ARTFORUM

Frankel, David, "Jesper Just," *Artforum*, Dece,ber 2012. .

artworks, here a mix of sculptures, paintings, and collages further displayed in a separate, and rather underwhelming, conventional gallery show one floor up. Their deadpan inventions and repurposings of everything from signage, products, and books to knickknacks, furniture, and advertisements accumulate in space as they do in the mind, describing a narrative environment that transports its temporary inhabitants into a kind of phantasmal dreamland where facticity begins to warp and founder but, crucially, never gives way to mere mendacity. In achieving this, the artists orchestrate a world whose artificiality is strangely instructive, even salutary—where the "real" is debunked as little more than a convincing performance of the sham, and the false is understood as not distinct from, but rather a clandestine species of, the true.

—*Jeffrey Kastner*

Jesper Just

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

Even before we digest the action in Jesper Just's video installation *This Nameless Spectacle*, 2011, the work strikes us as visual experience: Its setup is literally encompassing in that it is projected on two long facing walls between which its viewers must stand. Other film and video artists have explored this device, for example Shirin Neshat, who, however, used smaller projections and set them apart on the short rather than the long walls of a long room, making it impossible to see both at the same time—the viewer had to turn from one to the other. Just works instead on the room's long walls so that both projections are visible simultaneously, at least in part, almost everywhere in the space, unless we actually turn our back, on one of them. His extension of cinema's ability to swallow us in its world may also recall, for example, Pipilotti Rist's *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, her 2008 installation at the Museum of Modern Art. The comparison reveals an inverse logic, though, for while that work aimed at hallucinogenic sensory overload, Just rigorously returns his viewers to themselves.

The video begins with a woman rolling herself in a wheelchair through Paris's picturesque Parc des Buttes Chaumont. Just alternates between shots from her point of view—with the two screens showing the scenes to either side of her, as if we too were in her chair—and shots that describe her, whether close up or from afar. This fluctuation will continue in carefully deliberated ways throughout the piece, heightening the cinematic devices of shot and countershot, our identification with the characters and our voyeurist viewing of them, to engage us in a game of construction and interpretation in which we are constantly piecing together the environment of the video and where and who we are in it. As the woman leaves the park and heads home, a teenage boy follows her in a perhaps threatening chase, but she safely reaches her apartment in a high-rise housing block. Here she steps out of her wheelchair—at home, apparently, she can walk fine—only to be stricken by a beam of sunlight reflected from the glass of a distant apartment window, which her young pursuer, having himself also returned home, is manipulating. This produces in her an ambiguously epileptic or orgasmic fit before the sun passes from the window and the video ends.

In an astute catalogue essay on *This Nameless Spectacle* published by the Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Giuliana Bruno ties the work to a precinematic history of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century panoramic spectacles. One of these, the Maréorama—a kind of amusement-park ride evoking an ocean voyage, installed at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900—involved exactly the same structure as Just's piece, sandwiching its viewers between two screens of moving images that shut away the outside world. There, however, the images moved physically, being permanently marked on the eight-hundred-yard-long screens, which were cranked past on rollers instead of standing motionless to receive Just's beautifully defined light. To the extent that contraptions such as this were part of the same visual program that drove the birth of cinema, *This Nameless Spectacle* excavates the history of the medium. Bruno likewise argues that the wheelchair of Just's protagonist is also a reference to cinema, which can make us experience movement while sitting still.

So *This Nameless Spectacle* is embedded in metacommentary, in cinema's reflection on itself. The video's external and internal setup counts as much as its characters' actions, and indeed Just has spoken in interviews of wanting to escape the conventional forms of movie narrative. But what happens to his characters surely matters, particularly since *Sirens of Chrome*, 2010, one of two other videos in the show, shares the same theme: an interpersonal, even erotic experience at a remove, between characters separated by distance, by walls and windows, or by all three. Just's locations, too—in *Sirens of Chrome*, a once-grand Detroit cinema, now a dilapidated parking garage, is the site of elliptical interaction between women inside and outside a car—are always carefully chosen, and suggest an opening-out of his work into social awareness and analysis. Indeed, one wonders whether what may be preventing his characters from connecting is cinema itself.

—*David Frankel*

Jesper Just, *This Nameless Spectacle*, 2011, two-channel HD video projection, color, sound, 13 minutes. Installation view.

"Times Square Show Revisited"

THE BERTHA AND KARL LEUBSDORF ART GALLERY AT HUNTER COLLEGE

Were we to have the beer-stained napkin upon which was scrawled the brainstorming list of the participants in, say, the *Salon des Refusés* or the first Impressionist exhibition (perhaps we do, but I've forgotten my Rewald), imagine how precious such scraps would be. It may yet seem a stretch to equate the Times Square Show of the spring and summer of 1980 with these epochal undertakings—though posterity, such as it is a little more than thirty years on, appears to be taking a bullish view. But it seems to me that the ephemera generated by this sprawling Pictures-era conclave, from handbills to broadsides to stray snapshots and videos, are infused with the same talismanic quality.

To scrutinize the working floor plan by John Ahearn and Tom Otterness—with its list of some 150 (more or less) inclusions—is to set memory aflame, for scattered across the yellowing paper are names such as David Hammons, Keith Haring, Mike Bidlo, Kenny Scharf (then called "Jet"), Mimi Gross, James Nares, Walter Robinson, Fred Brathwaite (aka Fab 5 Freddy), Judy Rifka, Wolfgang Staehle, Alan W. Moore (who once interned as my assistant at *Artforum*), Rigoberto Torres, Mike Glier, and, obviously, dozens more. This reprise of the TSS at Hunter College also included video documentation of often-raw performance—footage of the installation, the fashion show, and a concert