
THE BOX

August 1–31, 2010

Flatform

57.600 seconds of invisible night and light, 2009



Image courtesy of Flatform

“In this work, the unity of place and action is precariously guaranteed through temporal discontinuity. Through repetition, we gain something and we gain something because our bodies leave personal traces...whatever the time, even though we differ from midday to midnight.”—Flatform

A non-descript urban setting is populated by a stream of people performing what appears, at first, to be the most mundane tasks and gestures. The careful choreography behind the characters' movements is revealed, however, when the time of day changes between night and day mid-step. By the end of the film the screen is alive with characters moving at different speeds, often in two different parts of the screen at the same time. As in the Italian collective's 2008 film *Sunday, 6th April, 11:42 a.m.* (screened in The Box last year), the camera in *57.600 seconds* is fixed, directing the viewer to consider the entire frame as well as movement within it.

The frame in *Sunday* contains a countryside landscape, shot from a distance. Cars and bicyclists are among the objects seen moving from afar and, aided by the soundtrack, the viewer is invited to decipher a coherent narrative from what is made available. In *57.600 seconds*, there is essentially no gesture towards narrative and, in fact, the notion of narrative is turned on its head as day turns to night and back into day, often before a character's movement can be completed. Most of the characters' movements appear

to serve no purpose whatsoever—characters lean a ladder against a railing and climb over, others pass aimlessly through the frame. Those actions that might have a purpose—setting up production lights and reflectors—only serve to tease the viewer with a photo shoot that never happens.

The question of cinematic time is also called into question through the highly choreographed, balletic exercise that unfolds within the frame. On a grand scale, night and day pass at random intervals, the characters oblivious to the shifting time within their collective habitat. As the number of figures on the screen at any one time increases, so too does the complexity of the exercise. Eventually, even the respective moments of time experienced by each individual character are manipulated within the frame as one character may continue to move freely even as all of the other characters pass through the space in slow-motion.

Even in the absence of narrative, or chronology, it is interesting to consider the effect time of day has on the tone of the work. Those actions that unfold in daylight are infused with an artificial industriousness, as if the people performing the tasks or movements are preparing for something, while those that occur at night read as invasive and emit a level of intrigue not suggested by anything other than the time of day.

David Filipi, Curator, Film/Video

Based in Milan, Flatform was founded in 2006 by artists working in sound and video. The group has a flexible structure with a focus on joining together different methods and approaches to video.

Presented in conjunction with the film series **Cinema italiano**, running through August 21.

Flatform

57.600 seconds of invisible night and light, 2009
(5 mins., 24 secs., video)

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