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September 10-19, 2009


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FP

In a City

Mark Lewis



PUBLIC SCREENINGS

Description

Mark Lewis, who was born in Hamilton and lives in London, England, often returns to Canada, where he spent much of his youth and early career. In fact, many of his films are shot in various locations in Toronto, including a new trilogy of films that premiered at the fifty-third Venice Biennale this summer and are now presented in Toronto for the first time.

Exhibited together with a selection of earlier Toronto-based films, Lewis's new films combine his interest in the history of cinema and mid-twentieth-century urban modernism. Commissioned by the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery and co-produced by Mark Lewis and the National Film Board of Canada, they feature seemingly generic locations, such as a street corner in Toronto's financial district, as well as iconic, including the popular skating rink near Viljo Revell's New City Hall, and Mies van der Rohe's TD Centre. Both of these sites are evidence of the city's engagement in the late fifties and early sixties with a broader international perspective and cosmopolitan attitudes.

Lewis's works are witness to particularly poignant moments of modern urban life. In *Nathan Phillips Square, a Winter's Night, Skating*,

the camera follows the liquid movement of skaters on ice. In front of this rear-projected wintry scene, a stationary camera records the undulating motion of two lovers as they playfully encircle and finally embrace each other. The rear-projection medium emphasizes their separation from the other skaters and their absorption in each other.

A historical and now obsolescent technique, the effect of rear projection is a perceptual oscillation between foreground and background. The divided spatial and psychological focus is also a common feature of many of Lewis's non-projection films, including *Cold Morning*. This silent documentary records a homeless man folding up his sleeping bag and clothes above an air vent in an astoundingly domestic ritual on a cold January morning as pedestrians hurry by. Appearing to be spatially seamless, the film underlines the tensions that characterize urban space, including feelings of belonging and alienation, and states of social engagement and dissociation.

Barbara Fischer

Curated by Barbara Fischer, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery.

Presented in partnership with the Justina M. Baricke Gallery, with special project support from the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts and the Toronto Arts Council.

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
Hart House, University of Toronto
September 9 to October 26, 2009
Monday through Friday, 11 to 5 pm; Thursday to 8 pm
Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 5 pm
Opening September 8, 7 to 9:30 pm
FREE to the public



Mark Lewis began making films in the mid-nineties and has had numerous solo exhibitions at venues including Hamburger Kunstverein, Musée d'Art Moderne (Luxembourg), bfi Southbank (London), P.S.1 (New York), Mamco (Geneva) and the Vancouver Art Gallery. He is co-founder of Afterall, a research and publishing organization based at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, University of the Arts London, where he is also a research professor.

COLLATERAL EVENTS

Mark Lewis Lecture at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery on September 8 at 6pm. Lecture sponsored by Partners in Art with the additional support of the Ontario Association of Art Galleries through Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts.

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