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## Barbara Rosenthal

Clare Carswell

Directors Lounge / Lucas Carrieri Gallery, Berlin

Dual solo events by avant-garde artist Barbara Rosenthal in Berlin this June, "An Evening With Barbara Rosenthal" at Directors Lounge and "Aperitif With Barbara Rosenthal" at Lucas Carrieri Gallery, presented a rare glimpse of the range and power of this zany but elusive New York artist who has operated just below the radar for over thirty years. Directors Lounge screened her mini-retrospective, 33 remastered *Existential Video Shorts*, prefaced and concluded by impromptu performance and discussion. Lucas Carrieri Gallery hung three rooms of print suites: "Button Pins Shirts Prints," "Logo Images," and "Provocation Cards Prints," which Rosenthal navigated whilst performing *Existential Interact* to begin the evening, and reading from *Homo Futurus* (Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986) at the end.

Barbara Rosenthal, *Dead Heat*, 2009. Still from film. Screened at Directors Lounge, Berlin, 2009.

At Directors Lounge, rarely seen works (*Playing With Matches*, 1992, 15sec) ran beside better known (*How Much Does The Monkey Count*, 1988, 4min), and one premiere, *Dead Heat* (2009, 3min), a pun meaning "tied race." This simple, profound work splits the screen into 4 horizontal layers in which moving subjects (bird, horse, Rosenthal, ship) start together, then repeatedly traverse at their own speeds, intermittently lapping, but starting and ending simultaneously. No matter our lives, our limits are the same, and no matter our limits, our lives are different, she seems to say.



Barbara Rosenthal, performance documentation from "Existential Interact" at Lucas Carrieri Gallery, Berlin, 2009.

At LC, her text-art delivered pithy, poignant, prophetic commentaries (*God Is The Idol Of Science; Life Has A Life Of Its Own; The Flaw Of The Ideal Is That It Does Not Encounter Time Or Touch*), high content, as usual, fabricated with low-tech materials. This is generous work by a mature and resilient artist. Finally, viewers are starting to "get" Barbara Rosenthal.