

Kunstraum

An Opal World

Biscotti, Fernandes, Hammer and De Michele

Each of the works – by [Rossella Biscotti](#), [Priscila Fernandes](#), [Jan Peter Hammer](#) and [Alberto De Michele](#) – in Kunstraum's *An Opal World* has a single voice. Each describes systems of knowledge, cycles of endless repetition, the memories or visions to which thoughts returns. At times the words are inaudible, leaving us to imagine their content, at others the flow of speech is interrupted by editing, or by the interviewer's rebuke. Whether an interior narrative or a public broadcast the four monologues trace the microcosms which the mind has the capacity to imagine.

The voice of Dik in [Rosella Biscotti's](#) 16mm film 'Yellow Movie' utters a vision of a world in miniature, something glittering with richness, but utterly ruined. The film's audio comprises of recordings of psychoanalytic sessions under the influence of the drug Pentothal, conducted between 1987 and 1991. The patient's voice narrates what he sees, and these are terrible things. It is slowly revealed that it is not just the story and the vision of an individual, but our history, the events of World War II, that emerge between dream and waking. We are brought into Dik's psyche in which the world which we occupy is tainted.

In [Priscila Fernandes'](#) video 'In Search of the Self' the artist borrows the lecture format to outline a theory of the self as a collage of representations. But the artist's voice is replaced with the sound of the chalk board, leaving us to imagine the lecture's content, which is in fact, an incongruous collage of different thoughts (ranging from the Enlightenment individual to the Post-modern subject). By appropriating academic language and structures the work suggests how one can convincingly pass a message as authentic even when the elements are incongruent. For all its complexity the diagram represents a closed system of knowledge, a self-referential loop.

Shot in the guise of a YouTube homemade production, [Jan Peter Hammer's](#) 'The Fable of the Bees' shows an eager young professional unwittingly channeling the controversial writings of 18th Century polemicist Bernard Mandeville. Mandeville's 1705 poem of the same name championed the counter-intuitive argument that better people make the world a worse place, since so-called vices such as egoism or greed stimulate social prosperity, whilst altruism or honesty result in collective atavism and disinvestment. The character's vision of society is absolute, there is no room for doubt in his understanding of the world around us. But it is an unpolished piece of theatre, the character is a vessel for someone else's words, a foolish young man unknowingly repeating history.

[Alberto de Michele's](#) two-part work 'Adriano' gives a portrait of an Italian bank robber who, on the run from the authorities, was hiding out in Amsterdam for a period of four months, during which time he stayed in the artist's home. The man reminisces about his experiences as an armed robber without a hint of remorse, but reflects poetically on his personal philosophy and morality with references to Molière, Lampedusa and Socrates. Adriano has spent time in prison and he describes it as a place without time, in which the dawn does not bring new hope. The prison is for him a miniature version of society in which every element of civil life has its equivalent. Unlike in the story of Socrates and his wife Xanthippe, Adriano chooses exile, but he claims to remain an innocent man.