

# SEAN KELLY

Dillon, Noah. "David Claerbout at Sean Kelly," *Artcritical*, April 7, 2016.

**artcritical**  
the online magazine of art and ideas

## David Claerbout at Sean Kelly



David Claerbout, Still from *KING* (after Alfred Wertheimer's 1956 picture of a young man named Elvis Presley), 2015 – 2016. Single channel video projection, HD animation, black & white, silent, TRT: 10 minutes. Courtesy of the artist and Sean Kelly.

It can be curious to find digital images in video: *Jurassic Park* (1993) still looks pretty sharp, while pixelated objects in more recent monster or action movies can stick out like a sore thumb. David Claerbout's current show at Sean Kelly, his first at the gallery and his first in New York in eight years, plays both. His 2015–16 video, *KING* (after Alfred Wertheimer's 1956 picture of a young man named Elvis Presley), digitally reconstructs, in the round, a 1956 photo of Elvis at home. The detail, while startling, in many places comes off as rubbery, like a video game. Nonetheless, it's a wonder to have long-gone artifacts revived, to walk through a still image. Even more striking is *Oil Workers (from the Shell company of Nigeria) returning home from work, caught in torrential rain* (2013), another digital reconstruction, which inhabits the other end of the spectrum: of completely convincing virtual detail. As the camera pans through a picture of laborers sheltering under a flooded overpass, one is challenged to distinguish between Bill Viola-like slow motion and uncanny, still reproduction. Claerbout's careful vision allows us to revel in still images precisely because he makes them almost live.