

Stockholm

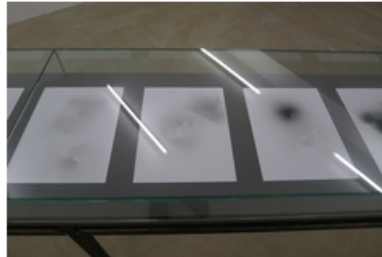
Lina Selander

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Kungsbro Strand 19

November 2–December 18

Index, the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, has of late mounted several consecutive exhibitions largely influenced by eastern European topics, almost to the point of developing a distinct style, and the most recent exhibition by Lina Selander is no exception. Its title, "Lenin's Lamp Glows in the Peasant's Hut," cites Dziga Vertov's 1928 montage film *Odinnadtsatyy* (The Eleventh Year)—made to commemorate the eleventh anniversary of the October Revolution. Vertov's film foremost details the construction of a hydroelectric power plant planned to generate power for the region surrounding the Dnieper River in the Soviet Union, in accord with Lenin's slogan "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country." The production of energy in this area, which eventually developed nuclear power, predates Selander's three-part installation comprising twenty-two photographic works, an engraved mirror, and a film.



View of "Lenin's Lamp Glows in the Peasant's Hut," 2011.

By placing stones radiating uranium onto photo paper in hermetically sealed containers, Selander creates curious phantom images that visualize the stones' emissions, much in the style of the photographic plates that led to Henri Becquerel's unintentional discovery of radioactivity. The mirror, hung between two rooms and literally reflecting the installation's two other parts, is engraved with crisscrossing phrases such as "Model Reactor 4"—referencing Selander's accompanying film, which in turn appropriates Vertov's work. Here the artist has coupled her own footage from Pripet, located near the Dnieper River, with scenes from Vertov's film, along with images of plant fossils and evacuated hospitals.

All parts of the installation ultimately concern present-day repercussions of what we see in Vertov's celebration, and although such collocations could be considered trite, the exhibition is quite enticing, especially for those with special interest in radiation. The photographic works are technically fascinating in this regard, but most poignant is the film—in particular, the part where Vertov's workers are paired with their more recent counterparts, who in the late 1980s decontaminated rather than developed the area. A clip taken of one of these latter-day laborers documents the sanitation process, and we are reminded that all these workers, including the cameraman, passed away soon after being filmed—lest we forget that the Dnieper River region was eviscerated by the Chernobyl disaster.

— Theodor Ringborg