

CORIN
SWORN
AT
CHRISTENHALE

8 February – 24 March 2013

PRESS COVERAGE

PART 2

Date	Publication	Reference
November 2012	Frieze Blog	Looking Back, Looking Forward: Part 4
February 2013	The Guardian Guide	Exhibitions
February 2013	Art Licks	Event of the Week: The Rag Papers
February 2013	Port Magazine	Corin Sworn: The Rag Papers
February 2013	Canadian Art	Corin Sworn Gears Up for Venice with Rag Papers
February 2013	Aesthetica Blog	Corin Sworn: The Rag Papers
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Looking Back, Looking Forward: Part 4

DECEMBER 29, *by frieze*
2012



Continuing our series looking back at the highlights of 2012 and thinking ahead to some reasons to be cheerful in 2013, as chosen by frieze editors and contributors.

Katrina Brown is director of the *Common Guild, Glasgow*.



Bactrian Princess, late 3rd/early 2nd millennium BCE, Central Asia, shown as part of DOCUMENTA (13), Kassel

Reasons to be cheerful for 2013

I am really looking forward to **Gerard Byrne's** most substantial UK show to date at the **Whitechapel** in January, **Corin Sworn** at **Chisenhale** in February and, in March, **Simon Starling's** take on the collection for the **Tate Britain Commission**, which is sure to be a treat.

As well as our own exhibition for **Scotland + Venice** at the **Biennale**, I'm looking forward to seeing how Jeremy Deller tackles the British Pavilion and what the swapping of France and Germany will produce. And I'm looking forward to seeing **Fulya Erdemci's Istanbul Biennial**, given her in-depth knowledge of the city.

exhibitions

● **Corin Sworn** London



In Corin Sworn's films, all that is solid melts, not into air, but rather flows off course, down the snaking tributaries of her characters' shifting

voices and views. Her latest work, *The Rag Papers*, features a series of brief encounters and near misses: "a collection of possibilities", as a voiceover says at one point, where identities keep changing. The action unfolds (and circles back on itself) between very different settings. In a tasteful,

expensive-looking flat with Danish furniture and high ceilings, a woman rifles through papers hunting for an obscure object left by an older man, who studies photos of consumer-culture waste. It's a strangely mysterious and meandering search. **ss** *Chisenhale Gallery, E3, Fri to 24 Mar*

ART LICKS



Event of the Week

The Rag Papers

A newly commissioned work by Canadian, Glasgow based artist Corin Sworn.

Preview: Thursday 7 February, 6.30-8.30pm 8 February - 24 March 2013
Wednesday to Sunday, 1-6pm

[Read more](#)



Corin Sworn: The Rag Papers

William Kherbeck reviews the Canadian artist's most ambitious exhibition to date, exploring the role of narrative at Chisenhale Gallery



Corin Sworn, *The Rag Papers* (video still), 2013. Co-commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery and Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (NAK). Courtesy of the artist and Kendall Koppe, Glasgow and Blanket, Cologne

Does it matter if you see something with a beginning from the beginning? In this era of art films shown on endless loop, and film and literary narratives unafraid to dump readers and viewers into the middle of things (I'd write in *media res* here like a good art critic is supposed to, but since I'm not writing the rest of the review in Latin, I don't see the point), you do begin to wonder if beginnings have the same aesthetic meaning they used to. Corin Sworn has some of the same questions on her mind in her new film installation *The Rag Papers* at the Chisenhale Gallery. Sworn's films frequently use the reader's ability to construct stories from ruptured narrative suggestions as a means of both examining the mind and completing an artistic aim; the mind is both the substrate on which her art acts and the catalyst for its generation. I happened to join *The Rag Papers* about five minutes in, and, in my critical prejudices, presumed that wasn't going to be a problem because, no doubt, the film was on continuous loop. Do you care less about missing the beginning when you know it's coming around again? In a work like Sworn's, there's an expectation that something will be missing and so perhaps it doesn't matter, but then, when the first screening ended and the lights came up like they do at your finer local cinemas, it was one of the most surprising parts of the work. That's not a bad thing; not least because, in her writing about *The Rag Papers*, Sworn says she's interested in how a viewer interacts with a gallery space. In presenting her film in a more "cinematic" way, the space came to mean something different than if the house lights hadn't come up.

Speaking of lights coming up, there are other moments in *The Rag Papers* where light is used to define the space. As noted above,

though the film may be a central component of *The Rag Papers*, the work is an installation. At certain points in the narrative of the film, the screen goes black and a set of lights at the western end of the gallery flash on and off. While this is happening, a lilting Canadian voice is broadcast through the space reading a fragmentary story that could, if the viewer chooses, be grafted onto the actions of the characters in the film. The first time it happens it's a revelation; the series of flashes last just long enough for you to focus on their source before blinking off again. The second time it happens you wonder why they're all on one side of the room. That may be intentional, but it struck me as problematic somehow, too overt a statement about the room itself perhaps.

But what of the narrative? The thing is, your story is going to be different to mine, and Sworn wants it that way, so I won't dig too deeply except to say it follows two characters on screen and a third mainly from the audio recording. They seem to be connected but connections, like the lights, seem to blink on and off as soon as you make them. Sworn has described the piece as "a seedy noir film that wishes it was an intellectual thriller" but, to be honest, it feels a bit more like the reverse. The perspectival shifts keep you unsure of where the intellectual thrills might come from, but the lighting of the scenes keeps too much seediness from creeping in. But she's right that there is a lot of noirish uncertainty, a lot of unresolved endings, and, just as importantly, unresolved beginnings.

Corin Sworn: *The Rag Papers* runs until 24 March at [Chisenhale Gallery](#), 64 Chisenhale Road, London E3 5QZ

by [William Kherbek](#)



Corin Sworn *The Rag Papers* 2013 Video still. Courtesy the artist, Kendall Koppe, Glasgow and Blanket, Cologne (Image 1/10).

REVIEW

Corin Sworn Gears Up For Venice With The Rag Papers

Chisenhale Gallery, London February 8 to March 24, 2013.

By **Roslyn Stanwick**

POSTED: FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Since graduating from Vancouver's Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2002, Corin Sworn has won increasing international recognition. Sworn, now based in Glasgow, is due to be one of three artists representing Scotland at the 2013 Venice Biennale, and as of late her work has been shown at ICA London, among other venues.

On Thursday, London's Chisenhale Gallery opened what it calls Sworn's "largest and most ambitious exhibition to date." Centred on a single new work entitled *The Rag Papers*—a film, audio and light installation that was partly produced during a residency at Vancouver's Western Front last summer—the exhibition offers thought-provoking narrative approaches that delve deep into the realm of contemporary storytelling to unlock the hidden memories contained within material objects.

In several of her previous works, Sworn has incorporated found materials, images, films and texts into loosely knit narratives that blur the line between fact and fiction to produce evocative renderings of the recent past. *The Rag Papers* continues this practice, with a twist—for this work, some footage was intentionally shot by other filmmakers for Sworn's use, and the soundtrack was composed by someone else as well.

Occupying centre stage of *The Rag Papers* is a short documentary-style film following the interconnected lives of two fictional characters. Shot within a single room, the film portrays a man and a woman in the same space at different times.

The woman, who enters the residence in search of something, encounters objects including wilted flowers, glass ornaments and archival photographs, which conjure up memories from a personal past. Her flashbacks, signified by footage of airy gardens, sorting depots and secondhand-clothing warehouses, act as formal disruptions within the film's disjointed chronology.

The man, who is introduced through a series of first-person close-ups, is revealed to be the room's primary tenant and author of an important document, which the woman discovers during her search. While the subjects never meet face to face, their intimate handling of the room's contents unites them in fleeting moments across time.

Part of the brilliance of this piece is that the gaps and fissures occurring within the film's narrative are just as important as the film's immediate content. Sworn's use of fractured realities and ambiguous characters shifts the viewer's attention towards unconventional modes of storytelling. The result is an unusual, drifting narrative about a collection of objects and a series of possible histories.

Sworn's fascination with the social value of objects is also evident in the audio recordings interjected throughout the installation between two scenes of the film. Spanning several minutes each, the tracks feature the disembodied voice of the artist who recites short stories about encounters revolving around material possessions.

Aesthetica Magazine's blog keeps you up-to-date with reviews, previews both from the UK and abroad.



[Corin Sworn: The Rag Papers, at Chisenhale Gallery, London](#)

Canadian, Glasgow based artist Corin Sworn unveils her new exhibition *The Rag Papers* at the Chisenhale Gallery today. This will be Sworn's largest and most ambitious exhibition to date and comprises a film presented as part of an installation with synchronised lighting and sound.

The Rag Papers (2013) explores the nature of attention, reuse and appropriation. The film's worried narrative shifts between the perspectives of three characters who interact with a series of objects set within carefully designed domestic interiors. The film uses point of view shots and cutaway sequences to suggest the roaming nature of each character's attention and in turn, reveals transient spaces such as hotel rooms, sorting depots and markets.

Layering multiple subjective viewpoints, Sworn's characters shift back and forth between modes of remembering, looking, processing and reading. Objects play a central role in the film, almost as characters in their own right; the *mise en scene* becoming as potent as the action of the protagonists or any suggested narrative.

In recent work, such as the performance lecture *Roaming Charges* (2011), and *HDHB* (2011), made in collaboration with Charlotte Prodger, Sworn has explored the global circulation of objects and images. She expands upon these ideas in *The Rag Papers* with the inclusion of footage shot in second hand goods warehouses – vast repositories where post-consumer textiles and household goods are sorted for reuse and shipped to locations around the world. Here the past trails into the present as objects are recycled across place and time.

Sworn is interested in the means by which artefacts are borrowed, adapted and reconfigured to tell different stories. Her work explores the social ordering of attention and how the erratic nature of perception might undermine control. Sworn's films and installations often incorporate found images, over which she voices her own narratives, themselves composed from fragments of other texts.

In *The Rag Papers* Sworn continues this use of appropriation but renegotiates its terms. In producing the film she worked with the actors to devise a set of actions in an apartment, and then hired two documentary filmmakers to shoot the rehearsed sequences as if they were making a documentary film. Sworn edited the resulting footage to create a narrative which vaguely apes that of a genre film. She has described the work as 'a seedy noir film that wishes it was an intellectual thriller'.

Corin Sworn, *The Rag Papers*, 8 February until 24 March, Chisenhale Gallery, 64 Chisenhale Road, London. E3 5QZ. www.chisenhale.org.uk

Credit: Corin Sworn, *The Rag Papers* (production still), 2013. Co-commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery and Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (NAK). Courtesy of the artist and Kendall Koppe, Glasgow.

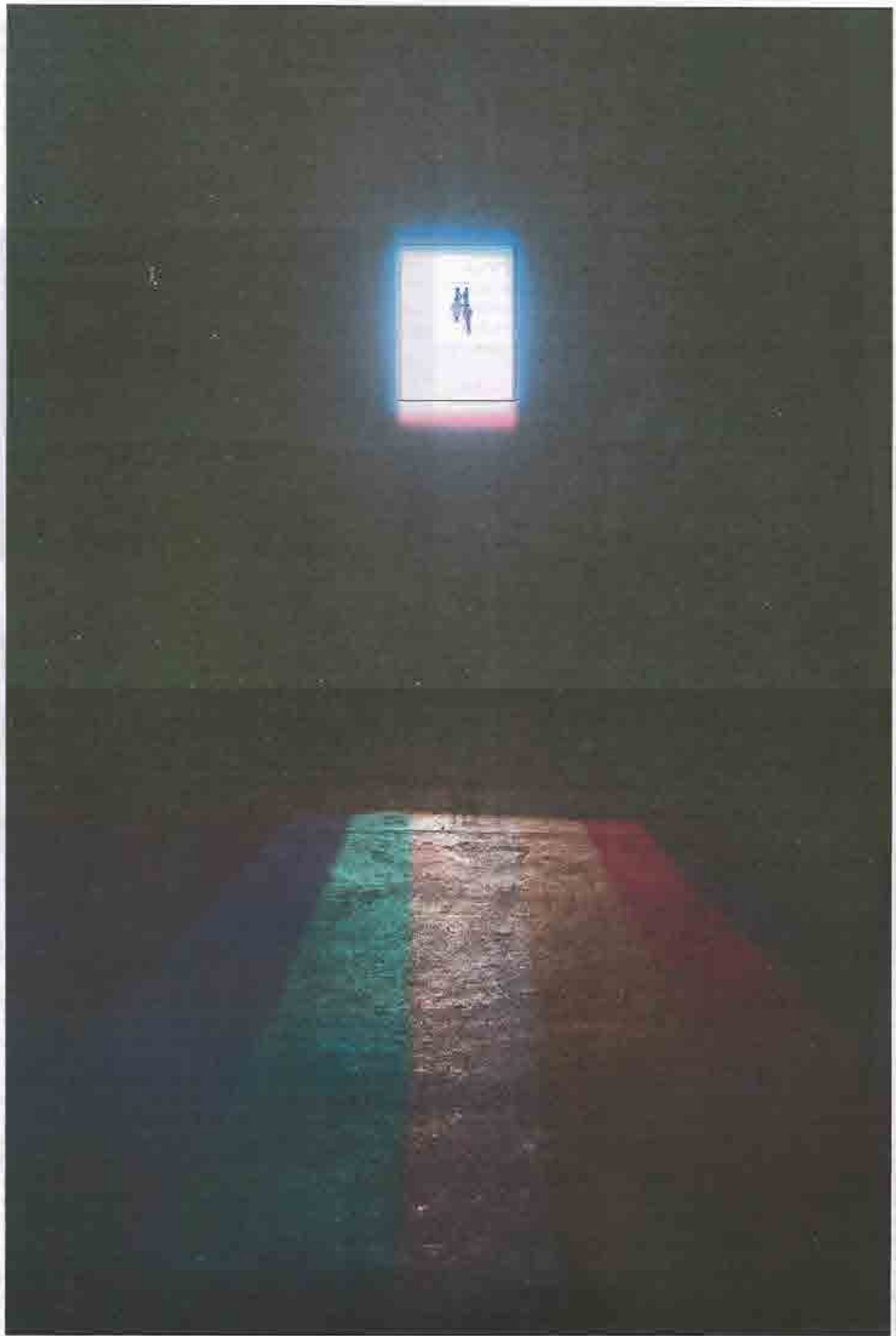
LONDON

THE SECOND HAND

BY LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS



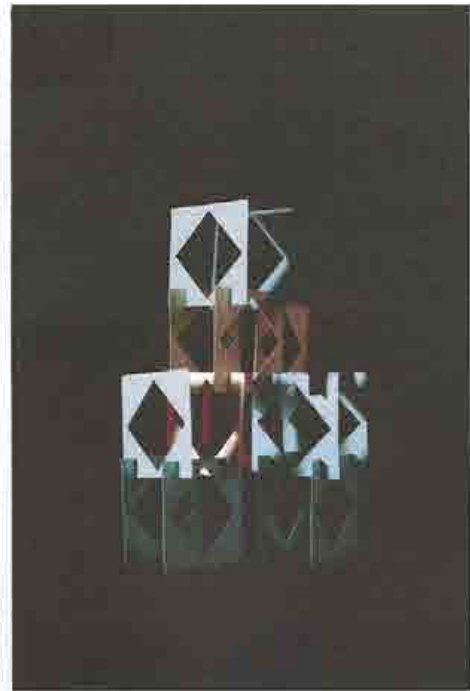
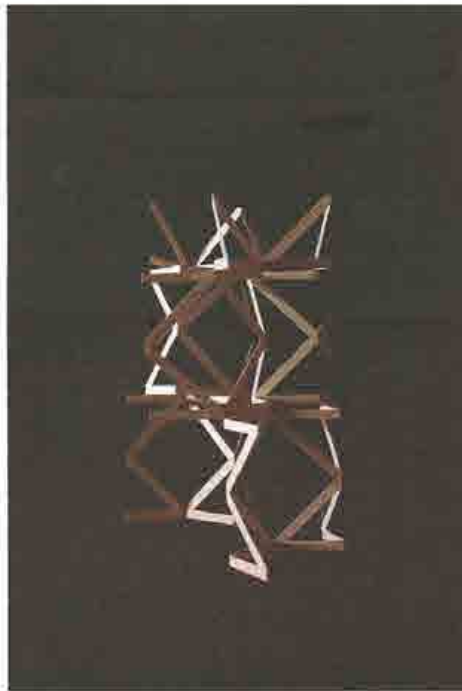
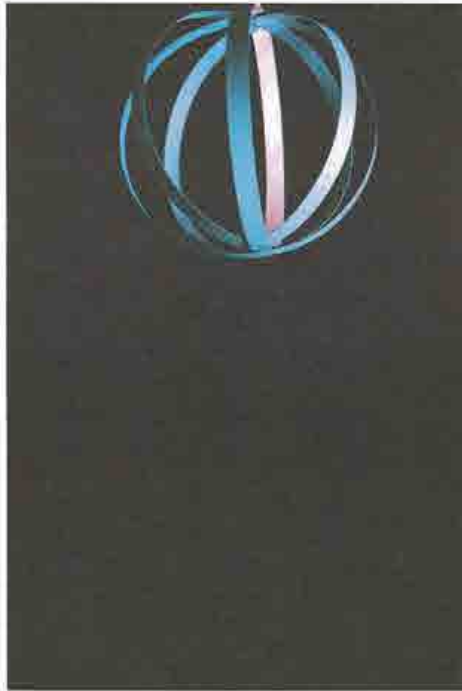
Corin Sworn's reinscriptions of appropriated media have seen her interpreting a set of slides found in a skip, creating characters who can only speak in the words of cultural documents such as films or books, or redubbing a 1979 teen flick. Her latest work, *The Rag Papers* (2013), recently opened at Chisenhale and soon to move to Aachener Kunstverein, features a male character and a female character occupying the same apartment at different moments in time. An older male character appears to be working on something, whilst a second female character searches through the documents he has left behind there. The voice of a third character interrupts the film, emanating from behind the viewer. Sworn is one of three artists who will represent Scotland at this year's Venice Biennale.



Endless Renovation, 2010. Courtesy:
the artist and Kendall Koppe, Glasgow

Opposite - The Lookers, 2010. Courtesy:
the artist; Blanket Gallery, Cologne;
Kendall Koppe, Glasgow





NEWS AND EVENTS

● **George Barber's** new video installation 'The Freestone Drone' is at Waterside Contemporary in Bristol from 2 February – 23 March. Consisting of three video projections, Barber's piece follows a mission from the point of view of a drone – one of those unmanned aerial vehicles that have become such a feature of recent military activity. The video combines found and made footage in an uneasy, seductive montage anchored on the drone's private thoughts as it travels across time and space, and draws on the legacy of Godard and Marker in its poetic, philosophical treatment of contemporary ethical and political concerns. www.waterside-contemporary.com

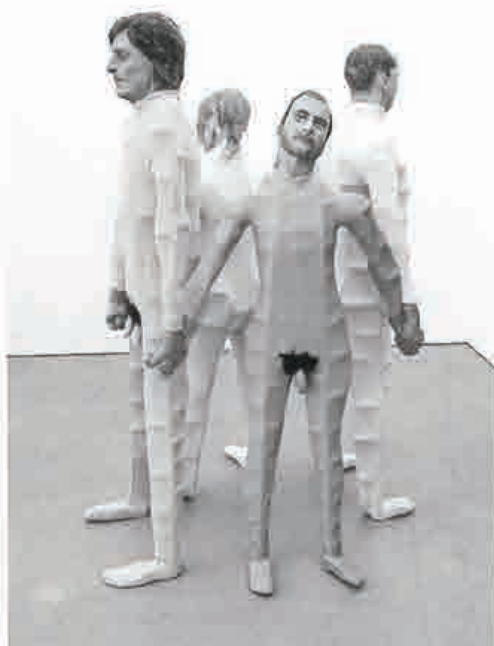
● **Corin Sworn's** new film 'The Rag Papers' shows at Chisenhale Gallery in London from 8 February – 24 March, as part of an installation with synchronised lighting and sound. The film's narrative shifts between the perspectives of three characters, who interact with a series of objects set within carefully designed domestic interiors; in fact objects play a central role in the film, almost as characters in their own right, the *mise en scène* becoming as potent as the protagonists' actions or any suggested story. Point-of-view shots and cutaway sequences suggest the roaming nature of each character's attention and, in turn, reveal transient spaces such as hotel rooms, sorting depots and markets. www.chisenhale.org.uk



● **A Grammar of Subversion** is a film season contained within the Barbican programme 'Dancing Around Duchamp', which runs from 22 March – 3 June. The season draws in films by and interviews with the artist himself; work by and profiles of close collaborators such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham and Hans Richter; silent film; and American underground cinema of the 1950s and 1960s, including Stan VanDerBeek (above), working in the spirit of Dadaist collage and abstraction. www.barbican.org.uk

● **Peter Todd** guest curates a programme of rarely seen films that explore different locations of creativity, from the room to the garden and beyond, in the Zilkha Auditorium at the Whitechapel Gallery on 7 March. Todd, a filmmaker himself, will introduce the programme, which will include works by John Smith, Storm de Hirsch, Renate Sami and Margaret Tait, with responses by film-maker Becca Voelcker and poet and critic Sophie Mayer. www.whitechapel.org

BANK
Group Portrait (Naked)
1998



Niels Olsen (of Zurich-based gallery Studiolo) are presenting a selection of work by the self-taught Swiss artist from the late 1950s to 1972, the year he died of alcoholism at only 46. Kuhn had something of a cult reputation as a maverick or outsider artist. He was also fortunate in attracting some heavyweight supporters among his local Zurich scene, including Harald Szeemann and recently Bice Curiger, who curated a retrospective of over 150 works at Kunsthaus Zurich in 2008-09.

From the show at Herald Street, it is apparent that Kuhn indulged his exotic and sexual fantasies: there's a saucy lady being embraced from behind by a shadow-devil, an orientalist nightscape and a whole range of work featuring a palm tree motif, including a rickety sculpture, silkscreened prints in different colourways and even a shapely stocking screenprinted with palm trees. Are we meant to see an intellectual connection between the palm trees and Marcel Broodthaers' potted palms? In *Antigrippine*, 1970, a shivering penguin on an iceberg clutches a packet of anti-flu tablets while floating tantalisingly close to a desert oasis. It is the kind of visual pun that advertisers get excited about (and there is a Pop Art feel to some of Kuhn's work) but apparently the artist also claimed to have 'visited the Eskimos' – an unlikely scenario for a resolutely regional artist. Is he a perty prankster or is there something more substantial behind his oeuvre? It is difficult to be certain from this small but intriguing taster selection. Many of the blue-chip galleries are competing for the grand modernist estates, ambulance-chasing the remaining bigwigs. Are the younger galleries now competing for the kookier 20th-century artists? Will a show at an East End gallery have more of an impact on Kuhn's posthumous career than an academic Kunsthalle show in his local town?

Corin Sworn's new film at Chisenhale also dabbles in nostalgia. *The Rag Papers*, 2013, is set in an elegant office sparsely furnished with mid-century-modern pieces: a sideboard, an architect's drawing table and an Anglepoise lamp. It was only on second viewing that I realised that there was no laptop or mobile phone, just a rotary dial telephone; modernist retro design is so ubiquitous that the room could easily have been a trendy creative studio today.

The narrative is slippery. There are two protagonists on screen: a chic woman in the timeless professional outfit of black trousers, white shirt and trench coat, and a less savoury, chain-smoking middle-aged man. The camera shifts between the man and the woman, both of whom appear to be looking for someone or something. We see each alone but in that same room, so that you are unsure whether you are witnessing two different times of day or two parallel worlds spliced together. The action relays between them: he sifts through photographs of warehouses stacked with clothes and furniture, she then picks them up; he arranges a set of index cards on the table, while she kneels on the floor to order a set of handwritten notes on A4 sheets. Is this detective work or are they creating something – a story, this story?

Clues are continuously dangled at the viewer – flashbacks, titles of books on the shelf, just-visible notes – yet they never lead to any certain conclusion. The soundtrack self-consciously amplifies the tension, such as a plane overhead (a Hitchcock reference?) or church bells and traffic noises outside that underscore the silence within. Slow camera pans and uncomfortable close-ups are thrown in for melodramatic effect. It is a bit like one of those stylish Scandinavian TV thrillers but without the murder.

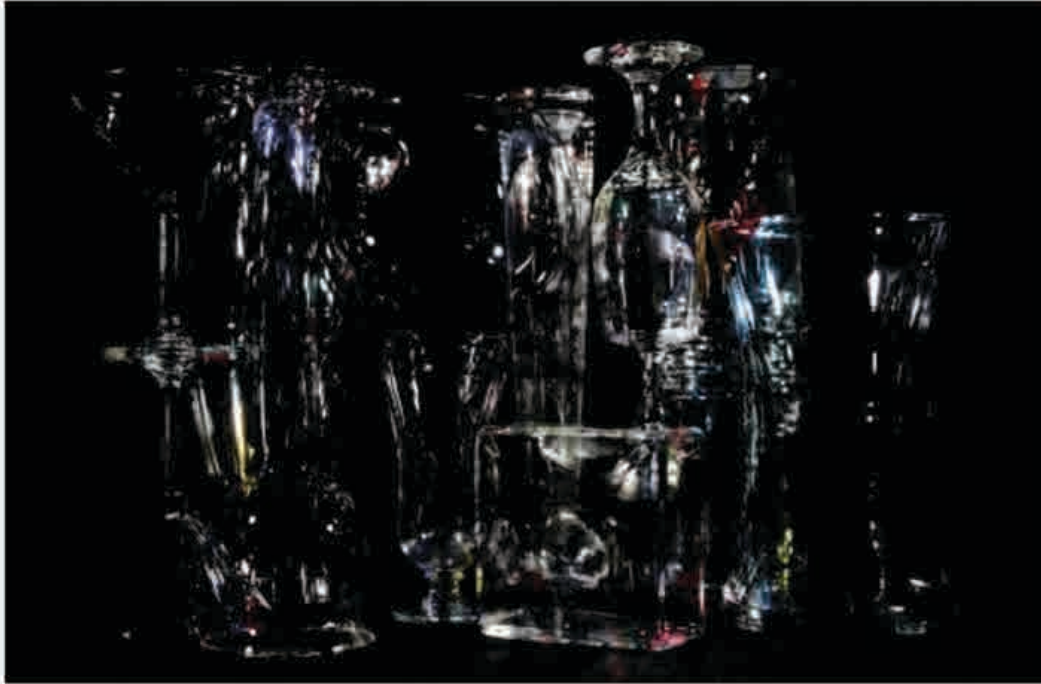
A voice-over at the beginning and end of the film further complicates the narrative thread: it tells the story of a chance meeting between two women who then bump into each other again at a bar later that night and discuss finding a man's text, or rather fragments of a text. One woman admits to borrowing the text, copying it and returning it, while the female narrator admits to using it for a film, proclaiming: 'You find something, you should use it.' It is left open as to whether *The Rag Papers* is the resulting film or the backstory to another film, and whether the man and woman in the office are the same as those discussed in the voice-over.

The Rag Papers borrows from different genres of filmmaking – thriller, TV detective, European art-house movie, structuralist film. Yet Sworn's use of appropriation is looser and more atmospheric than the literal sampling of videos in the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, the various layers of the film (the acting, the voice-over, the props, the voyeuristic camerawork, the flashback sequences, an abstract sequence featuring glassware being moved around) don't seem to have an obvious, necessary connection to each other; you get the feeling that each element could potentially belong to another narrative. Sworn has created a clever tension: on the one hand, the film encourages the viewer's imagination to fill in the narrative gaps; on the other, the viewer is frustrated into feeling they are always one step behind in understanding or that the real story is taking place elsewhere. ■

JENNIFER THATCHER is a freelance critic and lecturer.

Corin Sworn: Historical Narratives Travis Riley

Published 15.03.2013



Corin Sworn, The Slow Liquidity of Glass, 2013, digital C-type print on Fuji Crystal Archive paper, 51 x 33.4cm. Courtesy the artist and Chisenhale Gallery, London

A sheer curtain partitions the high-ceilinged gallery, forming a darkened corridor leading into the main exhibition space. The wall opposite the curtain holds a set of seven mirrored shelves, most above head-height, bearing an assortment of vases. A maundering, soft-spoken female voice is audible, describing teenagers as if they were medieval knights, kissing, smoking and vomiting, but with valour. The source of the voice is a single speaker, mounted on a stand, on the other side of the curtain. The words provide narration for two looped slide shows, projected onto perpendicular walls behind the speaker. A vase of flowers on the floor is caught in a projector beam, its forms caricatured and reduced to a silhouette on the gallery wall.

The voice divulges that the slides were found in a skip down the road from the narrator's home in Glasgow. The wandering nature of the pre-recorded narrative gives an impression of spontaneity, but correlative groupings of images reveal that an act of ordering must have taken place. Although looped, the slideshow has a distinct beginning and end. It opens with amateurish, documentary photographs of unfamiliar, mechanical objects. Later the slides shift through a series of pastel-toned, close-up photographs of flowers and frosty branches and, towards the end of the show, we are introduced to a procession of unconventional clocks; ostensibly the author of the slides was a clockmaker.

The voice is Corin Sworn's, and the work is *Endless Renovation* (2010), as installed at Tate Britain, London in 2011.¹ As the slides progress, the artist uses the selection of images to generate a speculative history – filling the gaps in her spoken analysis of the images with



Corin Sworn, Endless Renovation, 2010, modular shelving units, glass shelves, kodak slide projectors, 160 transparencies, dissolve sync unit, tape player, electronic sync unit, audio cassette, walkman, small red diary, glass transparency mounts, dimensions variable. Installation view, Washington Garcia, Glasgow. Photograph: Malcolm Cochrane. Courtesy the artist and Kendall Koppe, Glasgow

digressive narratives. The central account is one of the life and work of the slide-maker, though, apart from the conjecture that he makes clocks, we learn very little about him. In addition to her narration about the medieval teenagers, Sworn also talks about the dogs barking in Red Hook, New York where she is making the recording, the pitch at which a lampshade might crinkle, and the reason why, even if taken with a figurative intent, a photograph will still most likely hold an abstract quality.

Each slide is individually analysed and though Sworn's evaluation is tangential, deliberately slipping from objectivity into delirious fantasy, she remains foremost a presenter and decoder of images. Projected on the walls, a flickering, frozen past is faintly resuscitated. Sworn's voice assumes the authority of a historian, who captures and attempts to render this history objective. Significantly, she uses outdated equipment, the slide projector suggesting a past more distant than is actually being enacted and evoking a historical model in which the notion of the present is distinct and separable from history. A present in stasis is formed – a singular, detached point from which any objective history must be written.

Halfway through the 13-minute piece, and just as the viewer has, in the darkness, been lulled by the story of teenage knights in tight 1970s-jeans, Sworn reintroduces the first slide of the show. The image is an unremarkable photograph of a light fitting. It has been flipped horizontally and appears, this time, to be of a slightly higher definition. Sworn muses:

Although this may appear similar to the slide that I first showed you, it is in fact the original; the first slide was a copy. I had the slide copied because of all the slides in the collection, I feel that I could have taken it, and in copying it, I sort of have. So I misled you when I said that I found all of these slides in the skip. I made this one myself...

'By shifting the parameters of the present, Sworn distorts our view of the past, suggesting that a simple and neat historical model is not tenable.'

The change in our understanding of the present slide reflects back upon all the previous proceedings and the pretence of a sequential past leading to an inevitable present is undone. By shifting the parameters

of the present, Sworn distorts our view of the past, suggesting that a simple and neat historical model is not tenable. What emerges from the artist's conjectural account is not so much a history that generates the present, as a present that structures historical narrative.

One is tempted to think of Sworn's photographic slides as their scientific counterparts. Rather than freezes of a definite past stretched by the light, living cells are trapped between the glass and projected for observation. Sworn's analysis, along with the flickering projector beam, causes their contents to shift, changing the clustered formation of a hypothetical past with each observation.



Corin Sworn, Lens Prism (Working Model for a Viewing Subject), 2010, video, colour, sound, 17min, still. Courtesy the artist and Kendall Koppe, Glasgow

Sworn's single-screen video projection *Lens Prism (Working Model for a Viewing Subject)* (2010), exhibited first at Tramway, Glasgow provides another example of her exploration of the nature of historical narratives. The video features a monologue, delivered by a balding middle-aged actor wearing a mustard yellow waistcoat. The theatre lights turn on to greet him as he enters an empty stage from a side door. He hangs his coat on an unseen nail in the rough-hewn wall and walks out of shot, before a cut in the video plunges the theatre into darkness. Stood under a spotlight, he begins, 'I'm thinking of a photograph I took several years ago outside a museum...' With difficulty he attempts to describe the image. Following another cut he returns with the image in his hands and declares his recollection to be entirely incorrect. His memory and the photograph are completely misaligned. Later he speaks of visiting the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, and adopts numerous personas, among others, the protagonist of Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962) and Raymond Roussel as he wrote *New Impressions of Africa* (1932). Yet despite these discrete reference points – the allusions occur on an untenable timescale and cross resolutely between historic accuracy and fictional invention – his account still maintains a cohesive appearance.

Despite abrupt cuts, lighting changes, prop discontinuities and the actor's apparent lapses of memory, the video maintains an impression of an immersive and compelling cinematic experience, thus establishing a conflict between a nagging present and a linear narrative structure. As with *Endless Renovation*, the formal presentation of the work supports a desire for a sequential engagement with the story that is being told, but the content increasingly rebuffs it. In both works the artist makes use of a recorded monologue to bring the relationship between the present and our understanding of the past to the foreground. Just as Sworn draws inference from the appropriated slides of *Endless Renovation*, the protagonist of *Lens Prism* appropriates historical and fictional narratives by living them anecdotally. The actor's alleged participation in the historical events he recounts allows them to be re-lived and analysed as present artefacts, and by incorporating them within his own personal narrative, the fallibility of memory is imposed upon the process of historicisation, revealing it to be a site of partiality.



Corin Sworn, *The Rag Papers*, 2013, video, colour, sound, 20min, still. Courtesy the artist and Chisenhale Gallery, London

In Sworn's most recent installation, *The Rag Papers* (2013), currently on view at Chisenhale Gallery, London, the artist also makes use of a narrator. A single-screen projection follows a man and a woman, filmed in what appears to be a documentary style, as they perform simple actions in a sparsely furnished room. The two protagonists are never on screen at the same time, and interact only by moving various objects placed on the room's cluttered surfaces – a desk, chair, sideboard and fireplace; covered by piles of paper, plants, books, photographs, fruit and a vase of flowers. Though the edit doesn't specify a timescale, the placement of these objects suggests that the man's actions have occurred prior to the woman's – the core from his apple is brown and shrivelled, the papers he sorted through lie neatly piled on the desk as he left them – and as such the man's actions are viewed as past, a flashback, whilst the woman's are present.

This scenario on screen is interrupted by the sound of a female narrator, whose voice does not fit into the timescale of the video, nor does it appear to reside within the space shown on the screen. As she talks, an installation of five lights hung from the ceiling behind the viewer light up in erratic sequences. She appears to be present with the viewer. Her commentary seems to hold the authority of an objective description of a current event, yet her words are divergent, and the information she gives regarding the characters in the video is not verifiable. It is an unstable account given shape by an individual and a moment. Again we find ourselves in a detached present watching a history being formed, and again we must conclude that what we

view is a prismatic historical narrative, one just as much in transition as the present.

Travis Riley is the recipient of the inaugural Afterall Writing Prize (CSM, 2012), awarded annually to students who produce outstanding dissertations. Riley is a graduate of [BA Fine Art](#) at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts, London.

Corin Sworn is one of the artists included in [Scotland + Venice 2013](#) at the 55th Venice Biennale (1 June–24 November 2013), together with Duncan Campbell and Hayley Tompkins.

Footnotes

1. *Endless Renovation* was first shown at Washington Garcia, Glasgow in April, 2011.