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Untitled Fragments

James Benning

2017, 3-channel video installation, color, 75 min., English.

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The 3-channel video installation *Untitled Fragments* brings together four histories: the 1860s scorched earth policy of Kit Carson used to drive out the Navajos from their homeland in Canyon de Chelly, the 1967 execution of Che Guevara in Bolivia, the 1972 carpet bombing of Hanoi, and the 2016 Cedar Fire in the California Sierras. The radio transmission is from a US Air Force B-52 (Stratofortress Bomber, code name Lilac 02) recorded on the evening of December 26, 1972 during which 116 B-52s attacked Hanoi and Haiphong dropping all of their bombs within 15 minutes. The recording was declassified in 2016.

The installation is part of a larger project that further includes paintings, drawings, serigraphs, tapestries, film loops, and historical objects.

List of terms

Red Crown: Navy radar support ship in the Gulf of Tonkin
Guns: a B-52 tail gunner
CPI: Current Position Indicator
Triple A: Anti-Aircraft Artillery
LP: Layer Protocol
IP: Insert Point
Bulls-eye: navigation center point, Hanoi
RCD: Record
LIST: Communication center
Lilac, Pinto, Colbalt, Snow, Slate, Cream, Copper, Pink, Ash, etc:
B-52s flew in color-coded cells of three, for example Lilac 01, Lilac 02, and Lilac 03
SAM: Surface to Air Missile
Uplink: radio signal sent from ground to redirect a SAM
PDI: Pre-Designated-Items
TG: target
Secondary: second explosion due to bombs hitting explosive target
Nav: navigator
Chicks: slang for the three planes in a cell
COA: Course of Action, combat area
Gate or Fence: perimeter or edge of COA
POL: Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricant storage
MiG: soviet built fighter jet
Bandit: slang for MiG

James Benning

James Benning, born in 1942 in Milwaukee, USA, began working as an independent filmmaker in 1972, even before studying film at the University of Wisconsin. From 1977 to 1980 he taught at the universities of California and Oklahoma, then moved to New York to continue his work as an independent filmmaker. In 2009 he switched from 16mm to digital filmmaking. Since then his work has included installation and site specific art with many shows in galleries and museums. Besides his current film/art work, Benning has taught at the California Institute of the Arts since 1987. Last year he was a visiting artist at the International Film and TV School (EICTV) in Cuba.

Films (selection)

1971: *Did You Ever Hear that Cricket Sound?*. 1972: *Ode to Muzac* (3 min.), *Time & A Half* (17 min.), *Art Hist. 101* (17 min.). 1973: *Honeyland Road* (11 min.), *Michigan Avenue* (6 min.). 1974: *i94* (3 min.), *8½ x 11* (33 min.). 1975: *3 Minutes on the Dangers of Film Recording* (3 min.), *Saturday Night* (3 min.), *The United States of America* (25 min.), *9/1/75* (22 min.). 1976: *Chicago Loop* (8 min.), *11 x 14* (83 min., Forum 1977). 1977: *One Way Boogie Woogie* (60 min.). 1979: *Grand Opera. An Historical Romance* (90 min., Forum 1980). 1981: *Him and Me* (88 min.). 1983: *American Dreams (lost and found)* (56 min.). 1985: *O Panama* (28 min., Forum 1987). 1986: *Landscape Suicide* (95 min., Forum 1987). 1988: *Used Innocence* (95 min.). 1991: *North on Evers* (87 min.). 1995: *Deseret* (82 min.). 1997: *Four Corners* (80 min., Forum 1998). 1998: *Utopia* (93 min.). 1999: *El Valley Centro* (90 min., Forum 2002). 2000: *Los* (90 min., Forum 2002). 2002: *Sogobi* (90 min., Forum 2002). 2004: *13 Lakes* (133 min., Forum 2005), *Ten Skies* (101 min., Forum 2005). 2005: *One Way Boogie Woogie/27 Years Later* (120 min., Forum 2006). 2007: *RR* (110 min., Forum 2008), *Casting a Glance* (81 min.). 2009: *Ruhr* (121 min.), *Fire & Rain* (1 min.). 2010: *John Krieg Exiting the Falk Corporation in 1971* (71 min.), *Pig Iron* (33 min.), *Pascal's Lemma (document)* (17 min.), *Reforming the Past* (60 min.). 2011: *Two Cabins* (30 min.), *Faces (1973)* (25 min.), *Faces* (135 min.), *Milwaukee/Duisburg* (installation, Forum Expanded 2011), *Twenty Cigarettes* (99 min., Forum 2011), *After Warhol* (65 min.), *Small Roads* (103 min.). 2012: *Nightfall* (98 min.), *Stemple Pass* (121 min, Forum 2013), *Postscript* (7 min.), *Easy Rider* (95 min.), *The War* (55 min.), *One Way Boogie Woogie 2012* (90 min.), *BNSF* (194 min.). 2013: *Three Generations* (8 min.), *Data Entry* (10 min.), *US 41* (52 min.). 2014: *Natural History* (77 min.), *FAROCKI* (77 min.), *Concord Woods* (121 min.). 2015: *52 Films Project* (300 min.), *American Dreams* (85 min.), *Fresh Air* (46 min.). 2016: *Dancing in the Street* (6 min.), *Cuba, An Historical Romance* (4 min.), *Thinking of Red* (8 min.), *In Memory of Benjamin Benally* (5 min.), *Vallegrande, 1967* (4 min.), *Ash 01* (20 min.), *Fall Equinox* (77 min.), *Spring Equinox* (77 min.), *Scorched Earth* (61 min.), *Red Cloud* (61 min.), *Measuring Change* (61 min.), *Time after Time* (44 min.). 2017: *Untitled Fragments*.