

ARTslant

Passage of Time, Fragility of Memory

by Lori Zimmer

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The current group show at Peter Blum Gallery in Chelsea asks visitors to do something that other shows do not -- to slow down and take their time with the work. "4 Films" showcases recent films by Blum's best and brightest -- Adrian Paci, Luisa Rabbia, SUPERFLEX and Su-Mei Tse. The gallery has been transformed into a darkened theater, with individual bays to sit and enjoy each film. The nature of the films, which address time, memory and relationships are further confounded by requiring the visitor to take time out of the busy city outside the gallery doors to enjoy the magnitude of each film.

Su-Mei Tse's mesmerizing film, *Vertigen de la vida* (Dizziness of Life) immediately recalls the nostalgia of childhood. The film, which takes inspiration from Man Ray's Dadaist film *Le Retour à la Raison*, zooms in and out of a gently lolling carousel, carrying glowing orbs instead of passengers. With a soothing score by Gian Carlo Vulcano, the turning carousel blurs in and out of focus, creating a meditative and relaxing experience for the viewer. As the orbs blur into each other, they at once become waxing and waning gibbous moons, then the next moment transform into molecules. Under the power of Tse's swirling carousel, the viewer's mind dances between memories of childhood, studies of the universe and nostalgia.

The contemplation of memory is turned upside-down in SUPERFLEX's *Modern Times Forever*. The epic 240-hour-long film by the Danish trio who brought us *Power Toilet* takes us 5,000 years into the future. The film shows the Stora Enso Headquarters in Helsinki, as it "slowly" decays over 5,000 years. Initially, the film was projected across from the original building over the course of ten days, but inside the gallery it is nearly impossible to see the progress of the film.

Luisa Rabbia's *Travels with Isabella*, *Travel Scrapbooks 1883-2008* weaves together memories of the past with the future. Using archives of photographs collected by Isabella Stewart Gardener's 1883 trip to China, Rabbia creates a narrative between the present and past by animating the historic photographs with her own drawings and animations. With a soundtrack by FaVentilato, the late 19th-century philanthropist's journeys are brought to life by fusing sounds and imagery from the present and past with musical and visual collage.

We are brought back to the present with Adrian Paci's black-and-white film, *Inside the Circle*. The film shows a nude woman and horse inside a horse training circle. At first, the woman appears to be training the horse for show, commanding it to do laps with the shake of her rope. But as the film progresses, the viewer sees the incredible trusting bond between the horse and woman, as they begin to play and engage with one another. The horse begins to play with the woman as if it is a domesticated dog, playfully, lovingly, and with obvious trust. This interplay between man and beast is even more accentuated when we find out that the horse was rescued from a slaughterhouse by Tizania, showing that it is never too late to create trust.

As we race around Chelsea from show to show, "4 Films" is a wake up call, reminding us to slow down and enjoy the moment, to stop and smell the roses. Each of the films in this show remind us of the passage of time, the fragility of memory and their effect on the importance of relationships.

—Lori Zimmer