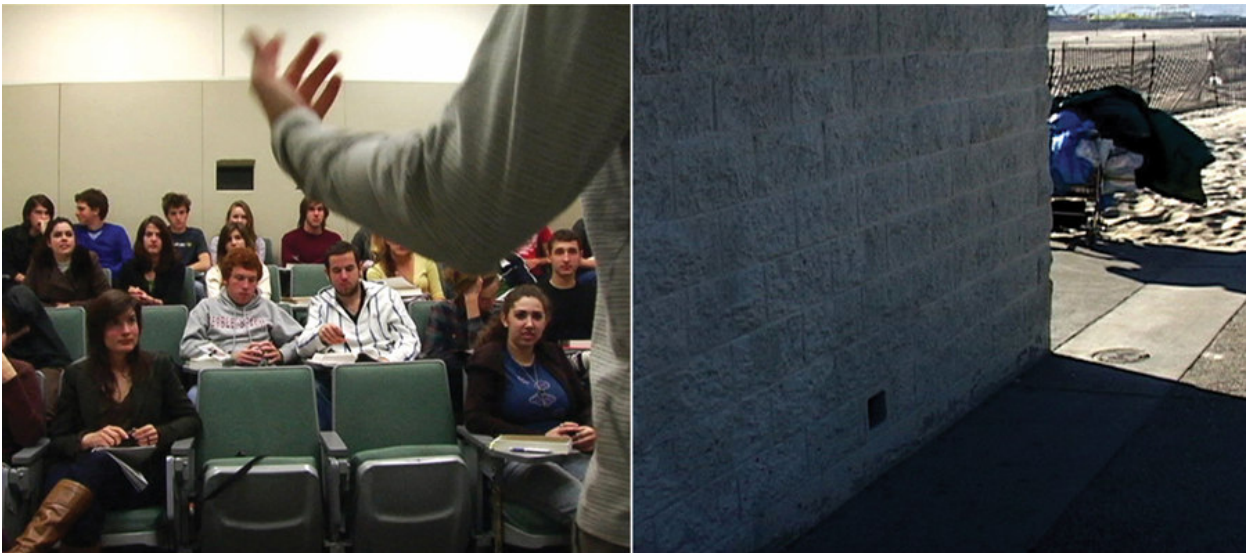


FROM AMERICA

Videoworks by José Carlos Teixeira

It's OK (united), three steps to a (r)evolution | Essay on Unsheltered Bodies



José Carlos Teixeira (1977, Porto, Portugal)

is an artist and fellow in residence, during one year, at the Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart, Germany), in Film-Video-New Media. He completed an MFA (Master of Fine Arts) in Interdisciplinary Studio at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), after having studied at the New York University (NYU), in New York City, and in Bilbao (Spain) at the University of Basque Country. He got a BFA (Licenciatura) from the School of Fine Arts at the University of Porto (Portugal).

His interdisciplinary work is mostly focused on video, installation, and performance; it deals with notions of language, identity, limit, exile, and displacement, from a psychological to a more sociological or political point of view. Collaboration and participation are key elements in Teixeira's work process and methodology.

So far, he has been involved in several art projects, exhibitions, festivals, and screenings both in Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Scotland, Sweden, Russia, and Cyprus) and in the USA (New York, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Boston, Atlanta, Detroit, Tucson, and Cincinnati), as well as in Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, and S. Tomé. Teixeira is represented in some collections (such as Aberdeen Art Gallery Collection, Scotland, UK; and PLMJ Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal), and has been the recipient of many awards and grants (the Fulbright / Carmona e Costa Foundation Grant, Gulbenkian Foundation / FLAD Grant, Samuel Booth Award, D'Arcy Hayman Award, and UCLA Fellowships, among others). He also studied music, experimental theater, and collaborated extensively with the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art (Porto, Portugal). Recently, he was assistant professor in Video and Multimedia at ESAD (Escola Superior de Artes e Design), in Portugal.

Friday, 21st November, 20H00

22 to 25 November 2008 by appointment

IT'S OK (UNITED) #1 #2 #3 – THREE STEPS TO A (R)EVOLUTION

is a video project that departs from a critical reflection around dominant educational, socio-cultural, and political premises in the West. The case of the United States seemed to be the most meaningful for me – not only because it was back then the country where I lived and worked (reinforcing site-specificity prevalent in my videos), but also due still to its paradigmatic and hegemonic nature.

Originally being the audiovisual component of a performance I was involved with at the end of 2004, **It's OK (united)** was born during my trips on the bus, in the metro rail system, and sometimes while I was driving to different parts of the city of Los Angeles. In my head, still fascinated and simultaneously overwhelmed with cultural and societal differences, the expression *It's OK* was marking a time, and my early American experiences. As a repetitive common saying, it encapsulated paradoxes and contradictions (be it in the form of electoral results, in the state of war, in the lack of equality and freedom, in the discrimination and mutual racism I could witness almost every day). For me, *It's OK* turned out to be not only a friendly and soothing expression, but also an ironic way of accepting it all, or just simply a manner of withdrawing yourself from those things you cannot control or determine.

Observing and confronting, I was decided to bring all those ideological and behavioral aspects I felt that were *OK*. Also, I was bringing up the question of what type of limits we have in the process of negotiation with the otherness.

Therefore, appropriating the American national anthem and having those writings as lyrics for such a symbolic music, this piece attempts to subvert the founding principles of attitudes taken as normal and positive. Playful, it questions beliefs, and aims to challenge ordinary perceptions of what Western culture tends to defend as normalcy, correctness and assertiveness.

As video-maker and performer, simultaneously playing the roles of conductor and teacher, I appealed to an engagement with a learning that values the uncertainty, the doubt, and the loss, against pre-assumptions such as the success, the safety, or the power. Therefore, **It's OK (united) #1 #2 #3 – three steps to a (r)evolution** aims towards a discourse about prescient sociological and psychological issues as globalization, migration, integration and the failure of the democratic ideals. It also enunciates ethics not dissociated from aesthetics: the artist-author as a responsive and responsible cultural, social and political agent.

TECHNICAL TERMS

Title: IT'S OK (united) #1 #2 #3 – three steps to a (r)evolution

Year: 2004-2006

Duration: 9:26

Conception and production: José Carlos Teixeira

Image / Edition / Sound: José Carlos Teixeira

Soundtrack:

#1: *Star Spangled Banner* in the album "American Spirit" by C. W. McCall,

#2: *Hero* by Mariah Carey, and *The star spangled banner* by Francis Scott Key & John Stafford Smith

#3: *The pledge of allegiance* and *Star spangled banner* by Lee Greenwood in the album "American Patriot"; *Star Spangled Banner* by The Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Lane

Process making: digitally captured and edited; transferred onto DVD

Original video format: Mini-DV, NTSC, color, 5:4, stereo

City/Country: Los Angeles / USA

Support: UCLA University of California Los Angeles - Department of Art (School of Arts and Architecture), and Department of Film and Television (School of Theater, Film and Television); Lafayette Park (Los Angeles Department of Recreations and Parks); Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences, Santa Monica, CA; New Roads School – The Herb Albert Campus, Santa Monica, CA; Los Angeles Public Library (Popular Library section)

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to the five wonderful hispanic kids, and also to the two teenager classes who agreed to sing and record this project with me (final credits in the video). A warm thank you to the artist, performer and instructor Ron Athey (Performance Art, UCLA Grad Seminar); artist and UCLA professor Allen Ruppertsberg; UCLA film professor Belinda Starkie; James Hosney, art & film teacher (Crossroads); Brian Sanders, teacher of english (New Roads); and David Bryan, head of New Roads School.

ESSAY ON UNSHELTERED BODIES

„The limits are imaginary, except for walls... Frontiers are invented every day.“ (from the video)

In my practice, I usually examine issues related to language, identity, boundaries of personal and social spaces, and the definition of physical and psychic territory, through collaboration and performance.

Essay on Unsheltered Bodies is an artistic documentary project that addresses ideas of one's placement and displacement in an expanding world, analyzing the problem of boundaries and frontiers.

The notion of *homelessness* was indeed the key departure point for such an experimentation that is poetically and conceptually charged. Based on some footage from Los Angeles (California), this piece embraces ethnographic-anthropological strategies as well as it tackles political issues around the notion of 'unshelteredness'. I appropriate such concept in a broader perspective: one that is close to the struggle in finding a place in the world, and related to the dialectics between home and exile (be the latter physical, bodily, emotional, or psychological). Does the state of estrangement exist as a sort of consequence, essential substance, or as a residue?

Overall, my attempt with this creative and reflexive piece is to bring personal and collective elements of displacement, pain, loss, and anxiety that might derive from a current human condition in increasing unfair societies.

“To talk about José Carlos Teixeira’s work is the same as talking about something that is alive, fascinates us, and make us move. Organical matter, life in transformation.

In “*Essay on unsheltered bodies*” what at a first glance might have seemed contemplation, it is not. The discourse and the mechanism employed is common to the documentary language, but also comes from poetry, from the tradition of painting, from installation, performance and music.

The reality is complex. It urges an sharp and active intervention. With no long ways or soft talks.

These electric shadows are not telling stories. They speak about their experiences. They are afterall imprecise shapes or fereless introspections that embrace reality, in movement.

The Essay has an introduction, but has got no end.”

Baeta, João

TECHNICAL TERMS

Title: ESSAY ON UNSHELTERED BODIES

Year: 2007-2008

Duration: 10:45

Conception and production: José Carlos Teixeira

Image / Edition / Sound: José Carlos Teixeira

Soundtrack:

#1: John Rose, *Fence*, #2: *Bleu*, movie soundtrack, #3: *Anonymus*, port. lullaby, 16th century, #4 Lansing-Dreiden

Process making: digitally captured and edited; transferred onto DVD

Original video format: Mini-DV, NTSC, color, 5:4, stereo

City/Country: Los Angeles / USA

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to Analia Saban, Melissa Manfull, Alejandro, Ana Rosa & Allan, and all the participants in the video.