

Running Up That Hill

Friday, November 6, 2009 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
presented in association with the Headlands Center for the Arts
curated and presented by Michael Robinson

Exploring states of psychological purgatory, journeys of spiritual flux and the possibilities of transcendence found in the act of getting lost, these episodes in the struggles and joys of the transient being are in turns haunting, hilarious, damning and hopeful. *Running Up That Hill* features Shana Moulton's desert vision quest, *Sand Saga*; Ben Rivers' foggy portrait of pilgrimage, *The Coming Race*; Jesse McLean's reality television meltdown *Somewhere Only We Know*; Tsuji Naoyuki's entrancing charcoal nightmare, *Children of Shadows*; Phil Solomon's intervention into the *Grand Theft Auto* netherworld, *Rehearsals for Retirement*; an excerpt of Ryan Trecartin's miasma of cloning, adoption and online identity, *I-Be Area*; and curator Michael Robinson's most recent work, *If There Be Thorns*. (Michael Robinson)

The Coming Race (2006) by Ben Rivers; 16mm, b&w, sound, 5 minutes, print from LUX

"A hand processed film in which thousands of people climb a rocky mountain terrain. The destination and purpose of their ascension remains unclear. A vague, mysterious and unsettling pilgrimage fraught with unknown intentions. The title *The Coming Race* is after a Victorian novel by E.G.E. Bulwer-Lytton, about a race of people who live under a mountain." (Ben Rivers)

Sand Saga (2008) by Shana Moulton; digital video, color, sound, 11 minutes, tape from the maker

"Moulton's alter ego Cynthia again gains access to a parallel universe via the transformative powers of New Age body treatments and domestic objects. After applying a facial beauty mask, she moves through an environment energized with Southwestern motifs and rituals, from sculpted heads and Georgia O'Keefe-like forms to sand painting and hot stone massage. Ultimately Cynthia is transported to a fantastical world and emerges transformed." (Electronic Arts Intermix)

Rehearsals for Retirement (2007) by Phil Solomon; digital video, color, sound, 12 minutes, tape from the maker

"*Rehearsals For Retirement* is the second segment of *In Memoriam Mark LaPore*, a trio of works entirely composed of images culled from the video game *Grand Theft Auto*." (Images Festival)

"This video is so infused with magic and loss that it doesn't even seem to be created by a human—it doesn't feel like any film, video, videogame or anything else you've ever seen. It's a soul's suffering and yearning captured in pixels. It's the end of everything you love... but beauty will remain. Whether you like it or not. Whether you can bear it or not." (Chris Stults, Wexner Center)

I-Be Area (2007) by Ryan Trecartin; digital video, color, sound, 7 minute excerpt, tape from Electronic Arts Intermix

“Fast-paced and dense with drama, *I-Be Area* relates the intertwined stories of an exuberant ensemble, played by Trecartin and dozens of others, as they cope with themes such as cloning, adoption, self-mediation, lifestyle options, and virtual identities.” (The New Museum)

If There Be Thorns (2009) by Michael Robinson; digital video, color, sound, 13 minutes, tape from the maker

“A dark wave of exile, incest, and magic burns across the tropics, forging a knotted trail into the black hole. Three star-crossed siblings wander in search of one another as a storm of purple prose and easy listening slowly engulfs them.” (Michael Robinson)

Somewhere Only We Know (2008) by Jesse McLean; digital video, color, sound, 6 minutes, tape from the maker

“Standing on the brink of elimination, the suspense threatening to fracture their composure, contestants wait and see if they will be going home. The audience at home is also waiting, gripped by a televised version of reality. As the tension builds, different forms of reality begin to bleed into another and disaster strikes. It might be just the thing to shake us back to reality, a place only we know.” (Jesse McLean)

Children of Shadows (2006) by Tsuji Naoyuki; 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes, print from the maker

“A boy and his sister are nearly eaten by their father and they rush out of the house. They run away with their father’s black car and wind up in the wilderness, where they meet a giant and a witch. This animation film in black and white charcoal drawings combines a Japanese Manga feel with a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm.” (Aurora Film Festival, 2007)