



'City of Nature' in Madison Square Park

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by Emily Hulme

New Yorkers have a strange relationship with nature. We like our trees and grass, but contained in organized parks.

A new video by artist Kota Ezawa riffs on this theme with a public installation for Madison Square Park. In “City of Nature,” Ezawa stitched together 70 clips of nature scenes from popular movies and rendered them in animation — a practice he’s been perfecting for the last 10 years. The six-minute video will screen on a loop daily starting March 31.

Your film stitches together 70 clips from 20 films. What was your selection process like? A lot of it came from my own personal references, movies that I’ve known for a long time that are in my personal possession. ... A lot of [the films] also came out of conversations with friends.

You must see a lot of movies. I

think movies are part of everyone’s life. I teach in a film program and I work with filmmakers, some of my students are aspiring filmmakers. My daughter and I go to see films. I live in San Francisco but I also spend part of the year in Berlin, so every time I’m on an airplane to Berlin, I get to see two films. So, yeah, films are around me.

Do you see many films for pleasure? That’s the tricky thing about being an artist — the distinction that some people have between work and pleasure is with me a very blurry line. The work that I do is very pleasurable. There of course also are tough moments and stressful periods, but ultimately it’s something I’ve chosen to do.

Public art is something that is very important to New York and its residents. Do you encounter this attitude in other cities? I think New York is special. There’s really an appreciation for art that I haven’t found anywhere else.

If you go: Stills from “City of Nature,” on view in Madison Square Park, March 31-May 15, daily from 11 a.m.-9 p.m.



Photo credit: A still from "City of Nature"