



Jenny Gillam



The Perfect Moment



2015

HD video, 10.21 minutes

The Perfect Moment is a work made up of video material sourced from YouTube of the hit single 'Empire State of Mind' performed in concert in 2009 by American R&B/hip hop artist, Alicia Keys, with Jay Z as surprise guest. Superstar rapper/producer and the R&B diva, extolling the virtues of New York City in New York could not be more 'pop'.

Sitting somewhere between critique and celebration of popular culture, the work questions the authenticity and limitations of the recorded event and considers the mediation of an experience through documentation. The 'official' video is no more authentic than the cell phone footage, perhaps less so given the commercial imperative's that drive its production, and, while less polished in its presentation, the cell phone footage appears to be a less mediated document of the audience members' lived experience.

This example represents the epitome of what has become a typical use of these technologies, the cell phone as camera, always present, and YouTube both as a mechanism of networked social media distribution and in some ways an archive (although generally of only unlicensed material); a contemporary form of documentary—produced by and presented to the general public without an intermediary and without context, or perhaps, within. Or perhaps within the unending multiplicity of context that is the web.



Jenny Gillam is an artist and academic based in Wellington, New Zealand. Her installation practice includes elements of photography, audio, moving image, video mixing performances and has recently extended to exhibiting living organisms within the gallery. She develops series of exhibitions, sometimes in a site specific manner, often produced collaboratively with other artists or with practitioners from another field. She gained an MFA from RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia in 1999.

