

Picture This

Michel Auder

PART 1

Rooftops and Other Scenes, 1996, 48' 51"

Rooftops and Other Scenes is comprised of footage shot over ten years, much of it filmed from a studio that Auder occupied on the 12th floor of a building on Broadway from 1986 – 1996. This nomadic essay combines detail observed at close range with scenes filmed from a distance. Auder's unwitting actors appear on the rooftops and through the windows of SoHo apartment blocks within a collection of images that describe an act of stealth photography or scrutiny through the camera lens.

Polaroid Cocaine, 1993, 5'

Composed entirely of still images, *Polaroid Cocaine* is a film about photography, printed media and the addiction to spectacle. The title song and soundtrack to the film is from a cassette recording made by two of Auder's friends during a visit to New York in the 1990s. The song is written by the French author Jean-Jaques Shuhl and performed by the German actress and singer, Ingrid Caven.

Made for Denise, 1978, 3' 5"

Featuring music by Philip Glass, whose acquaintance Auder made in early 1970s, *Made for Denise* is dedicated to a woman who appears in a photograph held in the palm of a hand. The film was the first of Auder's 'video letters', addressed to a single person, hand delivered to her apartment and left with the concierge.

Total runtime 57'

PART 2

Chelsea Girls with Andy Warhol 1971 – 76, 1994, 72' 39"

Edited some twenty years after it was filmed, *Chelsea Girls with Andy Warhol* is comprised of footage from the 1970s when Auder was living with Viva and their newborn daughter in the Chelsea Hotel. Material from Auder's archive is gathered in a series of 'chapters' that focus on Warhol and the complex relationship between the artist, his actors and others who worked with him at The Factory. Much of the video is shot at the Chelsea Hotel and includes several scenes with Brigid Polk (Berlin), who appeared in Warhol's 1966 film *Chelsea Girls*, also made in various rooms across the building. Other sections include the curator Henry Geldzahler with Taylor Mead, the reception for the 1970 *Andy Warhol* exhibition at The Whitney Museum, a summer party at John Lennon and Yoko Ono's house and Warhol being interviewed by Larry Rivers at The Factory. The film ends with Warhol speaking into a microphone to give a running commentary on the people around him and their immediate activities. Auder's camera follows Warhol's impromptu direction as he attempts to keep pace with the narrator's observations.

Chelsea 1990, 2008, 6'

Filmed from the driving seat with a soundtrack played on the car radio, *Chelsea* is a short film observing life on the sidewalks of this West Side neighborhood of Manhattan in 1990.

The Cockettes, New York City 1971, 2002, 28'

Forming in 1969, The Cockettes were a psychedelic drag queen troupe that gained a cult following in San Francisco for their outrageous parodies of show tunes (and original songs). The ensemble choreographed dance routines and designed sets and costumes for LSD-influenced shows including *Gone With the Showboat to Oklahoma*, *Tinsel Tarts in a Hot Coma*, *Journey to the Centre of Uranus*, *Smacky & Our Gang*, *Hollywood Babylon* and *Pearls Over Shanghai*. In 1971, The Cockettes split into two groups, The Cockettes and The Angels of Light. Later that year, The Cockettes were booked for performances at the Anderson Theatre in New York, the audience included John Lennon, Truman Capote, Gore Vidal and Andy Warhol. The show was not well received and Vidal quipped that "Having no talent is not enough". Auder's film opens with the welcome party assembled for their arrival at JFK Airport. The film chronicles their late night reveling in the local convenience store and Auder's room at the Chelsea Hotel.

Total runtime 106'

PART 3

Annie Sprinkle, 1981 – 84, 32' 52"

Auder began working on *Annie Sprinkle* shortly after they met in 1980, it is one of several film portraits (other subjects include the painter Alice Neel, photographer Cindy Sherman and Viva's co-star in Warhol's 1968 *Blue Movie*, Louis Waldon). Structured around a series of informal interviews, Sprinkle discusses the background to her career as a performance artist and sex educator. As she talks about her experiences and attitudes towards her work the camera takes in details of the costumes and photographs that surround her. Money is a recurrent theme and a series of anecdotes raise questions about exploitation and power within the sex industry. Sprinkle slips in and out of a 'stage' persona, dressing in costume, performing songs, reading fan mail, promotional material from her mail order business and articles she has written for pornographic magazines.

Brooding Angels, Made for R.L., 1988, 5' 25"

Originally made as an intermission piece for a performance event organised by the artist Robert Longo, *Brooding Angels, Made for R.L.* was initially presented via a video wall comprised of a bank of twenty-five monitors wheeled onstage for the duration of the piece. This dystopian montage combines detail observed from life, the printed image and the television screen. Scenes of chaos and destruction appear within a series of nocturnal images that create a densely claustrophobic collage. The soundtrack to the film uses an edited excerpt from an earlier work, *A Portrait of Alice Neel* (1976 – 1982), that features footage of the cellist David Soyer.

My Love, 1978, 4' 40"

My Love is made with text and drawings by Niki de Saint Phalle. Alongside *Made for Denise*, from the same year, it is one of Auder's first 'video letters'. These early montage sequences with their associative structure, layered soundtracks and sequence of imagery are essentially literary in character and show the influence of poetry on Auder's work.

Total runtime 43'