



PONCE DE LEÓN

(co-directed with Jim Drain, 26:00, HD, 5.1 sound, 2012)

"I could do wonders if I didn't have a body. But the body grabs me, it slows me, it enslaves me."

As the legend would have it, Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de León arrived in Florida in 1513 in search of the fountain of youth. In the world presented here, he has found it: our PONCE DE LEÓN discovered the fountain of youth and drank of immortality in the waning moments of his life. In an instant, he became old forever – an 80-year old Spaniard who would continue to walk the earth for century after century after century, watching as coral foundations gave way to mangrove swamps, as swamps were drained and Miami highrises were erected, as buildings decayed and swamps returned. Our PONCE DE LEÓN is an immortal for whom time poses the greatest dilemma – it is a constant, a given, and his personal battle lies in trying to either arrest time entirely or to make the hands on his clock move ever faster. For PONCE DE LEÓN, time is a problem of body, and only by escaping his container can he escape time itself.

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BIOGRAPHY

Ben Russell makes films, installations, and performances that foster a deep engagement with the history and semiotics of the moving image. He has had solo screenings and exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Wexner Center for the Arts, threewalls and the Museum of Modern Art. A 2008 Guggenheim Fellowship and 2010 FIPRESCI award recipient, Ben began the Magic Lantern screening series in Providence, Rhode Island, was co-director of the artist-run space BEN RUSSELL in Chicago, IL and performed in a double-drum trio called BEAST. He currently resides in Paris, France.

Jim Drain is from Cleveland, Ohio. Drain creates elaborate, colorful, mind-manifesting, and anthropomorphic sculptures, and recently an edition of wearable art sweaters; these works are manufactured by the use of an industrial knitting machine. Of his practice, he says, "Knitting is like painting, looking at the shelf, you never know how the colors are going to work together- in pattern, in texture, after being washed or fluffed or felted." He was a member of the seminal Providence collective Forcefield and works in several different media such as comics, music, drawing and painting, video and performance.

CONTACT: Ben Russell, 116 boulevard de Charonne, Paris 75020 France *BR@DIMESHOW.COM*