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"Matthew Buckingham"
Index Kungsbros Strand, Stockholm
By Katie Kitamura

Matthew Buckingham's *False Future* (2007) is an extended rumination on the birthing pangs of cinema. Evoking an alternate history that briefly came into possibility before abruptly flaring out, Buckingham's film installation captures the world of invention and its secrets, its illusions and desires. The 16mm film is projected onto a hanging white cloth, emphasizing the materiality of the cinematic form, while also engendering an acute sense of nostalgia entirely in keeping with the subject matter of Buckingham's film.

False Future recounts the story of Louis Le Prince, a French inventor who came tantalizingly close to recording moving images using an eight-lens camera. In 1890, Le Prince boarded a train and disappeared. Five years later, the Lumière Brothers premiered their *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de la Ciotat*, marking the arrival of a different train, a new form, and establishing the definitive history of the medium's genesis.

Buckingham's 16mm film is, in a sense, an attempt to resuscitate an alternative history of events. Returning to Leeds Bridge, the site of a split-second of footage captured by Le Prince's eight-lens camera, the ten-minute film provides a contemporary enactment - and also extension - of the place to which, perhaps, Le Prince's technological inquiries might have eventually led him.

As a narrative, *False Future* has much in common with the short stories of Borges; its sense of melancholy fascination reaches its height when the film's voiceover evokes the lost years between 1890 and 1895, between the disappearance of Le Prince and the debut of the Lumière Brothers' invention. Detailing historical and quotidian events, the voiceover conjures the alternative manner in which we might have experienced the history of those years, had Le Prince's invention reached its natural fruition.

But *False Future*, like much of Buckingham's work, including the slide piece *Image of Absalon to be Projected Until it Vanishes* (2001), also shown at Index, is less concerned with natural but artificial enactment. *Image of Absalon* queries the seeming permanence of monuments and the ordered history they stand testament to. And *False Future* is an elegant, eloquent exercise in extending a forgotten historical moment, far beyond its natural duration.

As the current exhibition at Index artfully demonstrates, Buckingham employs the simple gesture of extension in order to query the manner in which historical narratives are created, and then remembered or abandoned. Much takes place in the space of that extension, not least of which is a profound sense of melancholy - as well as a glimpse of the larger cloth from which our historical contingency is cut.