

AMY GRANAT COWFINGERS AND MOSQUITOPIE

OPENING FRIDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2012, 6 – 9 PM

EXHIBITION 10 NOVEMBER – 19 JANUARY 2013, TUE – SAT 11AM – 6PM

The title of this exhibition, with its surrealist conjoining of culinary terms, may call to mind one of Robert Bresson's better-known claims: that the task of cinema is to "bring together things that have never been brought together and did not seem predisposed to be so." Or we may recall Man Ray's account of the making of his first film: "On some strips [of celluloid] I sprinkled salt and pepper, like a cook preparing a roast." There is a similar culinary spirit that supplies the sensuousness of many of Amy Granat's experiments with photography and film. Trained as a painter, Granat has been noted for the physicality of her filmic inventions—for her way of scratching directly into the film strip, or painting it, or spilling chemicals onto her prints to produce strange shapes and forms that together situate her poetics in the interplay light, color, texture, and surface. We get a taste of that here, in the selection of ten unique black and white photographs constructed in the darkroom with organic objects, chemical spills, and the enlarged fragments of destroyed films. Produced in total darkness, without the usual red light to guide the way, their compositional arrangements are the result of blind *touch*. In the gallery, viewers can look at them or through them, stand above them or behind them: one indication that this show is concerned not only with the body, but with the conflicted ways of looking.

The heart of the exhibition is an installation of three new 16mm film portraits of animals and landscapes which show us a different side of Granat's practice, one that is more gentle in its mode of address, even serene. Unlike the more frenetic rhythms of her early, abstract films, this new body of work derives from the lineage of the Lumières—here, the camera lingers on its subjects with a sense of solicitude. Again though, when read laterally as a unit, this is a work concerned with the problems that the act of looking can pervade.

Jonathan Thomas