

For immediate release

## DIANA THATER

### Between Science and Magic

February 11 – March 13, 2010

Opening reception: Thursday, February 11, 6 – 8pm

Press preview with the artist: February 11, 5 – 5:30pm



*Josephine, 2010*

Production still from *Between Science and Magic*

David Zwirner is pleased to present Diana Thater's sixth solo exhibition at the gallery and the New York debut of a major new film work. Adapting its title from anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's seminal text, *The Savage Mind*, in which he wrote, "art lies half-way between scientific knowledge and mythical or magical thought," *Between Science and Magic* fuses the magic of illusionists with the magic of cinema.

An installation comprised of two looped side-by-side projections, Thater's film is based on the iconic image of a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat. She began by filming the acclaimed magician Greg Wilson, resplendent in a vintage formal top hat and tails, performing this trick alone on a white film stage. Thater then projected that footage onto the screen of the Los Angeles Theater and re-filmed it in the environment of the old movie hall. Built in 1931, this historic theater is one of the last and most ornate movie palaces remaining from the early part of the century. Still standing on Los Angeles's now defunct "theater row," the venerated cinema is a gilded remnant of Hollywood's golden era. The theater is of the same vintage as the magician's style, his costume, the trick, and the grainy film projection. All work together to form an image of "illusion."

In Thater's presentation, a camera on the left records a series of multiple angles shot while moving around the magician, while a camera on the right remains static. The shifting vantage point ultimately reveals Thater and her director of photography, Yasu Tanida, seen behind each of the two cameras. As this action completes itself, the second camera returns to its original position, and the film becomes an image of the frontal presentation of the magician and an image of the film itself. The two environments in *Between Science and Magic's* film-within-a-film structure mirror the duality of the split screen, all the while attempting to both show and not show how "the trick" — which can be taken for the actual magician's demonstration, as well as for the film's layered spatial arrangement — is done.

Layering continues in Thater's conception of the work's overall sound. Four compounding elements confront the viewer: the sound of the cameras filming the magician; the sound of the projectors projecting the film onto the screen of the Los Angeles Theater; the sound of the cameras filming the projection; and the sound of the projectors projecting the film live in the Zwirner gallery space.

(continue to next page)



Film still from *Between Science and Magic*

The layered scheme also inspires palpable tension between past and present. Wilson's formal attire reverberates throughout the French Baroque-inspired architecture of the theater, contrasting with the whirl of Thater's modern film machinery (the work was shot on 16mm film and is projected with 16mm projectors). The austere blacks and whites of the white sound stage and camera equipment collide with the lush, effusive colors of the theater's sumptuous stage, creating a physical representation of spaces both scientific, magical, and in between.

**Diana Thater** (born 1962, San Francisco, California), an artist, curator, writer, and teacher, has been a pioneering creator of film and video art since the early 1990s. She has been the subject of solo exhibitions, including at the Vienna Secession; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Kunsthalle Basel; Dia Center for the Arts, New York; and the Renaissance Society, Chicago. Currently on view at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art is *Diana Thater: Butterflies and Other People* (closes February 14, 2010). In 2009, Thater's *gorillagorillagorilla* premiered at Kunsthau Graz in Austria, in collaboration with the Museum of Natural History in London, to celebrate the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth; and Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne, England exhibited *Tigers and Other People*. *Between Science and Magic* premiered at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, where it is still on view until April 17, 2010.

Her work is held in many public collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. She was the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and the Phelan Award in Film and Video. The artist lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

For more information about the press preview, contact Ben Thornborough, Press Officer.  
212-727-2070 or [BThornborough@davidzwirner.com](mailto:BThornborough@davidzwirner.com)