



Mark Boulos

Antigone

September 13 - October 21, 2014

LA < ART on La Cienega Blvd



Antigone is a three-screen video art installation inspired by Sophocles' theatrical interpretation of the mythical character. Within the piece, three actors take turns telling a distinct story to compose three acts. In each an actor speaks candidly, spontaneously and truthfully into the camera reciting an incident from her life. At the same time, in unison, the other two actors reenact her words. In this triangular configuration of floating video screens, personal narrative and dramatic performance occur simultaneously, making the documentary account indistinguishable from enacted performances.

Initially, the documentary focused on each subject's training in the acting techniques of Constantin Stanislavski and Lee Strasberg, known as the Method. In these interviews each individual recalled past experiences of rebellion, love and loss that may inform their craft depending on the character they might play. The intimate portraits and subsequent reenactments have been edited, synchronized, merged into a single refrain and finally installed as sculptural elements. This uniform voice addresses us as both protagonists in a movie or on a television show and as a chorus. Coalescing the singular actors within a collective dirge, *Antigone* erases the dividing line between affect and recollection. These new Antigones invite us to differentiate the real story driving the Method from the performance reenacting a traumatic event. *Antigone* layers one story across a field of multiple narratives, effectively canceling out the possibility of any one authentic version.

Though Boulos' version of *Antigone* responds to classical theater, it revisits themes found in ancient myth to explore if tragedy still has a place in twenty-first century art and cinema. Now more than a century old, what relationship does moving image have to reality? What relationship does drama have to lived experience? These fundamental questions are approached by recreating the synchronicity of the Greek chorus using an editing strategy that included on-camera earpieces and projection technology developed after the fact. The simultaneity and multiplicity of the portraits in the end position existential turmoil as a rhythmic as well as sculptural presence. Because the three-channel projection folds

direct accounts within the actors' reenactments of sense memory and emotion, *Antigone* has the force of a confession or psychoanalytic advance while being a truth-telling documentary incorporating drama. The sculptural pretense of the installation is not merely an aesthetic device, therefore. The display strategy allows three different individuals telling three different stories to make the Method manifest as mimesis, echo, repetition and recollection all at once. As affect bolsters the truth only to find it disappear, a disjointed yet synced relay replicates the artificial speed of personal experience portrayed on the screens filling everyday life in the current era.

Mark Bolous *Antigone* is made possible by generous grants from the Mondriaan Fund and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Additional support has been provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. *Antigone* is a joint commission of LA><ART and the Geneva Biennale of Moving Images Biennale at the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, curated by Director Andrea Bellini together with Hans Ulrich Obrist and Yann Chateigné.

About The Occasional

Antigone was initiated in 2013 by LA><ART Curator Matthew Schum to inaugurate the Occasional, city wide platform built out of international residencies, collaboration between artists and curators and experimental new works sited throughout Los Angeles. The Occasional will be free of the two-year time constraints of a biennial thus allowing artists and curators the time needed to realize a project according to the artist's vision. Our curatorial team includes Sylvia Chivaratanond of the Centre Pompidou, Linda Norden, a NYC based independent curator, Matthew Schum, LA><ART curator and publications editor, and Lauri Firstenberg, founder and director of LA><ART. Commencing with travel and research in 2013, LA><ART staged think tank sessions amongst the curatorial team which began at the Getty after the success of the Pacific Standard Time Performance and Public Art Festival. This series of new commissions takes a city in flux as its starting point, examining L.A.'s capacity for experimentation outside traditional institutional settings.

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The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts





Gallery Two

Mark Boulos, *The Gates of Damascus*, 2005

Holy Week in Syria is the setting for *The Gates of Damascus* (2005). It begins with the subject, Myrna, on her balcony describing her nighttime visitations with the Virgin Mary. These apparitions turn to the pain of stigmata as Easter nears. A contemporary housewife bearing the wounds of Jesus shows us an individual in the midst of a seraphic event but also a spellbound community stopping time, intervening in daily life, superimposing the miraculous upon the usual order of things. Boulos traveled to his father's homeland to make this film and though it is removed in both time and distance from *Antigone*, it is united by recurring features of Boulos' artistic output to date, which, in his words, are performance and ritual, possession and ecstasy, mythology and ideology. Both *Antigone* and *The Gates of Damascus* capture performances wherein psychoanalysis and feminism might bleed together.

About the Artist

Mark Boulos (b. 1975, Boston, USA) currently lives and works in Geneva, Switzerland and Amsterdam, Netherlands, where he held a Fulbright Scholarship at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam. Boulos received his BA in Philosophy from Swarthmore College and his MA from the National Film and Television School, England. Solo exhibitions include: FACT, Liverpool, (2013), MoMA, New York (2012), Miami Art Museum (2011), Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, (2010), and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2008). Group shows include: Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2013), the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2012), Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt (2011), New Frontier at Sundance Film Festival (2011), Witte de With, Rotterdam (2010), the 6th Berlin Biennale (2010), the 2nd Biennale of Thessaloniki (2009), the 16th Biennale of Sydney (2008). He has received awards from the Wellcome Trust, Netherlands Film Fonds, the Fonds BKVB, Film London, the British Documentary Film Foundation, and the Arts Council England.

About LA><ART

Since 2005 LA><ART had been Los Angeles' leading independent contemporary art space supporting experimental exhibitions, public art initiatives and publications for emerging, mid-career and established local, national, and international artists.