



Review: Will Rogan MATRIX 253 at BAM/PFA
by Maria Porges
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Will Rogan. *Erase*, 2014; still from video, silent; 8:10.
Courtesy of the Artist, Altman Siegel, San Francisco; and
Laurel Gitlen, New York.

Viewing Will Rogan's MATRIX show at the [Berkeley Art Museum](#) leaves one with a lingering impression of something that can only be described, somewhat paradoxically, as *homely elegance*. Rogan's quiet yet extraordinarily powerful evocations of time—how one experiences its passage, quickly and slowly, or simply observes its arbitrary nature—manage to embody both of these qualities in their sparing installation throughout the odd, liminal space allotted to MATRIX exhibitions. The show's centerpiece, literally and figuratively, is *Seven* (2014), a small, ceramic, staircase-shaped sculpture festooned with seven handmade "melting" brass clock faces à la Salvador Dali. This sly, slightly louche historical reference is enchanting—especially when made by a conceptualist of Rogan's caliber and intelligence. It is a deliberate move, a deadpan sleight of hand and eye that Rogan's work as a whole invokes through both temporal and spatial manipulation. Three black-and-white photographs, one on each wall, triangulate the gallery space. Two of them, both titled *Scout's Ruler* and dating from 2013, were printed from the same negative and show his daughter's homemade ruler with numbers written right to left—a result of her dyslexia. The punch line is that the prints are different sizes but hung far enough from each other that this shift in scale, not immediately apparent, begins to suggest a magic act. (Rogan's artist's book of magician's obituaries, *Broken Wands* [2014], sits on a shelf in the gallery, hinting at such a reading.) The third

photograph, *Picture of the Earth Spinning in Space* (2014), features a rotated manhole cover, and is a version of a color picture featured in Rogan's first museum show ten years ago as a SECA award winner at SFMOMA. It, too, is a kind of measure of time, simultaneously marking movement forward and backward; it suggests both "development" (a kind of photographic in-joke?) and the retrograde implication of going from color to black-and-white, rather than the other way around.

The pièce de résistance of the show is *Eraser* (2014), a video of an exploding hearse shot with a special camera that takes 6,900 frames per second. Four seconds of "real" time become nearly six minutes of smoke and car parts that move, with the exquisite slowness of Butoh dancers, through a wintry landscape. It is a gift to be able to experience the events at a crawl. You can watch it as many times as you like without ever exhausting the almost pornographic thrill of feeling the tyranny of time all but perfectly tamed, even if only for a few ecstatic moments.

Will Rogan: MATRIX 253 is on view at the *Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive* through June 9, 2014.

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