

R e w i n d , r e w o r k



Suara Welitoff, *Barbara Krakow Gallery Exhibition View, February 8, 2014 - March 15, 2014*

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GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Suara Welitoff's videos and photographs at Barbara Krakow Gallery go through so many edits, iterations, and processes that the very stuff of film and video seems as malleable as paint. Her photos -- blown up, scanned, photocopied, removed by generations from the originals, which were mostly shot in the 1990s -- read more like evidence of the blur and cant of memory than like documents of reality. All as the artist moves nimbly from analog to digital, pushing old images, such as a self-portrait, into a new visual grammar.

Welitoff, primarily a video artist, alters found video in a manner that has us peering into the cracks of something we'd taken as seamless. She slows footage down, changes the palette.

For "Untitled (spiral)" she borrows a short clip from Francois Truffaut's 1970 film "The Wild Child," about a boy discovered wild in the woods who is captured and socialized. Welitoff shows the boy drawing an endless spiral on a blackboard. Her video runs on a loop, so the spiral never ends; with edits, it begins again, or cuts to the middle, but always the form imperfectly rounds itself, just as the video does.

"Interview," my favorite piece, features edited black-and-white footage of an interview with the Italian actress Anna Magnani, who stands in a field. Welitoff scrubs the audio and snips out the passages in which Magnani actually speaks. The actress listens, she gestures, she takes a deep breath. Her eyes move dreamily upward as she contemplates. She shrugs.

Her lack of words in this talking-head format feels gloriously spacious. Each gesture is an opening, while what she conveys feels unpackaged and even intimate. We read her as we would those close to us, whom we often need no words to understand.

Welitoff makes familiar visual tropes fresh, affirming that we will always find something new in the past, if only we know how to look.

At: Barbara Krakow Gallery,
10 Newbury St.,
through March 15th.
617-262-4490,
barbarakrakowgallery.com

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