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Media Test Wall Presents

Cyprien Gaillard: Pruitt – Igoe Falls (2008)

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Viewing Hours: Daily 24 Hours

Cambridge, MA-January 2010. The MIT List Visual Arts Center 's Media Test Wall presents Cyprien Gaillard's video *Pruitt – Igoe Falls*. Gaillard's video revisits the symbolic death of architectural modernism through it's depiction of a controlled demolition of a tower block apartment. The artist—who grew up in tower block public housing in a Parisian suburb that has suffered considerable ethnically-motivated violence—has referred to such demolitions as large scale state-sponsored vandalism. Gaillard invokes the eviction that occurs to families faced with the razing of such modernist tower block public housing, and also draws attention to the concurrent violent eviction of personal and public memory.

Pruitt-Igoe Falls does not employ footage of the eponymous project's implosion; rather, Gaillard utilizes video from the controlled demolition of a tower block apartment at 2:30AM, July 13, 2008, in Glasgow, Scotland. As the building collapses, the concomitant dust cloud spreads to cover where the structure once stood and conceals the light emanating from off-camera. This leaves the scene in near blackness before a glow languidly re-illuminates the screen. Only, as the video continues, the ephemeral nebula containing the airborne remnants of the building transform into the monumental downrush of Niagara Falls. This Media Test Wall exhibition was organized by guest curator Alise Uptis.

About the Artist: Cyprien Gaillard was born in 1980 in Paris, France, and graduated from ECAL, École cantonale d'art de Lausanne, Lausanne, France, in 2005. He has received solo exhibitions at venues such as Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany; Hayward Gallery, London, U.K.; and MUSAC, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y Leon, Spain. He has also been included in group exhibitions at The New Museum, New York, NY; Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria; SculptureCenter, New York, NY; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; and was featured in the 5th Berlin Biennale. Gaillard lives and works in Paris, France.

The Media Test Wall, an ongoing series of contemporary video exhibitions, is located in the Whitaker Building (21 Ames St., Building 56) on the MIT campus. This presentation of the Media Test Wall is generously supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Council For the Arts at MIT, and the Robert and Maurine Rothschild Fund.

