



#standby

Annika Kühn

abstract

This short film detaches and rearranges audio-visual material to explore the affectivity of cruise terminals in standby mode, thus reflecting how such a mode similarly runs through the filming process and the scenes that result from it. Visually, the film leads the viewer through a variety of motionless infrastructures – from an entry hall to gangways – creating a montage of fragmented images that radicalizes the sense of social detachment often ascribed to places of transition (Augé, 1995). Yet, although lingering on these infrastructural fragments, the camera captures and generates a pulsating tension: a humming that becomes almost painfully tangible and near unbearable. Noisy reminders of busier times, these tensions also point to the ephemerality of stillness and of standstill. Meanwhile, the film's soundtrack merges pollution data turned into music with the babbling voices of the privileged, a mix that signifies the political scope of cruising as a contested global practice. As the film ends, the soundtrack fades while the final image gives us another fleeting glimpse of transformation. While standby has a circular rhythm that constantly opens up for new beginnings, it also touches precarious ground: in pandemic times, the question 'what comes next' (Simone, 2017) haunts a hard-hit industry, revealing standing-by as an uncomfortable and hard-to-live with practice of enduring – sometimes longer than we can stand.

#standby was produced in collaboration with Berlin- and Hamburg-based video artists Friederike Güsselfeld (director), Stefan Rosche (director of photography) and Iwan Schemet (sound), and with financial support from Hamburg University, Germany. The short version displayed at the *ephemera* website can be accessed here:

<http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/standby>. The original film has been uploaded to <https://vimeo.com/318160606>.

references

Augé, M. (1995) *Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. London/New York: Verso.

Simone, A. (2017) 'All over the place: The arts of standing still', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Boston, United States, 9-11 April.

the author

Annika Kühn works as a researcher, writer and filmmaker in the fields of critical infrastructure studies and sustainable urban mobilities. She has organized international conference panels, screenings, and workshops on the affectivity, temporality and dis/connectivity of urban mobilities, and has explored infrastructural standby as a mundane mode of ordering in *Infrastructural standby: Caring for loose relations* (*ephemera*, forthcoming). This short film is part of Annika Kühn's PhD project 'In transition. On standby'.

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