

february 19
6 p.m.

spring 2015

conversations
at the edge
experimental media series

robin deacon

white balance: a history of video

2013-15, USA, live performance with analog and digital video, ca 60 minutes + discussion

[Robin Deacon in person!](#)

Robin Deacon (1973, Eastbourne, UK) is an artist, writer, filmmaker, and educator currently based in Chicago. His interdisciplinary practice spans a variety of themes, including explorations of performer presence and absence, the role of the artist as biographer, and journalistic approaches to art's practice. Since the early 1990s, his work has been presented at conferences and festivals internationally in Europe, US, and Asia, most recently at the Tate Britain, London (2014) and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2013). He is an Associate Professor in Performance at SAIC. His feature length documentary film *Spectacle: A Portrait of Stuart Sherman* will be screened at the MCA, Chicago in October 2015.

program

white balance: a history of video

The title *White Balance* refers to the process by which a camera is adjusted to account for differences in light, changing the relative strengths of colors to reach a truer sense of what is being seen. Echoing my recent extensive research of performance and video archives of New York artists such as Stuart Sherman, this performance uses a series of outmoded vintage video cameras to explore how our ways of seeing and ways of remembering may be informed by the medium used to capture the event – the artists document, the family gathering or the news broadcast. This work is part of a continuing series of works that create fictional narratives and explore their potential relationship with real life and autobiographical experience. An early, work in progress iteration of this piece was presented at the New Performance Festival in Turku, Finland during the summer of 2013, and was further to be developed with the assistance of a Franklin Furnace Inc. Artists Award, leading up to a showing of the piece in a nine hour version presented over three days at the Emily Harvey Foundation Gallery in New York in October 2013. Although emerging from similar themes and concerns to that of my Stuart Sherman research and related performance pieces, *White Balance* represents a point of departure from these projects that has allowed for a broader and more expansive view of the archive relative to my previous focus on a singular artist. Also, points of reference have expanded out from the video docu-

ment as merely a concern of the performance artist to record their work. The history and use of the video camera in the setting of the gallery or the studio has now widened to encompass an exploration of its employment in domestic settings to give a broadened visual palette to work from in terms of imagery and content. In my explorations of numerous video formats, the focus of these explorations is what the tone of the given image might suggest. For example, the association of a particular kind of warmth, sharpness or softness associated with a particular video format popular at a specific point in time. The performance speculated on the possibility of using video to 'tell the time' so to speak. The thesis is that our memories look like the things they were recorded with. That the sense of another time or place is not dictated by the content of footage - temporal pointers such as a location that has not been visited in recent memory, or a clear visual evidence of ones own ageing. Beyond the understanding of a particular space and a particular time is a third dimension: a particular format. The vessel that carries the signal now seems the primary point of reference.

- Robin Deacon

upcoming

February 26th at 6p.m.

Rebecca Baron: *Detour de Force*



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and Animation

