

**THE ARMORY SHOW 2009**  
 MARCH 5-8, 2009  
 PIERS 92 AND 94  
 NEW YORK CITY

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## FILM

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- Melissa Gronlund on Jane & Louise Wilson
- Melissa Anderson on Oscar Micheaux
- Lauren O'Neill-Butler on *Our City Dreams*
- S. James Snyder on *Memorial Day*
- Ara H. Merjian on Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian
- Melissa Gronlund on Robert Beavers

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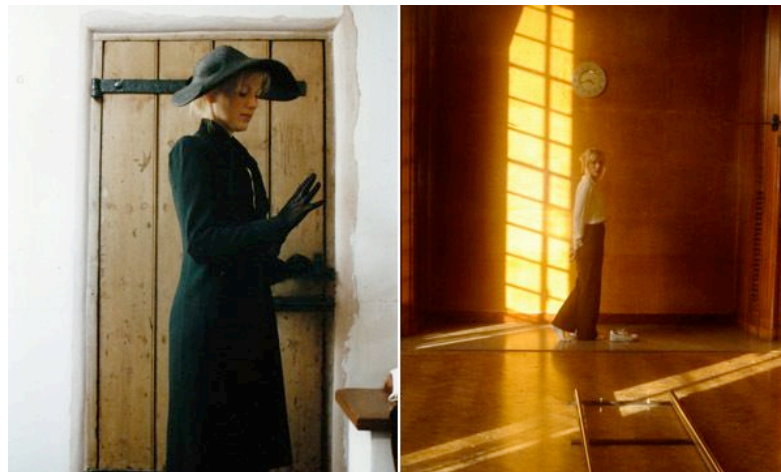
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### Newest Headlines

- Carolyn George d'Amboise (1927-2009)
- Los Angeles Museums' Collections Increased in 2008
- Film-Makers' Cooperative Faces Eviction
- Manifesta 8 to Take Place in the Region of Murcia, Spain
- Christian Marclay Receives Larry Aldrich Award
- New Director for Smithsonian Museum of African Art; Rose Art Museum Chair Speaks Out; One Washington Museum Finds Unusual Source of Income
- Damien Hirst Opens Second Shop; Stuckists Launch Online Store, Satirize Hirst
- Mark Wallinger Chosen for Ebbsfleet Public-Art Commission
- Shepard Fairey's Countersuit; Phaidon Press Acquires *Cahiers du Cinéma*
- Koolhaas Building in CCTV Complex Engulfed by Fire

## Paper Trail

02.12.09



Jane and Louise Wilson, *Unfolding the Aryan Papers*, 2009, stills from a color film in 16 mm transferred to HDCAM, 17 minutes 30 seconds.

IN 1993, Stanley Kubrick abandoned the extensive research he'd been conducting for *Aryan Papers*, a film about a young Jewish woman, Tania, who tries to save her family by pretending they are Catholics. The project's ephemera remain in Kubrick's London archive: photographs of Johanna ter Steege, the Dutch actress cast for the lead, in various costumes; Kubrick's own notes; images of Warsaw during World War II; and photographs from 1939-40 of Ealing Studios in London. As a complement to the Kubrick retrospective currently screening at the British Film Institute, the artists Jane and Louise Wilson have made *Unfolding the Aryan Papers* (2009), a film about the transformation of still photographs into moving images, as well as a surprisingly touching portrait of ter Steege and her lost opportunity. The film comprises stills from the archive, which the present-day ter Steege re-inhabits and animates for the viewer: In one shot, the young ter Steege appears in a photograph wearing a blousy pink dress; the next shows her swaying slightly in the same costume as the camera closes in to reveal a face fifteen years older. A rhetoric of love and loss prevails: Kubrick is the one who got away, the film is the envisioned house by the sea. Ter Steege, in a voiceover about her role and her preparation for the film, reminisces about how the director notices little gestures of hers, and of her disappointment when the project was canceled. She lay in bed for two days, she says, and wept.

On the third day ter Steege arose and thought, "Just go on." The Wilsons' prior work has tended to employ installations and non-narrative structures (this is only their second film using dialogue); the immediacy of an atmosphere of sounds and images is a hallmark of their work. Despite its technique and subject matter, the Wilsons' latest film conjures a similar sense of "presentness." Many films whose subject is the archive are tethered to a notion of the past as repository; the still image provides a treacherous, but privileged, mode of access to the memory bank. But the Wilsons frame *Unfolding the Aryan Papers* in terms of transformation; the (often conspicuous) movement of the camera and the actor's performance take precedence over the static photograph. Ter Steege takes on a triple role, playing Tania, her younger self, and the woman she is now. In one sequence she turns to face the camera five times, a succession that culminates in an image of the young ter Steege holding the same pose, looking wide-eyed in a fancy hat. She explains how Kubrick filmed her talking about her childhood, and how he made her repeat her story, teaching her to act even when speaking as herself. In the dramatization of this moment, ter Steege is again called on to play both herself and the potential Tania, whom the film partially actualizes. Though overburdened in places with the moral weight of its projected Warsaw ghetto context, *Unfolding the Aryan Papers* is never much about Kubrick himself, his theatrical style (which the film occasionally mimes), or the archive, but about the slow drift of the past into the present, despite what might be left behind.

*An installation of Jane and Louise Wilson's Unfolding the Aryan Papers will be on view at the British Film Institute February 13-April 26, 2009. A shortened version of the film will be available to view online for the duration of the exhibition at Animate Projects.*

— Melissa Gronlund

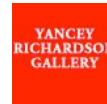
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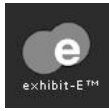
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