

# VI, VII

## Benjamin Crotty Biography

Born in Spokane, Washington, Paris-based filmmaker Benjamin Crotty studied figurative painting at Yale University followed by film at Le Fresnoy – Studio National in northern France. He left school with an esthetic penchant for the banality of American domestic standards (the family included), bucolic landscapes, military iconography, the conventions of episodic TV and the idle sense of time inspired by the viewing of soap operas.

Since leaving the Fresnoy, his work has been focused on 16mm narrative film, including *Visionary Iraq* (2009), a queer family melodrama about the Iraq War, made together with Portuguese-American filmmaker Gabriel Abrantes, where the filmmakers play father and mother, as well as son and adopted daughter in love, and *Liberdade* (2011), a love story set in Angola. *Fort Buchanan* (2014), the filmmaker's first feature film, again looks at war through the lens of domestic melodrama, focusing on sexual frustration and down time spent on a woodland military base.

His 2016 exhibition at VI, VII, "Division Movement to Vungtau" made in collaboration with French artist Bertrand Dezoteux, derives from a similar obsession with the prosaic side of militarized life, using material sourced from the US National archives to offer a "reverse shot" of US army abuses and excesses. Walking a line between home movie, experimental film and propagandistic documentary, *Division Movement to Vungtau* diverts the viewer from the idea of war as an uninterrupted continuum of violence, aligning itself more closely with psychedelic cultural production for children of the *Mary Poppins* (Robert Stevenson, 1964) and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (Stevenson, 1971) variety.

The artist's work in film and video has been shown in numerous international film festivals such as Rotterdam and Locarno; on regional television in the United States, national television in France, and in institutions such as the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève, the Palais de Tokyo, Palazzo Grassi and Tate Modern.

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Crotty's first feature film, Fort Buchanan, was debuted at the 2014 Locarno Film Festival and had its US premiere at the MoMA / Film Society of Lincoln Center's New Directors/New Films Festival in March 2015. His work was included in a retrospective Friends with Benefits: An Anthology of Four New American Filmmakers at the Film Society at Lincoln Center, New York in February 2016.