Rosalind Nashashibi

Production still from 'The Prisoner', 16mm film, 2008

By Ossian Ward

Here's another British artist wielding a 16mm camera, panning away from art house's cul-de-sac towards pastures more expansive and cinematic. Unlike Steve McQueen and Sam Taylor-Wood, however, 36-year-old filmmaker Rosalind Nashashibi isn't looking for feature-length acceptance. Her short stabs at understanding the limits of narrative are quiet and perplexing, yet beautiful to linger with.

'Eyeballing' is a ten-minute collage of jump cuts, flicking between NYPD's glum, gum-chewing boys in blue and abstract 'faces' noticed by the artist on the streets - where a pair of windows stand for eyes or a string of pearls reads as a mouth (recalling Brassai's photos of accidental faces etched into Parisian walls). As New York's finest keep 'em peeled, the very fabric of the city keeps a beady eye fixed right back on them.

Surveillance reaches claustrophobic proportions in Nashashibi's 'The Prisoner', a film noir-ish chase sequence in which a high-heeled lady is pursued around the Southbank by her own image on an adjacent screen. As the left-hand strip of film passes physically through one projector to its neighbour, we see and predict the action as it's repeated after a six-second delay. So, who's following who?

The artist plays Peeping Tom for her latest piece, 'Jack Straw's Castle', named after the pub nearest to a notorious gay cruising spot on Hampstead Heath. She then turns the camera back on her own shoot, exposing the possibility that this whole scenario has been magically crafted and staged with actors, rather than merely observed. She's a classicist and an imagist of the highest order, although a lot of this may be too nuanced to appreciate in such a tightly framed selection as this. The ICA helped to break Nashashibi's career in 2003 when she became the first woman to win its now defunct Beck's Futures award, although on this evidence she deserves a shot at the bigger, Turner Prize.