

## Critics' Picks

## Suara Welitoff: Sometimes Time Trembles



Suara Welitoff's three videos -- silent, black-and-white, a few minutes long, and looped continuously -- explore the tenuous demarcations between past and present, between an original moment and its recollection or revival. Exploiting the look of film -- in particular its scratches and flickering -- as well as the glitches from compressed digital video, these works produce a preternatural sense of déjà vu. A brief clip of a child drawing a whorl on a chalkboard repeats in *Untitled (Spiral)* (all works 2013), with jolted edits triggering the same action to begin at different points, while the titular words of another work, *Five Years Later*, are permanently fixed onscreen as clouds float behind them -- time passes but remains eternally suspended. Wearing a cross necklace and with an agrarian scene behind her, the woman in *Interview* moves in slow motion, gesturing and sighing expressively, like a heroine from an Italian Neorealist film, but the jump-cuts never show her speaking. It turns out that some of Welitoff's source imagery originates from postwar cinema--the woman being interviewed is Anna Magnani, star of Rossellini's 1945 classic *Rome, Open City* (as seen in a video posted to YouTube), and *Untitled (Spiral)* comes from Truffaut's *The Wild Child* (1970)--but the artist transforms the appropriated footage into visual metonyms for fading memories that confuse lived and fictional experience.

Welitoff recycles her personal archive for five photographs--also black and white--that condense time and space into singular, mysterious images. *Untitled* is a fuzzy, patterned picture of stars that the artist downloaded from NASA's website, printed, scanned, and enlarged, and *Untitled (Shadow)*, a newly abstract photograph of houseplants and floor tiles, was taken years ago with a chintzy cell-phone camera. Two blurry portraits of women--one of the artist and one of another woman--derive from Polaroids Welitoff took the early 1990s. She even produces her own film-noir scene with *She Liked to Feel Time Passing (For CL)*, a still from a film shot in London in the mid-1990s that looks out the window of a bus or trolley, showing a man striding alongside it with his hand to his ear, presumably holding a cell phone. The degraded quality of this image, resulting from both authentic graininess and magnified pixilation, generates a haunting yet intriguing feeling of the uncanny.

--- Christopher Howard

Suara Welitoff  
Barbara Krakow Gallery  
10 Newbury Street  
February 8 - March 15, 2014

BARBARA

KRAKOW GALLERY