

## **Face**

Film work

Christoph Korn, 2011-2013

Duration: 12 hours

Using the NS propaganda film Terezin: A Documentary Film of the Jewish Resettlement from 1944. Courtesy of the "Bundesarchiv/Filmarchiv" [Film Archive of the Federal Republic of Germany]

Speakers: Antoine Beuger, Christoph Korn

Production: C.R.I.M., Museum of Contemporary Art Serralves Foundation. Technical support: Enis Vardar and onomato

Premiere (under the title Austerlitz Duplicate):  
Museum of Contemporary Art Serralves, Porto (PT), November 2011

I would especially like to thank Antoine Beuger for his idea of conducting a conversation along the film.

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## **Terezin: A Documentary Film of the Jewish Resettlement**

The film work "Face" is based on the NS propaganda film Terezin: A Documentary Film of the Jewish Resettlement. The film, made by the Nazis from August until September 1944 in the style of a documentary, was meant to present the apparent good standard of life in the ghetto Terezin and, thus, veil the policy of annihilation of the NS regime.

What can be seen are the prisoners in Terezin as they sew, in the concert hall, at the pool in the evening sun, during a talk of a professor in the community library, etc. The film was directed by the Jewish actor and director Kurt Gerron. He was forced by the SS to make the film as its director.

A 23-minute fragment is all that remains of the propaganda film.

## **The Film Work "Face"**

Guided by the desire to place temporal gaps and holes in the apparent homogenous narrative structure of the propaganda film, Christoph Korn decelerated the film many times over. The 12-hour film he created this way forms the basis for a conversation that Antoine Beuger and Christoph Korn had along the film on June 3, 2012. This conversation accompanies the film as its soundtrack.

The conversation is borne by a peaceful, tentative, often silent sense of approaching and receding. In the course of the conversation, a type of reading gains both duration and power, a type that becomes condensed in the concept of the “Face” (Emmanuel Lévinas). “Face” in the sense of the philosopher Lévinas is “...the other, who reveals him or herself through the face.”



*(“...the other who reveals him or herself through the face...”, Emmanuel Lévinas)*

### **Excerpt from the conversation between Antoine Beuger and Christoph Korn**

CK: I am not sure, if what we can read out of the decelerated version and the gaps disclosed from this, if this is perceivable in the original version.

AB: Yes, but when it's present in the slow version, then it's also there in the fast version. It simply has a more unconscious effect. It is hidden for the Nazis and for such observers. And that's why Geron and the others could not be prosecuted. It remains masked thanks to the speed. But those who are sensitive enough will be

able to “read” this underlying message. At least it has this effect upon me. But I have not watched the fast original version.

CK: It is obviously something in the film, almost a kind of subversive level.

AB: Yes, in any case, we have perceived it as such.

CK: You still need humans to make such a movie. And clearly these people cannot be entirely instrumentalized. You can destroy them, annihilate them completely, but when they are filmed and you see them, as Gerron shows them to us, in these intimate settings, then you cannot get rid of these people altogether. And that is something you can see here quite clearly.

AB: Although he had an order to make a propaganda film, Kurt Gerron still has obviously made a film about his people.

CK: I think the Nazis felt this subliminally. That you can confine humans, make them into ghosts, that you can depersonalize them ... but you cannot get rid of a last remaining part of them. To do that you actually have to annihilate them.

AB: And you also cannot get rid of love. You don't see, namely, much of relationships. And everything was done to make this impossible. But you feel that these are people who carry love in themselves for others, for their children or for someone else they know.