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## MUSIC VIDEO

July 14 - September 29, 2010

Music is omnipresent in our lives, edging its way into our consciousness before we are even truly aware of its existence. It infiltrates our memory, envelops our reminiscences and colours our emotions. In Dick Clark's words: "Music is the soundtrack of your life."

This new *Music Video* program brings together a group of international visual artists whose interest in music is an important feature of their practice and who have, in a variety of ways, drawn upon the pop aesthetic for the vocabulary and even the inspiration of their creations. Some have produced actual music videos, others have executed works based on popular music. From an art practice steeped in the style and spirit of pop to a work commissioned from an artist by a musician, the links between the visual arts and music are manifold, and frequently very close.

A good number of artists are also musicians. **Rodney Graham** is known for the intellectual concepts behind works in which music plays a leading role, and in the late 1970s he formed the "new-wave-art-rock" band UJ3RK5. He recorded his first CD, *I Am a Noise Man*, in 1998. For his second, *The Bed-Bug, Love Buzz* (whose title is a reference to Kurt Cobain's first single), Graham also created a music video, *A Little Thought*.

From 1988 to 1994 the Swiss artist **Pipilotti Rist** was a member of the group Les Reines Prochaines. At the same period she was also attracting attention on the international art scene for her subversive interpretations of pop culture stereotypes, which explore her favoured themes: women, the human body and gender. In *I'm a Victim of This Song*, Pipilotti Rist appropriates Chris Isaak's song *Wicked Game*, performing it at some points in a muffled shriek and offering the refrain "No, I don't wanna fall in love with you" in a breathy squeak, completely undermining the cloying sentimentalism of Isaak's original.

Dutch artist **Rineke Dijkstra** is best known for her remarkable portraits of adolescents on the cusp between the innocence of childhood and the self-confidence of adulthood. Dijkstra captures the authenticity of what she calls "uninhibited moments," at a point somewhere between the posed and the impromptu where the inner self emerges. *Annemiek*, from 1997, features a young girl standing alone in front of the camera as she lip-synchs to the Backstreet Boys' *I Wanna Be With You*. Obviously nervous to start with, she throws anxious glances at the camera, but carries on bravely and eventually makes it to the end.

Music is central to the practice of **Johanna Billing**, of Sweden. This conceptual artist, who works mainly in video, is the founder of the independent record label Make It Happen, based in Stockholm. Her art often focuses on a social situation where cooperation and participation are integral to the overall experience. *You Don't Love Me Yet* comprises a musical project – twenty different performances of Roky Erickson's song – and a film, which reunites the participants in the studio for a new collective recording. In these works Billing explores the difficulty of expressing emotion uninhibitedly in a group situation.

*dislocK\_* consists of a series of short tableaux created by Montréal artist **Dominique T Skoltz**. Two people, a woman and a man, are drawn together in a series of disarticulated movements. Through the choreography's unexpected contortions, the artist throws into relief the vast emptiness that surrounds the figures, employing her habitual techniques – particular textures, a way of fragmenting the image, a gaze often directed towards the invisible. *dislocK\_* is being presented for the first time with the soundtrack that shaped the editing and the arrhythmic irregularity of the sequences. We are screening the tableaux created to the sound of Patrick Watson's *Wooden Arms* and Félicia Atkinson's *No Wedding*.

Four of the pieces in the program are “real” videos, produced to promote a record. **Doug Aitken** pursues a commercial career in Los Angeles and New York that runs parallel to his art practice. Before becoming a leading figure on the contemporary art scene (his installation *Electric Earth* won him the Golden Lion at the 1999 Venice Biennale), Doug Aitken was an illustrator. He has also directed numerous music videos, working with such performers as Interpol, Ryan Adams and Fatboy Slim. For this edition of *Video Music*, Doug Aitken is showing *Someone Great*, produced for LCD Soundsystem in 2007.

Special commissions tend to reflect the chosen artist’s particular approach more directly. *No One Does It Like You*, directed by **Patrick Daughters** and **Marcel Dzama**, vividly embodies the imaginary world of Dzama’s art, his style and his subjects. And the video made by **Pascal Grandmaison** for Jérôme Minière, *Les yeux tout autour de la tête*, reveals the artist’s unique manner just as clearly as his photographic work. Also unmistakable is the video produced by **Sam Taylor Wood** for Elton John’s *I Want Love*, starring Robert Downey Jr.: from the opening images we recognize Taylor Wood’s penchant for large elegant rooms and characters captured in settings that mirror their emotional state.

**Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay**, a Canadian who lives and works in Montréal and Berlin, is deeply interested in the impact of pop music on identity. In a practice that combines performance, video and singing, he has used the pop song to explore the emotion of lyrics. In 2002 he performed *Live to Tell*, a 1986 ballad by Madonna, in front of a number of surveillance cameras. A more recent piece, *The Same Problem*, directed with **Aleesa Cohene**, focuses on the affect conveyed by the vocalizations of a man standing alone before a vast ocean, until the final enigmatic signal that leaves him silent.

## LOUISE SIMARD

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Dominique T Skoltz and Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay for their kind generosity, and Félícia Atkinson and Patrick Watson for giving Dominique T Skoltz permission to use their music. Our gratitude goes also to Ann Adachi (Electronic Arts Intermix), Lana Kim (Directors Bureau), Kim Lane of 303 Gallery, New York, Anja Schneider of the Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, Louise Stern of STW Studio, London, and Chris Totushek of the Doug Aitken Workshop, Venice, California. For the work of Johanna Billing we would like to acknowledge the cinematography of Manne Lindwall and the musical arrangements of Ida Lunden, which were recorded and mixed by Pontus Olsson at the Atlantis Studio, Stockholm, in 2003, and produced by Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in collaboration with Nifca, Helsinki. Regarding licences, we are grateful for the help of Paula Carvalho, of Sodrac, and Janet Turner, of the AVLA Audio-Video Licencing Agency inc., Toronto. Finally, we would like to thank all the other individuals who have contributed in one way or another to the production of this program.

## PROGRAM

**Pipilotti Rist**, *I'm a Victim of This Song*, 1995, 5 min 6 s  
Courtesy of Pipilotti Rist and EAI Electronic Arts Intermix  
Original song: *Wicked Game*, Chris Isaak, 1989

**Rineke Dijkstra**, *Annemiek*, 1997, 4 min  
Courtesy of Rineke Dijkstra and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris  
Original song: *I Wanna Be with You*, Backstreet Boys, 1996, Jive records

**Rodney Graham**, *A Little Thought*, 2000, 3 min 54 s  
Courtesy of Rodney Graham and 303 Gallery, New York.

**Sam Taylor Wood**, *Elton John: I Want Love, with Robert Downey Jr.*, 2001, 4 min 38 s  
Courtesy of Sam Taylor Wood and White Cube  
Words and Music by Elton John, Bernie Taupin ©Universal-Songs of Polygram Int., Inc.  
on behalf of HST MGT.Ltd/Universal-Polygram Int.,Publi.,Inc. on behalf of Rouge Booze Inc.  
\*Licensed by AVLA

**Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay**, *Live to Tell*, 2002, 6 min  
Courtesy of Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay  
Original song: Madonna, *True Blue* album, 1986

**Pascal Grandmaison**, *Les yeux tout autour de la tête*, Jérôme Minière, 2002, 4 min 38 s  
Courtesy of Pascal Grandmaison  
Les éditions La Tribu and Suzie Larivée

**Johanna Billing**, *You Don't Love Me Yet*, 2003, 7 min 43 s  
Courtesy of Johanna Billing  
Original song: Roky Erickson, published by R. Erickson, 1984

**Doug Aitken**, *Someone Great*, LCD Soundsystem, 2007, 3 min 50 s  
Courtesy of Doug Aitken  
Doug Aitken Workshop/EMI Records Ltd \*Licensed by AVLA

**Dominique T Skoltz**, *disloc\_1*, 2009, 3 min 5 s  
Courtesy of Dominique T Skoltz and Patrick Watson  
Song: *Wooden Arms*, Patrick Watson, Secret City records, 2009

**Dominique T Skoltz**, *disloc\_3*, 2009, 1 min 41 s  
Courtesy of Dominique T Skoltz and Félicia Atkinson  
Song: *No Wedding*, Félicia Atkinson, Spekk records, 2009

**Patrick Daughters** and **Marcel Dzama**, *No One Does It Like You*,  
Department of Eagles, 2009, 3 min 57 s  
Courtesy of Marcel Dzama  
The Directors Bureau / EMI Records Ltd \*Licensed by AVLA

**Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay** and **Aleesa Cohene**, *The Same Problem*, 2009, 4 min 5 s  
Courtesy of Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay and Aleesa Cohene

**The approximately 1-hour program is presented as an endless loop.**

\*Videos with an AVLA licence are the property of the record companies, all rights reserved.

### PHOTO

Dominique T Skoltz, *disloc\_2009*  
Courtesy of the artist