

NATALIA HUG

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Corin Sworn

La Giubba

November 30 - December 12, 2015

In her second exhibition at Natalia Hug, Corin Sworn exhibits her most recent video piece La Giubba (as in the expression “the show must go on”, also taken from the Italian opera Pagliacci by Ruggero Leoncavallo), which the artist completed together with Canadian artist Tony Romano. Along with drawings, installation, sculpture and photography, video works serve the artist as a form of artistic method, in which she also employs a strategy of appropriation- diverse images and objects shed their contexts and function anew. Here arises an often magical effect, a distillation, which as a result of these interventions and deferrals is strangely and mysteriously loaded, as the elements each bring their own history and origin, in the form of old manufacturing techniques, cloth, or handcraft.

In La Giubba, moments of ambiguity are developed much more subtly, noticeably different from earlier projects. In this project, the narrative strategy stands at the center of the film, which seems to develop at a very slow pace. At once a wandering through the landscape of Italy, meaning is allocated in moments of observation. Throughout the narrative, interruptions and collage interwoven with the broadly drawn out, abstract moments of the film, a departure from her earlier films, in which quickness, abrupt changes and high tempo and energy were dominant, La Giubba leaves the impression of a distant dream, a mellow summer, the lethargy of heat, and the mist of the sea.

The almost one hour long essay-like video work follows a father and daughter on their search for a swim trainer. Various narrative lines overlap, each one marked by their own language. Thus various stories in the course of the film are developed, which gradually move closer to one another. The search of the father and daughter, as well as a traveling circus, function as representations of the universality of searching, or being on the way. In the journey through the Italian landscape amidst the barriers of understanding for the protagonists, the action reaches an almost metaphysical state- a stasis and lethargy, which stretches throughout the entire film. The languages, Italian, Albanian, and English, are specific to the protagonists. The narration is repeatedly interrupted by scenes of birds flying through the sky, accompanied by fragments of texts. The still passages of flying, the birds observing overhead from the sky, with their texts address the people below, and speak to their deficient and ever presence in the now. The elements of searching and forward motion in the various groups are repeatedly acknowledged; a man becomes lost and asks for directions, a father searches for another person, the traveling circus is on its way to the next village. They all are in transit, on a boat, on a bike, on foot, in a train, a car, or a bus. A painterly observation of movement results, before which the landscape widens and rests in the eye. The characters offer Sworn a new and surprising language, and connect certain elements from previous works, like an old jacket and its implied story, or the pitch of a traditional song, or the form of communication between objects and living beings, and with the viewer.

Sworn exhibited widely and recently was a subject of solo exhibitions in institutions including White Chapel, London (2015), Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2015) (both part of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women 2013 - 2015), Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany (2014-15), Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2014), The Common Guild, Glasgow (2014), Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany (2013), Chisenhale Gallery London (2013), Whitechapel Gallery, London (2012), Art Now, Tate Britain, London (2011), Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2011). Sworn was one of three artists representing Scotland at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 and participated in “You Imagine What You Desire”, 19th Biennale of Sydney. Her upcoming solo exhibition takes place in Modern Art Oxford in 2016. She lives and works in Glasgow.