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MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM

Films + Photographs + Drawings

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"A historical narrative is ... at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative." Hayden White

History is often represented in an attempt to preserve it, but is achieved without the reality of that historical time, therefore confusing a sense of the authentic moment with assumptions about an event forever lost except by replication. This procedure creates symbols for something irretrievable. Fact becomes redundant in this context and what remains is the social implication rather than the original function of documentation. Which is more real, the concept of history through factual record, or the experience of it through replication?

Buckingham is interested in how the past is used as a determiner of the present and how we define ourselves in relation to our predecessors. Interweaving past and present, fact and fiction in a documentary format, this method of portrayal analyzes the dichotomy of cultural and temporal difference and the paradox of trying to express a story authentically whilst inevitably distorting it.

In *The Truth About Abraham Lincoln*, biography is reduced to the form of a true/false quiz. By examining the process of memory and the psychological import and weight of history, Buckingham analyzes the usage of historical fact and the way in which certain figures become mythologized as a template for reinvention. In *Amos Fortune Road*, Buckingham takes as his starting point something factual, but the result is mostly fictional. The point is less how much of it is fictional than why it is read as truthful in the first place. Through the willing suspension of disbelief the film reflects both a presence and a pseudo-presence.

Whereas the films use past and present time, the related photographs contain a sense of moment, of something about to happen, future time. The drawings demonstrate that unlike a painter or a sculptor whose considerations are largely two- or three-dimensional, a filmmaker is also concerned with a fourth dimension - time.

This will be Matthew Buckingham's first solo exhibition in New York. His work has been shown recently at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Museum Fridericianum, Kassel and his films have been screened at the Berkeley Art Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.