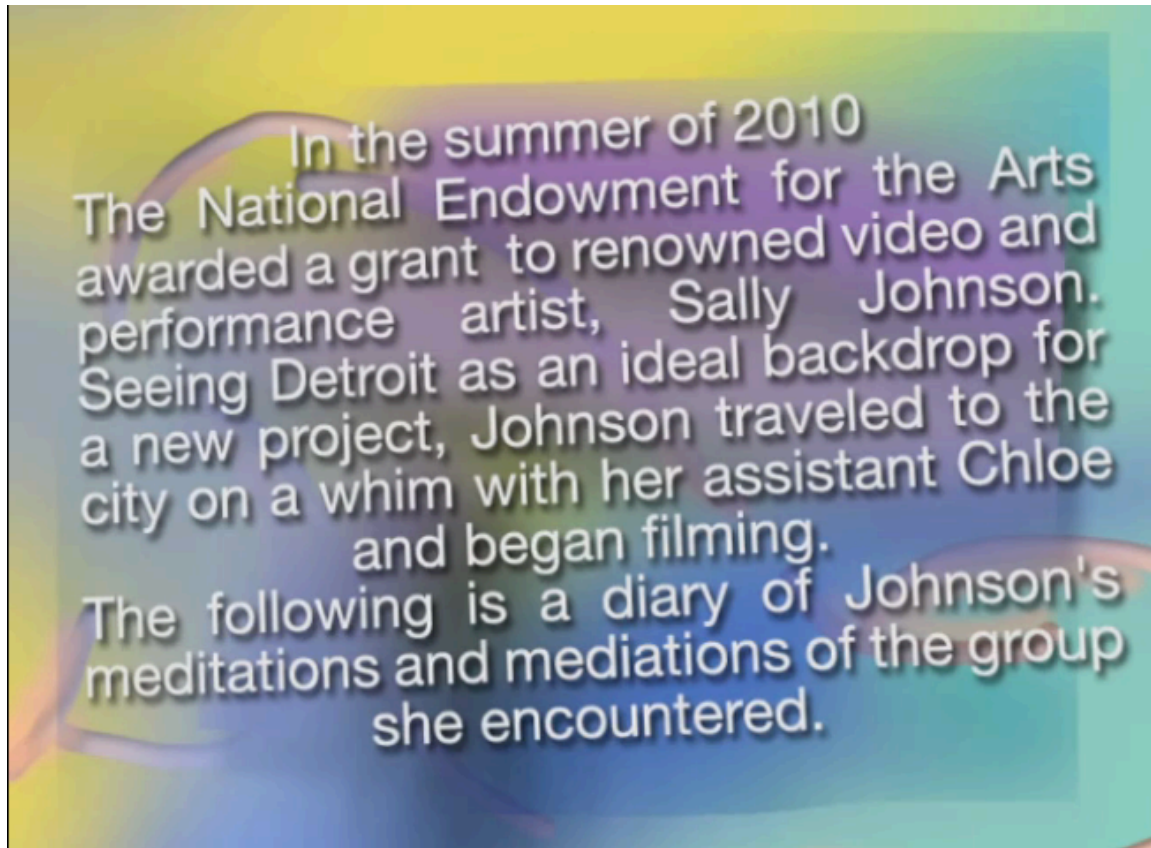


"Transfer Progress"

SD Video, 41 minutes

Written, Directed and Soundtrack by Isaac Richard Pool

2010 Isaac Richard Pool

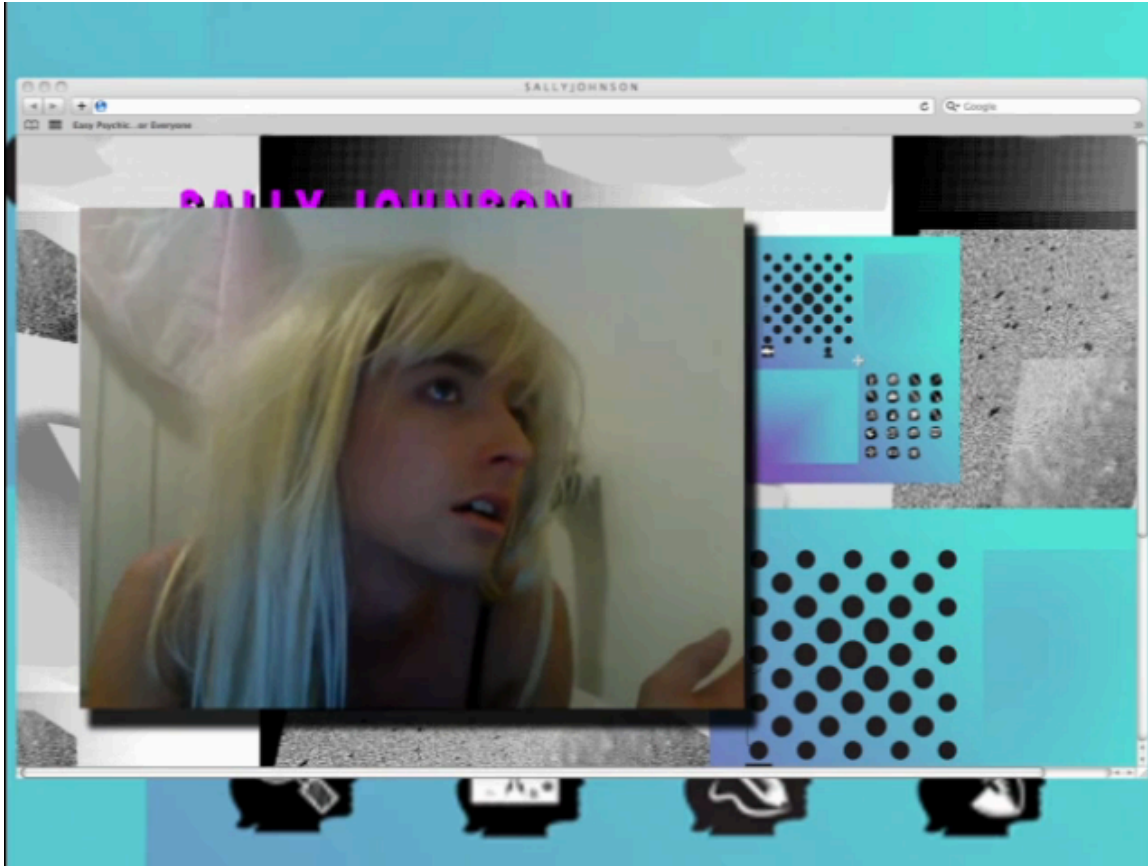


Prelude Text:

In the summer of 2011¹⁰ The National Endowment for the Arts awarded a grant to renowned video and performance artist, Sally Johnson. Seeing Detroit as an ideal backdrop for a new project, Johnson traveled to the city on a whim with her assistant Chloe and began filming.

The following is a diary of Johnson's meditations and mediations of the group she encountered.

"Style, in the broadest sense, is consciousness." – Quentin Crisp



PT 1: Website

Video Blog Monologue

Sally

Sally Johnson:

This is, Sally Johnson, I'm checking in. Still here riding out this cash flow and, I think I'll just start filming because, quantify socially: I'm merging and, it's a landfill!

There are so many people here and like, two opinions.

I think I made a wrong turn somewhere, a left-back, it precision fall back, like when you compromise political because of discomfort? When you stop processing because process becomes stressed?

Anyway, I'm here with them now, they're talking.

It's fashion, which I like, but it's not enough flaunting of core, it's more like, imitation of the most sterile, most PLAYBACK.

Magazine clip as in, "I've totally seen this somewhere, is it-"

I'm waiting to find the one freak and her three friends. You know, the OUT THERE, the almost there, the dead poser and her friend Otherness. Otherness is good because she realizes It's all a joke, but she is so sick of playing the game so quiet consumes. -It's Out There that I can dig into something with.



PT 2: Daylight
Beach Monologue
Sally, RYANNE

Sally (voiceover):

I was talking on the way in to someone who was also backwards-time, on layover, but not searching. They were kind of over-dosey, like they had something to say but couldn't say it because of the clouds.

I think there is bad atmosphere here, it's hide rhythm is decaying my sensibilities, making my lifestyle all a blur.

That must be the problem here, totally bad flight in, too easy to stay, no cheap flight away.

I don't even understand what they do, it's like, are they unpaid models? Debutantes? I mean yeah, they're artists, right, but what the fuck...

PT 3: Artists + Friends

Individual artists speak about their practice in their homes



Matte Black: I think I'd have to describe what I do as an artist as an ever evolving not stopping self-portrait



Devon Parrott: I feel like it's deeply personal, and, it makes it really scared to share it with people because it is so personal. And it is very, in a lot of ways, I feel like it's dark.



Ruin: I guess the things that I create are sort of interested in sort of exploring my body and exploring this sort of affected feminist identity.



Levon Millross: Wearable sculptures and just making things for myself to wear out



Avalon Altamont: It's a clusterfuck of anything related to make-up, fabric and food. Food because food makes me feel good, make-up because it makes me feel better and fabric because I don't like being outside butt-ass naked.



Amanda Gordon: The group of friends that I have I don't think I could find anywhere else and they definitely influence me and I think that we all propel off of each other and come up with some insane ideas. Living in this loft, I've had creative space and freedom.

It's kind of my own universe. I've lived here so long and a lot of my friends have lived with me and I've had the opportunity to make art together and see what happens.

(a scene of Levon, Devon and friends at Noise Camp, 2010, Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit's backyard)

Levon: It's kind of cheesy but, when I look at my art when it's finished I'm like oh, that's exactly how I feel about how I grew up and live, and how I feel about living down here. I guess making something a little more obnoxious like a sculpture on is my way of not wanting to fit into the real fashion world and trying to do something that not a lot of people want to wear because it's too much or too heavy or made out of garbage.

Devon: The people that I'm around have definitely influenced me to expand my ideas of what is acceptable and permissible in both art and fashion and the way we conduct ourselves and carry ourselves.

Avalon: All my friends are crazy with severe social dysfunctions so it helps because you ain't got shit to do but sit home and glue shit together and call it a day.



PT 4: Meeting with Chloe

Discussion in apartment

Sally, Chloe

Sally (voiceover): My assistant Chloe has been here with me since we got funding. She's been a really big help.

Chloe: Oh, Sally. The NEA called, they wanna know how your latest project is going.

Sally: I was thinking about this piece, that sort of uses mimicry to utilize this essential feminized self to sort of employ hysterics in this really like, obscene sort of way

Chloe: This is going to look like burning man...

Sally: OK

PT 5: Fashion

Individual artists speak about fashion in their homes



Ryenne Lumetta: I don't necessarily think that I have a good sense of fashion or know what I'm doing as far as clothing goes. But, I enjoy getting dressed. Probably more than I enjoy being seen.

Avalon: This (gestures at self) is fashion.

Ruin: I think fashion is if you woke up in the morning and you're like "I want to look like this today" and you had an idea of what you wanted to look like and then you put that on, I guess that's fashion.

Levon: Something that hit me the other day, like why I'm so obsessed with clothes and getting ready and stuff, I had a little flash back to my childhood: I remember one of my mother's outfits when we were going to hang out with some of her friends. Me thinking it was really cool that she was all white from head to toe, she took the time to do that, and it really stuck out in my head and made me aware that fashion is power, I guess, around other people. It definitely means something when you're alone but when you're surrounded by other people it's stronger, you can like get high off of your own fashion.



PT 6: Website

Video Blog Monologue

Sally

Sally: I've made a few friends here, a few really good genuine women and some transy-fags, it kind of feels like home, but I'm still far away.

This whole thing though, it seems blessed! Atmosphere reads as consequence, it's direct, but all the bodies inhabiting are just OVER IT. It's like, it's been natural, background for so long that it's like NOTHING.

I almost need a mask to breathe through their apathy, actually. It's suffocating their smell, this confidence of knowing NOTHING. Total relax, but total pose, you know? They're reflecting and existing but it's all on surface, it's like there's no deep stress.

Virtual stress, yes, lots of complain-socializing, for merit system, for credibility. But nothing actual, nothing invested, only dry tears and hardly plausible aspirations. Still looking for the one outside the default. Maybe they're in disguise?



PT 7: Glamour

Individual artists speak about glamour in their homes

Ruin: When you go to like CVS and you buy the perfect lipstick for \$5 and then you go home and you like, look in your bathroom mirror, and everything you live in is shit, because you're broke, but you have this \$5 lipstick and you're just like looking at yourself in the mirror and applying it and reapplying it and you're just sort of making these poses and you feel disconnected from everything. I think glamour is a disconnection.

Ryanne: I would define glamour as a way of life rather than a way of describing something.

Levon: Probably, the art of getting ready before you leave, like an hour, a half an hour, twenty minutes. Just your face and a simple outfit or all outfit and a simple face. When a lot of people are doing it together it's like a heightened sense of glamour.

Matte: I think that nobody knows how to answer the question, but they do it by

breathing in and out and dancing and getting drunk.

Avalon: This (gestures at self) this is glamour.

Ruin: Or I like taking sort of inspiration from these sort of normative femmy butch lesbian identities and I think that that is really glamorous. I think that lesbianism is really glamorous. And I know that's a really terrible thing, I think some people would be like, OMG that's so problematic for you to say, you're not even a lesbian, but I think all of the sort of performances of lesbian identities are so glamorous and I think that lesbianism is usually positioned as the antithesis to glamour but I think that, I guess, lesbian fashion is the most glamorous thing I've ever seen in my life and I'd just like to end it with that.



PT 8: Suburbs
Ruin, Sally, Chloe

(a still life of McDonalds and Febreeze on a night stand, a hand places down a can of Miller Lite.)

Television Commercial (playing in background): She's all "you use it with your detergent to get stains out the first time" are you kidding me? So now the stains are magically gone and my sister passes her jeans on to me. What a life. Get your \$3 coupon at tide.stain.release.com today. Your freeze revolution starts now"

(Bikini Kill, "Resist Psychic Death" plays in a suburban living room. Ruin and Sally dance and sing while drinking beer.)

Dog: barking

(Sally stands in front of the camera wearing a bra. Ruin writes "AGENCY" across the bra with Sharpie.)

Ruin: Don't use it fucking loose it girl

Sally: I'm gonna take this shit off

Ruin: Do it. Freedom Feels so good! Fucking, throw it in there.

(Sally throws her bra into a fire pit, jumps up and down. Chloe is seen holding a camera off to the left. Close up of the video burning in the fire.)



PT 9: Haircut

Sally gets a haircut from Chloe in the apartment

Sally, Chloe

Sally:

They have nostalgia for everything, just anything. It's KILLING ME, the water here is so many decade shifts STALE! How can they reconstruct, or even erupt NEW consequence if all they drink is this stale water they have here? It's all back-in-time? It's so fucking weird.

And it's like honor, it's like their badge of honor that is the discussion point, again it's fashion in the most cable television sense. And it's like, the most droning, mass instructed, trend predicted gossip magazine, reminisce and the reminiscence of an absence and it's the worst shit I have EVER SEEN!

I don't know.

I can list his/her's narrative and inner monologue in a matter of seconds, in SECONDS. And if you stab at conversation based on some vague reference to these presumptions that you know they're trying to play off as cool things that they made up it's instant gratification to them. It's instant. How can I penetrate this sort of sludge? It's this

shifting that's based in copying, this kind of copy-stop. I don't get it.

How does it look?

Chloe: Looks great.

Sally:

But the most impenetrable is the MATTERING. What quantifies success is non-counting, innumerable- There is no standard here, it's make it, brake it, loose it, forget it, start again with the same cast, a mirror crew of slightly shifting, easy forgetting passive people that are looking for the BEST night. Even NIGHT makes new life here. It's different. What was once qualified and earned chaos has become totally contrived and blind.

But, they still go wild.

(Sally takes a photo of new, cropped haircut on cell phone)

Chloe: Looks good



PT 10: Nightlife

Individual artists speak about nightlife in their homes

(Friends at a bar where Ryanne is working.)

Sally:

I went to a party that night. I think they're starting to trust me here. It makes me a little bit nervous because trust, it's just so soft. I don't wanna melt away.

Ryanne: Yeah I definitely think that nightlife affects what I create. Most of my ideas for most of my artwork come from things that happen at night. Which is usually me being drunk and coming up with a great idea.

Ruin: When you're out, and you're drunk, and there is like the perfect song on and it just sort of makes you escape everything. I think that escape is something that's good and I think that nightlife allows you to enter a space of escape. And you know I just like hanging out with my friends. And I think that sort of is a big influence on me.

Avalon: Girl it sucks. It is terrible. There are no men. Nobody wants me like this. You

get cheap drinks, cheap weed, cheap blow. I don't do blow, but if that's your thing, get some cheap blow.

Levon: Nightlife is definitely something I put into the equation. Kind of um, feeling popular, or just standing out a little bit and being a in a little small group of people who get it among other people who don't maybe.

(Levon and Devon dancing in the bar. Sally leaning over a pool table hitting on butch lesbians. Avalon dancing in nightvision wearing a look.)

(Inside a car in line at McDonalds drive thru)

Ruin, off camera in drivers seat: I don't want you. You know what there is no one around us and you have like a \$600 camera out and you need to not do that right now. What do you want to order? Could I have a 10 piece chicken nugget, 2 Mac snack wraps, a hamburger and a number 11 with a Powerade. Okay put it away. Ugh, wasted.



PT 11: Ruin's Monologue

Ruin in her suburban home

Ruin

Ruin: I make me. I make me. My side pony dragging its sagging it's here. I'm not telling jokes to you. I make me. You got it? Are we ready?

(Sung at a piano)

I make me
My side pony, dragging it's sagging it's
here
I'm not telling jokes to you
I'm telling the truth
Well as much as I know it
And that's just it
The more versions of the truth you can offer
The more stealing you can prevent
Because it becomes free
But you have to think about it

You know
Homework is every second
It's the research you do
By really digesting your location
Physical virtual spiritual it's all the same
It's all all psychic terrain
And I'm just here to attest
I'm just here to resist psychic death



PT 12: Levon's Monologue

Levon delivers a monologue in his loft wearing a look

Levon: Flaunt is substance. That's just all that there is. The way I say something, the look I have together. If you don't get it, it's not my issue. But you can still feel it, I cause you to react even if its just your appeasing or teasing my ideas. The fact that I make myself so transparent is naïve to you. But where are your ideas at? What have you invested in the space we're standing in? It's a joke.

(Video of Sally – visibly drunk – filming herself in a mask that Levon made for her)



PT 13: Detroit

Individual artists speak about Detroit in their homes

(More footage from Noise Camp)

Sally (voiceover):

And when they enter this place, the past thinking, the bodily noise, the outside space where you can only linger in void it's a MESS, it's the BEST, it's unbelievable without witness.

The characters only emerge as postHuman: breed vampire, werewolf, villain, ghost, it's a never ending cast but it's all schizophrenic and accessed through forgetting their hard scripts of not-caring.

Apathy is the strongest current here, laziness the motive, easy reference their key to success - but when they dispose day job, nightlife is EASE, their most potent happening comes in a longing for ecstasy typified only by the specter of apocalypse that channels this space.

IT echoes the streets, it caves the clubb making it danceable, making the end into disco-floor, an epistemic rebirth that only forwards NON-SENSE. But how can I communicate here? How can I communicate all of this? What do all of these auto-bodies mean?

Is there substance in these floating spirits or chaos with no consequence? Dancing seeks YES, but I can't figure out the test?!

Avalon: I love my city. But it's time, it's time for things to change. (laughs) I wish there were more flamboyant, males that weren't quite drag queens but kind of bordered on that line of drag. Because I'm tired of getting dirty looks from you faggots, you know who you are. But the chaos fuels the inspiration in reality. The chaos fuels the inspiration.



PT 14: Closing Party

Party scene at Amanda's loft. Everyone is dancing in looks.

(Sally enters in a ridiculous look for the first time and is drunk, falling over and getting into fights with everyone.)

Amanda: Get the fuck out. You gotta go.

(Sally traipses out the door and into the parking lot. Everyone follows her and receives a final monologue from her standing on the other side of a gate)

Sally:

Help me be less prescriptive! It's this thing, inhibitions as firewall like, my mind say YES and my body just won't let me go forward with it! I wanna trust you, I really do, but if I did that means that I would have to compromise all of my attempts and all of my judgment! It's edit, it's natural, it's edit, it's natural, but SHIT... Just because you like to prance, it isn't by chance, I know, but it's this hyper style, this rude club, this drug mud, this swelling I feel when I'm swimming inside of it, it's the thing that makes people not want to be with you and it's real too! And it's REAL, too. I'm sorry for scouting and I'm sorry for doubting you, but I'm not sorry for interfering. This space we built, it's deep

holes with escalators out of it, it's fall to a bottom that we created ourselves! It's trampoline logic. Karma reboot, and blank screen-

(Black)

So, let's keep cycling, okay?