

**ROB TUFNELL**

AT

**1 SUTTON LANE  
LONDON EC1M 5PU**

**HUMPHREY SPENDER  
STEPHEN SUTCLIFFE  
1 JULY – 7 AUGUST 2010**

Rob Tufnell presents a series of rarely seen, early photographs by Humphrey Spender alongside new video and graphic collages by Stephen Sutcliffe.

Spender's photographs include images of Christopher Isherwood, taken on Ruegen Island at a Baltic coast guesthouse fictionalised in his novel *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939) and in Amsterdam. Other subjects include Costa Achilopoulos, socialite and associate of Marcel Duchamp; the surrealist painter John Banting; the ethnographic film-maker Hugh Gibb; members of the Group Theatre; Spender's wife, the architect Margaret Low and his brother, the poet Stephen Spender. Figures are variously captured against the backgrounds of the Swiss Alps, the waterways of Amsterdam, the streets of Berlin, the Mediterranean coast, Innsbruck during the Anschluss and Lake Garda in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War.

Sutcliffe's *untitled* (2010), a short, single channel video work, features, found footage of Isherwood, late in life explaining how he writes fictional dialogue. Isherwood refers to *Prater Violet* (1945) a novel based upon his experience of working as the screenwriter of *Little Friend* (1934) directed by Berthold Viertel in Vienna. The book describes the technical process of filmmaking as a vehicle for telling the stories of the cast and crew and through this, the erosion of European democracy in the 1930s. Other material used by Sutcliffe includes extracts from a documentary about the *nouvelle vague* director Eric Rohmer whose films are distinctive for their focus on dialogue. Sutcliffe has also appropriated extracts from the score for Rohmer's *L'amour l'après-midi* (1972).

Whilst Spender's photographs document a seminal period in British cultural and political life (albeit one chiefly taking place abroad) Sutcliffe can be seen to dissect and reassemble something of their later fictionalisation. Presented together they explore either end of the creative spectrum – original subjects and collaged reconstructions.

Exhibition open 12 – 6pm, Wednesday – Saturday and by appointment.  
For further information please contact [mail@robtufnell.com](mailto:mail@robtufnell.com)

Initially training as an architect Humphrey Spender (1910 – 2005) worked as a freelance photojournalist after being invited by a probation officer to photograph homes in London's East End in order to provide evidence of the poor conditions that were thought to contribute to crime in the area. He was subsequently commissioned by the *Left Review* to capture the Jarrow Crusade and a British Union of Fascists rally and by Mass Observation to record the lives of working people in Bolton. Between 1935 and 1937 he worked as a photographer for the *Daily Mirror* before being employed to document cities across Britain for *Picture Post*. During this time he also travelled extensively in continental Europe. In the early 1940s he worked as an official war photographer before largely abandoning photography in the 1950s to concentrate on painting and producing murals, mosaics, and designs for wallpaper and textiles. He taught in the Royal College of Art textile department for 20 years. In 2004 Spender was enrolled as an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. A major retrospective of his photographs was mounted at the Yale Center for British Art in Connecticut in 1997. 2010 sees a series of exhibitions of his work across Britain and in New York in celebration of the centenary of his birth.

Stephen Sutcliffe was born in Harrogate in 1968. He studied at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design and Glasgow School of Art (from where he participated on an exchange programme at Cal Arts, Valencia California). Solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at Cubitt, London; Galerie Micky Schubert, Berlin; Tate Britain, Art Now/ Lightbox and at the ICA, London, as part of *Nought to Sixty*. His work has been included in a number of group exhibitions at venues including Dundee Contemporary Arts; Studio Voltaire, London; Transmission Gallery, Glasgow; the Zenomap Performance Space at the Venice Biennale and in the British Council touring exhibition *Electric Earth*. He was shortlisted for the Jarman Award in 2009. In 2011 he will have a solo exhibition at Stills, Edinburgh and will be included in the Independent Curators International, 'Project 35' that will be touring venues in the United States. He has also been commissioned by Frieze Projects to present a new work during the Frieze Art Fair in Regent's Park 14 – 17 October.