

PRESS RELEASE

Catherine Story *Angeles*

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The backdrop to Angeles is the world of early cinema – the fantastic camera machines, the actors and directors, and the basic film sets that were built amongst fruit groves, oil wells and desert. Like the walls and props of one of those sets the works in the show employ basic building materials: plaster, cement, mortar and wood. At the center of this mis-en-scene is the camera. It stood between the directors and actors, between the business men and the illusion, making something happen on screen to actors that was not obvious in real life.

The painting *Angeles* (2011) transforms the camera into a picture, and so in effect turns cinema in on itself. It is key to themes in the exhibition: looking at and being watched, viewpoints and shadows, the camera as eye and recorder, repression and paranoia, serious versus comedy. There is continuity here too with Story's earlier 2010 *Cinema* exhibition. The artist explains more in a recent interview: "*Cinema* was mainly about the experience of watching Chaplin films and becoming obsessed with his 1931 film *City Lights*. And also the thought that cinema and cubism were developing at the same time on opposite sides of the world. They were both about vision and imagination, but one seemed to be about the expansion of two dimensions into three, and the other about the reduction of three dimensions into two." It wouldn't be until 1952 that Chaplin came face to face with Picasso. After making *Limelight* (1952), about a clown at the end of his days, Chaplin went on a European tour to promote the film, and while in Paris a dinner was arranged for the two to meet. (Not speaking each others language they got bored of the interpreters, and turned to mime instead).

Many of the works in the show, such as *Limelight* (2011), *United Artists* (2011), and *City Lights Still Life* (2011), are inspired by this coalescence of artistic inventions. For example the sculpture *Limelight* is a three dimensional reworking of a Picasso still life from 1919 which exaggerates both the potential comical elements of the painting and its anthropomorphic qualities, suggesting now also the form of a clown on a stage. The painting *Millionaire* (2011) links the form of a camera to the top-hatted benefactor in *City Lights*, his double-sided character referenced in the broken horizon (itself borrowed from Picasso's beach figure paintings).

Many Italian directors were inspired by Chaplin, and *Harmonica* (2011) links to Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* (another major influence on Story's work). The broken forms and hidden profiles that can be found in the sculpture refer to the film's plot, as well as the building structures of the railway track that cut through the country to the promised riches of the west.

"I think about Los Angeles" says Story "as the place it was in 1900, of oil barons, and fruit crops (because it had so much sun). The first film makers needed sun as the silent sets were open to the skies, and when he became rich Chaplin built his studio in an orange grove. *Angeles* also refers to the fantasy of Christian afterlife, as well as the fantasy about the city and California, the place at the end of the line where someone might find a job picking fruit, or become a movie star."

Catherine Story (b. 1968) studied at Royal Academy Schools, 2006-9. She lives and works in London.

The exhibition is open Wednesday – Saturday 12 – 6 pm, otherwise by appointment. For images and further information please contact the gallery on 020 7684 8890, or email info@carlfreedman.com