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Kevin Moore on the Relationship of Photography and Film

By Susannah Tantemsapya

The innovative Sound and Vision program provided an immersive experience to the sophomore edition of Paris Photo Los Angeles. This two-fold component consisted of screenings and conversations. These serene environments offered a pleasant respite from the bustling art fair.

Independent curator Douglas Fogle expanded on his conversation series from 2013. His “Charlie Rose” style discussions between artists and curators investigated how photography encompasses their practices. Set in the Sherry Lansing Theatre, these engaging dialogues provided an intimate forum with some of the world’s most interesting minds: Walead Beshty, Simon Castets, Doryun Chong, Charlotte Cotton, Clara Kim, Florian Maier-Aichen, Jean-Luc Moulène, Leigh Ledare, Amanda Ross-Ho, Stephen Shore, Taryn Simon, Agnès Sire, Frances Stark, Kevin Tent, Kerry Tribe, Sara VanDerBeek, Philippe Vergne, and Jeff Wall.

For the screenings, academic and curator Kevin Moore teamed up with FotoFocus. The 12 videos selected were set in pairs and screened in continuous succession during the fair. Exploring the relationship between photography and film, these works encompass six similar or contrasting themes: causes, enterprises, fictions, loves, others, and performances. These international works include contemporary and historical films. Set in Soundstage 28, each pair has its own screen with a seating area and individual headphones. This setting provided a private experience within a communal environment.

For instance, enterprises brought together Jack + Leigh Ruby’s *Car Wash Incident* (2013) with Peter Roehr’s *Film-Montagen 1-3* (1965). The first was

based on a 1975 photograph taken for an insurance scam at a New Jersey car wash. The film uses split screens, a circular narrative and multiple actors to reenact the mysterious incident. The later is Roehr's re-appropriation of TV commercials edited to repeat in a spasmodic manner to create a convulsive effect.

Whitewall spoke with Moore about his involvement in this year's program, originated by Fogle, and it has become a testing ground for a larger exhibition in the future.

Whitewall: How did you become involved with Sound and Vision?

Kevin Moore: Paris Photo wanted to add another museum exhibition component to the fair this year. Because it's Los Angeles, they decided it would be good to have a film exhibition. They asked me, I'm normally a photography curator. I tried to angle it towards history of photography or a set of issues for contemporary photography. For example, fiction vs. documentary modes or certain motifs in photography such as the slide show with a series and a sequence. I tried to select films that had notes of these kinds of themes, so that the photography crowds could come at it from their own perspective. The relationship between photography and film is important and longstanding. It goes back to the invention of film in the 1890s. There hasn't been a major exhibition of this relationship before, no museum exhibition, no series of publications. In some ways, this is the first stab at a serious—not didactic, not thorough, not exhaustive—but a stab at making connections between the history of photography and the moving image.

WW: Where are you based?

KM: I live in New York. I've worked in museums and curated shows in such as the de Young Museum in San Francisco and the Cincinnati Art Museum, which is how I hooked up with the folks from FotoFocus. They're an interesting nonprofit group that brings good photography exhibitions to Cincinnati, but also are now expanding and want to fund shows in other cities and even other spaces. For example, this art fair space is temporary,

but will have a very big audience. The show will come to Cincinnati in the fall as part of a biennial in October. This same show as one component with a number of museum exhibitions and other shows we're creating in Cincinnati in October.

WW: How is this year's program organized?

KM: Sound & Vision is a split program. Douglas Fogle, who does the conversations, curates half of it. Screenings is the second component curated by me. It's a selection of 12 art films, which are set in pairs. The pairs have thematic titles such as enterprises, causes, loves, performances... I think that's kind of an important thing to emphasize. I had those as working titles when I was putting films together, just to register in my mind which pair I was thinking about. In the end, we ended up using those titles. I think they draw the films out of a realm of film about film, photography about photography. That kind of thing drives me crazy. I think that photography, in particular, is a medium that is engaged with the world. It's a chance to think about the content of these films, not just in relationship to photography or the film medium itself, but in relation to all these kind of human values that we all share and sort of struggle with throughout our lives.