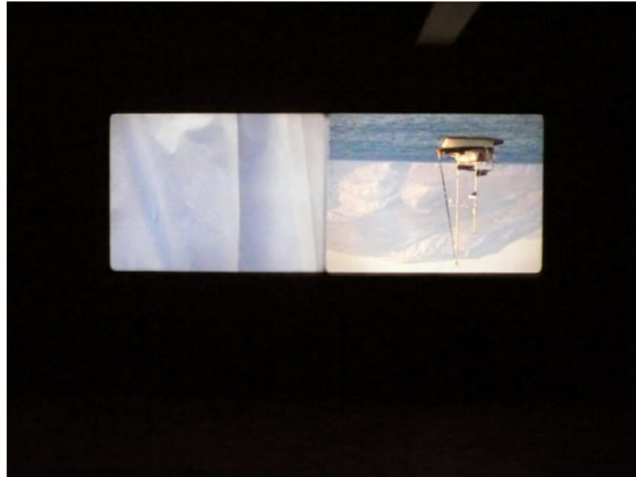


ARTFORUM

NEW YORK

Nashashibi / Skaer

MURRAY GUY
453 West 17th Street
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Nashashibi/Skaer, Pygmalion Event, 2008, still from a two-channel color film in 16mm, 2 minutes 50 seconds. Installation view.

The experimental, collaborative partnership of artists Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer has yielded four non-narrative 16-mm films to date, all commissioned by European institutions. Two are featured in this exhibition, the pair's first solo show in the US: *Pygmalion Event*, 2008, and *Our Magnolia*, 2009. The latter enkindles an anxious daydream around a painting by Paul Nash, Britain's official war artist during the first and second world wars. The two synchronized reels in *Pygmalion Event* fashion loosely structured visual pictograms, as if in a book: On the left, a priest is shown putting on vibrant, graphic vestments designed by Henri Matisse for his midcentury total work of art, the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence, France. On the right pass painterly images including a teacup, an orange, and an upside-down sailboat—a nod, perhaps, to Marcel Broodthaers's seminal yet confounding film and book *Voyage on the North Sea*, 1973–74. What Nashashibi and Skaer's collages have to do with the myth of Pygmalion, a sculptor so bewitched by his work that he willed it to life, is hard to say. The artists prefer associative thinking, a gambit that ultimately allows audiences' memories and imaginations to produce the works' meaning. But the films also traffic in a permeability that changes the act of simply "relating" into a query about the pictorial and about the propensity of images to absorb, transmit, and, most of all, to make their presence felt, even in their absence.

-Lauren O'Neill Butler