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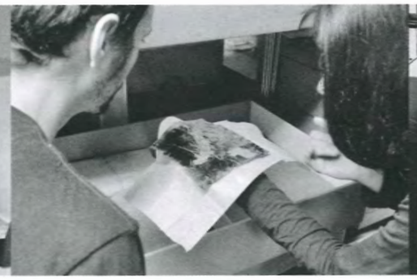

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Welcome to Fiction Hour

by Nellie Lindquist

Detail, Memorabilia, 2024.

Nellie Lindquist.

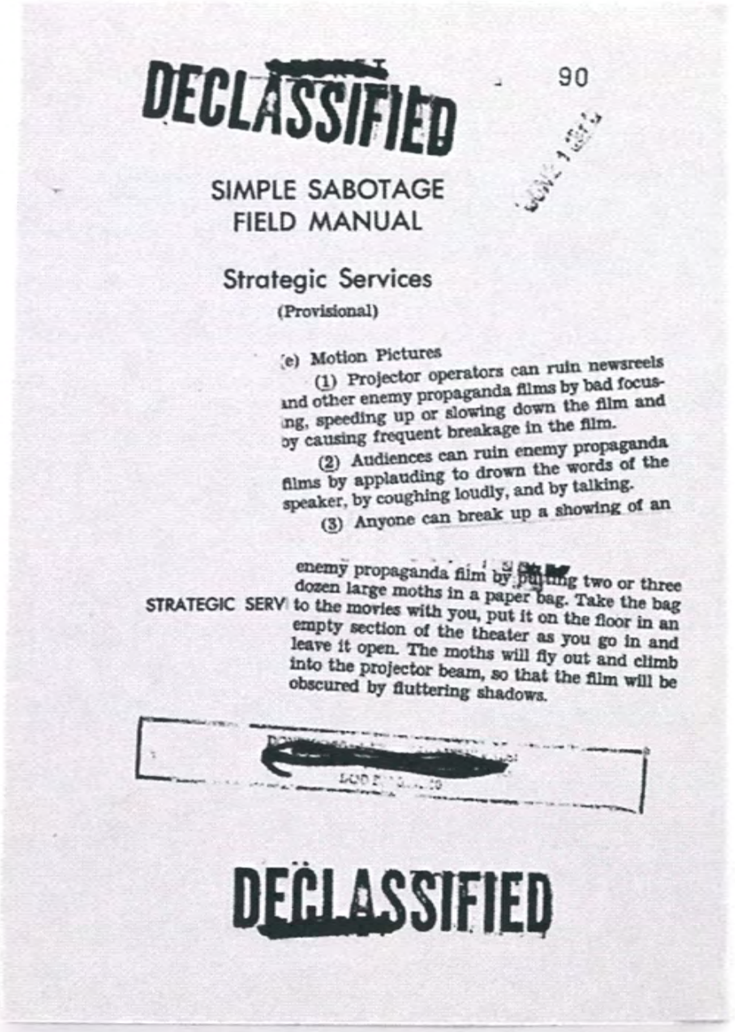
Reality has a shape and taste. Reality is utilitarian, fiction is adorned,is what I've been taught. The words 'factory' and 'to fabricate' come from the same Latin root of the word 'fabricius'. Stories are not fabricated in factories, but they do get told and reiterated through industrial production, architecture and infrastructure, making the reality of modernity a fiction among others. The tension between fiction, architecture, infrastructure and industrial production is not a dialogue, it is a script. Welcome to Fiction hour. Cue a gust of wind.

Some time ago, nowhere in particular, I was waiting for the bus and noticed an old advertisement light box on the wall next to the bus shelter. While it still lit up, its print was faded, and what remained was only sunbleached outlines on the cracked vinyl. The lightbox no longer served any practical purpose, and was left behind, ghostlike and pale. Without a task at hand it was now looking like a prop in a story which was no longer believable.
Having recently binge watched a bunch of badly produced, campy films, most of them horror movies from the 80's, they appeared to me, from the off-scale props and lack of visual consistency to the weakly weaved storylines, to have an indifferent approach to making things feel real. The blood is too red, the monster is too silly.

Many of these films, and all kinds of plot driven Hollywood productions often use the kind of prop assigned the role

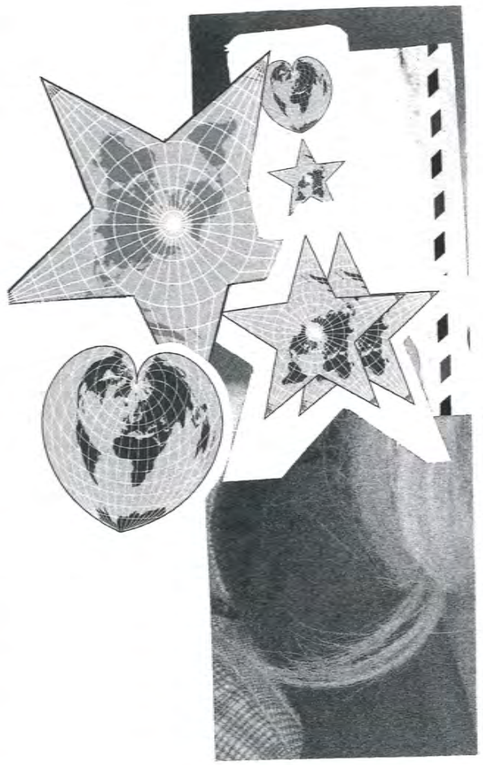
Installation view, Motion Pictures, 2024.

Nellie Lindquist



Detail, Motion Pictures, 2024.

Nellie Lindquist.



Detail, Memorabilia, digital collage, 2024.
Nellie Lindquist.

to drive the narrative forward, called a MacGuffin. A MacGuffin can be anything, It doesn't have to look real, do anything or be useful, what it is is not important. It is something that serves as a narrative device of big importance to the plot but with no inherent value,or function in itself. It rarely really does anything, it can be a ring, a golden fleece, a briefcase, and it might for example have importance for the characters and therefore get stolen to be retrieved.

In mainstream film productions, props are also sometimes manufactured larger than the actual object itself, in order to, paradoxically, be perceived as more realistic, or real. The change in scale allows for certain camera angles, or use of materials other than the original that better emphasize and make it possible to capture the traits associated with the object, its varnish, its color. I assume similar conditions apply for stage props.

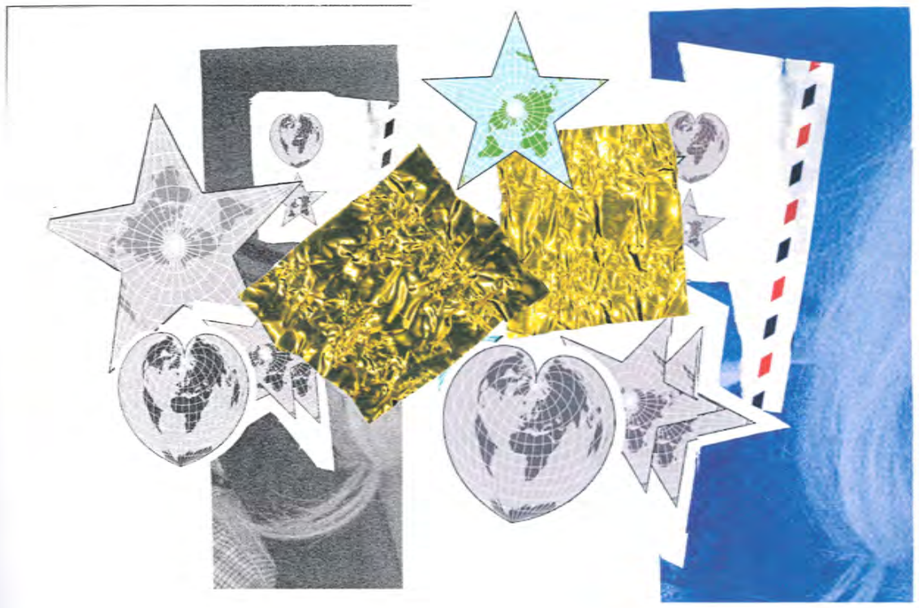
In my work Motion Pictures(2024), the installation draws attention to the fact that there is no film being screened. Where there should be a video projection, there is instead a wall-mounted archival print placed in front of a wooden bench

'Anyone can break up the showing of an enemy propaganda film by
putting two or three dozen large moths in a paper bag. Take the bag to the movies with you, put it on the floor in an empty section of the theater as you go in and leave it open. The moths will fly out and climb into the projector beam, so that the film will be obscured by fluttering shadows.'

It is an excerpt from the 'Simple Sabotage Field Manual' by the OSS, the predecessor of the C.I.A. A pamphlet for internal circulation, originally published in 1944, it was declassified a long time ago. It contains instructions for infrastructural, industrial, military and political sabotage that can be performed by 'anyone', but this strange, score-like instruction stands out.

I imagine there being a weird shadow choreography of moths and spies in the cinema. After the moths are released, the shadows they cast on the screen are both story and object-prop. The soundtrack will probably still be playing and people will be getting up, not sure if what is showing on the screen are shadows or a projection of them. If the enemy is not defeated, he is at least...confused, making the methods of the C.I.A appear almost mischievous.

Both the defunct lightbox as well as the moth-filled cinema are ideological objects turned into props, no longer with any clear role in the narrative they used to participate in. Through their gradual decay, sabotage or breakdown, that narrative's false claim to permanence is made easier to see.



Memorabilia, digital collage, 2024

Nellie Lindquist.

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