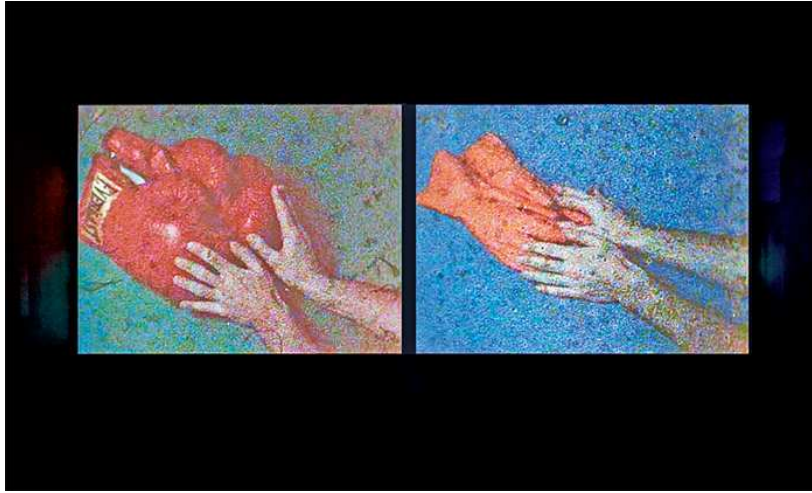


ARTFORUM

Morgan Fisher

MAUREEN PALEY

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Morgan Fisher, *Red Boxing Gloves/Orange Kitchen Gloves*, 1980, two-channel video (Polavision cassettes transferred to DVD), color, silent, 3 minutes 20 seconds.

Much recent engagement with photochemical film tends to reflect a fetishistic investment in the uniqueness of its materiality. The work of Morgan Fisher is different: His interest is in the conjunction of this material support and the demands of industry. For Fisher, film is less artisanal than it is inextricable from the standards imposed by corporations in the field, such as Agfa-Gevaert. Of course, it is exactly this tie to industry that has cast the medium into obsolescence, a topos that looms large in Fisher's recent exhibition "Past Present, Present Past."

In the 1970s, Fisher worked in the Hollywood industry while maintaining a practice as an avant-garde filmmaker, thus inhabiting the peculiar nexus of two areas of film practice typically considered to be resolutely separate, if not antagonistic. *Production Footage*, 1971, puts these two kinds of filmmaking face-to-face to underline the close links between aesthetic conventions and modes of production. The first half of this 16-mm work consists of handheld color footage, a form of cinematography rarely seen in Fisher's films due to its alliance with subjectivity and expressivity, qualities the artist assiduously avoids. Fellow filmmaker Thom Andersen, a friend of Fisher's, stands on a dolly loading film into a mounted Mitchell camera, preparing to shoot. The second half delivers the reverse shot: a static black-and-white view from the Mitchell of Fisher unloading his lightweight Eclair and putting it away. The film closes in on itself with a reflexivity typical of its time—not to pursue pure materialism but rather in order to open onto questions of infrastructure.