

GALERIE JOCELYN WOLFF

***Retour d'Italie. Documents en déplacement.***

Laura Horelli, Norman Richter, Clemens von Wedemeyer &  
Maya Schweizer

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Taking a cultural voyage, first to Italy, then to the East, is widely viewed as a practice that has fashioned Western modernity. The different “ports of call” involved did not have the same influence on their eras: Italy was the model everyone wanted to emulate, while the East was the antinomic world against which European identity would be forged. Although these two voyages are not the only ones that shaped the history of the West, they sum up the traveler’s situation very well — on one hand, that which brings him closer to what is foreign; and on the other, that which takes him farther away from it. Our immediate and global, planetary condition does not eliminate this rift. It adds to its complexity. Identification and rejection are entangled together. Familiar representations are layered atop foreign and unknown characteristics. Not to mention that we, as Westerners, are no longer the only ones who travel — other people travel, literally or virtually, via the globalization of media.

The projects presented at the Galerie Jocelyn Wolff are all variations on these cultural entanglements, cinematic sketches of the perception of the foreign and the familiar, in a world that has opted for the global view.

Clemens von Wedemeyer and Maya Schweizer have created a convergence of two myths—the modern totalitarianism depicted in Fritz Lang’s *Métropolis* in 1926 and modern China, whose staggering growth obsesses the West. In *Variation sur Métropolis*, one fiction meets another. *Incomplete Picture - "Discover Japan"* by Laura Horelli examines a marketing campaign for domestic tourism in Japan in the 1970s. The development of tourism, the globalization of imagery and female emancipation through travel: this observant decoding of a specific example reveals the complexity and importance of a subject that may at first appear to be superficial. And Norman Richter’s *Vali Asr* features silent, filmed portraits, produced during a field trip to Tehran. In a simple way, these human canvases raise the question of the figure, stereotypes and their representation. The series of portraits reflects the social disparity in a single street in Tehran, which runs from wealthy neighborhoods to more working-class areas.

Each of these films navigates through the ever-present theme of cultural displacement from extremely different angles: the overlapping displacements of two political fictions in *Variations sur Métropolis*; the liberating displacements of Japanese women visiting their own country; and a literal displacement with Norman Richter, whose real-life portraits subtly challenge the fears raised in the West by the Iranian society.

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(translation: Lisa Davidson)