

SAMRENSEIW



vlog illuminations

Videos from **spacetwo : patalab**

At first glance those small video pieces appear awfully weird. Posted regularly since July 2005 on a Vlog. <http://patalab02.blogspot.com>, 379 entries so far, the videos do not seem to fit into any known Vlogging category. Somehow disparate regarding the range of issues and contents, the overall visual mix sometimes presents clear imagery, at times coloured wilful blurs, generally a mix of both and by and large, an inscrutable dramaturgy. Mostly they baffle the viewers as to the meaning of it all, since little comprehensive explanation is offered. The accompanying texts on the posts are of no real help either, presenting a seemingly random mix of high-lit quotes and serendipitous links.

Yet, some strikingly beautiful, strange poetic visual imaginations emerge, embedded in some unconscious mirrored out-posts from one's memory: Urban prospects, fragments of larger spaces, intriguing interiors, intimate moves, shrapnel of dance(s), perceptive promenades, burlesque performances, *oneiric* exoticism and corny inconspicuousness. All of it somehow familiar, nevertheless representing a bouquet of strikingly fresh and simultaneously kitsch visual experiences.

The video's accompanying soundtracks are a peculiar supplementary treat: Rarely *diegetic*, mostly made out of intriguing sound mash-ups, remixes and multi-overlay excerpts available from the Web (mostly from CC sources), the soundtracks ostensibly act as *synaesthetic*, intuitive counter-pointed components to the videos.

The **spacetwo : patalab** Vlog is operated by **Sam Renseiw**, the avatar monicker of a Danish architecture professor from Copenhagen, who also shoots and edits all the presented footage in his spare time.

" It started as an experiment out of sheer curiosity, to test the feasibility of up-loading videos to the web, after having read an article on Vlogging " states Renseiw, " then it sort of mutated into a pleasurable, quite creative obsessive - compulsive endeavour, that could also encompass some of the research I was doing anyway "

Having a background in performance theatre, stage design and part-time coaching choreography students in conceptual space awareness, it comes as no surprise that Renseiw's videos feature a broad mix of architectural framings as well as theatrical and dance related settings.

" Yet, almost none of the posted videos are conscious constructs, made after some sort of pre-arranged, scripted conceptual framework " asserts Renseiw, " the videos consist of rather prosaic diary entries of what I happened to see during my daily itinerary, at work, travelling, attending some theatre/dance performance, or while simply moving about from one endeavour to the next. Sometimes, just enjoying being at home or accompanying my daughter"

Always carrying his simple, off-the-shelf pocket digital camera close at hand, not many scenes escape Renseiw's curious observations. At the same time, a newfound awareness surfaced:

" While always positively bewildered by the beauty of simple things and settings, I started to become intensively more conscious about how I actually was seeing. The possibility of being able to frame, capture and later re-edit these short, at times magic moments opened up some interesting new terrain. Particularly in being attentive to the more precise parallaxes between what and how I actually saw and the possibilities to re-present it later in such manners closest to my particular personal experience.

Having often been told that he seemingly had a peculiar, somehow twisted romantic outlook at what he saw, Renseiw was utterly happy to submerge further in the experiment with his new hobby, intuitively and attentively voodling, meddling and peddling the almost daily load of pixel footage.

*" Although I have a keen interest and somehow broad knowledge of conventional films, film art and art videos, I was quickly determined that I would not attempt in my videos to mimic or adhere to any genre. Possibly playing consciously with it, just to get the feel of some of it. The main goal then seemed to come as close as possible to re-producing what I actually experienced **seeing**. Unfortunately not having the complete capabilities of a synaesthete, I am nevertheless increasingly and wholeheartedly aware that the content of images alone, and of their conventional dramaturgy, is but a surface. Yet, I will actively refrain from telling stories via video. The Message is the Meaning, to paraphrase McLuhan."*

Renseiw's palatab vlog thus somehow seems to diverge from the usual vlogsphere, being simultaneously an open cryptic diary and a covert, personal patient laboratory. Presenting videos and text posts cushioned in a standardized template, (with minimal aesthetics specially when viewed on PCs) openly sharing, yet at the same time withholding directly phrased meaning(s) about the overall content.

"The videos," explains Renseiw, "are my feeble attempts to re-phrase, re-view and re-construct the childlike outlook I once had, and which is so difficult to re-capture in our present, visually saturated world. A visuality full of conventions, rules and formalia, that I try to escape from. Few of my posted videos come somehow close this goal, while most fail miserably. But each of them represents an earnest piece of research. Over and over, again and again. The ensuing compilation is not intended as, and will hopefully never be, a show. More to be considered as a showcase of attempts open for others to re-view, and comment. Yet, I must honestly state that I am quite

shy, in all this extroverted exuberance. I try not to show of, but to show how I've seen. Sometimes this seems to be misunderstood.

As to the pataphysical overlay on the vlog, it apparently is more than just a gimmick for Renseiw; Even though this intellectual cover might be considered far-fetched, it somehow seems fitting:

"Surrealism, the OuLiPo writer's games and absurd stratagems have always held my fascination. While their stratagems are intellectual, they still incorporate a delightful, childlike naive approach. A game of: "As If". Thus the pataphysical approach, acting as overall protective shield and alibi to voodle around; Pataphysic's definition by Jary being : The science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments gave me relative leeway in calmly proceeding experimenting further with my videos, absurdly contextualizing them if it seemed, to me, appropriate.

Some of Renseiw's videos have already been screened at various venues in England and Scandinavia. The recent invitation to screen some videos at the upcoming Pixelodeonfest in Hollywood is, indeed, quite an honor.

Nevertheless, a general screening can also be a sort of happy visual lottery, a momentary superficial zapping, of imagery out of context.

"This is why I stopped viewing web videos on aggregators, emulating TV's" states Renseiw. "It just reduced my act of seeing to some crude, pokemon card like trading, that made it more difficult to enter into the fellow other's perspective. There are plenty of soaps around. I constantly long for the moment when I can discover someone else's view of the world. Visually, without explanations; becoming their eyes, thus inhabiting the moment, not consuming it as a commodity or message.

" The prospects are indeed out there. I have had some quite extraordinary moments watching short videos without explanations, that touched me deeply by their sheer visual simplicity – however complex they might have seemed - from various parts of the world." recalls Renseiw " I recognized in those gazes, a similar longing for another kind of recording of the world. A certain joyful ease being able to see more freely and then sharing that view with selfless compassion. As meaningful as writing Haiku poetry in water and as giving."

It is thus most appropriate to thank the organizers of the **Pixelodeonfest** for the inclusion of some of the seemingly more oblique, inconspicuous and naïve approaches to Vlogging. It is a fine invitation for a further- mute in words- visual dialogue on the nature of how the **seen** might be communicated, and encouraged. Without becoming a tradable commodity.

through the eye
pixelwise
straight into the heart

views

Statement for Pixelodeonfest, 2007

Sam Renseiw / spacetwo:patalab
<http://patalab02.blogspot.com>

