

NoMad

1998, Colour, sound video, 11 min 53 s
(sound covering 4 visual loops)

NoMad, by Danish artist Eva Koch, is gripping in its simplicity and poetic force. The work shows a landscape dominated by a choppy sea. Water floods through the entire image. The stationary camera follows the movement of silhouettes walking along a dike surrounded by ocean. It first leads our eye from right to left, keeping pace with a man who is moving faster than the others. Then, suddenly, before he reaches shore, the camera turns back to the right to follow another man, carrying some plastic bags — a discreet narrative touch in this to and fro of anonymous walkers. Moving continuously, without letting the unpredictable and undoubtedly dangerous violence of the waves slow down their steps, they make their way steadily along. < < <

NoMad is both fascinating and somewhat mystifying, perhaps because at times the waves are so high, the breakwater disappears beneath the expanse of sea that seems to wash over the whole screen. These moments give us the unique impression of people walking on water. In the Bible, walking on water constituted a miracle. For centuries, this image has fed the Christian imagination. The notion of the lightness of a being that escapes gravity and moves about freely without the pull of the elements is a source of fascination. < < <

What is it that prompts people to travel this way through a rough sea? Who are they? Where are they coming from? Where are they going? Like a pendulum, the camera tracks the continuous movement of these silhouettes without ever following them all the way to shore. The work keeps us in this space between two places, in an interstice between the “coming from” and the “going to” — two places we will never see, points of departure and of arrival somewhere beyond our field of view. < < <

The mystery lies in this unexplained site: a busy thoroughfare, traced out in the middle of the sea, where people move along with the determination of those who know where they are going. As Koch enjoys pointing out with her title *NoMad*, these people are not crazy. They pass back and forth along this wave-swept dike the same way others, elsewhere, move along city sidewalks. They go about their business. Judging by the way they are dressed, we would place them somewhere along the coast of the Indian Ocean and, given the weather, we understand that it is monsoon season < < <

In several of her works, Koch examines these moments in life that connect us with the anonymity of people absorbed in their comings and goings between work and home, between private and public, in a transitional time in human activity. In *NoMad*, Koch captures this idea in an unexpected place, in a corner of the world where water overruns everyday life. < < <

NoMad captures the energy of nature and demonstrates the power of human determination. Paradoxically, the constant to and fro of the silhouettes that is generated by the alternating movement of the camera produces a near-hypnotic effect on anyone who becomes lost in its gaze. The sound track consisting entirely of white noise adds to this sensation. *NoMad* holds us in a suspended space, an indefinite time, with neither beginning nor end. <

LOUISE ISMERT

On a thin line, a narrow mole extended between sky and sea, human figures walk and walk. Their passage is not without risk. Powerful waves are constantly crashing on the mole, sweeping over the walkers. They walk and walk, and while the energy with which they are moving seems to tell of a goal at the end, we never see it. What is behind is lost; we can only guess at what lies ahead. The mole, which is at times visible, at times covered in water, is a transition, a passage connecting two places. It is also an interval. A gap between here and there. < < <

The sound is a vital part of *NoMad*. It is artificial noise, with elements that mime real sounds. It shifts between being synchronous and asynchronous. For an instant sound and image match, but then the white noise increases and the synchronicity is gone. There is sound like that of an enormous wave, but is it not the sound of the sea: it is an enormous wave of white noise. We hear a muttering chorus of voices, but they are not human voices and they are moving in the opposite direction to the figures whose voices they might be. The deep bass sound gives body to the immaterial video pictures. < < <

Sound and image are two abstract elements that our perception automatically tries to link in order to form a meaningful, but actually fictive, reality.

MAI MISFELDT

The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal is a provincially owned corporation funded by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec and receives financial support from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Born in Denmark, in 1953.
Lives and works in Copenhagen.

Main solo exhibitions

- 2003 Galleria Magda Bellotti, with Fernando Baena, Madrid, Spain.
Museo de Teruel, Teruel, Spain.
CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, Spain.*
Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway.
- 2002 *Odd Weeks*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden.
X-Room, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark.*
- 2001 *GUK*, Exhibition Place, Denmark, Germany, Iceland.
VILLAR, Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2000 *Oha Kunst*, Wasserturm, Eutin, Germany.
- 1999 Gallerie Stalke, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 1998 Kunstforeningen Gamle Strand, Copenhagen, Denmark.
CRUCE, Madrid, Spain.*
- 1997 *Portrait of a Woman*, billboard series of 9, Oslo, Norway.
- 1995 *Saga II*, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 1994 *Mind the Gap*, sound installation, Pavilion,
Copenhagen, Denmark.*
- 1991 *Wurst Showroom 1991*, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Traneudstilling, Gentofte Kunstbibliotek, Gentofte, Denmark.*
- 1990 *Kongo*, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 1990 *CIEJ*, Fundació Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona, Spain.
- 1988 Baghuset Galleri, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Main group exhibitions

- 2005 *Down by the Waterfront*, Ronmandos Gallery, Rotterdam,
The Netherlands.
Approach, Danish Pavilion, 51st Biennale de Venice, Italy.*
DivA Video Art Fair, New York, USA.
- 2004 *Heimweg/The Way Home*, Galerie Zink&Gegner, Frankfurter
Buchmesse, Frankfurt, Germany.

- VideoZone2 / Video Art Biennial*, Tel Aviv, Israel.
BLICK 04, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden.
Monument, Copenhagen, Denmark.*
- 2003 *MAD03*, Madrid, Spain.
Sound and No-sound, LAB, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Clandestine, 50th Venice Biennale, Italy.*
- 2001 *CoMa*, Sala de Exposiciones de Plaza España, Madrid, Spain.*
- 1999 *Close-Ups*, NIFCA, Nikolaj Contemporary Art Centre,
 Copenhagen Denmark.*
Trace, Liverpool Biennial Exhibition, Liverpool, England.*
Mix Blended Spaces, Museet for Samtidskunst, Roskilde, Denmark.*
En Face, Gallery North, Copenhagen, Denmark.*
- 1998 *Stretch*, Tensta Konsthall, Gallery Index, Stockholm, Sweden.*
Leerräume - Nothing but Space, an hARTware project,
 Dortmund, Germany.*
- 1997 *Transit*, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark.*
The Louisiana Exhibition, Humlebaek, Denmark.*
- 1995 *MTG III*, sound installation, Museet for Samtidskunst,
 Roskilde, Denmark.*
- 1993 *Brandts Klædefabrik and Eventyr Haven*, Odense, Denmark.*
- 1992 *Norrskan*, Biennial for Contemporary Nordic Art, Göteborg
 Kunstmuseum, Göteborg, Sweden.*
European Media Art Festival, Osnabrück, Germany.*
Propuesta 92, Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain.*
- 1990 *Madrid Minimixer*, Casa del Reloj, Madrid, Spain.*
- 1989 *September Exhibition*, Sophienholm, Lyngby, Denmark.*
Sculpture Project 1989, Lodsparken, Hvidovre, Denmark.*

* Exhibition accompanied by a publication.