

A Return James Edmonds

(2018, 16mm, 6min, colour, sound)



To return again. To re-align is the object of these visits, perhaps. Geography of origin becoming catalyst for an inner re-alignment with the secret, private, unspoken work of one's being. Peering into layers, sliding planes of windows and time, the fragmentary gesture of the dance. A series of rapid contrasts, a synthesis of elemental and everyday experience. Structures shift and intermingle, two worlds become one.



Notes on *A Return*:

A Return consists of two reels of 16mm film shot on a visit to my home village in the South of England. The footage begins in Berlin, in the location I was working with Robert Beavers on the restoration of Gregory J. Markopoulos' epic film cycle *Eniaios*. Following on from this starting point, I continued to shoot people and locations from my everyday life - returning to England during the Christmas holidays, a gathering of old friends, the house of my parents, and glimpses of ancient folk traditions they are involved in.

The two reels of film negative were then spliced together, interweaving the two locations and time frames in which they were exposed, so that we experience a constant flux of alternation between places and times, aesthetics and weather conditions, eventually, both reels settling in a similar atmosphere.

All this was done, simply by observing the negatives with the hand, without any form of work-print being made, or even an editing table, but simply the relationship between the material and my intuitive reading of it's structures, and memory of its locations and colours.

The sound was mostly recorded in the films final location: where a river, which has it's source near my home village, finally meets the sea.

(JE2018)

TONI D'ANGELA - Introduction text to *Chaos versus Frame: in conversation with James Edmonds* ([la furia umana 28, Toni D'Angela 2016](#))

The cinema of James Edmonds (1983) explores the complexities of the real not as a mere substance named “reality” but in its most fluctuating and Turnerian correlation, in those uncertainties that make it impossible to fix it in any specific point in space. A splendor in the world. His last film *Movement and Stillness* (2012-2014) assembles a series of motives and topics that are recurrent in his work and that situate him within a tradition bringing together Peter Gidal, Leighton Pierce and even Jean-Claude Rousseau. A poetics of space. Edmonds composes a poem about inhabited spaces, a dialectics without synthesis between the internal and the external. The almost fixed frame moves as if it were shaken by the wind, in the same way hung up clothes swell, the camera cuts across rooms, the exposure to the light makes the composition of the images iridescent: stains, halos, colours. The immeasurable intimacy of the house, the intimacy of the open space, the flesh of the bodies, the vapors, the stain glasses that evoke the work of Joseph Albers, the chiaroscuro produced by the shutters, the windows from which the trees outside appear – the ramifications of Being – all of this united by the very fast and kaleidoscopic montage. *Movement and Stillness* is an “aleph” in which the seasons alternate (the snow and the flowers), and with them the day and the night, the lights and the shadows, figuration and abstraction.

Since *After Hours* (2005) Edmonds intertwines the mobile and the immobile, the internal and the external. In this work an office building is almost like a moving film: the lights from the windows shine in the night as if they were film

perforations sliding. Handheld camera, panoramas, still lives and improvised rhythms. Night and day. Space is not just something we simply inhabit. A deserted building is like a film: it has a history that is revealed by the play of light and shadow on the various elements that compose this space. Also *Inside/Outside* (2008/2015), that begins with a flirtatious interaction between the clear and the blurry, is like the previous film filled with corridors that, through superimpositions, cross over each other – or perhaps only one or just a few. A constellation of internal and external forms, in a continuous return, moving from closed to open form, from one film to another. *Overland Collages* (2015) is his most fragmented and abstract work, with echoes of Norman McLaren, a string of lines-force, in fact, from *Movement and Stillness*.

The segmented and associative montage of Edmonds is not governed by cuts seeking to connect signifier and signified but rather by a lacanian *capitoné point* (or *cushioning*). This is an anti-representational and anti-narrative knot, which makes the signifier/signified relation a more dynamic, fluid one, and which does not work with a descriptive language but institutes a topography of desire – a fabric weaving itself with an already existing one. A flux as infinite as desire. A ramification through the frame of windows that open wide the splitting of Being, as a work in progress *Sternwarten der Welt*. It is not in any case a form of welding – a simple intersection organized around anchor points – but rather a collage inspired by Burroughs' cut-ups, as it is intimated in another of his works in progress, *We all live in the Blue Image Forever*. In this case a lyrical quality speaks of another inspiration of the filmmaker, Stan Brakhage. (*t.d.*)

James Edmonds is an artist and filmmaker from the UK living in Berlin. His practice centres on a personal poetics in which the nature of recording, particularly when approached from the materiality of a medium, offers a tangible yet ultimately paradoxical surface for what is intangible and fleeting - our personal experience,



inner worlds, thoughts and reflections. His work manifests in analogue films, painted gestures and long-form soundworks, occasionally combined along with found materials to create immersive environments.

He has presented his work at festivals and venues such as Âge d'Or Festival Brussels, Process Festival Latvia, Fronteira Festival Brasil, 3 137 Athens, Cinema Parenthèse Brussels, Macao Milan, Ausland Berlin, and Another Vacant Space Berlin.

He recently contributed to the book on filmmaker Jeannette Muñoz - *The Landscape As a Sea*, (Revista Lumiere 2017) and since 2015 curates the film series Light Movement in Berlin.

Filmography

A Return, 2018, 16mm, 6min, colour, sound

Overland, 2016, super 8, 22min, colour/b&w, sound

Movement and Stillness, 2014/2015, super 8, 10min, colour, silent

Sternwarten der Welt/Sun Documents, 2011, super 8, colour, soundtrack

Inside/Outside, 2008/2015, super 8, 7min, colour, soundtrack

Fragments/Structures, 2007/2015, super 8, 6min, colour, silent/soundtrack

Fleeting Landscape, 2006/07, super 8, variable durations, colour, silent

After Hours, 2005, super-8 transferred to SD, 07'18", colour, sound

Further info

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