



Title: Melting Ground
Artists: Richard Garett + Asher Thal-Nir
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OUT NOW: *Melting Ground*

Contour Editions is pleased to present the new collaborative work of Richard Garett + Asher Thal-Nir, *Melting Ground*. This audiovisual release is the latest development of the label's effort to present works that explore the various possibilities of sound and moving image, while also engaging with studio experimentation, materiality, processes, and diverse techniques to treat the material. The label's objective is to reach spectators on a personalized level while facilitating the independent distribution of sound and visual artist's work that are often hard to experience within the local community or the cultural landscape of the world at large.

The imagery of *Melting Ground* consists of an uninterrupted single handheld take, while flying in a helicopter over Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska in August 2005. Garett submitted the footage to rigorous processes of digital manipulation, altering the take's natural condition, light, motion, rhythm, and duration. The audio was specifically composed for the imagery. Asher's sonic construction commenced by making recordings with microphones placed inside the body of a piano, very close to the hammers, and emphasizing not only the tactile qualities of the instrument, but also the timber and sensorial richness of its sound. Additionally, Asher focused on layering and synchronizing loops of the piano's sounds to create irregular structures in which new melodic phrases would arise through chance. To find out more about Richard Garett + Asher Thal-Nir please visit the label at www.contoureditions.com

NYC, winter 2011
Contour Editions

...As if Erik Satie and Albert Pinkham Ryder had taken a helicopter ride in Alaska together in order that they might locate a cipher or secret alphabet in the clouds, the mist and the glacial moraine below. Aerial adumbrations of wilderness unfolding in time like a Chinese landscape painting from the Sixteenth Century. Topography as stand-in for the unconscious. With geology and waterfall as phantasm, a panorama of lost places flickering in the eidetic harbor of dream. Of what was and never will be again, as much in metaphor, in mind, in memory as in actual place. Who am I? Where am I going? What can I become?

NYC, winter 2011
David Baker

A trick of the light.

Film flicker is an aftereffect, a remnant, of an 'imperfect' projection, a deficient or inadequate projection speed (frame rate) or shutter speed (flicker rate) that fails to achieve the deception, illusion, artifice of motion that is cinema. Flicker illuminates and reveals the deceit, testifying to the perceptual machinations that support the cinematic enterprise, strobing the aporia that is at once the eye's (perception's) inadequacy and cinema's (technology's) success. Before sound, flicker was often just fact, a trace of the variability of the apparatus (capture and playback) manifest in its display; with synchronization, audio compelled consistency, installing 24fps as industry standard and forcing flicker beyond the frame (of vision).

Sound (and simulacra) swelling, 8, 16, and Super8 stock domesticated flicker's flares and flashes, registering gaps of memory and light in sitting-room intimacy (amat-eur). Experimentalists also appropriated, flicker facilitating structuralist speculations on neurophysiology, space, narration (Conrad, Gehr, Frampton). Contemporary appearances of flicker carry nostalgia: historical (silent film), personal (home movies), but also sensorial -flicker is an afterimage of a (now usually) foreclosed mode of spectatorship that acknowledges means and content coterminously. Flicker prods the sensorium to process and attend to its processing, film's glimmering technological manipulation on view (too).

Richard Garet's *Melting Ground* flickers gently, pulsating and vibrating, co-opting for video flicker's effect/aspect of nostalgia. Sensuous and grainy, strained contrast flattens its single long take, eliciting surface, the tangible materiality of the image plane a collusion (illusion) of light and black and white. Slow, throbbing changes of focus and intermittent pulsations in exposure require the eye to track finely shifting modulations of depth and content, the quivering mass of unsteady (hand-steady) ground falling away from the camera's spreading sweep. Cloud, sky, rock, and ice, trembling monochrome, converge and drift at a pace and degree at once just noticeable and vast.

Relief in sustained flux, scale, space, and scope blur, a vertiginous geo(-)logic commensurate to Garet's subject. Hovering at inhuman heights, *Melting Ground* documents a landscape of visual experience situated between eye and screen: as flicker, focus, light, texture, and movement fugitively constrain or disperse vision, seeing is exposed. With the image field's every flare or fade, the monumental ephemerality of glacial movement is transposed to twitching optical musculature, eye clambering a fickle (rock)face, seeking settled traction.

Asher Thal-Nir's soundtrack echoes with elastic iterations, dislodging temporal trajectory. Loops, layered irregularly, prompt a slowly evolving asymmetry, melody and its memory suspended between repetition and change, recognition and elision. Microphone, hearing aid, acts as prosthesis, amplifying the piano's internal anatomy and transcribing a tender mechanics of hammer and wire. Ear enveloped by intimate architectonics of instrument, repetition (or near-) erodes aural orientation, perspective, direction. Too forestalling a foothold, *Melting Ground's* soundscape gently disjoins sound and syntax from semantics, parsing perception – a muffled music box quietly compelled to succession rather than progression.

Sight scrambling in the light's interval of flight, disoriented eyes and ears watch and hear, the workings of perception flooding the void laid open by filmic flaw, blip, digital clip. Abstraction, linear architectures, moving geometries, and color field layering achieve, in Garet's earlier video work, similar medi(t)ations on visual perception. *Melting Ground* translates these concerns to concrete site, exercising an experiential, phenomen(ologic)al aesthetics within the sphere of referent. Regarding vision, a panoramic view flickers.

NYC, winter 2011
Jennifer Eberhardt