

“Der Himmel über Kalifornien,,



Artist:	Terrence Handscomb
Title of work:	“Der Himmel über Kalifornien”
Medium:	Single Channel Video
Production Date:	February 2007
Production Details:	Original video feed from a modified <i>PXLVision 2000</i> camera patched directly to a Mac Powerbook via a DV Bridge.
Standard:	Video: NTSC (ITU-R BT.601) anamorphic 16:9 (forced pan & scan). Audio: PCM Stereo 48 kHz, 16 bit.

Terrence Handscomb’s *Der Himmel über Kalifornien* is a sardonic critique of Californian culture. Handscomb takes some fundamental Californian cultural tropes – a fascination with the body, cosmetic surgery and the prolongation of youth, science-fiction mysticism and the suspension of death and stirs them into a thick mix of low-resolution Film-Noir stylistics.

The title for the work satirically references German filmmaker Wim Wenders’ 1987 film *Der Himmel über Berlin* (‘Wings of Desire’, USA title) in which an angel (Bruno Ganz), who tires of overseeing the melodramatic shortcomings of mortal human existence, himself falls to earth. Handscomb summons the Miltonesque theme of a fall from grace and considers how hilarious some attempts at redemption can become, if the fall is never fully acknowledged in the first place.

The video is composed in five parts. These include sections on missing children, an analogical fall from grace, male cosmetic surgery, and death.

The impetus for the work followed from a particular reading of the book *The Case of California* by West Hollywood based theorist and art-critic Laurence A Rickels. In his book, Rickels argues that the thing, which is ‘California’, conceals a sadistic death-cult representing a reversal of psychoanalysis and German National Socialism.

Der Himmel über Kalifornien contains German titling and a mixture of German and English language narrations, scripted by the artist.

A web-based Apple Quicktime version of *Der Himmel über Kalifornien* is available at ...
<http://www.terrence.org>.

Print resolution video still images and a copy of this document are available for download
at ... http://www.terrence.org/der_himmel/press/.