

# Tommy Olsson 2009

## Off the grid, text on Bjørg Tarangers video project URBAN MOSAIC

### Off the grid

We can safely say that mosaic has a long history behind it. Video has a somewhat shorter history but it's in place. Even mosaic's presence in video media has a history, it might even play an active role in the media's origin, the electronic picture is after all based on small points. Common to all histories is a labyrinth of alternative courses, parallel discussions and things that never lead anywhere. Bjørg Taranger's work can be understood as a meeting place for all these components or perhaps some kind of transit hall? Because when we access the material and examine the components we discover what it's made of. These are video loops, often only a few seconds in duration, treated by a variety of filters to apply pauses and vibrations in a kaleidoscopic, flashy, visual explosion. What happens when you put something in a loop – and this is the magical hold everyone instinctively understands – is that you in a way sabotage our comprehension of time as a linear progression. I will go as far as to say that you actually interfere in time itself – you don't stop it but rather mess around with the continuity of it and thus apply incalculable effects.

I can supply a couple of examples, both of which are coincidentally neighbour clashes. Some of my acquaintances maintain a well above average interest in the occult and I consulted one of them for advice on a very charged situation with a particular neighbour. This neighbor had taken to enthusiastic hammering on the plumbing if I as much as breathed in my apartment and I was advised to record the sound of the hammering, and play it endlessly every time I went out. It wasn't even necessary to leave it on an especially high volume, it just had to sit there hammering away in its loop. I didn't particularly like this idea however, the neighbor was a grandiose snorer and I managed to record some of the snoring and let it play in a loop when I went out. It took less than a week before the neighbor stopped me on the stairs and apologized, informing me of a mega-migraine. Afterwards all was quiet and peaceful again. As a result I began to experiment a little. It so happened that the back yard was frequently occupied by a gang of rowdy people who practiced summer annoyance. I managed to record an exceptional sequence of 45 minutes from my bedroom window and then played it the following day out of the same window – again on no especially high volume. They were nowhere to be seen for the rest of the summer. What happens is one simply creates a hole in time and it's unpleasant for whom it ought to be unpleasant.

In the context of Bjørg Taranger's video work however, my personal experimentation with making holes in time constitutes only a fraction of the rationale. It's equally important to note that many, if not all of these short sequences revolve around the active use of one or another form of transport. We may, if we want to, understand it as a body of fragmentary impression from a long journey but since I'm in the mood for the magical, it ought to be understood as a wisely selected apparatus in a work of poetry aimed at a precise destination. Because the train never leaves the station – it starts all over again from where it began two seconds earlier, and does so on a screen filled by the same times thirty. The most important and most striking – the first we notice as an observer – is that the pattern itself emerges as a consequence of this interference. Hypnotic and surely risky for epileptics, it stands with Brion Gysin's *Dream machine* in trance-inducing mode.

Therefore this is definitively a meeting place – something supported by other short sequences from a shopping centre or a train station – for different stories and ideas. However it's also a random location; a place for transit, because even with all these signs of a journey, it's static and showers us with flicker, and it's exactly here that the journey begins. Through interfering in the moment with such consequence and consistency, Bjørg Taranger opens the door in Harry Potter fashion to another world that we know fuck-all about. (I imagine however that all similarity ceases at this point, there are no dragons and princesses lurking anywhere here.) As a starting point for investigating one's own inner space, this is both a friendly and generous manoeuvre. The observer knows what the signs mean and that it's their own substance, their own memory that makes these associative elements functional. The captain welcomes you on board. This journey takes either 2 hours and 50 minutes or it never, ever ends. We'll see.

Tommy Olsson,  
Bergen 27. September 2009

Translated from Norwegian by Gillian Carson