

Anya Lewin

More than Stories: A Film Trilogy

John Hansard Gallery
16 February – 4 May 2019

#JHGLewin

John Hansard Gallery, part of the University of Southampton, is pleased to present Anya Lewin: *More than Stories: A Film Trilogy* from 16 February to 4 May 2019.

More than Stories is a trilogy of films inspired by Anya Lewin's family photographs and stories, and their interconnections with screen history and public archives. Each film has at its heart the haunted memories of Jewish life embedded in a particular story passed down to Lewin by her father.

Fez: The Royal Scent (2019) has been made specifically for this exhibition and will be presented alongside *With Heartfelt Gratitude for the Painless Treatment* (2008) and *Chez Paulette on the Sunset Strip* (2013). *Fez: The Royal Scent* completes Lewin's trilogy of installations that will be shown here together for the first time.

These films take place in three different cities that Lewin's family inhabited during their wanderings: Cairo, Berlin, and Los Angeles. Each of the films was shot within built sets that recreate the locations central to each story: a perfume shop, a dental office, a coffee house. Aspects of these sets reach out from the films and appear in the gallery space so that the audience becomes part of an expanded frame.

Fez: The Royal Scent takes place from 1926 to 1928, when Lewin's father was a child, and his father and mother decided to leave Berlin for Cairo, Egypt, which had a large Jewish immigrant community. The film is shot in four languages: Arabic, French, Polish and English, acknowledging the multi-lingual environment the family would have found themselves in. Once settled in Cairo the family opened a perfume shop and Lewin's grandmother – who had a degree in chemistry – invented a scent called Fez that was presented in a bottle in the shape of the common Fez hat. The bottles were stacked in the shop window when one day King Fuad I happened to drive past, stopped the royal car and bought all the stock. Fez became the Royal Perfume and the family stayed in Cairo for two years.

With Heartfelt Gratitude for the Painless Treatment blends the historical with the imaginative. Developed from an inherited and unexplained collection of autographed photographs of 1920s film and theatre stars who frequented the Berlin dental practice of Lewin's grandfather, Dr Ignatz Lewin, the story tells of a Jewish Polish family, who fled to the USA in 1938, soon after Krystallnacht and before Hitler invaded Poland. The film travels through the Weiner Library archive to discover the original Berlin address of the dentist surgery to

reveal a film within a film of the fascinating patients, with a nod to silent German Cinema.

Chez Paulette on the Sunset Strip brings together the launch of the European style coffee house in Los Angeles, the experience of Jewish immigration to Hollywood, the influence of Europe on Hollywood, and the blurring of fact, fiction, the real and the reconstructed. In 1958 Max Lewin took over his family's failing cake shop. Capitalising on its hip location on Los Angeles' Sunset Strip, he turned it into a coffee house called *Chez Paulette*. With the help of Marlon Brando, who became a regular customer to help build its reputation, *Chez Paulette* became a popular Hollywood bohemian hangout favoured by actors, poets, folk singers and flamenco guitarists and dancers. At the same time as *Chez Paulette* emerged, along came *77 Sunset Strip* (also 1958–64) one of the first detective television series. *77 Sunset Strip* and *Chez Paulette* were brought together when a set of the café was built on the Studio lot, and featured in the series with Max Lewin as host. These tales and tidbits, TV scenes, facts and momentary glimpses from photos in a scrapbook have been reworked, copied, quoted, and reconfigured into a film script and made into a film that is both finished and unfinished at the same time. As the director/detective figure in the film says, "there is no mystery, just history".

The production of *Fez: The Royal Scent* has been made possible through support from Arts Council England. Production and audio-visual exhibition services have been provided by Spike Film and Video at Spike Island.

Biography

Anya Lewin was born in Los Angeles and is a first generation American on her father's side and a second generation on her Mother's. Both branches of her family immigrated to the USA in flight from persecution in Europe.

She has been the recipient of three Arts Council England Grant for the Arts funds and several international residencies. Her works, both individual and collaborative, have been exhibited and screened in such places as Beijing, Belfast, Bristol, Bulgaria, Cuba, London, New York and San Francisco.

She has lived in the UK since 2000 and is an Associate Professor (Reader) in Art and Moving Image at the University of Plymouth.

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Notes to Editors

John Hansard Gallery

John Hansard Gallery is a locally engaged and internationally recognised contemporary art gallery in Southampton. Being part of the University of Southampton, the Gallery aims to change the world for the better through great art. To realise this the Gallery creates innovative and critically acclaimed contemporary art exhibitions, events, engagement and research projects that excite, challenge, represent and reach the widest possible public audience. Since being established in 1979 the Gallery has been located on the University's Highfield Campus. In 2018 the Gallery relocated to the new purpose-built arts complex Studio 144 in Southampton's city centre, significantly increasing the space available for exhibitions, events and integrated programming. Learning and engagement are at the heart of the Gallery and underpin all its activities. The innovative education and public programme is accompanied by special community-focused projects, including activities for all ages and levels of experience. John Hansard Gallery is supported using public funding as a National Portfolio Organisation by Arts Council England.
www.jhg.art

University of Southampton

The University of Southampton is one of the UK's leading teaching and research institutions, with a global reputation for research and scholarship across a wide range of subjects. The University combines academic excellence with an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to research, supporting a culture that engages and challenges students and staff in their pursuit of learning.
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Inspiring arts and culture for everyone

Arts at University of Southampton offers a wealth of inspiring cultural experiences and opportunities, showcasing emerging talent and renowned international artists. From visual arts, music and literature, to theatre and film, there's something for everyone.

The University of Southampton has rich heritage and long-standing commitment to arts and culture as an essential part of university life. The University is proud of its unique relationship with three Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations. The Nuffield Theatre opened at its Highfield Campus in 1964 and was joined by the University's concert hall Turner Sims and John Hansard Gallery in the 1970s.

Sculpture by leading UK and international artists is displayed at Highfield and Boldrewood Campuses and exhibitions takes place at the Hartley Library's Special Collections Gallery. The University's Arts and Humanities departments present regular free public activity at its campuses and across Southampton and Winchester. The University is committed to fostering new talent and the University's Students' Union SUSU supports over 40 performing arts societies which host regular public events.

The relocation of the John Hansard Gallery to its new purpose-built home in the heart of the city's Cultural Quarter increases the University of Southampton's presence in that area, close to its Mayflower Halls and administrative offices in Guildhall Square. The opening of Studio 144 symbolises an extraordinary moment for Southampton and the University will be working closely with John Hansard Gallery, City Eye and NST to deepen public engagement, to share its research and present inspiring and accessible cultural opportunities for all.

www.southampton.ac.uk/arts