

**ArtReview**

Editors. "Simulations, Ruins and Chinese Goths: Arts and Culture this April."  
*ArtReview*, April 8, 2022.

**It's not all about Venice... *ArtReview* editors on exhibitions, film streamings and talks to catch this month**



*David Claerbout, Aircraft (F.A.L.), 2015-2021, single channel video projection, black & white, stereo audio, endless.*  
 Courtesy the artist, Esther Schipper, Sean Kelly

David Claerbout, *Dark Optics* at Sean Kelly, New York  
 27 April – 4 June

The nature of the virtual object, of documentary truth and our access to history have long been key concerns in David Claerbout's disarming video works, in which complex digital simulation has come to play an increasingly central role. *Dark Optics* presents the recent *Aircraft (F.A.L.)* (2015-2021), in which an impossibly shiny but old-fashioned propeller passenger aircraft (a Douglas DC-4 is this critic's guess) is found stranded on a wooden scaffold in an empty hangar, a bored security guard guarding it from nobody much. The glossy aircraft is a simulation, presented in neurotic, inert detail, speaking to the disintegration of materiality and our faith in images in the era of deep-fakes, where even twentieth-century optimism of air travel for all is reduced to a virtual collectible. The new *The Close* (2022), meanwhile, recreates a piece of 1920s documentary film, full of jumps, scratches and speckles, depicting the everyday goings-on in a grimy working-class street somewhere in Europe. Finally focusing on the stilled figure of a little boy, impossibly captured in 'time-slice' photography from every angle, *The Close* offers a sort of redemptive fiction of the photographic image's access to reality, like a wormhole between our time and a century ago. [J.J. Charlesworth](#)