

LAURA BARTLETT GALLERY

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Time In Motion
by Frances Guerin

«Capturing Time»

Kadist Art Foundation

19 bis - 21 rue des Trois Frères , 75018 Paris, France

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The Kadist Art Foundation is an exciting and innovative family initiated organization that marks its difference from other galleries by collecting new works and an active involvement in the community. In addition to offering residencies to young, up and coming art professionals, Kadist fosters a connection between artists, critics and curators through the residency program in both Paris and San Francisco. If only for its filling of this important role in the art community, Kadist must be applauded. All of the works in the current group exhibition, *Capturing Time*, are drawn from the Kadist collection, thereby demonstrating the variety of its acquisitions. While some of the individual works are fascinating, “*Capturing Time*” seems to be a loose connection between a series of otherwise disparate works. Similarly, given the dominance of time-based photographic media on exhibition, it would appear that many other works from the collection could fit under the umbrella of *Capturing Time*.



Among the pick of the pieces on display was Simon Starling's *Autoxylopyrocycloboros* (2006). With its aesthetically very beautiful images on a lake in Canada, the slow transformation of movement and time reminded me a lot of Rodney Graham's *Loudhailer*. Starling's sumptuous color diapositive slides recount the transformation of an old boat that he found on the bottom of Lake Windermere. Two men, presumably Starling and a friend, turn the boat into a steam boat, and then proceed to strip the boat of its wood in order to fuel the engine. The notion of a cyclical journey into auto-destruction against the most stunning of backgrounds creates a logical, and simultaneously, cookey, narrative that has us in awe and at the same time giggling to ourselves. This progression towards self-destruction is traditionally a conception of linear, teleological time that would perhaps not be noticed or noticeable in a different context. But in the context of *Capturing Time*, *Autoxylopyrocycloboros* appears innovative as the slides go around on the carousel, continually rebuilding and dismantling the boat. I was intrigued that Kadist claimed the diapositive slides to be Starling's use of an impoverished technology. Given the clarity of their vision and the brilliance of their color, the slides are obviously enhanced with the help of contemporary technology. The slide may be an impoverished technology, but there is nothing inadequate about these images.



My favorite piece in *Capturing Time* was Elizabeth McAlpine's, *98m (The Height of the Campanile, San Marco, Venice ...)*. McAlpine uses 98 meters of super-8 film to shoot the length of the Campanile. The result is a film that hovers between private memory and a public statement about tourism, as she captures faces, body parts, figures, walking past the camera in the most public of spaces. A man visiting the exhibition when I was there looked in the image very intently, telling his friends that maybe he was in Venice when McAlpine filmed. This is, of course, the tendency of amateur and home movie footage. It is so banal, so caught up in an everyday world that we recognize and are a part of, that we begin to look for ourselves in the image. Whether they generate a literal search as was the man's at Kadist the day I was there, or a reverie into memories of my own trip to Venice and the Campanile, the amateur, super-8 film techniques mimicked by McAlpine hover at the boundaries of public and private as they trigger us to remember. Amateur images belong to everyone. It is not only the content of the images that are the source of memories in *98m*, McAlpine also builds a Perspex case for the film to fall into – and as it falls I am mesmerized by the memory of the film strip. The film feed falls in exactly the same intricate pattern every time. The over and over again of the film strip as it falls and subsequently rethreads into the projector on its own, sees the film material itself echo the timelessness, and the attachment to memory, that we experience as we watch the home movie footage projected in a postcard sized image on the wall.



Tacita Dean's characteristic placement of a camera that watches very little happen to create transformations in the mind of the viewer continues in *Baobab*, 2002. Dean engages with a different kind of memory, a different kind of time, and a very different set of images, to those of the other artists in the exhibition. Dean's film meditates on the primeval landscape of Madagascar, and as we watch the slow moving camera, seeing these wonderfully bizarre trees from different angles, at different times of the day, they are brought to life. In our minds, the trees start to take on anthropomorphic forms, they have personalities, emotions. Time spent with Dean's slow moving films are always rewarding for their opening up of worlds we had not previously thought of entering. And our experience before the baobab trees is one such journey. Dean's use of black and white images, the film noisily moving through the projector in the same room, is not nostalgic like McAlpine's appropriation of techniques and technologies from the past. Rather, Dean's use of sensuous black and white, her capturing of the rich sounds in the environs of the trees, as well as those in our midst, transports us to a world outside of time, a time, we did not previously know existed.

Also on view is the Ugandan artist, Zarina Bhimji's exquisite *Bapa Closed his Heart. It Was Over*, a photograph in which a room at Entebbe airport that has fallen into a state of disrepair, she addresses issues connected with the memory and loss of the émigré. Thus, while the title might appear very broad when we enter the Kadist Art Foundation, it nevertheless invites us to see familiar works differently, and unfamiliar works in interesting relations we might not otherwise have observed.

--Frances Guerin

*(top & bottom images) **Tacita Dean**, *Baobab*, 2002, 16 mm film, black and white, optical sound, 10 minutes. (second image from top) **Simon Starling**, *Autoxylopyrocycloboros*, 2006, Color transparencies, projector, Variable dimensions. (third image from top) **Elizabeth McAlpine**, *98 m (The Height of the Campanile, San Marco, Venice, in Super 8mm Film)*, 2005, Super 8 mm film, projector, looper, 145 x 21,4 x 73, 3 cm, 20 minutes. All images courtesy of the artists and Kadist Art Foundation Collection. Photographer: Aurélien Mole)

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