a paean to the abstract qualities and malleability of this new material. Providing a fascinating insight into the optimism behind plastics prior to realisation of the stark environmental damage their production causes, the film also anticipates the potential of the material only now being realised with the advent of 3D printing. *Le chant du Styrene / The Song of Styrene* was commissioned by French industrial group Pechiney to highlight the merits of plastics with a commentary by Raymond Queneau composed in Alexandrines, the film examines with futurist zeal the abstract potentials of an emergent age of plastic.

Ein Bild / An Image

Harun Farocki, Germany, 1983, 25 min



Four days spent in a studio working on a centrefold photo for Playboy magazine provided the subject matter for my film. The magazine itself deals with culture, cars, a certain lifestyle. Maybe all those trappings are only there to cover up the naked woman. Maybe it's like with a paper-doll. The naked woman in the middle is a sun around which a system revolves: of culture, of business, of living! (It's impossible to either look or film into the sun.) One can well imagine that the people creating such a picture, the gravity of which is supposed to hold all that, perform their task with as much care, seriousness, a responsibility as if they were splitting uranium.

'This film, An Image, is part of a series I've been working on since 1979. The television station that commissioned it assumes in these cases that I'm making a film that is critical of its subject matter, and the owner or manager of the thing that's being filmed assumes that my film is an advertisement for them. I try to do neither. Nor do I want to do something in between, but beyond both.' - Harun Farocki, 1988

The Deccan Trap

Lucy Raven, USA, 2015, sound by Paul Corley, 4:19 min



'The Deccan Trap is a sci-fi fable that goes back in space and time, from some of the newest 3D images being produced in India—at post-production studios in converting outsourced Hollywood films from 2D to 3D—to some of the oldest—bas-relief carvings in Ellora's rock cut temples in Madhya Pradesh.'
 - Lucy Raven

F for Fibonacci

Beatrice Gibson, UK, 2014, 16 min



F for Fibonacci takes as its departure point American author William Gaddis' epic modernist novel *JR* (1975). An eerily prescient, biting social satire, *JR* tells the story of a precocious 11 year-old capitalist who, with the unwitting help of his school's resident composer, inadvertently creates the single greatest virtual empire the world has seen, spun largely from the anonymity of the school's pay phone.

F for Fibonacci develops a particular episode from *JR*, in which a televised music lesson is scrambled with a maths class on derivatives inside the mind of its child protagonist. Musings on aleatory music become muddled with virtual stock pickings and a theory of 'market noise'. Unfolding through the modular machine aesthetics of the video game *Minecraft*, text book geometries, graphic scores, images from physics experiments, and cartoon dreams, blend with images from wall street: stock market crashes, trading pits, algorithms and transparent glass.
 - Beatrice Gibson