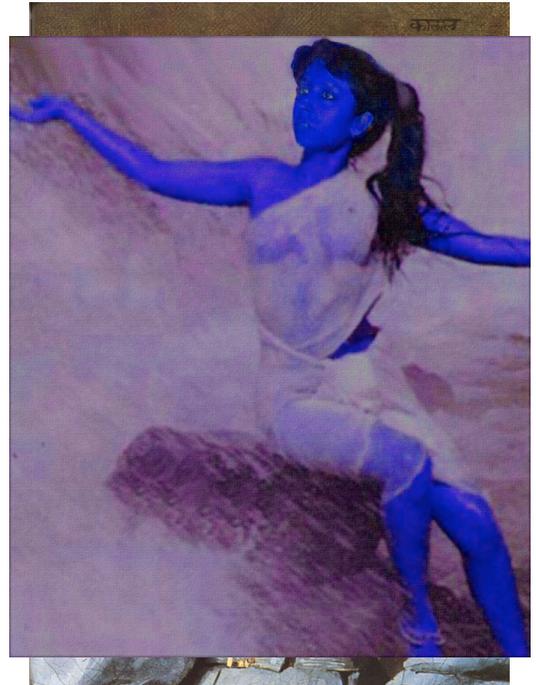




Never Been to Merle





STILLS



David Dasharath Kalal's work trips the light diasporique: from Noor Jehan to Norah Jones, Marxist Economists to Merle Oberon, Electroclash to early morning mantras.

His work has been widely exhibited and screened including at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, the National Gallery of Canada, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, in TriKone Magazine, at the Microwave Festival-Hong Kong, Inside/Out in Vienna, Allmänna Galleriet and Lydmar Art Hotel in Stockholm, eKsperim[E]nto in Manila, The Frameline Festival, Mix Festival, 3LD Art & Technology Center and Blue Heron Arts Center in New York, the Siddarth Gautam Festival and Nature Morte Gallery in New Delhi.



Never Been to Merle (Black as Acheron Mix)
5:23 min., color, sound.

An unconventional take on the cinematic anecdote **Never Been to Merle** is a multi-chromatic picturization of Merle Oberon's description of the car crash that sent her to a London emergency room unable to remember her own invented name even as fans around her chanted it. An Anglo-Indian born in Bombay in 1911, Estelle O'Brien Thompson passed and re-invented herself as English and white -- and as Merle Oberon -- a 1930s Hollywood star. Layering a melodic line of sarod with samples from the light FM hits "Never Been to Me" and "Get Here if You Can" the video literalizes the many shades of passing -- personal, cinematic and historical.



Navy Blue of India (Nanda Mix)
4:09 min., color, sound

While tracking a phone call gone astray between continents, chromatics, cinemas and soundtracks – Henry Mancini's theme from 'Charade' (1963) meets its suspect twin in Shankar Jaikishan's theme from 'Gumnaam.'(1965). Silmultaneously Bollywood actress Nanda tries to get through to The Chapelle Show as wavering video backup singers keeps time to her plaintive, repeating calls of "Hello". Navy Blue of India looks at the trans-national migration of image/sound -- much of its original footage was harvested from VHS compilation tapes of Hindi film musical numbers subtitled for (guest worker) audiences in The Gulf. This frenetic glimpse of translation and slippage is structurally modified by the famed Diana Vreeland exclamation: "I adore that pink! It's the navy blue of India!" since the imagery was produced by first setting monitors to maximize their blue phosphor dots, then wrapping them in lay-



ers of pink stage lighting gels.



Anglophobia (Punkawallah mix) 8:56 min, color, sound

This audio excerpt from a 1960s BBC documentary "It's true the French call sodomy le Vice Anglais, but without reliable statistics we can always dismiss that as AN-GLOPHOBIA" sets the tone for this look at notions of na-



tional identity and symbolism. The French have their version of Anglophobia, the colonials have theirs -- which in this video is overseen by the punkahwallah from Kipling's "The Man Who would be King" -- slowly observing the ceremonial processions of British government. The iron fencing around Big Ben and The Houses of Parliament is manipulated into patterns of floral lace against the London sky -- the Union Jack wriggles like an animated amoeba meshing its various representative crosses into oddly liquid flagella, double decker buses and Underground signage move like lipstick smears across the screen. These iconic symbols of the imperial hegemon and its capital city become abstracted into the symmetrically paired opposite of Anglophobia --into a sort of decorative 'Angloiserie.' On the soundtrack an emerging commentary on phobic desire is provided by the hippies from Dev Anand's 'Hari Ram Hari Krishna' singing "I Love You" and the journey is continued by an Indian train ride through the credits of Masterpiece Theater -- the entrenched televisual home of American anglophilia and devotion.-- one has to wonder if national phobiasn't brutality at all, but the souring side of love.



Economist Descending a Staircase

5:50 min, color, sound. Featuring Radhika Balakrishnan.

After: Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2) by Marcel Duchamp (and particularly Duchampiana by Shigeo Kubota). Specificity, biography and history all meet the Duchampian project on that oft-trod staircase in the age of digital reproduction. Duchamps use of pochoir is here transposed with a practice of digitally stenciling the line and geometries of Nude Descending ... across a collection of portraits of the economist Dr. Radhika Balakrishnan --as Kathakali dancer, Corot portrait, Lady Liberty, Queen Victoria,

Empress Eugenie, Nathalie Wood, Jayalalita etc. This hyper-specified, post-modernist portraiture grows in referentiality as the staircase descent becomes increasingly fractured, shingled and cubist. In counterpoint the Mohamad Rafi samples (from *Beti Bete* and *Kohinoor*) become more insistent as the soundtrack and visuals build to a formal resolution between painting and commentary.

Pasolini Suprabatham

14:33 min, color, sound.

Pasolini's sub-proletariat meets the Gramscian Indic-subaltern as appropriated by Ranahit Guha et al. A collision of semi-urban spaces, spectatorship, boys dancing produces a video take on cinematic neo-realism –its an effort to preserve a dimension of the mimetic real and show how recording technologies can imitate what exists outside. Subalternity as a group study attempted to locate and re-establish a "voice" or collective locus of agency in postcolonial India and the sub-proletariat conception used semi-otic analysis to emphasize the non-symbolic existence of bodies in post-war Italy. Here vocals by Anna Magnani and M.S.Subbalakshmi arc and swoop against a modulated exchange of national, urban and rural scenes – Indian and Italian – Roman, Keralite and Gujarati, juxtaposing architectural and sociological readings with the concrete presences of people and events. The heterogeneity of the recorded body (politic and social) resonates both with and against theory and asserts itself as tangible and projected. .

Hindu Pushups

5:02 min., color, sound

"You're rusty - the old whore is rusty" ... and the only cure is a strict course of Hindu Pushups as serenaded by Megan Mulally with a plaintive Mangeshkar note just audible underneath. A combinaton of oxidation, internet narcissism, courtesan culture and Sanskrit workouts.

Hindustan X (Pardesi suitcase mix)

7:11 min., color sound. Featuring Gita Reddy, Sridhar Venkatapuram, Surabhi Kukke and Zahid Zaman. Hindustan (1995) by Gita Reddy and David Kalal.

A tenth anniversary remix of the 1995 Video 'Hindustan' with more melodic thought on travel, foreignness and romance. In this re-incarnation, as our heros and heroines pack their bags and fasten their coats, Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney chirp their 1950s travel song at cross purposes with *Pardesi, Pardesi*. The song is from 1996's 'Raja Hindustani' famed when it came out for its scandalous kiss, no shy turning of the head, no object to suddenly block the viewer's line of sight, but an actual liplock. This remix ups the ante.

Electroclash Wojnarowicz

5:05 min, color, sound. Featuring Jacob Peres, footage originally conceived of as part of TrueMyth (directed by Christopher Eaves from text by David Wojnarowicz) as part of the Blue Heron Art's Center's Out on a Limb Series. A retro-synth, drum machine treatment of David Wojnarowicz, "When I Put My Hands On Your Body." with recreations and citations of his Falling Buffalo, Ant Series and particularly his breakthrough Rimbaud in New York series and -- fusing re-hash with mash-up, video with photography, politically engaged art with style based imitation, 80s nostalgia and the actual stark poetic stakes of the decade. "All these thing will be lost in time ... like tears in rain."

East Village Maxi Mantra

3:15 min., color, sound.

"Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the hymn in English will now be performed at the beginning of the resumption of the music after the intermission" The sun also rises over downtown New York and Bombay -- over a very contemporary exercise in repatriation -- over a 70s fashion flashback in a keeping up with the (Norah) Jones' pop music *Gayatri Mantra* -- with dance by Parijat Desai.

