

## **Ed Atkins**

### *Performance Capture*

2015 – ongoing. An unfinished, unending work in progress.

Video with sound, 1hr40

Over two weeks of the Manchester International Festival in 2015, Ed Atkins operated a motion capture studio, a post-production studio, a render farm, and a provisional cinema, all within the Manchester Art Gallery. Over one hundred participants in the festival — from prima ballerinas to cleaners; family members to curators — were invited to don a motion capture suit, have their faces codified, and recite a sliver of a long, giddy soliloquy entitled 'Performance Capture', written by the artist. Each performance animated the same figure: a customised, off-the-shelf figure bought from turbosquid.com, reduced to a severed head and some wayward arms and hands. Each performance was sutured together, accumulating to form a bleak recital that, after processing, was spat out as an ever-growing video that both documented its production, and produced a deathly, funny, broken monologue. Needless to say, the technology did not comply, went awry, participants dropped out, and the planned pipeline — performance, clean-up, rendering, editing — slipped to an irretrievable impasse. As a finished work it quickly became untenable. As a peculiar census, a document of the failings of any attempt to sufficiently 'capture' a real person, it stands as a singular testament. An insistent outtake; a pathetic, romantic failure; a rebuttal of digital technology's seeming capacity to replace imminent, corporeal life.

This hobbled, pertinently flawed work is shown here in its incomplete entirety.

In 2016 the video was installed at The Kitchen in New York. Throughout the run, different musicians were invited to improvise a soundtrack alongside the video. Okkyung Lee, Ches Smith, Graham Lambkin, Bob Bellerue, Marcia Bassett, Matthew Regul, C. Spencer Yeh, and Ed Atkins all performed alongside the video, attempting both a reclamation and a reanimation of this most done-in of videos.

An edition was produced for The Kitchen, featuring every single document, every single asset that was used in the production of the video on one hard disk. Available here: <https://thekitchennyc.square.site/ed-atkins>

The work is shown here for a limited period courtesy the artist, The Kitchen NYC, and Manchester International Festival. With thanks to Hans Ulrich Obrist, Alex Poots, Pollyanna Clayton-Stamm, Tim Griffin and Lumi Tan.