

Barry Schwabsky, "Review: Georgina Starr Emily Tsingou Gallery," *Artforum*, September 2002.

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Georgina Starr, *Bunny Lake Drive-In*  
2001-2002, mixed media. Installation view.

### GEORGINA STARR EMILY TSINGOU GALLERY

Encountering images moving in darkness, images that may or may not make sense but which stir up visceral emotions, primal anxieties—what could be more like having a dream than watching a movie? The answer, often, is: walking through a video or film installation. Making your way carefully through the murky labyrinth of disparate elements (moving and still images, lights and pockets of darkness, objects and props disposed through distinct spaces) allows for only one sure experience: losing sight of everything you're not looking at right then.

Freud spoke of the "navel" of a dream, a point where it becomes impenetrable to further analysis. Like a dream, too, a walkthrough video installation always seems to circle something that obstinately refuses to present itself. Something is missing—the very thing that seems to have generated the whole visible apparatus in the first place. Georgina Starr acknowledges and perhaps even celebrates this absence with the title of the inspiration for her installation in a disused industrial space in the East End, *Bunny Lake Drive-In*, 2001-2002. Why choose, particularly, Otto Preminger's 1965 film *Bunny Lake Is Missing*? Its power may lie less in the plot, cast, or any cinematic quality than in just the words *bunny* and *missing* and the complex of feelings they generate around the idea of a young girl seen by her family as either less than human or simply not there at all.

*The Bunny Lake Collection*, 2001, a performance at the last Venice Biennale (presented on video at Tsingou's Mayfair gallery as part of an ancillary show of photographs, drawings, and other byproducts of Starr's three-year engagement with Bunny Lake), is a kind of gleeful revenge fantasy with some dozen girls in rabbit costumes invading a fashion show (featuring the artist's own glam-grotesque designs) and mowing the

models down with handguns. On the other hand, with its multitude of projected images, fake drive-in setting, and three-wheeled car, the sprawling installation is more likely to evoke feelings of claustrophobia (in a bit of Preminger's film quoted by Starr, the kidnapped Bunny turns out to have been locked in the trunk of her uncle's sports car), foreboding (as if to emphasize that Preminger's film isn't sufficient to the project it inspired, Starr borrows the idea of a killer hidden behind the screen of the drive-in from another movie, Peter Bogdanovich's 1967 thriller *Targets*), and perverse eroticism (Starr includes over-the-top footage of a guy slowly and feelingly buffing the "Bunny Lakemobile"). What counts most here may be the very particular way the innumerable parts of the project refuse to add up. The artist gives us a clue to the emotions underlying the project in her catalogue text, describing an adopted younger sister whose destiny was her incapacity to belong or, eventually, to be "saved" from her own self-destructiveness, but that hardly explains the work's elusive form. Perhaps it has something to do with the blurred or shifting boundary between "projection" and truth—between screened pain and the real thing. As far from cheeky postfeminist "girl art" as it is from confessional realism, Starr's Bunny Lake project is an oneiric immersion in deeply mixed feelings.

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