

conversations  
at the edge  
experimental media series

## louis henderson: melts into air

2013–14, France, HD Video, ca 60 min + discussion  
Presented in collaboration with the Video Data Bank.

Louis Henderson (1983, Norwich) is an English filmmaker whose research focuses on new materialities of the Internet and the neocolonisation of cyberspace through planetary scale computing. He is a graduate of London College of Communication and Le Fresnoy–studio national des arts contemporains and is currently finishing a post-diplôme at the European School of Visual Arts. His work has been exhibited across Europe and the Americas, including at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Rotterdam International Film Festival, CPH:DOX, Transmediale, Muestra Internacional Documental de Bogota, The Centre Pompidou, FRAC Midi-Pyrénées, Louisiana museum of Modern Art, Tate Modern, and Whitechapel Gallery.

program

### ***Lettres du Voyant***

(Louis Henderson, 2013, color, HD video, 40 min.)

“To take back the gold that was stolen from us – this is the object of our actions.”

*Lettres du Voyant* is a documentary-fiction about spiritism and technology in contemporary Ghana, which attempts to uncover some truths about a mysterious practice called “Sakawa” - internet scams mixed with voodoo magic. Tracing back the scammers’ stories to the times of Ghanaian independence, the film proposes Sakawa as a form of anti-neocolonial resistance.

The film takes the form of a voyage through a network of digitised mine shafts that lead the viewer to each of the film’s locations ; a gold mine, an e-waste dump, a voodoo ritual or a discotheque for example. A character recounts a story through reading a series of letters that he has written to the film’s author - letters that speak about the colonial history of Ghana, of gold, of technology.

### ***All That Is Solid***

(Louis Henderson, 2014, B&W and color, HD video, 16 min.)

“All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.”

– Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848

A technographic study of e-recycling and neo-colonial mining filmed in the Agbogbloshie electronic waste ground in Accra and illegal gold mines of Ghana. The video constructs a *mise-en-abyme* as critique in order to dispel the capitalist myth of the immateriality of new technology – thus revealing the mineral weight with which the Cloud is grounded to its earthly origins.

“As technological progress pushes forward in the West, enormous piles of obsolete computers are thrown away and recycled. Pushed out of sight and sent to the coast of West Africa, these computers are thrown into waste grounds such as Agbogbloshie in Accra, Ghana. On arrival the e-waste is recuperated by young men, who break and burn the plastic casings in order to extract the precious metals contained within. Eventually the metals are sold, melted and reformed into new objects to be sold; it is a strange system of recycling, a kind of reverse neocolonial mining, whereby the African is searching for mineral resources in the materials of Europe. Through showing these heavy processes, the video highlights the importance of dispelling the capitalist myth of the immateriality of new technology to reveal the mineral weight with which the Cloud is grounded to its earthly origins.”--Louis Henderson

upcoming

October 15 at 6p.m.

The Animated Films of Suzan Pitt