

DIRTY LOOKS NYC

A PLATFORM
FOR QUEER AND
EXPERIMENTAL
FILM AND VIDEO



Michael Robinson, *The Dark, Krystle*, 2013
Courtesy of the artist and Video Data Bank

MICHAEL ROBINSON, 'THE DARK, KRYSTLE'

KEVIN KILLIAN

At this point in life everything reminds me of Doris Day, but Michael Robinson makes it so obvious, by picking out over sixty clips of Linda Evans, as Krystle Carrington, at her most Doris-Day esque, to begin his largely silent clip show of the light and dark holes of what was once my favorite TV show, *Dynasty*. We didn't even know how Blake was, no, we queens were too blind to see, and I blush when I remember how we scorned the nouveau riche vulgarity of Larry Hagman on the other show and thought of John Forsythe as the classy one. [1] He was just more skillful at keeping corporate evil inside his suit, and meanwhile Linda Evans and Joan Collins were good and bad angels on either side of him, and everyone else. Evans and Collins, could even their names be more similar? One Aaron Spelling gets through with you, people in the industry used to say, we all look alike poured into Nolan Miller bugle beads and retro padded shoulders. Michael Robinson uses the film technique patented by the wizards at TCM for their annual "In Memoriam" clips played between Christmas and Easter, he takes an ordinary movement made by a star, and slows it down to t t t t t t t t h h h h h h h h i i i i i i s s s s speed and before you can shriek, "No! Not Eleanor Parker!" the screen dissolves and it's Linda Evans once again looking at first uncomfortable, then mortified, then positively tearful, the giant smooth rocks that were her cheekbones awash with tears. On the phone—tears. On the bugle beads—tears. Linda Evans should have gone to Norma Shearer school, that seems clear

I'm freaking out that thinking of Doris unhappy leads me to memories of Doris' Ingmar Bergman phase of misery, where she played in *Julie and Midnight Lace* and *Love Me or Leave Me* or the one with Sinatra where he breaks her heart or when her son gets kidnapped and she kinda goes catatonic. And Linda seems to be acting all of them out in

Michael Robinson's five minute superclip. Then a strange Tennessee Williams / Hart Crane thing starts happening and fire seems to eliminate Linda Evans and instead, we get Joan Collins in her place, her hair much more various than Krystle's two-Doris looks, Joan Collins, lifting a Martini to her lips and never drinking, or sucking a straw, a tiny straw, and no liquid lifts itself to her coral lipstick. Is she pretending she gives a damn? I remember thinking that Joan Collins' sudden appearance on the last episode of *Dynasty* Season One didn't entitle her to the First Nations status of those, like Linda Evans, who had been there since the beginning, and to tell you the truth, Alexis was always something of a sexual carpetbagger as well as a geographical one. Robinson uses the power of montage to bring us the obverse of everything we are seeing—when Linda Evans kisses Rock Hudson, then so ill with AIDS Americans gasped without really knowing what they were seeing. Then he showed up on *Doris Day's Best Friends*, his last appearance in any medium. Robinson's continual use of the dissolve, together with an increase in the number of subsidiary characters spotted in the clips, makes the world of "The Dark, Krystle," more and more social (abetted by Alexis' constant sipping of cocktails, white wine and aperitifs), and we remember how lonely Krystle was, how solo, all alone, even when someone knocks on her door, and she answers it, no one is there. Send in the clowns and "stone me for the sins I have committed," Alexis asserts defiantly. "I'll stand before you, and take my chances." But Krystle has no such defenses.

[1] *The Dark, Krystle* is all about repeated gestures of consumption, and the fire that is recollected at the beginning and breaks out in the middle, is about consumption as well. Krystle is in the glass that Joan Collins drinks from, like she was Krystle Light instead of champagne. In fact Krystle is spotted early on seeming to caress a comforting cup of tea, but only one, she's no guzzling glutton like her foreign counterpart, Alexis.

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE:



[Jesse Hultberg \(Interview\)](#)

BY KARL MCCOOL

APRIL 1, 2014

3 Teens Kill 4's Jesse Hultberg on his collaborations with David Wojnarowicz, Melanie, and his Danceteria days.



[Ruivisionary History](#)

BY NICHOLAS DE VILLIERS