

SCREENING PROGRAMME BLACK BOX

side A / who decides who decides?

In art institutions, finances and business are run alongside the creative processes of the artists and the emotional entanglements of the cultural workers. Who are the people attempting to bridge the gaps between these oppositional forces? Who decides who decides, and how? This selection of films from the argos collection take a deeper look at the frictions that inevitably arise when these worlds collide, uncovering, not without humour, the peculiar power dynamics and crooked decision-making processes that govern them.

part 1 : cultural capital

Je suis content (2001) Bernard Mulliez, 00:12:00

A man speaks with a firm voice at the camera. He talks about management, success, values, and goals. He repeats this speech for an extended period of time, seemingly affected by a lack of sleep. The speech loses its dynamism throughout the different short sequences, impacting its initial message.

The Fine Arts (2002) Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby, 00:03:38

The Fine Arts is a short and funny film about the perils of making images and narratives. A woman confesses that she's speaking French in the nude because she has no good ideas but admits that her solution is unoriginal: "I hate the fine arts, I am disgusted by the fine arts, because, um, the fine arts are always made with artifice."

The Good Life (a guided tour) (2009) Ronny Heiremans & Katleen Vermeir, 00:16:00

Describing interiors, great views and the city's vibrant opportunities, a real estate agent sells an up-market architectural proposal and a lifestyle that grafts the 'value' of art onto cultural institutions. In the background, we see technicians installing a prestigious exhibition. *The Good Life (a guided tour)* redefines our perception of the art institution and raises our awareness of public space as cultural capital.

Une femme entrepreneante (2004) Sven Augustijnen, 01:12:00

With a highly enacted contraction of ignorance, enthusiasm and astonishment, a fierce 'journalist' takes the audience in tow for a further and better acquaintance with the protagonists of the outset of WIELS as a contemporary art centre. Conventional documentary codes are undermined or subtly eroded, and as if by coincidence, a complex tangle of art, brokerage and politics slowly unravels.

part 2 : curating the curator

FränZ ünd KoFÖN (2004) Messieurs Delmotte, 00:02:53

Messieurs Delmotte pretends to be a German artist. Standing in front of a door, as he would stand at the entrance of an art gallery during the opening of a new exhibition, he holds a seemingly serious and highbrow speech in an unintelligible language that appears to be but in fact isn't German. A funny and light take on the so-called 'curator speak' or 'artist speak' observed in hermetically operating art institutions.

J.H. The Art System (2004) Angel Vergara, 00:02:39

It's 2004. Jan Hoet retires as artistic director of S.M.A.K., the City Museum for Contemporary Art in Ghent, and the artist Angel Vergara decides to impersonate him during the festivities. Among the prominent crowd of curators, museum directors, politicians and artists, he assumes the appearance of the icon-turned-caricature, pointing out the absurdity and emptiness of the etiquette and codes of the arts system.

Ijsbreker 22: Cultuurmanagement (1984) Jef Cornelis, 01:22:00

In the 1980s, art and culture became domains that had to be managed like any other economic activity. The market radically changed artistic practices, and whereas in the period 1968-1972 art involved a utopian and critical element, now works of art turned into peaceful and valuable investments. In this context, it comes as no surprise that Cornelis proposed broadcasts such as *Ijsbreker 22: Cultuurmanagement* in which sponsorship and cultural management are scrutinised.

Ego Sumo Version 2 (2005) Emilio López-Menchero, 00:05:00

Emilio López-Menchero embodies a Japanese sumo wrestler and enters into combat with his mirror image. A deliberation on the roles of embodiment of the other and amateurism in art.

side B / what to spare, what to let go?

In tarot, the Tower card suggests demolition - a finite act that raises unavoidable questions: what to let go, what to spare? And yet, the card also invites to see the building as an instrument, another tool in the box, to implement and facilitate the necessary changes caused by a crumbling status quo. By actively looking for new perspectives, one can *deconstruct* to better *reconstruct*. Whether that applies to our gaze or to an actual building is left in the middle. For the cards to reveal, for us to imagine. Here's a compilation of films from the argos collection to tackle the mechanics of viewing and shifting, through space and time, to envision new functions for recalibrated spaces.

part 3 : recalibrated space

Building (2003) Anouk De Clercq, 00:11:30

Flat, sharply cut forms appear in black-and-white and high definition. Light feels its way along walls, storeys, windows and doors. Stairs, columns and floors appear in a controlled choreography upheld by the music of Anton Aeki. A building reveals itself, as if it were an architect's dream.

L'occupation des sols (2002) Marie-Françoise Plissart, 00:22:45

Seen from above, the city offers an intriguing view, creating an entirely new image for our daily, urban environment. This kaleidoscopic staging of the capital invites us to imagine our own story while daunting, almost ethereal, perspectives from lofty summits bring harmony to a chaotic city.

H-H (2017) Chloé Malcotti, 00:50:00

An emblematic building where filmmakers like Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard worked alongside factory workers for the creation of various films is going to be demolished. During this process, memories morph and fossilise into various vernacular forms.

part 4 : kunst voor een kapot museum

Breakdown (2004) Karen Vanderborght, 00:02:01

Breakdown uses digital editing techniques to bend, crush and transfigure two different perspectives of a building while a computer-generated voice recites lyrics of desperate love songs like Santa Esmeralda's *Don't let me be misunderstood*.

Museum voor Kapotte Kunst (1978) Luc Deleu, 00:35:00

Deleu observes an abandoned, declining industrial building from various angles, and against the backdrop of *The Robots* by Kraftwerk. Through his lens, the building becomes an object, a ready-made that we can modify and adapt to our liking.

Performing Space (2004) Erki De Vries, 00:03:09

De Vries brings to life an empty gallery space with virtual extensions and animated variations, morphing possible and impossible spaces into one another. What if space itself is an extension of our mental constructs?

Une tentative de définir la notion de transition (2016) Mira Sanders, 00:11:44

This work attempts to re-think an exhibition space by revealing its inner structures. Drawing and thinking processes overlap and blur our view with various spatial and temporal transitions, prompting the realisation that the act of 'listing' alone won't suffice to generate the actual transition(s).

La Scala (2013) Aglaia Konrad, 00:11:44

Perched on a cliff overlooking Lake Garda, *La Scala* is a Brutalist villa built in the late 1950s by Italian architect Vittorio Viganò. The film begins from the perspective of the lake and moves up, through a vertiginous concrete stairway ('scala' meaning 'ladder' in Italian) and into the house, where glass becomes predominant, and with glass, light. The film explodes into a kaleidoscope of reflections, multiplied by a split screen attempting to capture light, and film as light.