

Community Project Kypseli 2016 – The Ring

30.05 – 05.06.2016

Municipal cinema STELLA - 34 Tenedou Str., Kypseli
Curator: Helena Papadopoulos | Radio Athènes

Robert Ashley
Perfect Lives

A television opera (1978-1983)

- I. The Park (Privacy Rules)
- II. The Supermarket (Famous People)
- III. The Bank (Victimless Crime)
- IV. The Bar (Differences)
- V. The Living Room (The Solutions)
- VI. The Church (After the Fact)
- VII. The Backyard (T'Be Continued)

The setting: early summer, small-town Illinois. *Perfect Lives* pursues the thoughts and sensations of several local characters and two out-of-towners as they intersect catalytically around a central event.

As Ashley tells it: "An over-the-hill entertainer, and his somewhat younger pal, Buddy (The World's Greatest Piano Player), find themselves in a small town of the Midwest circuit playing at The Perfect Lives Lounge. They become friends with the son and daughter of the local Sheriff, and the four hatch a plan to do something that if they are caught, it will be a crime, but if they not caught, it will be art. They've set themselves a kind of metaphysical challenge.

It is discovered that one of the tellers in The Bank, Gwyn, is going to elope on a certain day with Ed, and they have to go east into Indiana. The four decide to take the money out of The Bank, put it in the elopement car, and return it the next day. At the same time, the seedy-looking older guy and his pal with two dogs (Permanence and Impermanence) come into The Bank and the dogs pretend they are fighting.

The Bank Manager goes into the safe and discovers that the money is gone. He announces that there is no money in The Bank, and because of the symbolic meaning of that moment the five tellers, Jennifer, Kate, Eleanor, Linda, and Susie, all see something. They each have a religious experience. Kate sees Perfect Lives, Eleanor falls in love at first sight, Susie quits because she's interested in opera. Everybody's career is totally changed. And there is a question of whether or not this is actually a real event."

Known for his experimental theater and large scale-performance works, for his years at the forefront of the avant-garde, Robert Ashley is a pre-eminent writer. "Echoes of Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein" says The New York Times, "a major work".

"*Perfect Lives* is an endless and seamless dreamscape of the musicality of the spoken word. Last winter after performing *Swimming to Cambodia* I would lie on the floor and listen to perfect Lives over and over. It floats in my head like a memorable, ever-changing dream"