



SCREENING

FILMMAKER FOCUS

# ROBOCUP 99

Mika Taanila

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TUESDAY MARCH 25 2014 | 7:30PM

MIKA TAANILA. ROBOCUP99. 1999. 35MM FILM STILL.  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND KINOTAR OY, HELSINKI



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*RoboCup 99* is part of *Filmmaker Focus: Mika Taanila*, a retrospective overview of the documentary films of Mika Taanila, who has created acclaimed works of film, video, photography, installation, and sound over the past 20 years. Reflecting on utopian technological innovators across the fields of engineering, architecture, and music, Taanila's films explore unsung genius and delve into the gap between technological progress and society's looming destruction to uncover the successes and failures of a century of progress.

**Mika Taanila, *Optical Sound*  
2005, digital video, 6mins**

*Optical Sound*, Taanila's 2005 filmic interpretation of the brutalist sound work for an array of obsolete printers by Canadian duo [The User], depicts the devices ratcheting horizontally together in a stalled symphony, inkjets repeatedly blackening the same area on the page. A digital breakdown of an analogue effect.

It was computer scientist Ray Tomlinson, responsible for establishing the first electronic mail delivery between two machines back in 1972, who chose the @ sign as part of an email address. He was looking for a character that could not conceivably appear in the computer user's name. Taanila's film fills the entire screen with scratchy inscriptions of this sign, now a part of every individual identity.

Ken Hollings: "Activate Only When Absolutely Necessary – Utopian Memories in the Documentary Films of Mika Taanila", Migrosmuseum catalogue (2004.)

**Mika Taanila, *RoboCup 99*  
1998, 16mm transferred to digital video, 30mins**

Mika Taanila's documentary follows the antics of soccer playing robots, pitted against each other at the annual RoboCup tournament on the eve of the 21st century. With *RoboCup 99*, the Finnish filmmaker continues his investigations into the unwieldy dynamic between man and machine. Using deliberately aged footage from the tournament to highlight the failed experiments of the past, the film tracks the clumsy desire of the makers' drive toward technological progress.

**Mika Taanila** lives and works in Helsinki. For more than 20 years, he has created works in film, video, photography, sound, and installation that investigate various technological developments and the innovators behind them. Solo and two-person exhibitions include *Mika Taanila: The Most Electrified Town in Finland*, KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (fall 2013); *On The Spot #4*, Badischer-Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany (2008); *Zone d'éclipse totale*, Dazibao, Centre de photographies actuelles, Montréal, Canada (2007); *Une histoire saccadée* (with Erkki Kurenniemi), Institut Finlandais, Paris (2006); *Hotel Futuro*, Spacex Gallery, Exeter, UK (2005); and *Mika Taanila: Human Engineering* at Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich (2005). Taanila's films and installations have been featured at more than 200 international film festivals and exhibitions, including dOCUMENTA, Kassel, Germany (2012) and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2013).

**Frieze Film**

**Oraib Toukan + Ala Younis  
*From the impossibility of one page being like the other*  
2013, video, 3.30mins**

Oraib Toukan has been collaborating with Ala Younis on a project on found film footage from the former Soviet Cultural Center in Amman, and working with digital builder Matthew Epler, who designed a crowd-sourced database to globally identify 900 unknown film canisters in Amman. From this starting point, Toukan and Younis have developed a peculiar archeology of research that looks at early Palestinian film production, technocratic Soviet friendships, cine clubs, and Russian language films in Amman. The beginning of the project was locating the key early films of two members of the former Aflam Falistine collective (Palestine Films). *From the impossibility of one page being like the other* is based on material from this growing archive.

# STAFF

Johannes Goebel / Director

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies

Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer

S. Argeo Ascani / Associate Curator, Music

Eileen Baumgartner / Graphic Designer

David Bebb / Senior System Administrator

Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer

Michael Bello / Video Engineer

Victoria Brooks / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts

Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer

Ash Bulayev / Curator, Dance + Theater

Michele Cassaro / Guest Services Coordinator

John Cook / Box Office Manager

David DeLaRosa / Production Technician

Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator

William Fritz / Master Carpenter

Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations

Ian Hamelin / Project Manager

Katie Hammon / Administrative Specialist

Ryan Jenkins / Event Technician

Shannon Johnson / Design Director

Pamela Keenan / Production Technician

CathyJo Kile / Business Manager

Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician

Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician

Stephen McLaughlin / Event Technician

Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator

Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager

Kim Strosahl / Acting Production Administrative Coordinator

Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer

Dan Swalec / Master Electrician

Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer

Pete Wargo / Manager, Information Systems

Michael Wells / Production Technician

Emily Zimmerman / Assistant Curator



**Oraib Toukan** lives in New York and teaches and works in Ramallah and Amman. Toukan works across a variety of media focusing on historiographical absurdities and discreet institutional interventions. Previously, she produced a short sound work for radio for ARTonAIR.org and ArtDubai Projects (2011) and took part in the Serpentine Gallery Map Marathon (2010). Recent exhibitions include the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, the Mori Art Museum, and the 11th Istanbul Biennial.

**Ala Younis** is an artist based in Amman. Collaboration forms a big part of her practice, as does curating and joint book projects. Using objects, film and printed matter, she often seeks instances where historical and political events collapse into personal ones. Recent exhibitions include the 9th Gwangju Biennial (2012); the New Museum Triennial (2012); Tea with Nefertiti at Mathaf and the Institut du Monde Arabe (2012-13); the 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011); Home Works '5, Beirut (2010); and PhotoCairo 4 at the Contemporary Image Collective in Cairo. Recent publications include 'Needles to Rockets' (2009), and 'Tin Soldiers' (2012), a collaboration of artists, writers, soldiers, and photographers on the concept of militancy. Younis curated Kuwait's first national pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), as well as the 'Museum of Manufactured Response to Absence' at the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait (2012), and 'Out of Place' at the Tate Modern and Darat al Funun Amman, among others.

Curated and produced in collaboration with Frieze Foundation curator Nicola Lees, **Frieze Film** is a series of new short-form moving image works by Petra Cortright, Peter Gidal, Patricia Lennox-Boyd, Oraib Toukan, and Erika Vogt produced for television. Petra Cortright, Patricia Lennox-Boyd, and Erika Vogt's Frieze Films were all produced during artist residencies at EMPAC in fall 2013. The works are broadcast on Channel 4 (UK) as part of Random Acts and the shorts will be screened individually prior to EMPAC screening series throughout Spring 2014.

*EMPAC 2013-2014 presentations, residencies, and commissions are supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts (with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation, and the Boeing Company Charitable Trust), and the New York State Council for the Arts. Special thanks to the Jaffe Fund for Experimental Media and Performing Arts for support of artist commissions.*

# SOMETHING SIMILAR



PERFORMANCE

## 33RPM

Rabih Mroué + Lina Saneh

A semi-documentary performance about the final moments of a person's life and how machines live on even after our death.

APRIL 19 8PM

# A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT



TALK

IN OTHER WORDS

## THOMAS KEENAN

News Media, New Documents:  
On Images, Examples, and Evidence

Thomas Keenan will consider the rise of social media and new forms of documentary.

APRIL 26 8PM