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ARTFORUM

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"Matthew Buckingham"
Index Kungsbro Strand, Stockholm
By Kim West



With the two works that make up this exhibition, Matthew Buckingham engages in a subtle meditation on reproductive media and history. *Image of Absalon to Be Projected Until It Vanishes*, 2001, is a simple yet conceptually rich photo installation. A slide show presents a single image of the 1902 monument to Copenhagen's founder, Absalon, a twelfth-century bishop and warlord. As the title of the work suggests, the light and the heat from the projector lamp will wear out the slide, ultimately effacing the image. The gradual disappearance sets in contrast two forms of mnemotechnology, two forms of monument—the statue and the photograph—and their different relations to entropy. The centerpiece of the exhibition, the multilayered film essay and installation *False Future*, 2007, also reflects on memory and disappearance. The film itself is a 16-mm film remake of what is supposed to be the second-ever moving-image recording, Louis Le Prince's Leeds Bridge fragment from 1888. Buckingham's film is shot from the same location as Le Prince's, with double-decker buses replacing horse-drawn carriages. But it is also shown in conditions reminiscent of Le Prince's first screening: The scene is projected onto a white cloth suspended in the middle of the room. However, there can be no true symmetry, no direct historical continuity between the original fragment and Buckingham's remake. Shortly after presenting his invention, Le Prince mysteriously disappeared from a train between Paris and Dijon. His invention never received due credit, and its technological, scientific, and artistic potentials were never investigated. *False Future*, therefore, is a monument not only to a lost past but also to possibilities never realized, to a future that could have been.