

waterside  
contemporary

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2 Clunbury Str, London N1 6TT  
info@waterside-contemporary.com  
waterside-contemporary.com  
tel +44 2034170159

**George Barber**

## waterside contemporary

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'Akula Dream' set on an old Russian submarine armed with ballistic nuclear missiles, blends Barber's familiar editing style with a feature-film approach.

The sub has a new captain who seems to care very little for practical matters or protocol. He feels the submariners' jobs are a waste of time and prefers to lead discussions groups about spiritual matters. On this strange, unspecified mission, the crew begin to project out into the world to see their future and everything above the waves in sharp clarity. Rather than getting to know the world by travelling vast distances and meeting people, they come to understand it just by sitting in the dark holding hands; precisely by being denied sight of the world, they come to see it in more clearly. Shot on a real submarine, the work has impressive original CGI sequences which reference Russian art rather than the classic torpedoes firing out of submarine tubes. The crew 'journey' outside the hull, and make shamanic visits to strange worlds.

### **George Barber**

*Akula Dream*

2015

video

HD video

BAR055/1



## waterside contemporary

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BAR055/1



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### George Barber

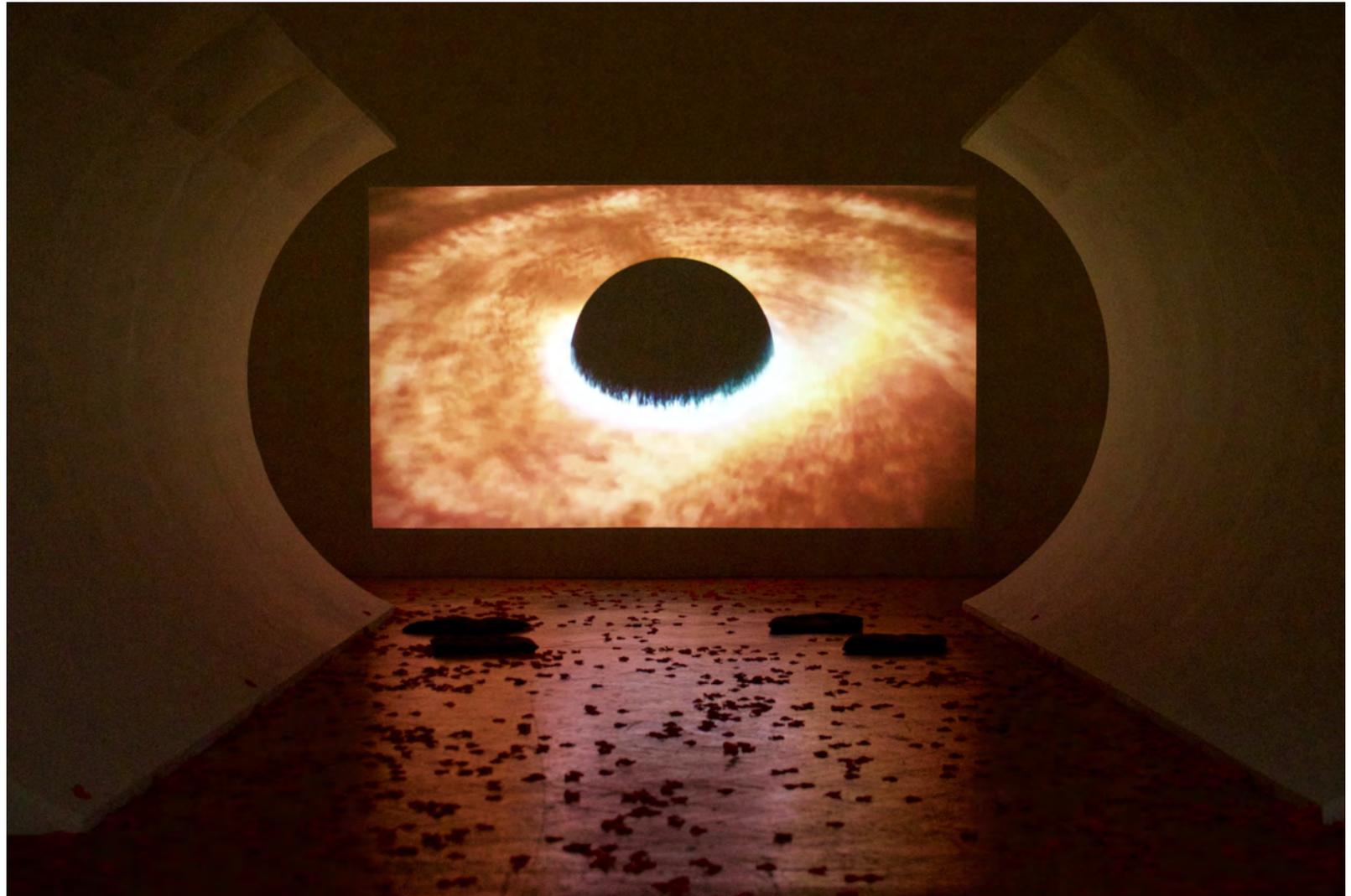
*Akula Dream*  
2015

video

HD video

installation view, Chapter, Cardiff  
Adam Chard

BAR055/1



## waterside contemporary

'Fences Make Senses' rehearses and re-enacts prevailing debates at international borders. Contemporary media reports usually focus on the plight of the forsaken; Barber instead specifically uses non-refugees to improvise situations and themes frequently faced. Buying a totally inappropriate boat from a rogue, for example, or having the wrong paperwork at a border, or on towards more philosophical notions - like the moral dichotomy of Captains who routinely ignore refugees. Created before the recent surge of disasters in the Mediterranean, the exhibition's feature video combines found and made footage to produce a montage anchored on migrant experience. While the reenactments are at times absurd, the artists' own poetic voice-over explores the injustices and paradoxes of the situation. The work proposes the meeting place of poetry and philosophy as a site to consider one of the world's biggest humanitarian and political concerns. Barber's use of non-refugees to perform ultimately reignites and reframes the growing condition, stating it in an unexpected way.

### George Barber

*Fences Make Senses*  
2015

installation  
HD video, found objects  
26'56"



## waterside contemporary

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*Fences Make Senses*  
2015

installation  
HD video, found objects  
26'56"



waterside  
contemporary

In 'Basement Pool,' a companion piece to 'Fences Make Senses', Barber monologues to get 'underneath' the water, taking on an anxiety of hypothetical neighbours excavating basement pools in more affluent areas of London. The indulgent and superficial unease is in stark contrast to problems many others face across the globe.

**George Barber**

*Basement Pool*  
2015

installation  
video installation  
2'25"

installation view, waterside  
contemporary

BAR056/1



waterside  
contemporary

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**George Barber**

*Basement Pool*  
2015

installation  
video installation  
2'25"

BAR056/1



## waterside contemporary

'The Freestone Drone' follows a drone mission from the point of view of the machine. The drone's camera surveys cityscapes, encounters individuals, reports, and in flight becomes aware of its own utility and destiny. The video combines found and made footage to produce an uneasy, seductive montage, anchored on the drone's private thoughts. Barber brings together war, love, life, death, and sends the drone over not only Waziristan, but also to New York and a London suburb. The drone then travels through time, projecting images of the past and possible futures. 'The Freestone Drone' proposes the meeting place of poetry and philosophy as a site to consider contemporary ethical and political concerns. Ultimately, Barber's work underlines the fact that technologies, and in particular modes of warfare, are symptomatic of the way we understand ourselves at our moment in history. Much now done in our name is at odds with democratic tradition: hidden, inhuman and robotic.

### **George Barber**

*The Freestone Drone*  
2013

video  
HD video installation  
13'

video still

BAR044/1



## waterside contemporary

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### George Barber

*The Freestone Drone*  
2013

video  
HD video installation  
13'

video still

BAR044/1



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### George Barber

*The Freestone Drone*  
2013

video  
HD video installation  
13'

installation view at waterside  
contemporary, 2013

BAR044/1



## waterside contemporary

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**George Barber**

*The Freestone Drone*  
2013

video  
HD video installation  
13'

video still

BAR044/1





**George Barber**

*The Rhinestone Drone*  
2013

sculpture  
balsa wood, crystals  
58x38x33cm

BAR051

## waterside contemporary

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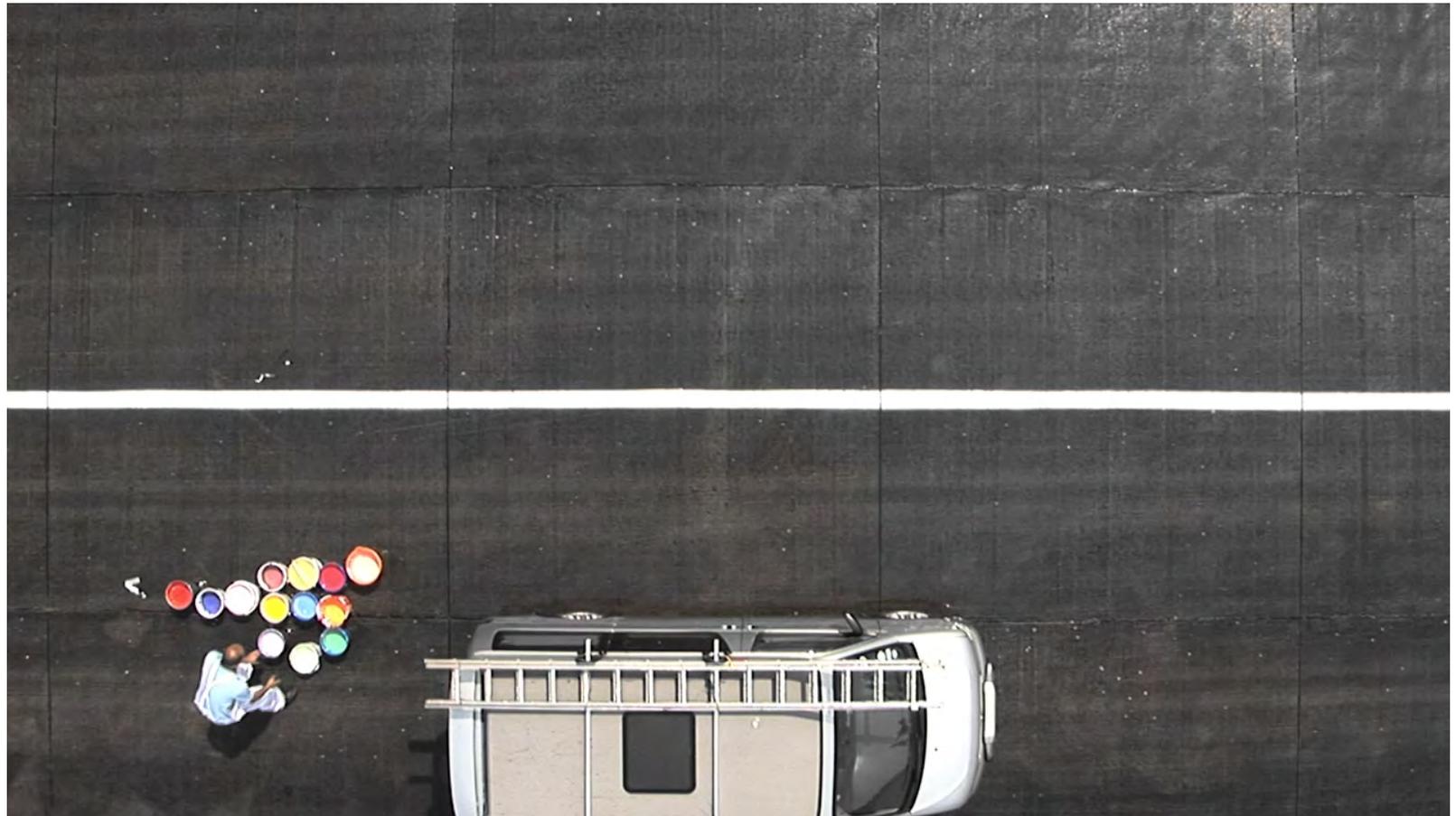
Observed from an overhead camera, a man stops by the roadside one morning and empties the contents of a number of large cans of paint over the tarmac. As the light rises, along with the level of traffic, the cars spread the paint along the surface of the road, creating an abstract smear of vibrant colour. Fundamentally, the piece is a painting done by traffic. Automotive Action Painting is an ironic comment on Abstract Expressionism and shows that a work containing emotion and passion can be created by people driving to work. Nobody has ever thought this. Rational beings driving cars engage with colour and become the brushes producing a very lush 'action' canvas by the end. Automotive action painting won First Prize at the 24th Hamburg International Short Film Festival and has been shown at Tate Britain in London.

### **George Barber**

*Automotive Action  
Painting*  
2007

video  
full HD video  
6'03"

BAR001/1



## waterside contemporary

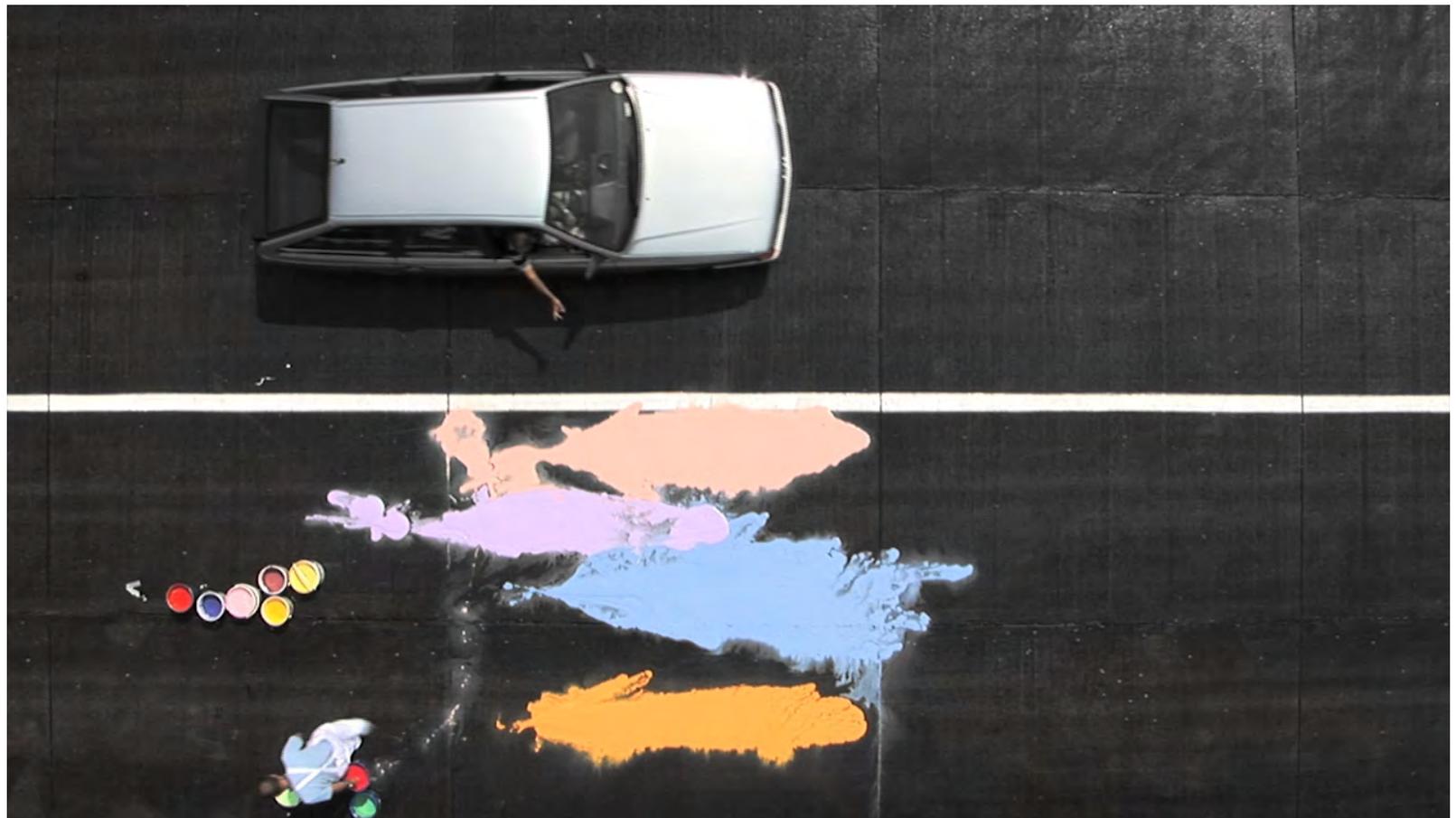
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video  
full HD video  
6'03"

BAR001/1



waterside  
contemporary

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**George Barber**

*Automotive Action  
Painting*  
2007

video  
full HD video  
6'03"

BAR001/1



Barber's appropriation of Andy Warhol's appropriation of an icon of popular cinema. Barber takes on Warhol's famous Marilyn paintings and screenprints, but brings the (then) new technology of video dissolves of colour and adds new layers of deconstruction to the image. *Curtain Trip* resulted from the artist simply hanging three pieces of coloured silk from a ceiling, lying on the ground and looking up at them as they moved in the breeze. Then, he hit on the idea of doubling it all up to create a kaleidoscopic effect. The fabric itself was shot on film; the rest is video editing. *Kite* is a mesmerising journey through a saturated field of colour.

**George Barber**

*2001 Colours Andy  
Never Thought Of*  
1996

video  
DV video  
4'35"

BAR004/1



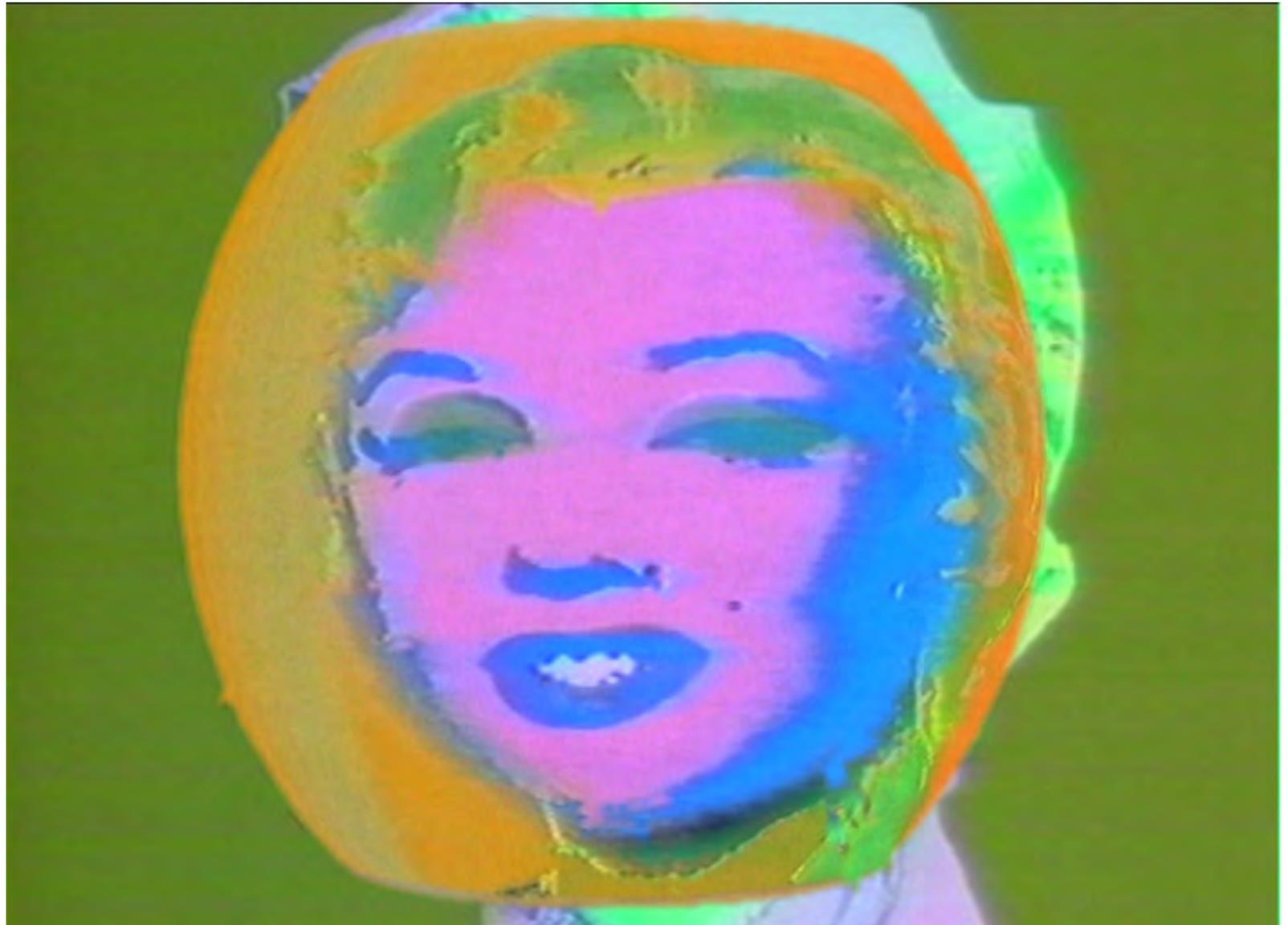
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*2001 Colours Andy  
Never Thought Of*  
1996

video  
DV video  
4'35"

BAR004/1



waterside  
contemporary

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**George Barber**

*2001 Colours Andy  
Never Thought Of  
(Marilyn Iran)*  
2012

photography  
c-type print  
62x47cm

BAR007

## waterside contemporary

Gibberish attempts to interrupt and convey meaning using nonsense language. Gibberish seems to be sense, yet most of the recognisable language spoken is ludicrous and spontaneously thought up. The work starts in a garden with a discussion about lost suitcases at an airport, and over 5 minutes develops through various scenarios into being about a loved kitten and the end of the world.

Gibberish is fundamentally about the voice as an object and as a presence. Once sense has been taken away, and the performers merely make sounds that we apprehend and make familiar to ourselves as 'foreign language'. Without sense we are left with mannerisms, tone, hand and eye movements and, of course, our physical reaction to the speaker's voice quality and tone. Language is a logical structure, generating meaning in building blocks. Here we sense building blocks but have to improvise and generate our own sense to get by. Like listening to someone speaking a foreign language, we have to 'insert' bits, fill the gaps. We struggle to predict what the problems might be that the speaker is telling us about, we look for hints in the voice.

### **George Barber**

*Gibberish*  
2009

video  
single-screen HD video  
6'10"



## waterside contemporary

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single-screen HD video  
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**George Barber**

*Gibberish*  
2009

video  
single-screen HD video  
6'10"



waterside  
contemporary

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The ten-minute 'Beyond Language' features two distinctly unglamorous women howling, grunting and whooping together in an elevated garden overlooking an urban street - that piece could also be considered a summa of Barber's restlessly impious, comically earthy superseding of consensual sense.

**George Barber**

*Beyond Language*  
2005

video  
SD video  
9'46"

BAR030/1



A beautiful woman screams at something unseen off camera. Paul Newman appears eating salad and soon the famous sequence of Paul Newman closing a car door cut with a helicopter takes place. *Absence of Satan* is probably one of George Barber's best Scratch works and is a deft reworking of cinematic narrative and cliché. George Barber is one of the pioneers of Scratch Video which emerged in the UK during the mid-1980s. Scratch video makes use of found images from films and television, cutting seemingly incongruous imagery together to make a new meaning.

**George Barber**

*Absence of Satan*  
1985

video  
4'46

BAR012/1



waterside  
contemporary

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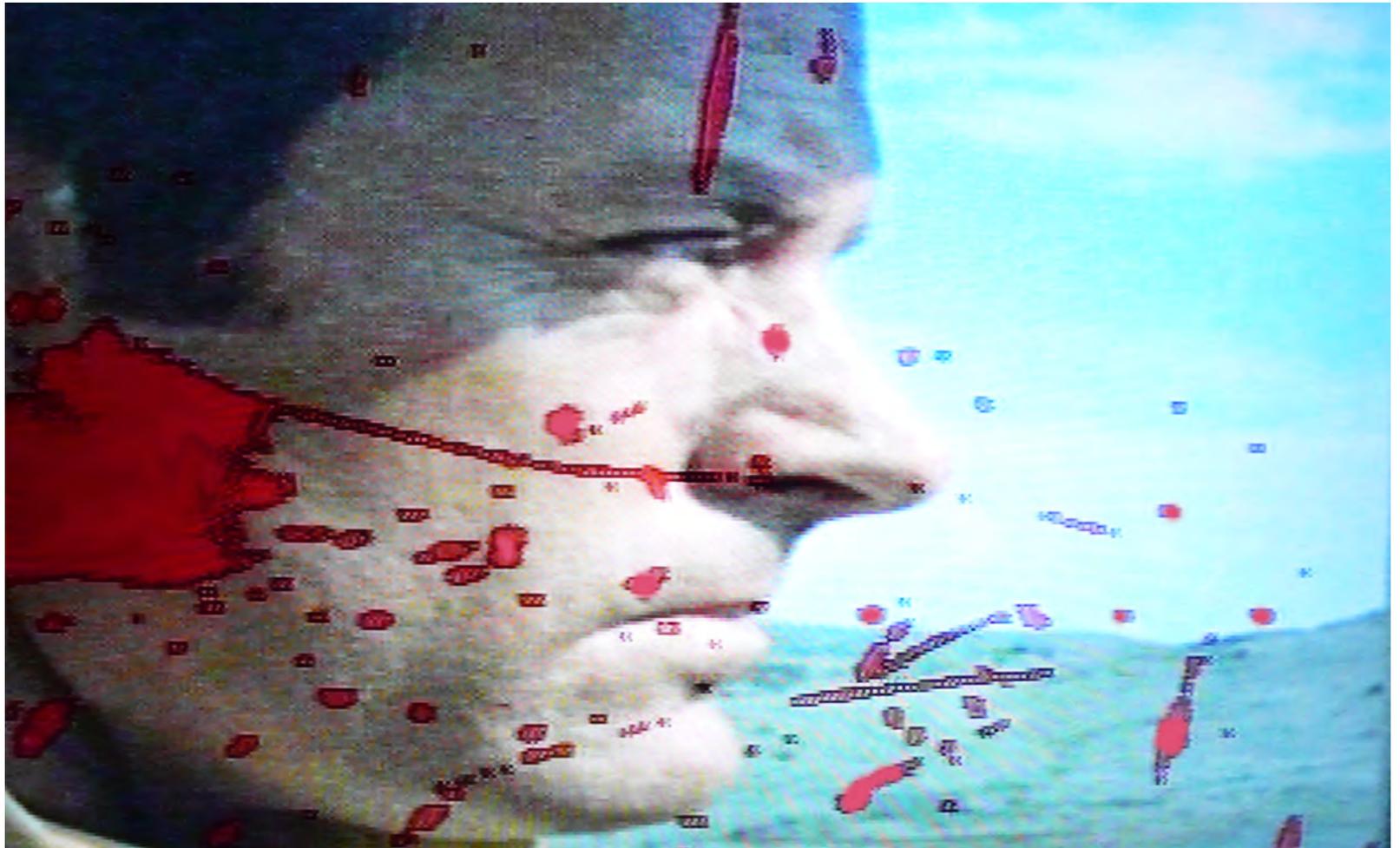
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**George Barber**

*Absence of Satan*  
1985

video  
4'46

BAR012/1



Selected from Barber's recent found footage work, *Following Your Heart* uses off-air adverts and TV films. The central conceit is to take found footage and manipulate it into a new artistic experience. The adverts and dramas all essentially present clichéd dialogue but by the use of repetition, music, the works rise away from being humdrum television into something more effecting.

**George Barber**

*Following Your Heart  
Can Lead to  
Wonderful Things*  
2008

video  
6'03"

BAR031/1



Selected from Barber's recent found footage work, *Following Your Heart* uses off-air adverts and TV films. The central conceit is to take found footage and manipulate it into a new artistic experience. The adverts and dramas all essentially present clichéd dialogue but by the use of repetition, music, the works rise away from being humdrum television into something more effecting.

**George Barber**

*Following Your Heart  
Can Lead to  
Wonderful Things*  
2008

video  
6'03"

BAR031/1



waterside  
contemporary

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**George Barber**

*Following Your Heart  
Can Lead to  
Wonderful Things*  
2008

video  
6'03"

BAR031/1



The first Shouting Match is a well-known work that has been shown as a single screen work at the Tate Modern, DCA and Miami Basel. The piece is a conceptual work and is different every time it is staged. So far the artist has made three versions - in London, Bangalore and Tel Aviv. The next one is likely to be Dallas or New Orleans. It was conceived as a multi-screen gallery piece and once all four versions are complete it will be ready to be shown. A variety of participants, due to the power of their voices, determine the length of their presence on screen. In order for our culture to feel that something is worth watching or good, all the volume and parameters have to be turned 'full up'. Similarly so to express yourself in daily life. Nothing is quiet.

**George Barber**

*Shouting Match*  
2004

video  
11'

BAR032/2



waterside  
contemporary

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BAR032/2



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**George Barber**

*Shouting Match*  
2004

video  
11'

BAR032/2



## waterside contemporary

India Shouting Match is a version of George Barber's well-known Shouting Match but newly shot in India. Barber sees it as an infinitely repeatable conceptual idea and benefits from being different every time it is staged. Take two seated people facing each other. At the given signal they begin shouting. They have to put everything into a short contest. The harder they shout the more they are in the frame, the quieter they are, the more they are withdrawn. If you fall silent - you will be out of frame - out of history. India Shout Match consists of pure shouting.

Visually, India Shouting Match is made up of the actual vocal combat and insight into characters, how they behave, their faces in pain, anger, struggle, insanity, defeat and victory. The sheer sound of the piece is impressive; especially as a multi-screen in galleries and consists of men and women using their voice in a totally irrational, pre-cultural fashion. The howl of madness.

### George Barber

*Shouting Match India*  
2010

video  
6'14"

BAR033/1



waterside  
contemporary

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*Shouting Match India*  
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video  
6'14"

BAR033/1



waterside  
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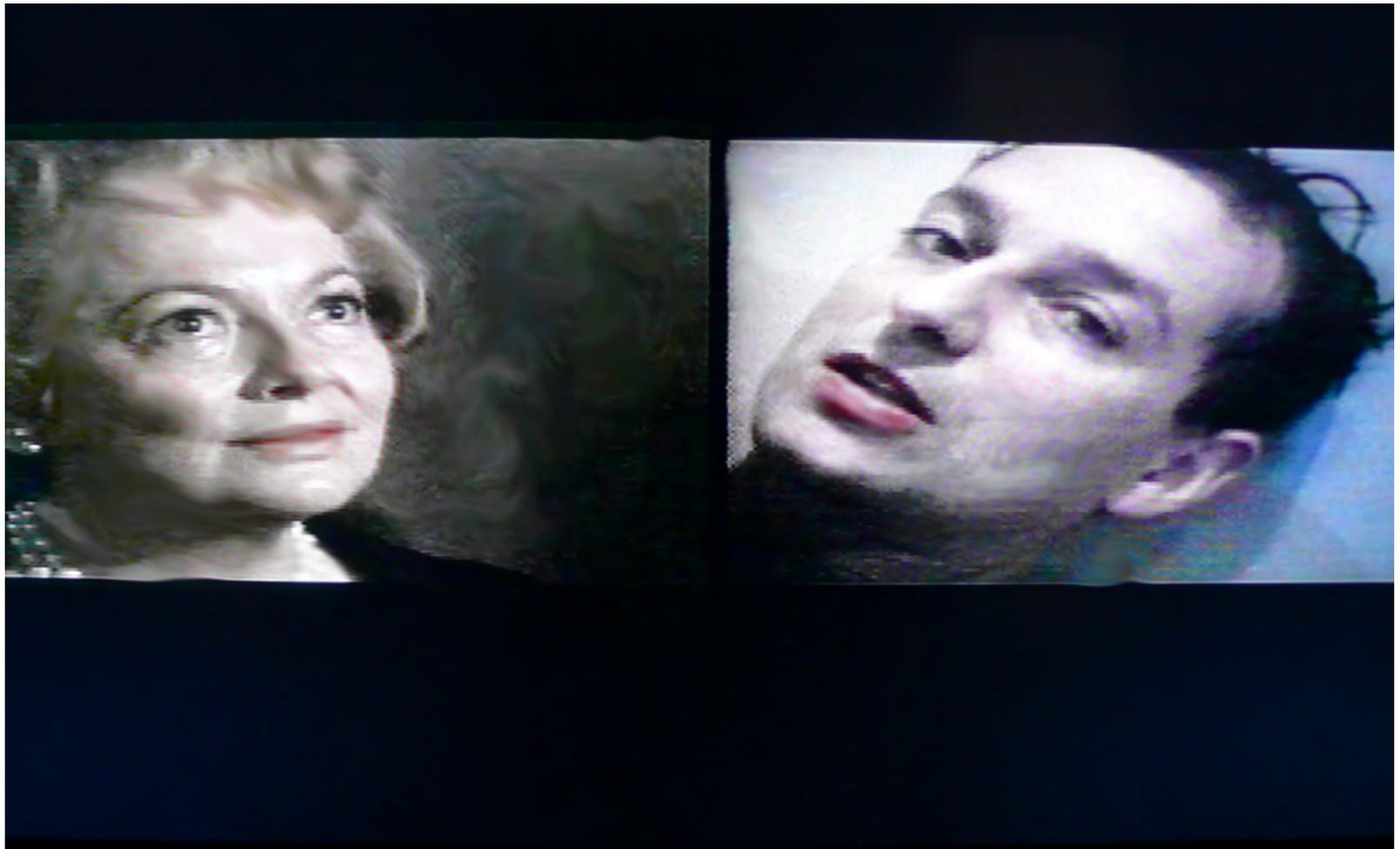
As in earlier tapes, George Barber appropriates popular film culture and engages with it on his own terms. He reclines in his bath narrating, in a loosely constructed monologue, an account of how he survived a plane crash over water and the events which led up to it. A montage of 1970s American disaster films accompany and interact with his tongue-in-cheek account. *Passing Ship* is concerned with ambiguity in the representation of events. Is he concocting a story inspired by watching too much television? Is he contrasting personal experience against the mass media as a critique of the latter? There is no single answer as the tape works at many levels.

**George Barber**

*Passing Ship*  
1994

video  
6'34"

BAR022/1



As in earlier tapes, George Barber appropriates popular film culture and engages with it on his own terms. He reclines in his bath narrating, in a loosely constructed monologue, an account of how he survived a plane crash over water and the events which led up to it. A montage of 1970s American disaster films accompany and interact with his tongue-in-cheek account. *Passing Ship* is concerned with ambiguity in the representation of events. Is he concocting a story inspired by watching too much television? Is he contrasting personal experience against the mass media as a critique of the latter? There is no single answer as the tape works at many levels.

**George Barber**

*Passing Ship*  
1994

video  
6'34"

BAR022/1



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**George Barber**

*Passing Ship*  
1994

video  
6'34"

BAR022/1



waterside  
contemporary

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"Walking Off Court concerns a story I saw in the Times about a tennis coach called James Goodman who had a nervous breakdown around about the time that a motorway was built right outside his house. He spent a lot of time aimlessly walking in circles around new roads and road works. I contacted him and even ended up playing tennis with him. The video is loosely the story around his experience and his changing relationship to his normal circumstances."  
GB

**George Barber**

*Walking Off Court*  
2003

video  
10'30"

BAR029/1



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*Walking Off Court*  
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BAR029/1





**George Barber**

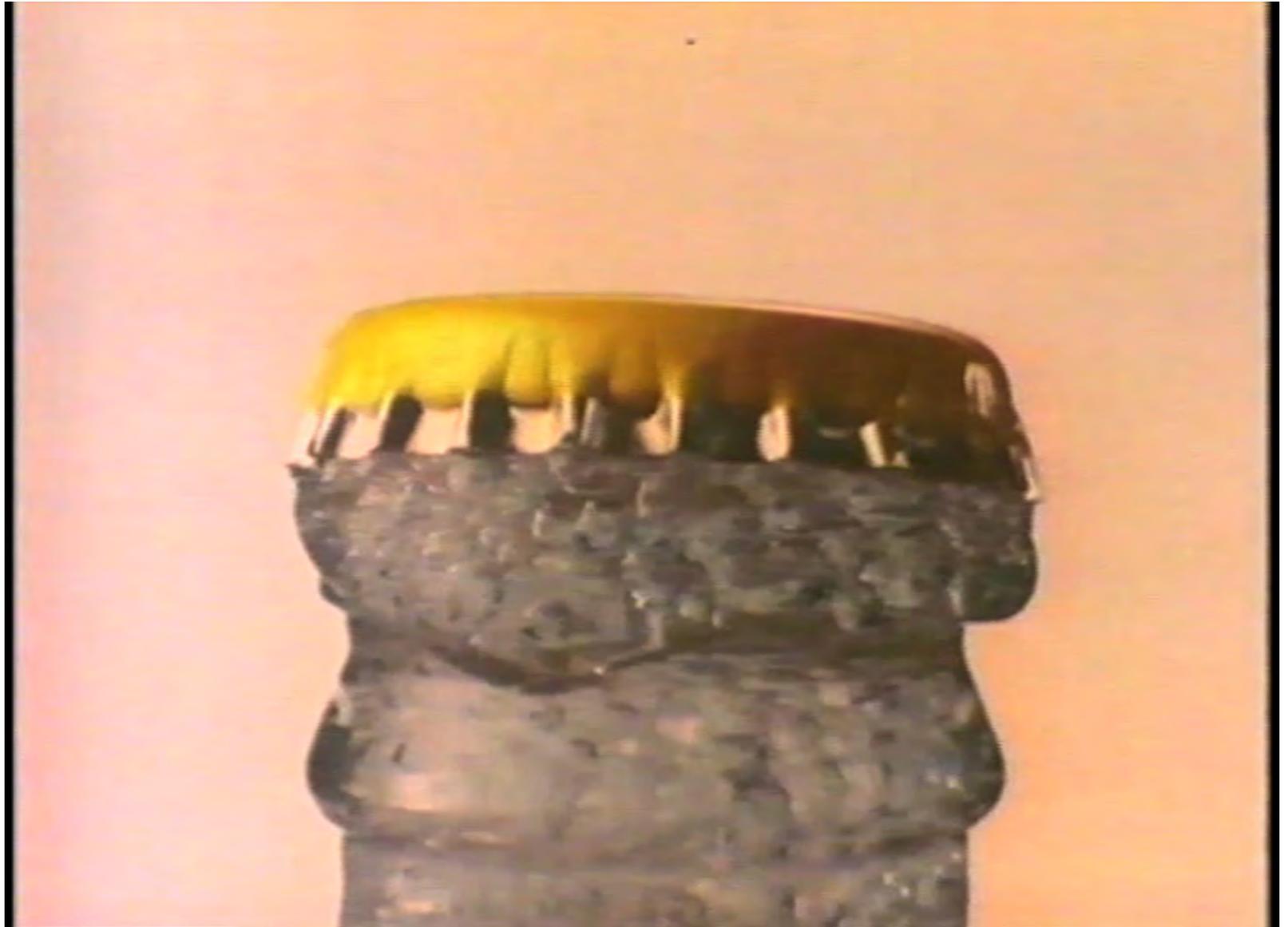
*Schweppes Ad*  
1993

video  
2'19"

BAR019/1

waterside  
contemporary

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**George Barber**

*Schweppes Ad*  
1993

video  
2'19"

BAR019/1

waterside  
contemporary

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**George Barber**

*Tilt*  
1983

video  
5'37

BAR011/1

waterside  
contemporary

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The Very Very End alludes to a common preoccupation of the 1960s, nuclear war. Today we regard this as an outside possibility yet the possession of these weapons is rising and many regimes that already hold them are considered to be far from predictable. The film also references Nevil Shute's novel, 'On the Beach' (1957). Shute sketches a haunting picture of what it is like to wait for a radiation cloud; the result of a conflict far away. Here we find a group of tourists trapped on holiday by war. They become drawn to a new video craze, watching films of outer space, while waiting for the radiation cloud to arrive at this tropical paradise.

**George Barber**

*The Very Very End*  
2013

video  
PAL video, 4x5  
8'40"

BAR052/1

