
GAMeC

BERGAMO

LUKe

WILLIS

THOMPSON

HYSTeRICAL

STReNGTH

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The GAMeC — Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea of Bergamo hosts *Hysterical Strength*, the first exhibition in Italy by London-based artist Luke Willis Thompson (Auckland, 1988). The exhibition is curated by Edoardo Bonaspetti, the first guest curator in a new exhibition program promoted as part of the *Premio Lorenzo Bonaldi per l'Arte — EnterPrize*.

Luke Willis Thompson presents *Untitled Trilogy (2016-2018)* and a new site-specific work, *Black Leadership* (2019), all of which examine the relationship between a person and their representation. The first film in the trilogy, *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries* (2016), is comprised of two 16mm, black-and-white, silent portraits of two young men from London. Thompson here exactly replicates Andy Warhol's *Screen Tests* (1964-66), a series of filmed portraits of a mostly white and New York-based celebrity milieu. This appropriation considers various formal qualities of the shot—its sharp contrast, tight head crop against a minimalist background, and its slowed and distorted pace—and repositions Warhol's *Screen Tests* within a complex history of photography and the making of race.

autoportrait (2017) is a 35mm film black-and-white silent portrait of Diamond Reynolds. Thompson describes the work as a response to a “call” which began with a live smartphone video shot by Reynolds herself that almost instantly accrued viral viewership and mass global online presence. By transmuting this original “celebrity” of Reynolds from wide circulation to the controlled specificity of a film set, Thompson invites Reynolds to produce a second broadcast, a tribute-like rendition, where her survivability is the subject of her performance.

In *_Human* (2018), Thompson enacts a filmic translation of *My Mother, My Father, My Sister, My Brother* (1997), a sculpture by British artist Donald Rodney (1961-1998), a fragile architectural structure made out of the artist's fragmented skin. With the control afforded by an automated motion-controlled camera, this 35mm film makes the ideological materiality of Rodney's work visible so that film stock becomes analogous to skin. This analogy is extended further within the film's structure. Experimentally edited together out of 42 strips of footage, the work conforms to a pattern extracted from highly specific genetic sequencing present in the cells of Thompson's siblings. In this way, the corporality of both Thompson and Rodney are intertwined within the film matter itself.

Untitled Trilogy (2016-2018) is supplemented here with a new work, *Black Leadership* (2019), which takes its cue from the recent debates within the artworld around an individual's right to represent the pain of others. Thompson zooms out from any one position of critique to produce an artwork on language and power, and the psychological fragmentation of a self in the age of mass media and digital communication.

Luke Willis Thompson (b. 1988, Auckland) lives and works in London. Selected solo exhibitions include *_Human*, Kunsthalle Basel; Luke Willis Thompson, Adam Art Gallery, Wellington (both 2018); *autoportrait*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2017); *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries*, Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin; *Sucu Mate/Born Dead*, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland; and *Misadventure*, IMA, Brisbane (all 2016).

He has participated in group exhibitions including the 10th Berlin Biennale (2018); 32nd São Paulo Biennial; La Biennale de Montréal (both 2016); and *Surround Audience*, New Museum Triennial, New York (2015). Thompson was awarded the Walters' Prize in 2014, the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize in 2018, and was a nominee for the 34th Turner Prize (2018-2019).

Untitled Trilogy (2016—2018)

I

Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries, 2016

16mm, b&w, silent. 9'10" @16 fps
Kodak Tri-X 16mm b&w reversal stock
9min 10sec

Director of photography: Simona Susnea.
Commissioned by IMA Brisbane, supported by Creative New Zealand.
Produced in association with Chisenhale Gallery and Create, London.
Courtesy the artist, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland and Galerie Nagel
Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.

II

autoprotrait, 2017

35mm, b&w, silent. 8'50" @ 24 fps
35mm Kodak Eastman Double-X BW
8min 50sec

Director of photography: Mhairi-Clare Fitzpatrick. Film and lighting
technician: Miranda Langevin. Project liaison: Sara Cluggish.
Commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery and produced in partnership
with Create.
Courtesy the artist, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland/Wellington and
Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.

III

_Human, 2018

35 mm film, color, silent, 9'30" @24fps
35mm Kodak Vision 3 500T colour negative
9min 30sec

Director of Photography: Mhairi-Clare Fitzpatrick. Editor: Annie Collins.
First camera assistant: Jerry Pradon. Lighting: Straton Heron, Kupa
Warner. Motion control operation: John Adderley. Colorist: Damian
McDonnell. Postproduction: Park Road Post Production, Wellington.
Commissioned and produced by Kunsthalle Basel. Made with the
permission of the Estate of Donald Rodney, London. Courtesy the
artist, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland/Wellington and Galerie Nagel
Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.

Black Leadership, (2019)

16mm film, b&w, silent 2'40" @24fps
Kodak Black and White Print Film ESTAR Base
2min 40sec

Commissioned by GAMEC.
Courtesy the artist; Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland/Wellington; and
Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.
The artist would like to thank Clémentine Deliss, who profoundly
assisted with earlier stages of Black Leadership 2019 via her
ongoing curatorial and pedagogical project Organs and Alliances.

All the exhibition prints for all titles were produced by Niagara Custom
Lab, Toronto.

You can download these texts: they are available on our website (gamec.it).

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