

Hidden realities, invisible fictions

by Philip Smith

Before *In Between*, Aurélien Grèzes began *Standing*, an ongoing project portraying people standing in the street, lost in their thoughts.

While everything looks “real” at first glance, the scene is actually staged. Using a small camcorder and hidden from people’s eyes, Grèzes’ presence is imperceptible. Only asking participants to stand at specific spot, he films them as they are, surrounded by the urban flow and the passage of time.

As viewers, we observe people who observe people; we imagine through their eyes what is out of camera.

A fiction taking place amidst reality, *In Between* is also based on a reflective concept. Sitting on the ground, Robert Siverls is staged from a distance; long duration shots plus the distant position of the camera helped him forget the camera. Actions are so minimal that they could be seen - misleadingly - as “documentary”. Siverls’ anti-theatrical performance and detachment from the camera – which he pretends to ignore throughout the sequence before being “surprised” by it at the end – enhances the distance between him and us.

In Between’s fiction is certainly a way to “pierce” and to reveal the real under an original perspective. Like a magnifying glass, the camera shapes and makes visible what life’s rapidity makes impossible to see. What appears are details that usually escape our attention: eye movements, gestures, human interactions and string of micro-events.

The fiction creates a friction between Siverls’ truthful and seemingly authentic presence and its artifice. The actor’s awareness of being filmed confronts the viewer’s understanding that Siverls is an actor. Performing for the camera but responding to the real setting, Siverls is somewhere in between his real person and a fictional character: he becomes his own character moving through the unpredictability of the real.