

NOTES FOR BOB

Notes For Bob – a new project by Dani Marti

In his latest video project, developed during his Australia Council residency in New York in 2012, the subject of Dani Marti's film appears to be the ultimately vulnerable one: a blind man. Marti purposefully searched for a gay blind man to film in order to further explore the dynamics that operate in his previous works. Issues of power, control, and the ethics of the gaze, are all pushed to their limits in Notes For Bob, a two channel video work that depicts an intimate exchange between Bob and Marti.

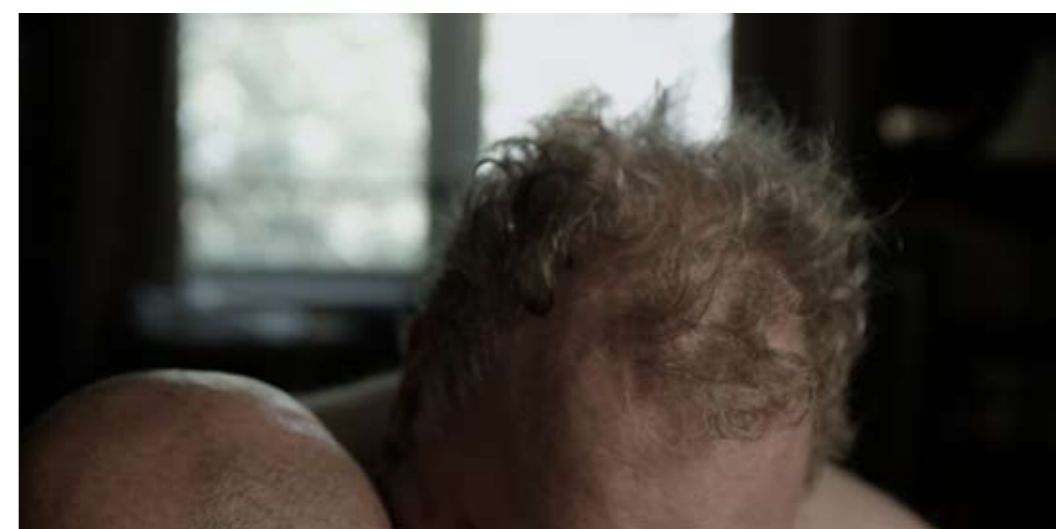
Through the artist's exquisite sensitivity to his subject matter and his unique cinematic style which breaks down the conventions of documentary narrative and its pretensions to objective truth, Bob is afforded an agency that he rarely experiences in his own life. Marti instead becomes a participant who is (literally at some points) manipulated in Bob's world in order for him to achieve what are rare moments of intimacy, not through overt sexual acts, but through the power of sound.

Stripped down to their underwear, Bob sits on the artist's lap and is held tightly in an act that is simultaneously maternal and yet masculine. Bob also guides Marti through the process of singing specific notes for him to which he masturbates. Bob records these notes and replays them at night, getting lost in the beauty of the human voice, which takes him as a blind man to both a meditative space and/or a sexual one.

Once again, Marti has produced a work of compelling beauty which leaves the viewer both entranced by the aesthetics of the work and the ideas about human relationships it raises. Marti's work is often described as "confronting"; in Notes For Bob the real confrontation is not, as one would expect, that he has filmed a vulnerable blind man but the way it confronts our own ability to come to terms with the issue of disability and sexuality and the very personal ways that the desire for human intimacy always needs to find expression.

Carrie Miller , January 2013

project supported by the Australia Arts Council and developed during an artist residency in NYC, 2012



NOTES FOR BOB, 2013
21'41"- loop + 3' of darkness
1st room
1 channel 5k video screen projection

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NOTES FOR BOB 2

In the process of getting to know Bob, Marti discovered that he found it difficult to find people to sing for him the way the artist does in his video. Bob felt judged by people who saw his idiosyncratic way of finding sexual gratification as weird or abnormal – judgements that as a blind man he already experiences.

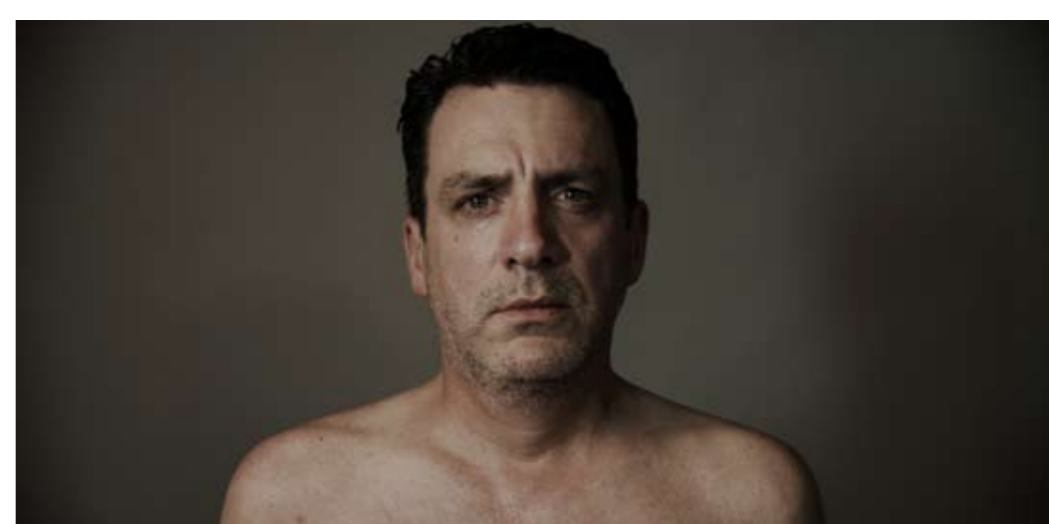
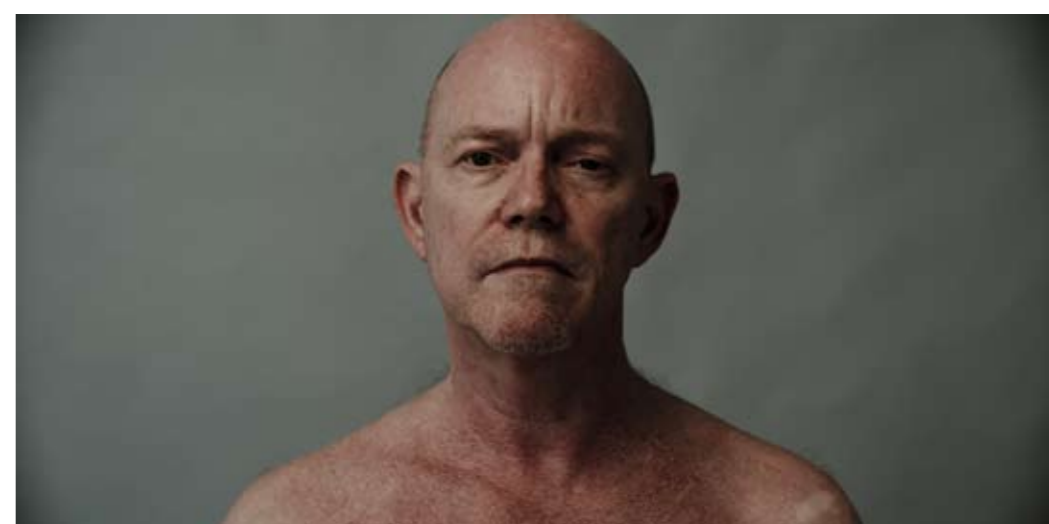
In wanting to fulfil Bob's desires for both sexual fulfilment and a sense of connectedness with the world, Marti offered to find Bob volunteers who would sing the notes that were so affecting to Bob.

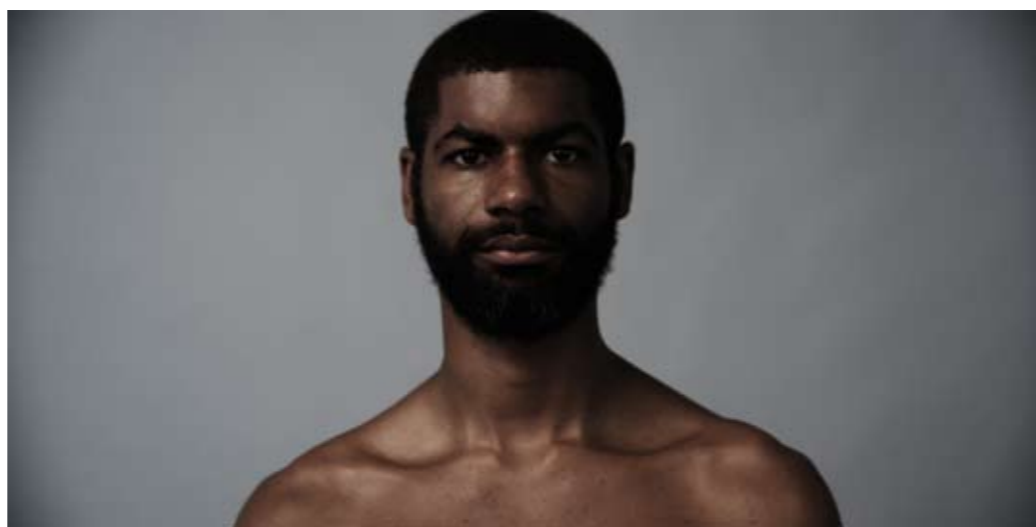
Marti posted advertisements asking for volunteers, offering sexual favours in exchange for singing Notes For Bob. The artist recruited twenty one men over a period of three months who came to his studio and were filmed in their underwear and in the nude, singing the notes that have a specific sexual charge for Bob. This work functioned as bridge between Bob's isolated, blind world and the very visual world inhabited by gay men in their casual sexual encounters. The result are a series of striking portraits of men of all ages and types, bound by a common purpose that transcends the fleeting nature of anonymous sex.

Marti has since copied all the sounds from this project on to a CD for Bob – a gift which further suggests Marti's commitment to his subjects. Bob was profoundly touched by the recording which allows him to remain connected to the intimacy he experienced with Marti and to express his sexuality in his terms. The artist remains in touch with this once isolated man and continues to sing notes for him over the phone.

Carrie Miller , January 2013

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NOTES FOR BOB, 2013-

2nd room

5k video screen projections- non synchronized

9 projections:

3 at the front of the room (faces) -red as one projection 54'14"- loop

3 x2 lateral walls (bull bodies) - red as two projectons, one on each wall- no sound

left wall- 9' loop right wall-15' loop

