

(Goodbye to) Manhattan, digital video (color, sound), 72 minutes. 2010

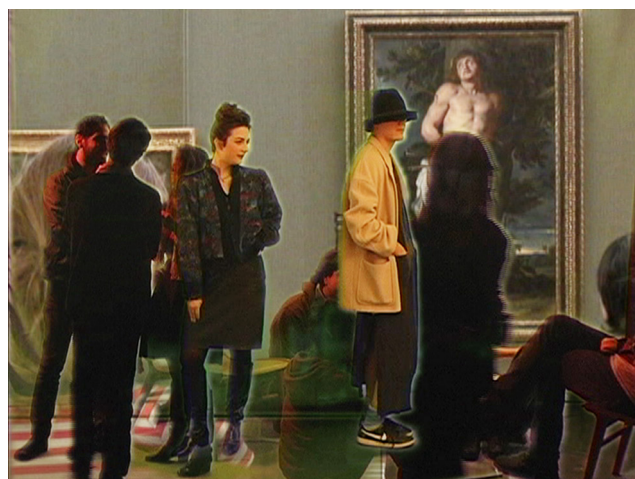
Exhibited at Alex Zachary, New York (2010); MD 72, Berlin (2010); Kunstlerhaus Stuttgart (2010); Based in Berlin, Berlin (2011); Anthology Film Archives, New York (2011); IMO, Copenhagen (2011); Take Ninagawa, Tokyo (2012); MIT List Visual Arts Center (2013)

Description from Artforum review by Victoria Camblin of the solo exhibition at MD 72, Berlin.

“Chapter One. He adored New York City,” begins Woody Allen’s 1979 *Manhattan*. “To him it was a metaphor for the decay of contemporary culture. The same lack of individual integrity to cause so many people to take the easy way out . . .” Allen’s line may be an allusion to suicide, but one less radical departure for New York creatives has been, traditionally, to move away. With seemingly exponential increase over the past decade, asylum seekers have turned not to Brooklyn but to Berlin, inaugurating in their wake a love-hate fantasy wherein the German capital is cast as a utopian center of artistic production, and New York as a place to sell, not to make—a sexy but commercial hell. The success of Ken Okiishi’s film work (*Goodbye to) Manhattan*, 2010, is its dismantling of that bipolar fantasy, of which its protagonists are ostensibly a part.

Okiishi has been living between New York and Berlin since 2001, and (*Goodbye to) Manhattan* combines materials from that experience (filmed between 2006 and 2009) into a seventy-two-minute, semiautobiographical transposition of Allen’s classic. Okiishi’s cast of characters is pared down to *Manhattan*’s three female protagonists, interpreted by key players in the artist’s actual New York/Berlin life; its script is the Google translation, into English, of the German version of Allen’s original. The resultant semantic layering is mirrored in the video’s sometimes vertiginous, pixelated editing; still, if there is anything neurotic here, it is only in both films’ intuitive, historicized preoccupation with Germanness. Okiishi’s work indulges the hysterical potential of that transatlantic transaction; its Technicolor destabilizes a black-and-white cliché. One sees a zany shopping and dining experience in West Berlin’s KaDeWe department store; *Manhattan* meanwhile languishes under a sound track of slightly decelerated Gershwin tunes that have the metallic quality of a recording made, perhaps, in the hull of a Berlin-bound Boeing 757.

(*Goodbye to) Manhattan*’s presentation in Berlin this summer, after its debut at New York’s Alex Zachary Gallery earlier this year, provides an opportunity to view the work in the space in which it was partly conceived and filmed: Galerie Neu’s apartment annex, where Okiishi once briefly resided. Viewers, too, thus find themselves green-screened into the film’s Berlin/*Manhattan* hallucination—the work, after all, is about you.



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Installation view, Alex Zachary, New York, 2010.





(Begin voice-over.)

Chapter One. Manhattan: an actual geographic place; a city and a population undergoing massive crises in identity and economy; a ruckus of monologues of urban experience; a blue rhapsody; a movie by Woody Allen...

Ken Okiishi's (*Goodbye to*) **Manhattan** is a totalworkofart (minus men) teetering on the brink of the following phenomena: Manhattan-as-shopping-mall-going-out-of-business; the traffic of artists and culture between NYC and Berlin in the 2000's; the malaise of transnational bourgeois cultural life; the failure of communication, translation, and dating; and the crisis of subjectivity of those of us who will be thirty-something in the 2010's. In (*Goodbye to*) **Manhattan**, the Manhattan that circulates as an assemblage of neurotic ideas and narcissistic fantasies is brought to the foreground, taking literally the grandiose analogies that have led to questions such as, is Berlin the new New York? Is this about ME?

--1 moving picture (color/sound, 72 minutes, filmed in Berlin and Manhattan between 2006 and 2009)

--6 lobby cards (somewhere between Ku'damm and Madison Ave.)

--1 movie theater (split in two, in the basement)

Starring:

Emmelyn Butterfield-Rosen as Mariel Hemingway as Tracy

Nick Mauss as Diane Keaton as Mary

Pati Hertling as Meryl Streep as Jill

On the walk home from the opening:

Mary: Tschau, tschau!

The taxi drives off. Ike and Mary cross the road and continue.

Mary: Hmh. I know.

Mary: Those are err funny. Mad people, and Bella is a genuine friend. She is a brilliant woman, knows you.

Mary: It is a genuine genius, a genuine genius!

Mary: I it by Jeremiah became acquainted with, mean ex man.

Mary: I do not understand you.

Mary: What to be called, "why is you you separate let", hä?

Mary: What is for a question? I hardly know you.

Mary: Well, I... we had simply n heap of problems. We do not haven ourselves often argued and I, I could my identity longer to a so brilliant, dominating man subordinate.

Mary: It is a genius, a genius, a genius. Genius!

A breakup:

Tracy: We have a lot of fun together. I take care of me to you. Your problems are my problems. We pass in bed tol.

Tracy: Yes, but do you love me not?

Tracy: Is this true?

Tracy: You have to know someone?

Tracy (off): Did you talk with another?

Tracy: O ever. Suddenly I go far not good. (sighs)

















**Lauter Beklopte. Die sitzen alle
im 30er-Jahre-Radikalismus fest.**



Mary und ich haben eine "Akademie der Überschätzten". Dazu gehören







