



KINGS



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Timepiece
Simone Hine

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Timepiece
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As the name implies, *Timepiece* is in an artwork obsessed with time, its mediation and construction. Across the three Kings ARI galleries, the work moves between video, performance and installation, with each element layering temporal experiences, intersecting, converging, and contradicting.

A large-scale video projection, apparently of a few cumulus clouds against a stark blue sky, is the first image visible upon entering the gallery. Suddenly, a crumpled piece of paper flies through the foreground of the shot, altering our sense of the scale of the image. It soon becomes apparent that this sky is in fact merely a constructed backdrop: this is a video of a motionless, still image of the sky. The paper flies through the air at irregular intervals, always following the same arc, its path determined by the infinite reproducibility of the digital loop. This is a brief moment in time, captured and replayed endlessly.

Moving to the second gallery, an architectural enclosure sits in the centre of the space, its plain white exterior walls mirror the architecture of the gallery itself. A window, the size and shape of a screen, presents us with a view to the scene inside. A woman sits at a typewriter, continuously typing. Glowing in the background, visible through a window behind the woman, is the image of the sky from the video just viewed. Apparently dissatisfied with each page that is typed; the woman pulls the

paper out of the typewriter, scrunches it and tosses it out of the window. This performance gives the video in the first gallery a context, but one that does not illuminate the scene or make it more intelligible. Instead, we are presented with a more elaborate construction, another surface. Strikingly, the scene is out of time. The hair and makeup, the colour scheme, even the size of the paper, all seem allude to the 1950s. Yet everything gleams as though new: the typewriter, a collector's item used here for the first time, the dress, made with new fabric from a vintage pattern. Framed through the viewing screen, cinema is the clear reference of the scene. This constructed image is not at all glamorous, but brings to mind a secondary or background character from 1950s cinema that is set in office blocks, such as *Executive Suite* (1954), or more clearly, *Desk Set* (1957), the storyline of which is based around the fear that a computer will remove human labour from the workplace. Temporalities begin to accumulate. The everyday time of life and work here collides with the temporality of the video loop, and the time of cinema: the gesture perfectly realised in the video is approximately re-created by the physical performance occurring in front of the viewer.

At the far end of this room within a room, two further windows provide a glimpse backstage, revealing the room in which the woman sits as a façade. The room is a makeshift set, a temporary

structure assembled by the artist for this single gesture. Here the reference to mid-twentieth century cinema is reinforced, as this view brings us into clear proximity of the rough brushstrokes that reveal the image of the sky to be a painted backdrop: a standard technique of filmmaking of the time. Below the painting, the crumpled paper accumulates; marking the physical time of the gesture.

In the final room we are confronted with an actual timepiece, an antique electrically-driven office clock, precisely illuminated by a single spotlight. Marking time, this object also bears the marks of time: its discoloured surface revealing its antique status. Such a clock is a symbol of the working day, and this connotation seems reinforced by the constant sound of the typewriter keys in the next gallery. Yet, more than this, this object speaks to both real and imagined memories of the time-period alluded to in the constructed scene of which the typist is a part. Finally, perhaps, the clock marks the time that we inhabit, a time that is constantly fractured between memory and expectation, and between varying rhythms, of work, of bodies, and of technologies of mediation, through which we flow.

Kyle Weise