

Tina Modotti 'Her Life and Photography', Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, until November 19; **American Photography 1890-1965**, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, until November 26; **Frank Darius**, 'Fremdes Zuhause: Portraits of Asylum Seekers in Germany', Street Level, Glasgow, until November 11; **Seydou Keita and Malick Sidibé**, Photographs from Mali, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh until October 21; Joel-Peter Witkin, Stills Gallery, Edinburgh, until November 18. **Allan Sekula**, Fish Story, Tramway, Glasgow, until November 12. A catalogue is published by 'Fotofeis' with essays by Allen Frame, Pavel Büchler and Val Williams.

Julian Stallabrass is a London-based critic and art historian.

■ **Rewind**

City Racing London September 18 to October 15

Time Travel. Compare the futuristic, sci-fi time travel of old with the low-key, homemade sort which curator Eric Troncy presented in 'Rewind': it's ordinary, as ordinary as watching videos, as taking a bike ride, as seeing moving pictures on a wall and taking it in as art. This isn't cinematographic Real Time, or even No Man's Time – the title of one of Troncy's most successful shows, in 1991; this is time as filler, indistinguishable from the past or the future. The works by Carsten Höller, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno and Rirkrit Tiravanija in 'Rewind, A Short Trip in Time' (three video pieces, and offset-printed photographs from Huyghe) forego the linear time of narration for a circular or directionless expanse of time, an endless loop as it were, centring upon the

self, or the event, but never on the image. The picture-ness, the *tableau*, is avoided in favour of the recognisable and the dull, like the early days of movie-making, when the mere novelty of the moving image was enough to marvel and to hold an audience enthralled. In *Cinema 2: Time-Image*, Gilles Deleuze writes of film that 'at times we need to draw together the parts that have gone missing, rediscover everything left out of the image, everything that had been subtracted from it to make it "interesting"'. 'Rewind' is, then, like the scraps on the cutting floor, the 'uninteresting' bits strung together as true insight into the 'real' and time passing in the uneventful way it usually does. This accounts for the documentary-like presentation, the blankly descriptive press release, the insistence that this is not a group show, but four instances of time being spent, recorded and later exhibited.

Philippe Parreno's untitled video of a French mimic, Yves Lecoq, impersonating actors and politicians is, among the works on view, the one which best provides layers to the deliberate flatness of presentation. Some of Parreno's other videos are slick and masterful, so its 'dullness' is more evidently a stylistic endeavour. The work benefits from being the only one in a room large enough for the image to fill the wall, and is thus distanced from TV-watching. You suspect that Parreno's video is *impersonating* an art video, and that Lecoq is some autobiographical stand-in. The plot thickens when you discover that the impersonator on the screen is imitating the French bureaucrats involved with the opening of the Marseilles Museum of Contemporary Art – politicians who later appear in the flesh – as well as mimicking 'cameo' speeches from unrelated figures such as Sylvester Stallone (or is it the French actor who dubs Stallone's plodding voice at the movies?). The image is unremarkable: a drab municipal park, a man on a

Pierre Huyghe
Chantier Rochechovart
1994



podium, a scant audience displaying varying degrees of lack of interest. But the political sub-text works the shabbiness of the scene to its best advantage, revealing in Lecoq's performance the public figures' true motivations which are ordinarily concealed – as if behind a flat screen – in official ceremonies.

Booster, a brief video by Carsten Höller, expands on previous themes of this artist which centre on the enhancement of lovemaking with the benefit of experimental science: drugs, machines, accessories. Earlier works by Höller owed more to his real scientific background; the weird science in *Booster* is garage science: a hokey, 3m high motorised contraption in which the desirous couple lie on a mattress covered with a plastic hood, obscenely reminiscent of the transparent rain protection on cheap baby-strollers. As the motorbike-propelled love machine sputters aimlessly around a pedestrian square, and the couple above giggle at the camera, indifferent to one another, it occurs to you that the participant having the best time is the driver below. The scientific miscalculation is apparent. Like Wilhelm Reich's organ machines, *Booster* can't compare with, say, the back seat of a taxi cab for being conducive to lovemaking. The mood is playful, not passionate, and the repeated non-stimulation enacted by the loop effectively underscores the embarrassment and failure of the experiment.

Least concerned with accusations of being boring is Rirkrit Tiravanija, here enjoying another healthy group activity besides cooking: bike-riding. Strapping the camera to his handlebars, the artist pedals along the bicycle-heavy streets of Amsterdam, with all the dips, jolts and jerks of the ride. We never follow the artist/rider's point of view, which must be steadier and more alert, but for some reason are made to identify with the shaky bike. The video was made on the occasion of a group show in which Tiravanija participated; his fellow cyclists are the other invited

artists. This work, then, with its deliberately tiresome imagery, most literally addresses Troncy's theme, that 'Rewind' is not about Art, but about the passage of time; and a group of artists could be invited to a foreign city to present their artwork just as they could be asked to cruise the streets together by bicycle.

Troncy wisely included photoworks by Pierre Huyghe, not merely to avoid 'Rewind' being dubbed as yet another video show, but also to allow time to unravel within the confines of a single image. A photograph appearing on an urban billboard replicates the surrounding scene; the time lapse between the mechanically reproduced image and reality is reduced to zero, drawing the present viewer into this same instantaneous equation. Chronological time, then, springs holes and leaks; everyday time, instead, is void of trauma, jumpcuts and heartache. Even humour is restrained, flattened by the insistent *ennui* of the non-event. Time passes and then there's more, more videotapes, more 35mm film to fill. ■

Gilda Williams is a critic and editor at Phaidon Press.

■ The Charge of the Light Brigade

Burbage House London September 16 to October 22

■ John Timberlake

Commercial Gallery London September 21 to October 18

Burbage House, a space run by the art group, Bank, is one of a proliferation of venues around Shoreditch in East London, an area that has in recent years become associated with the new London art scene. The emergence of such scenes, centred around specific localities,

Bank
The Charge of the
Light Brigade 1995

