

SCREEN TEST

Screen Test 508 is a ten-minute black and white video for continuous projection, a collaboration between photographer and video maker Christopher Köller and sculptor Elizabeth Presa. It directly references two films, Jean Luc Godard's science fiction film Alphaville (1965) and Michelangelo Antonioni's little known Il Provino (The Screen Test)–the preface for a three part Dino de Laurentiis film by three different directors, titled I Tre Volti, also released in 1965. Screen Test 508 also pays tribute to Andy Warhol's various works around the idea of screen tests.

Usually screen tests are used to audition actors, trial lighting, costumes and effects, and also to explore actors' approaches to character, but this is a fictional screen test. It uses dialogue from four scenes of Alphaville, spoken by main female character Natasha Vonbraun, a brainwashed 'seductress' who is moving to a state of awareness. Other elements are drawn from Antonioni's Il Provino, which features the former wife of the Shah of Iran, the Princess Soraya. Antonioni's short film is more of a documentary showing Soraya the person, without attempts to elicit her limited acting talents, as seen in the second of the two chapters. This segment of I Tre Volti is characterized by an instability that comes from the constant shifting of languages as well as the confusion between what is real and what is 'acted'. Screen Test 508 draws on this approach, showing Elizabeth Presa practising and improvising with the French dialogue of Alphaville, often prompted by a male stand-in. Compounding the complexity of the role-playing, the stand-in is referred to as 'Mr Johnson', the false name of the main character Lemmy Caution, who is hiding his identity.

This project is a realization of Christopher Köller's lengthy fascination with Alphaville and ongoing practice of appropriation from the work of Antonioni and Godard. For Elizabeth Presa, whose practice is primarily concerned with the materialization of texts, the performance of dialogue and gestures becomes another form of material making. Presa and Köller have collaborated before; on the video and photographic work Aberrant (2003) and the portrait series Trust (2008).

"It was precisely by photographing and enlarging the surface of things around me that I sought to discover what was behind those things." – Antonioni

"...on the one hand, participation in art requires immediacy, which lies either in the belief triggered by what is represented in the artwork, by its content, or else in a belief in the artistic representation itself, in the work of art ... On the other hand, however, participation in art requires meditation, since a distinction needs to be made between art and non-art ... between art and nature."

– Alexander Garcia Düttmann

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CHRISTØPHER KÖLLER & ELIZABETH PRESA

OPENING

10 MAY 6- 8pm

CONTINUES

11-26 MAY

WED - SAT 12-6pm

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