



ARTIST'S ARTISTS

The Way You Look

Tim Simonds and Ashish Avikunthak

August 10 - October 7, 2018



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Artist's Artists: The Way You Look, Tim Simonds and Ashish Avikunthak

To see *The Way You Look* you must first look. Any writing about an exhibition with works from artists like Ashish Avikunthak and Tim Simonds first must beg the viewers to view. So I implore you to experience the art works before reading any further; to accept that the experience of the works, love them or hate them, is more meaningful than anything a guest curator prints onto this flimsy piece of paper. Trust yourself to enjoy what you find without any help from me.

The story of this small exhibition is, like many stories of art, one of chance encounters, glancing impressions, and lasting affects. The Way You Look is an experiment, and the first show in a series at BCA called the Artist's Artists. The series hinges on the belief that Vermont's artists have unique empathies and connections to artists and artworks from around the world. The greater Burlington community can experience, learn from, and enjoy these connections when artists are given space to share them. Artist's Artists: The Way You Look brings together two artists whose work forever changed my own, influencing me for years after just brief encounters.

Six years ago Ashish Avikunthak stood off to the side of a projection screen, his lips hidden behind a large mustache, the color from his films painting the audience as the room was slowly submerged in sound. A set of four short films, Et Cetera (1997), was the first to be shown that day. I remember being drawn into its depictions of rituals, surprised that something so simple could hold my fickle attention. Following a rickshaw through a city I felt myself humbled by experiences I've never had. As the sound fell out of sync with the video, I grew confused and searched for clues to understand what I was being told. But there were no answers to be found; instead it was like a visit to a sacred place, where mundane actions circle around complicated questions of existence, time, and experience. Fighting my desire to find the hidden meaning, I eventually allowed myself to follow Ashish and his camera. I struggled to keep up with a man walking through the desert, my breath keeping time with his. As the camera grazed the roughly shaved head of a grieving man the tension between inanimate and human, simple and complex, was somehow held in front of me. These difficult, grainy films weren't filled with symbols or sophisticated technical wizardry, but something quietly impressive - a chance to wonder at the experience of being.

In 2015 a fold of carpet caught my foot and I tripped on a work by Tim Simonds in a small Brooklyn gallery. Soft and restrained, tight and relaxed, this perfectly fitted carpet seemed to push back against the walls like a skin stretching the body it was on. The sculpture *if* pushed the walls even further outwards. It's cold, stainless steel grab bars were forced into service, holding the building up whether it needed help or not, while waiting to be held themselves. Cloaked and prodded, the gallery seemed at once too big and too small, and I felt out of context as I awkwardly sat on the carpeted floor. It was only when I began to wonder about my own reactions that I was able to see Tim's work, so sure of itself, more clearly. In *Solips*, the structure of celery was revealed as its color was bleached away. Maybe it too was forced to reflect on itself, finding only its own support structure. My time with Tim's work felt like getting to know someone; a private yet proud personality, hollow in sound but resonant with meaning that only time could reveal. It stayed with me.

A few months ago I told Tim all of what I've told you, about Ashish's films and my time in the Brooklyn gallery. He told me about visits to temples and ruins - spaces where the senses were free from their insistence on language and logic; open to feeling without description. We talked about the way your feet can feel something hollow, and how you might hear a sound with your teeth. We talked about the assumptions, ideologies, and morals we bring with us when we look at the world.

Ashish, Tim, and I agreed that you might like the opportunity to join the conversation these artworks have started. We know *The Way You Look* can't seduce you with dazzling visuals or bright colors, but instead offer a chance for your attention to linger. Here, in the lower level gallery, you'll be on your own, offered a place where a mystery can become its own answer and an experience can become its own meaning. This chance encounter, brief as it may be, encircles the questions we most desperately need to answer – questions about being human in this world, about how we look out into it, and how we look when it gazes back at us.

Pete Moran, Guest Curator

BIOS

Ashish Avikunthak (b. 1972, Jabalpur, India) is a filmmaker and creator of cinematic art whose works have been internationally screened and exhibited at institutions such as the Tate Modern in London and Centre George Pompidou in Paris. He has had career retrospectives at the Center for Moving Image Arts at Bard College, Apeejay Arts Gallery in New Delhi, and the National Centre for Performing Arts in Mumbai, among others. Avikunthak was named one of *ArtReview* 'Future Greats 2014', and holds a PhD in Cultural and Social Anthropology from Stanford University. Previously, he has taught at Yale University, and is now an Associate Professor of Film and Media at the University of Rhode Island's Harrington School of Communication.

Tim Simonds (b. 1989, New York) is a conceptual artist, currently based in Brooklyn, New York. He teaches in the Humanities & Media Studies program and in the School of Architecture at Pratt Institute as a Visiting Assistant Professor. With a B.A. in both Architectural Studies and Performance Studies, he graduated from Brown University, and went on to work as an artist assistant to Camille Henrot in her New York studio. Simonds' work has been exhibited internationally, including both group and solo shows at Cathouse FUNeral in Beacon, NY, in Exo Emo at Greene Naftali in New York City, and in a solo show at Rond Point Projects in Marseille. Recently Simonds published a book of written errors, notes, and corrections with New York publisher Printed Matter, titled VVVVV.

Pete Moran (b. 1984, Syracuse) is a sculptor who currently lives and works in Vermont. Moran received his Master of Fine Arts, Sculpture, Yale University, in 2012 and a Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, Cornell University in 2006. Moran offers art works to reasonable viewers, sometimes in disguise, but almost always as a call to think about thinking and to bring the senses along for the ride. He began practicing art as an engineer wandering the abandoned, overgrown military bases of the American countryside; emptied of their weapons but still guarding the logic used to construct a war of fear. Through mis-registration and friction within their context, they shelter the possibility of new meanings and reveal unrealized knowledge. Surviving work has been shown in New York City, Beacon, Copenhagen, and Los Angeles.

Artist's Artists: The Way You Look featuring the work of Tim Simonds and Ashish Avikunthak is guest curated by Pete Moran.

The Artist's Artists series offers insights into contemporary art by inviting Vermont artists to guest curate intriguing and challenging work that has influenced their creative practice.

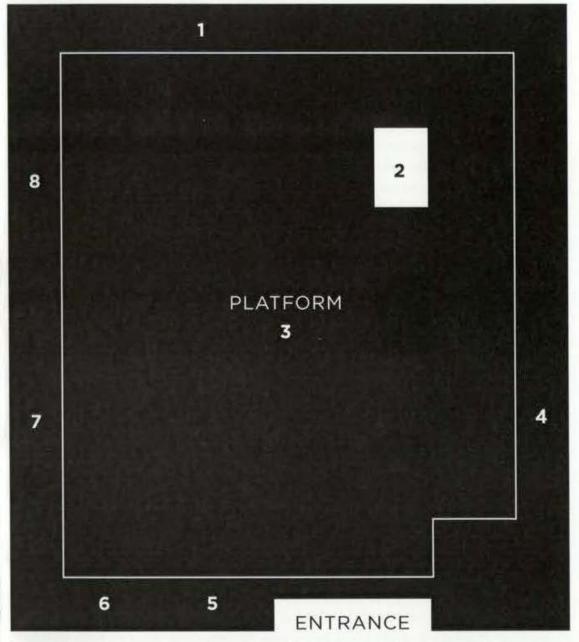








LOWER LEVEL GALLERY



- 1. Tim Simonds if (no.7), 2018 40" x 4" x 4"
- **4.** Tim Simonds if (no.2), 2018 78" x 4" x 4"
- 7. Tim Simonds if (no.8), 2018 44" x 4" x 4"

- 2. Tim Simonds Solips, 2016/2017/2018 20" x 12" x 12"
- **5.** Tim Simonds *if (no.6)*, 2018 58" x 4" x 4"
- 8. Ashish Avikunthak
 Et Cetera, 1995-97
 16mm film
 transferred to video
 33 Minutes
 Courtesy of the Artist

- 3. Tim Simonds For, 2018 (dimensions variable)
- **6.** Tim Simonds *if (no.4)*, 2018 56" x 4" x 4"

Prices available upon request

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