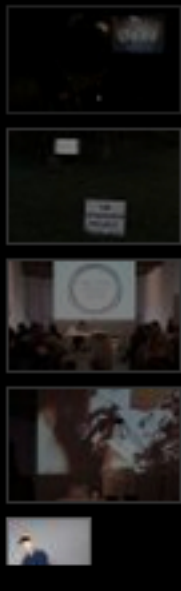
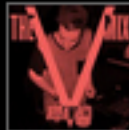


ARTICLE JOSEPH TEELING



ARTICLE

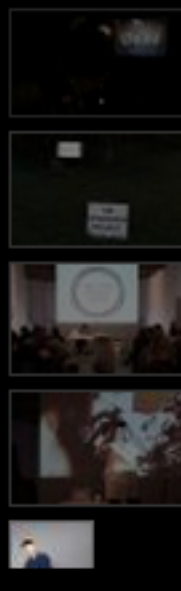


THE VMIX: JESSE MARCO

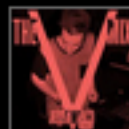


ASIA MAJOR

ARTICLE JOSEPH TEELING



ARTICLE



THE VMIX: JESSE MARCO

ARTICLE JOSEPH TEELING

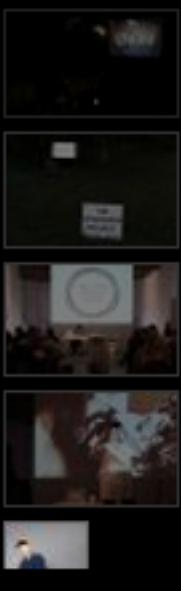


ARTICLE



THE VMIX: JESSE MARCO

ARTICLE JOSEPH TEELING



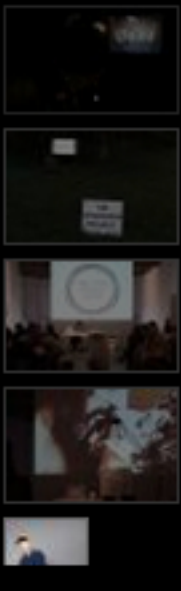
ARTICLE



THE VMIX: JESSE MARCO



ARTICLE JOSEPH TEELING



ARTICLE



THE VMIX: JESSE MARCO



R. E. H. GORDON PHOTOGRAPHY SE YOUNG AU

EXPERIMENTING WITH FIRE

TEXT JOSEPH TEELING

ARTIST R. E. H. GORDON IS THE FOUNDER OF THE CENTER FOR EXPERIMENTAL LECTURES. AFTER A CEL SERIES AT PS1, ARTIST JOSEPH TEELING AND GORDON DISCUSSED WHAT AN EXPERIMENTAL LECTURE IS, AND WHAT IT EVENTUALLY COULD BE. JOIN THE CEL TOMORROW IN SOHO FOR THEIR COLLABORATION WITH CHRISTINE SUN KIM, PART SIX OF HER SIX-PART SERIES AT RECESS

Little could have prepared me for the concepts presented and the nature of the presentations at these artist talks. It's a unique format, paired with original, sometimes improvisatory content. I left the PS1 lectures with completely new information. What were some of motivations for starting CEL? R. E. H. Gordon I think the Center for Experimental Lectures emerged from four related desires. The first was that I was going to lots of artist talks, and I started thinking that the Internet has changed the possibilities for the artist talk because it is so easy to access images by, and information about, artists. Not that a traditional slide lecture can't provide new information, but in general if you are interested enough in an artist to see them speak, you probably already know about many of their projects. So it seemed to me that there could be a space for artist talks that were instantiations of the artist's work, rather than reports on the work they do elsewhere.

The second motivation grew out of the experience of going to academic conferences and feeling very interested in lecturers' research topics and feeling let down by the uniformity and rigidity with which academics must speak about their work. What if there were a space where academics were invited to be creative with their presentation of their research? I also wondered about people in academia who aren't in the arts or humanities—what kind of lecture would a physicist or an astronomer give?

Third, there's the category of "non-academic" creatives—DJs, musicians, chefs, drag performers, and so forth—many of whom have deeply research-based practices that I thought would produce really interesting lectures, and whom I wasn't hearing from in the public discourse in an in-depth way.

And the fourth was a desire to disregard these sorts of categorizations—academia, fine art, entertainment, performance. I am interested in a variety of voices, those completely imbricated in the art world or academia and those more distant from it, and creating a platform for all of these people to experiment with ways of speaking, displaying, performing, and presenting research.

The CEL archives all of its participants' lectures online. What is the dynamic shared between the event and the archive?

REHG The live events are of course crucial because there is no substitution for being in a room of people having a shared experience—watching together, looking at each other, meeting, and experiencing the feeling of being in the room in a group. The archive is important because I feel that our minds actually move quite slowly, and we can only take in a fraction of what we perceive in lived experience. The archives are a chance to revisit the lectures and extract additional material from them. Or, as is often the case, they allow people who weren't able to be at the live event to still be able to see the talks and be part of the project. For me, the archive is a way of respecting the events as both fleeting real-time experiences and objects of further reflection, research, or conversation. The speakers put tremendous energy into their talks, and it is my responsibility to make sure they are as easily accessible as possible.

Within its brief history, the CEL has drawn speakers from a queer community. Does this community speak to the motivations of the CEL?

REHG While I have presented a variety of lecturers who self-identify as queer, I think of the "queerness" of the CEL as stemming more from the project's strategic skepticism about disciplinary boundaries as well as its commitment to trying to figure out the possibilities for speaking differently. This uninterest in disciplinarity plays out in the CEL in the ways I described, and also in my own practice, which is a composite of making sculptures, making performances, writing, teaching, and organizing events. I was once at a critique in graduate school and one of the faculty asked why I do so many different kinds of work (a question which someone would invariably ask in any conversation about my work). A student who was at the critique answered before I could: "It's trans." Which seems to me like a perfect way to characterize my practice, but also the guiding principle of the CEL.

I believe in experimentalism in work, but also in life, which is linked to a long history and innumerable current practices of queerness as a zone in which people try to figure out new or different ways to build lives, love each other, get older, find legibility, and so forth. Experimental endeavors have a high likelihood of failing, being incomprehensible, or unsustainable. But, when they do succeed, they tend to succeed exceptionally, to go above and beyond what we could have hoped for. The experimentalism of the CEL is connected to the project of queer world-building, regardless of the genders or sexual orientations of the speakers or the topics of their research.

This LGBTQ generation is indebted to our predecessors' war on institutional neglect. The loss of so many voices leaves a culture half known, practices lost, lives of intense experimentation ended and buried. In the shadow of the emerging plague does the CEL possibly act as an archive of contemporary queer voices? A way to document a fragile minority?

REHG You know, I never thought about it this way, but since you ask, I suppose it could be true, and I would welcome it. However, I select a diverse group of speakers, some of whom are far removed from queer culture, and this is very important to me as well, to not make clear divisions between people along lines of queerness. I am quite anti-identitarian in this way. I view the project as a way of contributing to building a world that is weirder and more experimental, and this is the version of queerness that is at its root.

As you have shared the brief history of CEL, it's apparent that its past iterations have been in contexts that foster intimate communities while maintaining the aim for expansion. Does existing in MoMA's tributary remove the CEL from a community context? This isn't an instance for critique, just a concern. REHG My relationship with institutions such as MoMA PS1 is still very new, so I am in a process of understanding the dynamics of it. So far, working with PS1 has been a positive experience, especially in the way that they have understood, from the start, the CEL as an artist's project that is a component of the rest of my art practice. The most important things for me right now in terms of creating and fostering the CEL are quite simply to have a space, an audience, and funding, and PS1 has been able to provide those things, in addition to other kinds of intellectual and organizational support. In a way, the fact that it is a substantial public institution has allowed it to be accessed by a larger community of viewers than just the immediate networks of myself and the speakers, and I am excited about that—how the idea resonates, or not, with the broader art community. It is such a new project, and I moved from Chicago to New York just after launching it in the winter of 2011–12, so there was not a community already established in relation to it; its community is being developed right now.

Can you briefly describe a few of the past speakers? REHG The first event, in December of 2011, was at Alderman Exhibitions in Chicago, where Edie Fake gave his talk, "The Sexual Life of Patterns" (which he presented again in a revised version at PS1) in which he engaged in a Tarot-style reading of textile patterns in relation to trans-embodiment. Andy Roche gave a lecture about sense and non-sense using a voice modulator, and Anthony Elms, who will be one of the curators of the 2014 Whitney Biennial, gave a talk about a still-nascent exhibition he was working on about artists whose work deals with clothing and adornment, which recently opened in its finished form at the ICA Philadelphia at the beginning of February.

The second event took place upstate this past Labor Day, at a residency called The Shandaken Project, where Math Bass presented a narrative about the death of her dog with a variety of sound pieces embedded in it, and Travis Boyer gave a talk called "Any Three Ingredients Makes a Margarita, Or, Margaritas, Avant-garde for the Proletariat," about a Russian Socialist Realist painter named Alexander Deineka and bulldog margaritas.

And this last event in November at PS1 featured drag performer Alexis Blair Penney speaking and performing and conjuring a web of influential divas, and curator Jamillah James talking about pop-culture representations of the art world as moments of accidental institutional critique. I post video and make full transcripts on the CEL website of all the lectures, so you can watch and read all of these there. On March 15th and 16th, an event we put on an event with the artist Christine Sun Kim and Recess, an amazing storefront residency in Soho—a day of seven lectures that do not utilize the speaker's audible voice. I am also planning upcoming events at PS1 and The Shandaken Project this summer and fall.

Is the CEL a purposefully transient body? Or could you see it fixed in one location in the future? REHG I hope at some point to have a venue that will host the project for a year at a time or more, but I don't want to commit to any one venue permanently, because I am interested in seeing the way it interacts with different kinds of pre-existing institutions and their audiences: museums, galleries, residences, conferences, schools and so forth. I am hoping to start doing occasional one-off events in other cities—I am fantasizing about the L.A. version these days.

Has the CEL's focus on unique ground-level communities been useful in funding the program? REHG We successfully completed our first fundraising campaign through USA Projects, and we raised enough for a year or more or programming through donations from supporters. I am humbled and motivated by this outpouring of generosity from people who support the project. We have also relied on funding from PS1, a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and I've also funded it myself.

How do you see the CEL fitting into your practice as a sculptor and performer? REHG The Center for Experimental Lectures is part of my broader artistic project. In my sculptures and performances I explore the ways that infrastructure creates content. Specific platforms limit what we can say and do, but they also have the power to actually render certain kinds of content unthinkable. Projects and their contexts are not distinct entities—the conditions from which we speak determine what we can say, do, and even conceive of. This is where the Center for Experimental Lectures hopes to make a contribution—to provide a platform that might enable different kinds of speaking and sharing information, and possibly even different kinds of thinking.

The CEL will be presenting "Seeing the Voice The Seven-Tone Color Spectrum" On March 15 & 16, Recess in Soho, 41 Grand Street, New York, NY 10013



5 / 5

Like 95

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

TUMBLR

PINTEREST

EMAIL



5 / 5

Like 95

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

TUMBLR

PINTEREST



5 / 5

Like 95

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

TUMBLR



5 / 5

Like 95

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

TUMBLR

PINTEREST

EMAIL



5 / 5

Like 95

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

TUMBLR

PINTEREST

EMAIL

TWITTER