

the gallery

sketch

presents

Brice Dellsperger
video works

20 March—8 May

Tuesday—Saturday 10am—5pm

9 Conduit Street London W1

reservations +44 (0)870 770 6515

www.sketch.uk.com

Free admission

Brice Dellsperger
Video works

"I want my films to be like a dream-like memory of a movie.
They are meant to show how your dreams are influenced by movies."
Brice Dellsperger

"In 1995 the French artist Brice Dellsperger wanted to film an unknown woman being strangled while exiting an elevator. Since no one in his circle of friends and associates really wanted to do the scene, and out of fear of the attack going badly with a 'real victim', Dellsperger decided to play the role himself. After a day of shopping the artist appeared before the camera in drag, decked out as a woman from head to toe. The scene was borrowed from Brian De Palma's 1984 film 'Dressed to Kill'. This piece marks the start of a series of remakes, each given the title 'Body Double', followed by a number."

(Alexis Vaillant, in 'And if I had to do it all over again? The videographic bent of Brice Dellsperger', 9th Biennial of Moving Images, Centre pour l'image contemporaine Saint-Gervais, Geneva, 2001)

Since 1995, Brice Dellsperger has undertaken a postmodern re-reading of cinema by adapting over fifteen celebrated movie sequences, all under the generic title 'Body Double', referencing Brian De Palma's 1984 film of the same name. The term 'body double' also alludes to film production – it is the name given to an actor's stand-in, the crew member used for shooting special effects and other types of scenes. Dellsperger notes that the stand-in is generally a regular individual who takes the place of a celebrity, and the artist pushes this concept even further by considering himself a

'body double' for a director. Carefully selecting very specific, key sequences from canonical cinema history, Dellsperger directs the recreation of scenes from films including John Badham's 'Saturday Night Fever', Alfred Hitchcock's 'Psycho', Stanley Kubrick's 'A Clockwork Orange', Ken Russell's 'Women in Love', David Lynch's 'Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me' and 'Mulholland Drive', Gus Van Sant's 'My Own Private Idaho', Richard Marquand's 'Return of the Jedi', and Brian de Palma's 'Dressed to Kill', 'Body Double', 'Blow Out', and 'Obsession'. Meticulously reconstructing the mis-en-scene of each original, Dellsperger recreates the scenes with his friends, often transvestites, playing virtually all of the characters. They lip-synch to the original soundtrack, and for the viewer, confusion ensues, as it becomes difficult to tell one character apart from another. "Although the time frame, framing, shots and sequences that Dellsperger uses maintain their evidential particularities, his videos tamper with costumes, identities and models, defining the remake as a travesty of the original" (Alexis Vaillant, *ibid*). Pasting together disparate footage of the same person creates additional slippages, and with sketch's unique twelve-screen projection set-up, there is a compounding of this confusion through a repetition of characters, reinforcing the cloning effect already present in the works themselves.

Dellsperger's use of transvestites may seem to locate the artist within a contemporary discourse on gender, yet the device is less about sexuality than it is about cinema, image, and the construction of a mis-en-scene. Like Warhol, Dellsperger addresses cinematic glamour, confronting the mainstream filmmaking process and its inherent cult of personality. The low-budget appearance of the finished works conceals a surprisingly elaborate and professional production method.

Ultimately, Dellsperger's works are funny and entertaining, and demonstrate the artist's deep love of popular culture and celebrity.

