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Guido van der Werve, Nummer veertien, *home*, 2012  
 © Guido van der Werve; courtesy of the artist and Lühring Augustine, New York

## Guido van der Werve: Nummers Vier, Acht, Veertien

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May 23 – September 6, 2015

Opening reception: Friday, May 22, 6-10pm

Deceptively simple at first glance, Guido van der Werve's films weave together meticulous visual composition, symphonic scores, and durational performance to create enigmatic and ambiguous narratives that evoke and critique notions of the sublime landscape. Marked by a meditative, dream-like quality and punctuated with surprising moments of deadpan humour, van der Werve's work explores themes such as loss, solitude, belonging, and the self.

Esker Foundation presents three of van der Werve's 35mm films: nummer vier, acht and veertien. Numbered sequentially as a nod to the organization of musical compositions – the artist is a classically trained musician and frequently scores his own work – van der Werve's numbered films feature the artist as the protagonist in a series of vaguely episodic, loosely woven narratives that, similar to dreams, seamlessly fuse the quotidian and the surreal, casting both in the realm of the everyday.

Nummer vier, *I don't want to get involved in this. I don't want to be part of this. Talk me out of it* (2005), like many of van der Werve's shorter films, reveals a prolonged, intense meditation on depressive themes that unexpectedly veers into moments of irony and absurd comedy. Centered around two iconic musical compositions – Chopin's Nocturne No. 1 in B Flat Minor, played live by the artist; and Mozart's Requiem in D Minor, performed live by Vocaal Ensemble Markant and Kamerorkest Musica Ducis brabantiae – nummer vier's aural focus amplifies its emotional and visual impact.

Nummer acht, *everything is going to be alright* (2007) documents a performance in which van der Werve strolled calmly ahead of a 3,500 tonne icebreaker as it carved through the ice of the Gulf of Bothnia, off the west coast of Finland. The simplicity of the performative gesture is set into stark relief by the sheer size of the icebreaker and the monumental scope of the surrounding landscape. Distinct from many of van der Werve's other films in its unyielding focus on a single take, nummer acht, in as few words as possible, speaks volumes to notions of transience, transcendence, and futility.

The longest and most elaborate of the three films, nummer veertien, *home* (2012), weaves three distinct yet interrelated narratives and a three-movement, twelve-act score composed by the artist and performed live by Orchestre Colonne and the Jeune Chœur d'Île-de-France into a broader exploration of place, identity, belonging, and loss. Amid the biography of Alexander the Great and details from the artist's personal trajectory, *home* documents van der Werve's gruelling 1,700km



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triathlon from the crypt housing Chopin's heart in Warsaw, to his body's resting place in Paris. Through such acts of physical endurance, van der Werve uses his body and his own mortality as a narrative device and as a means of underscoring his work's melancholic themes and surreal atmosphere.

## latest news

### Work of Art: Ryan Slugget's Wig Slip (Male)

Katherine Ylitalo profiles Ryan Slugget's Wig Slip (Male), one of the many works of art in the Atlantic Avenue Art Block's public atrium, for Avenue magazine.

» Avenue Magazine (<http://www.avenuecalgary.com/City-Life/Detours/Work-of-Art-Wig-Slip-Male-by-Ryan-Sluggett/>)

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