CULTURE

DIRECTOR
Donigan Cumming

DURATION
17:04

YEAR
2002

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE
English

CATEGORY
Video Art



DESCRIPTION
In his newest film *Culture*, Donigan Cumming searches the apartment of one of his regular characters, Nelson, who is in the hospital. Filming with one hand and rummaging through drawers with the other, Cumming finds much evidence of the passage of time. Dust, dirt, and rotten food infested with insects testify to Nelson's absence from home, while pictures and memorabilia hint at episodes from his life. From behind the camera we hear Cumming's spontaneous reactions to what he finds. They range from disgust at the mess to emotion at the signs of his friend's aging and illness, and frustration at not being able to find Nelson's chequebook, which is what he is supposedly searching for.

Cumming also uncovers evidence of his role in the other man's life: many of the photos he finds are his own, and show Nelson and other recurring figures over a period of twenty years. From Cumming's off-screen comments (and his other films) we understand that many of the people in the photos are already dead. The pictures act as a kind of flashback to previous times, as well as foreshadowing Nelson's own death. Thus, *Culture* becomes an elegy in advance for the dying Nelson. But it wouldn't be a classic Cumming work if it weren't also a commentary on the activity of capturing other people in still and moving images. The multiple meanings of the film's title - anthropological, aesthetic and scientific-biological - hint at the multifaceted nature of the impulse to document other people's lives.

Marcy Goldberg, Visions du r??el, 2002

IMAGE FORMAT
4:3

SOUND
Stereo

KEYWORDS
Apartment, Unsanitary, Degeneration, Filth, Garbage, Cleaning

THEMES
Art and culture
Socio-politics