

# SEAN KELLY

“David Claerbout,” *Art in America*, March 2016.

## Art in America

### David Claerbout



David Claerbout installs scrims to angle out from the wall so that his digital projections fall across them like afternoon sunlight slanting through a window. The placement prompts viewers to actively walk around the images as they observe them, the constant movement mirroring the artist's play with motion and stillness. *Oil Workers (from the Shell company of Nigeria) returning home from work, caught in torrential rain* (2013) reconstructs a found image of men taking shelter under a bridge as a torrential downpour fills the street with muddy water. Claerbout has reproduced the photograph using 3-D computer technology; the perspective on the men subtly shifts, the effect recalling that of a lenticular postcard. Instead of creating an illusion of minor dynamism, however, Claerbout's interventions amplify the tableau's stasis.

In a basement gallery, the computer-generated video *Travel* (1996--2013) pans through a forest. It's eerily serene. No wind or critter stirs the leaves. Only silvery water shimmers and trickles with a semblance of life. While *Oil Workers* experiments with surfaces and exteriors, *Travel* seems to navigate the interior of a world presented as a still image. But in both, Claerbout uses seductive and sophisticated visual means to evoke a document's paradoxical ability to both fix past time and animate its beholder's imagination in the present. —Brian Droitcour

Pictured: David Claerbout: *Still from Oil workers (from the Shell company of Nigeria) returning home from work, caught in torrential rain*, 2013, single-channel video projection, endless loop. Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York. © David Claerbout.