

Modern Art Oxford

Straight to Camera: Performance for Film

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Straight to Camera is a changing programme of artists' films examining the practice of making performance for the camera and the inter relation between performer, audience and camera. From private performances in New York's loft studios in the 1960's to contemporary artist's aiming to exploit digital and 'reality' formats today, this programme seeks to map the boundaries between film, theatre and the nature of live performance.

Straight to Camera is a weekly changing programme of artists' films presenting performances made for camera, examining the relationship between performer audience and camera. From the performances carried out in loft spaces of New York in the 1960s and artists' actions in Eastern Europe in the 1970s to contemporary adaptations of theatrical and reality formats; the practice of making performance away from a live audience has produced some of the most iconic film works of the past 80 years. The intimacy of Warhol's Screen Tests, the theatricality of Beckmann's productions or the self possession of Atay's vision offer almost a private perspective; exposing the process of performance-making, something often denied to the audience within a live work.

Watching these works the audience is not only witnessing the performance itself but also the artists' process - the editing and re staging - the practicality of production. Straight to Camera traces the historical roots of this genre, from iconic film works of the mid 20th Century through to contemporary approaches in which formats and visual language are appropriated from popular culture. The programme attempts to deconstruct what can happen when the audience is watching but is no longer in the room.