

**Deej Fabryc & Elvis Richardson**  
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The Physics Room

## **Welcome to Slide Show Land**

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Leisurely speaking recreational family activities range from such indoor pleasures as reading of poetry or playing chamber string quartet music in bourgeoisie XIX century home to more popular outdoor activities of post-industrial society as travel, sport and dance, not to forget even a common drug use among different generations of the family. However the overwhelming production and consumption of images in mass society has become the most popular recreational activity since the invention of inexpensive analogue and digital recording devices. The making of images has turned into recreational activity itself integrating travel and family reunion into just another subject of photographs or videos. To meet family without any image recording device on travel is almost as extraordinary as to not recognize Madonna in the street.

Yet the fact that usually particular events of higher significance like wedding, travel, family reunion or weekend get into focus instead of dish washing certifies that we haven't entered the stage of pure leisure societies and cocaine nights (J.G. Ballard) have not become our days yet. However who would resist to delve into analogue senses and sensibilities embodied in the vibration of warm light and color on the wall?  
- Welcome to Slide Show Land.

Slide Show Land (2002) is collection of collections of 35mm family and travel slides from hundreds of different families dating from 1940 - 1995 (over 30,000 slides), advertised as 'travel and family slides', and purchased so far through various Internet auction sites by Elvis Richardson (b. Sydney 1965), Australian artist and curator living in New York. Slide Show Land is to be shown at The Physics Room New Zealand and Columbia MFA graduation show as an interactive installation. Recently Slide Show Land has been successfully shown together with live DJ music at the Bi-Fi screening in NYC.

The geography of collected images reaches Cape Cod, Paris, South Africa, While entering unfamiliar places at Elvis Richardson installation we at the same time enter unfamiliar lives even if they do not seem to be so different from ours. The fact that private images of family life have become public explores not only our trashophilia, but raises interesting questions about privacy and publicity as well - however while we

think about it the next slide transcends to another episode - that's the particularity of the medium. In some respect the situation reminds Jonathan Fuerst - the character of Jack Nicholson in *Carnal Knowledge* (1971) diaprojecting his former girlfriends for the couple of friends and commenting them in a highly explicit way. Elvis Richardson's slides may be not so explicit as our thoughts about them as well. However the aesthetics of them reminds other characters - some shots look like photographs of Wolfgang Tillmans, Juergen Teller or Rineke Dijkstra. It feels as if you were flipping pages of *Face* or *Purple Fashion*. Well, those are not bad magazine though. And it's good to know where things come from.

It is impossible to miss the double nature of Slide Show Land too. While traveling in time and space together with strangers and rotating in 360 degrees memory carousel one visit issues of ready-made, found object, re-collection as well, and, of course, the medium par excellence - diaprojection. As we know slide (diaprojection) is a particular underrated sub-medium located between photography and film and still been waiting for more light among the tons of video and film studies. Therefore one could say that while acting as a cultural anthropologist in search of particular folk-records Elvis Richardson steps into media studies as well not to forget integration of such a commercial structure as Ebay into her practice (which adds yet another aspect to Slide Show Land<sup>1</sup>).

There is another reason to remember Jack Nicholson again - it is usually white male who displays the power of collection. Woman traditionally tend to be turned into an item of it. Re-collecting slide collections Elvis Richardson enters double identity which corresponds in an interesting way with her detective (usually male domain as well) strategies particularly used in previous works. The same may happen with the viewer when watching of slides provoke tracing the individual story back. Since subjects of slides are rather familiar, participants are invited to tell their own stories about projected images.

These are not slides whose viewing is intended to retroactively change the history, however it might radically change your hour.

1 - Ebay's popularity within contemporary artworld is rising: one could remember Christop Buechel who sold his right of participation in Manifesta 4 biennial this year for US \$15,099.00 to freebiennial.org.