



Holly Zausner: *Unseen*, 2007, super 16mm film, approx. 16½ minutes; at Postmasters.

HOLLY ZAUSNER POSTMASTERS

After more than a decade exhibiting almost exclusively in Germany, sculptor and filmmaker Holly Zausner, a native of New Jersey, returned to New York with "A Small Criminal Enterprise," her first solo show at Postmasters. Derived from Roberto Bolaño's 2002 novella *Antwerp*, the title provides an appropriate literary reference point for the exhibition, which features collages that read less like pictures than like writing. Using stills from *Unseen* (2007), the last of a trilogy of 16mm films the artist shot in Berlin, Zausner creates a personal visual language by recombining source images in much the same way that a novelist develops a style out of a unique recombination of words.

Each large collage features hundreds of tiny photographs that are tiled together in a grid to create abstract patterns, some monochrome and some bursting with color. In them, the images are stripped of their references to specific times and places, thereby losing their original narrative meaning. In the 7½-by-5-foot *Memory* (2012), a photograph of a live tiger in the garden

at the Neue Nationalgalerie is repeated in both underexposed and overexposed versions to create dark and light tiles that create a swirling pattern. The same still is used to a much different effect in the diptych *In Your Eyes* (2012). Each part consists of a black circle on a white ground; together, the piece evokes the eyes on a simple ghost costume.

Titles translate visually in works such as *Sound* (2009), which uses images from the grand entrance stairway of Berlin's Bode Museum to create a composition resembling a diagram of a sound wave. *Double Vision* (2011), a collage featuring images shot inside a structure in the Spreepark (an abandoned Berlin amusement park), looks like the patterning of an autostereogram from the Magic Eye fad of the '90s. The works are pigeonholed by descriptive—and painfully obvious—titles, so that it's almost impossible to read any meaning besides that which is implied.

Since Zausner started spending time in Berlin, in 1996, the city has become a major

character in her work. This is made clear in the film *Unseen*, which was shown in the back room. It captures the artist, lugging one of her signature large, floppy, humanoid sculptures, as she races around the city, past historic landmarks and through empty streets and the Spreepark. In each space, danger awaits—a shopwindow explodes, a tiger prowls—forcing Zausner to continue moving. Neither the artist nor her sculptural progeny can find a safe place to rest, a precarious situation that can be interpreted as a metaphor for contemporary life.

In the collages, the forward movement of the film is halted, and the stills become isolated memories that, unfortunately, mean little to the viewer.

—Brienne Walsh