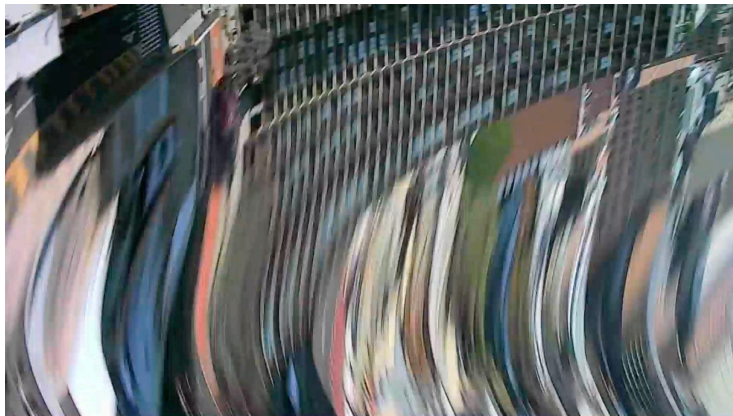


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Anna Rubin *The Gram*
What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in September
By Travis Diehl



Anna Rubin's "The Gram," 2024, video still.



Anna Rubin's "Super Gift," 2024, video still.

The footage recalls a GoPro tumbling toward Manhattan, transmitting a jostled aerial view of weathered bridges, yellow cabs and brick apartment towers. Watch Anna Rubin's "The Gram" a while, and a rhythm sets in. The video *flaps*. Turns out, it's a 26-minute flyover by a homing pigeon strapped with a small camera, registering the city from Midtown to the Bronx in jarring blinks and a soundtrack of puffs of wind.

Rubin's show includes just two videos. Under the chaotic imagery are elegant structures. In this way, Rubin echoes the Structuralist filmmakers of the 1960s and '70s, especially Michael Snow's cartwheeling landscape film "La Région Centrale," shot with a gyrating robotic arm.

This nostalgia seems intentional. In Rubin's second video, "Super Gift," the camera pans across the shelves of a thrift store, lingering on rows of outdated books, derelict appliances, mysterious electronics. This is the present, appraising the recent past, as if contemplating its coming obsolescence. The image fills a horizontal screen, mirrored at the edges and slowly spinning, like a kaleidoscope.

Pigeons have carried small film cameras since at least World War I. Rubin's "Gram" nods gratuitously to the ease of cheap, mini cameras (and Instagram). The history of image making has harbored hope that the camera, combined with planes or balloons or satellites, can give us a god's view, and therefore a kind of dominion. Surely an inexpensive drone could have delivered a steady shot. Rubin's fluttering, rolling videos show us mesmerizing alternatives to control.