

CATHERINE STORY

Astoria

30th May – 28th June 2014

One hundred years ago Charlie Chaplin's 'Little Tramp' character appeared on screen for the first time in *Kid Auto Races at Venice*. It was filmed at the local soapbox derby in front of the public, and towards the end the tramp sits down in front of the crowd. Everyone glances nervously into the camera but in the middle of the shot is a woman who is covering her face with a programme. Her imagined face is depicted as a silhouette in *The Vanderbilt Cup*, 2013, from the crowd's view behind her, so the viewer of the sculpture stands in their place. This complex exchange between looking, hiding and posing recorded in film at this moment is a central theme of the exhibition.

The beginning of cinema might, by some, be dated to the moment Chaplin arrived in Los Angeles. In 1920 a silent studio was built in Astoria, New York in an attempt to rival the west coast industry, and over the next few decades picture palaces were built all over the world in the Art deco style of the time. The two wooden sculptures in the middle of the room, *Rivoli* and *Astoria*, (both 2014) are in part homages to these buildings that once held premieres and housed projectors, while the balancing characters are the actors themselves, thinking between shots or posing for stills.

Surrounding them are paintings and objects relating to early cinema. *Napoleon*, 2014, has a panel of black hair like the lead in Abel Gance's epic film, and *Corsica*, 2013-14, shows two of his soldiers struggling at his feet. Douglas *Fairbanks*, 2014, poses against a leaf green backdrop for a role in Robinson Crusoe, and the women in *Parade*, 2014, dance in Busby Berkeley geometric patterns. These painted statues are odes to cinema and are flat and three dimensional at the same time, like film itself. They are also highly controlled, like a performance, yet painted in colour as if the camera wasn't there.

Odets' Grant, 2014 shows Cary Grant between takes of *None but the Lonely Heart*, 1944. This social realist film by Clifford Odets was set in east London and the story begins just after Armistice Day. In this imagined still Grant's impoverished character is sitting by the Thames dreaming about his future. If Grant had really been by the river in 1918 he might have seen the great impresario Fred Karno go by on his palatial houseboat, The Astoria. It was he who sent Chaplin to America in the first place.

Catherine Story (b. 1968) studied at the Royal Academy Schools (2006-9). She lives and works in London. Recent group shows include 'Painting Now: Five Contemporary Artists' at Tate Britain, London (2013-14) and 'Recent British Painting' curated by Tom Morton at Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam, (2012). This will be her third show at the gallery.

The exhibition will be open from Tuesday – Friday 11 – 6 pm and 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

List of Works (clockwise from entrance):

Valentino, 2014
Oil and sand on wood
50.5 x 40.5 cm

Napoleon, 2014
Stone, wood, acrylic
36 x 22 x 9 cm

Corsica, 2013–2014
Unfired clay, acrylic, wood
105 x 57 x 44 cm

Parade, 2014
Oil and sand on wood
Diptych: 86 x 61 cm (left), 96 x 71 cm (right)

Rivoli, 2014
Wood, acrylic
153 x 80 x 24 cm

Fairbanks, 2014
Oil and sand on wood
76 x 86 cm

Grand Hotel, 2014
Oil and sand on wood
89 x 72 cm

Astoria, 2014
Wood, acrylic
143 x 96 x 50 cm

Marceline, 2013
Unfired clay, wood, acrylic
130 x 42 x 35 cm

The Vanderbilt Cup, 2013
Unfired clay
31 x 25 x 13 cm

Odets' Grant, 2014
Oil and sand on wood
91 x 82 cm