

NOWNESS

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NOWNESS LOVES

ART & DESIGN

NOWNESS Loves: A Crackup at the Race Riots

Leo Gabin reinterpret a Harmony Korine novel for the YouTube generation.

In the digital sphere ownership is anyone's game, something taken literally by Leo Gabin, aka Belgian artist trio Lieven Deconinck, Gaëtan Begerem and Robin De Vooght. Known for their internet-appropriated lo-fi film works and paintings rooted in video, their latest offering, previewed here, is a video-realization of Harmony Korine's 1998 novel, *A Crack Up at the Race Riots*. "When reading it for the first time, we immediately had the feeling that the way it is written and constructed would fit perfectly with our approach to video," explain the artists of the novel that spawned this film, spliced together in the style typical of the trio's videowork from YouTube-sourced footage of everything from natural disasters to at-home dance performances. Responding to the book's jagged structure and non-linear narrative made up of "short stories, list, rumors, suicide notes and jokes", the video is instead an assemblage of contemporary comparisons: namely the "weird, funny, sad and absurd shit" stumbled upon whilst surfing the web. "When making an adaptation of the novel it was just very interesting to use this library of already existing scenes, fragments, jokes and monologues."

Can you talk us through the process of sourcing the material you use in your video works?

Leo Gabin: We are mainly interested in self-shot footage by amateurs, mostly teens. As for the film, the backdrop of the 'story' is Florida, so we started searching for a lot of imagery of the southern state after being hit hard by the economical collapse and real estate crash. Once you start a search you will get offered new clips relating to the theme in the sidebars, creating an endless chain you can follow.

There's a big question mark over authorship of art rooted in reappropriation, what's your view on this?

LG: With the huge impact of the internet and easy access to all this personal material that is uploaded on a daily basis, it seems very relevant to make use of it. By doing so it automatically raises questions about authorship and privacy—to us this is part of the work. But we don't consider what we do to be pure appropriation art—it is more in the Dada mindset.

What are your top 5 videos on YouTube?

LG: the one with the fight the one with the girl dancing the one with the room tour the one with the cat the one with the guys watching a youtube video

A Crackup At The Race Riots is on show at Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, through 28 March.