

Galerie VidalCuglietta is pleased to present the new solo exhibition of the young New-York based artist Amy Granat, Reincarnare.

Much as been said about the experiments in structural filmmaking in the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps one way to summarize the work of artists such as Joyce Wieland, Hollis Frampton, Paul Sharits, Anthony McCall, or Tony Conrad is that they took film down to its most basic elements: light + material + motion + time. Instead of focusing on how to use film to narrate a story, these artists addressed its phenomenological properties and the ways film could engage the perception of material and light, over time.

These filmmakers broke film—they performed an act of physical and ontological violence that took apart basic assumptions about the nature of film. But in many ways, their intentions were cerebral and academic, and their methods borderline clinical. Amy Granat, working forty years later, gives these formal experiments some heart and soul.

If film is broken, Granat loves the beauty of its demise. While her work certainly follows the legacy of the structural project by avoiding narrative in favor of light and materiality, her act of breaking comes with the sense of touch and a belief in the re-birth.

To break film means to break light, to break material, to break motion, and to break time. Granat's films, photographs, sculptures, paintings, songs, performances, and texts perform each of these acts with elegance and sincerity. She scratches film stock not to destroy it but to allow the generative properties of light to shine through it. She loops films not to subvert linear structures but to create a relationship between the cycles of a film projector and the cycles of natural phenomena—the sunrise/sunset, absence/presence, ying/yang. She stops film not by printing film stills—because film isn't ever still—but with photographs of shadows, because obstructing light is something film always also does. And perhaps most importantly, Granat takes apart film's time-based nature and disrupts any distinctions between past-and-present or beginning-and-end. In this exhibition, time doesn't work: it loops, stops, repeats, leans, hovers, and remains out of focus. All of these gestures make film impossible, and, as such, demand its reincarnation.

Reincarnare is the title Granat gives to this exhibition, referring to the moment of reincarnation—a moment when linear time undoes itself.

*It Comes and It Goes...* (all works 2012) is an installation featuring four framed photographs, an oil painting, and a 16mm film projection. Kept off the wall, the works lean on a shelf and are arranged in such a way as to incorporate the projection as one of the “shelved” pieces. The prints are enlarged images of projected light, made by the artist in a darkroom, and the film is a scratched version of Olivier's *Zero*, a film Granat made in 2006 of one of Olivier Mosset's famous circle paintings.

Overall, the assemblage evokes the tradition of Aby Warburg's anachronistic archeology, but instead of providing a constellation of disparate images, Granat re-proposes, albeit in different forms. No matter their medium, each work is an object—arranged on a shelf—that stands in for the timeless cycle of light and dark. As such, the work repeats itself, like a poem of different but synonymous words.

If It Comes and It Goes is a film that happens vertically, Hidden Mango High happens horizontally. Loosely placed on top of framed prints are other unframed prints. Once again, images and physical forms repeat and accumulate, the same way a filmstrip involves compilation and disguise.

LLanterns is a double projection of the same film, and like the double L in its title, they slightly skip and repeat out of synch. With the camera swaying slightly in Granat's hand, registering the movements of her own breathing body, the film captures a lantern festival at sunset. As objects, the lights are artifacts with specific cultural references. As filmed objects, however, they take on a timeless air of celestial bodies, sharing space with the evening sky. Repetitions, patterns, and cycles are fundamental to way film's structure works, but are just as fundamental to the way nature itself works. While Granat is drawn to the structures that lie behind the making of moving images, she takes film apart by bringing it back to life and by maintaining a close connection to the body, to organic forms, to landscape, and to the natural magic of light. In film, as in life, it all begins and ends with light.

Anthony Huberman, August 2012

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