

Flash in the Metropolitan is the second collaboration between Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer; a short experimental film, shot on 16mm, after dark, at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

Spike Island originally commissioned this new film in 2006 with support from Bristol Visual Art Consortium (BVAC). It was shown once in a digital format as part of the series of events relating to the British Art Show 6. Since then it has been shown at Frieze Art Fair and the Venice Biennale. Later this year it will be shown again at Esther Schipper in Berlin in a show called *The Droste Effect*.

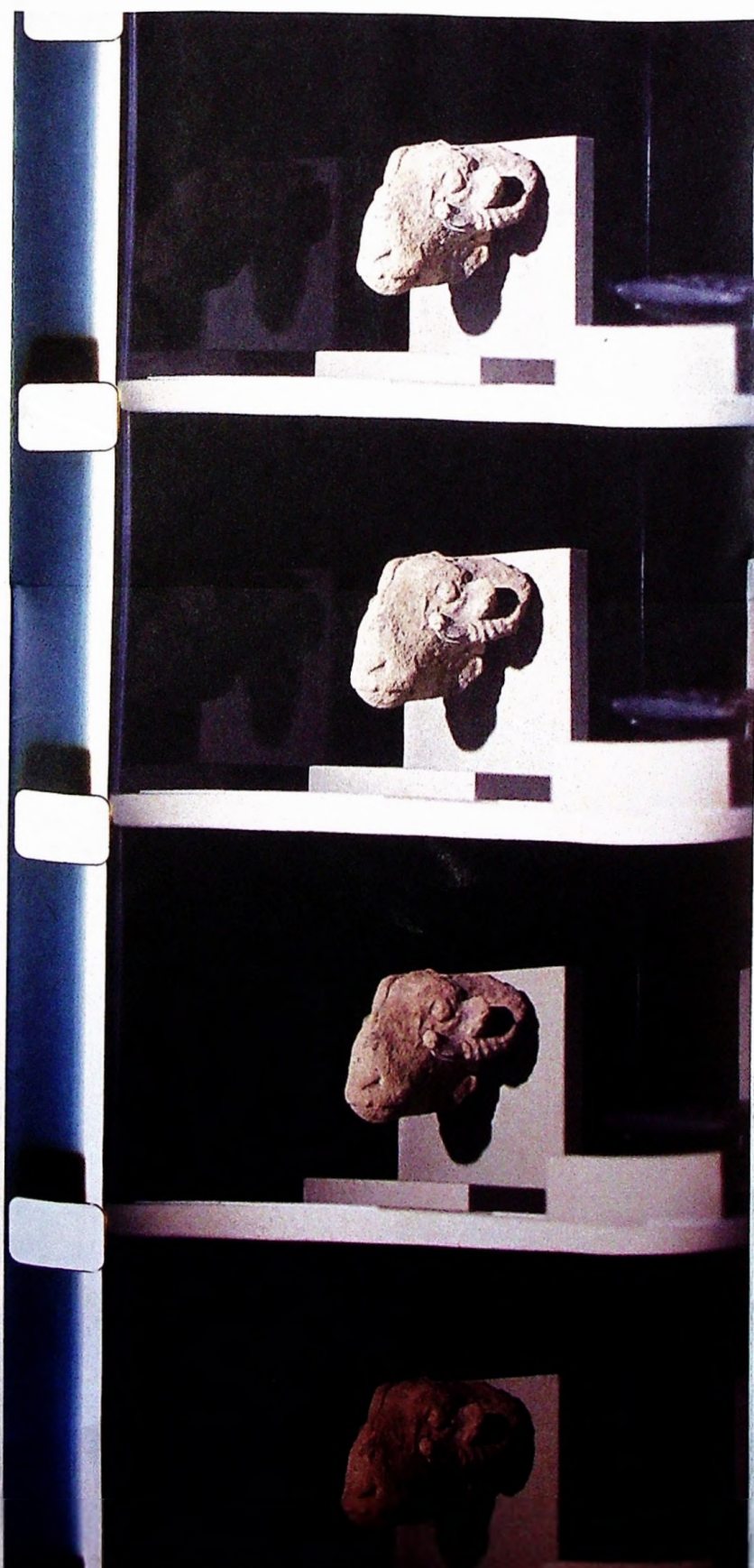
We are delighted to be able to install the work for an extended period as a 16mm projection.

Both artists have been recipients of the Scottish Arts Council's New York Studio Residency. Although their time working in this city did not overlap, their experience of moving for a stipulated period and using New York as a short term working base, has had a considerable impact. The richness of this experience and their fascination with the mighty and authoritative cultural institutions situated there has been the subject of this work.

The artists share a common interest in using re-contextualisation as a magical and subversive tool. They develop these interests within their collaborative and individual practices through many forms of active intervention and also through the use of film.

The idea behind *Flash in the Metropolitan* is simple: as if they had waited, hidden, until the staff and visitors had left, the two artists have invaded one of the USA's foremost cultural institutions, New York's Metropolitan Museum. Under the cover of darkness, armed with flashing strobic light, they have managed to film the museum and the objects on display through this imposed matrix of light. The film seeks to permeate the conventions of a museological space by literally marking the passing seconds and minutes.

The resulting disorientation tips the viewer from the logic prescribed by the museum's framework to one dictated by the artifacts, enabling a new and imagined response. The strobing light almost animates; one has the sense that the objects are taking on their own authority. As with the making of a simple flick book, the objects, like the lunatics taking over the asylum, have formed characters of their own. The artifacts are cast as silent characters in this very specific and charged space.



Discarding their ideologies and status within a narrative of the archive, we can imagine that they have come alive; even though we know this is not real we can suspend our disbelief and see beyond the special effect. The pulses of light draw us into the structure of the film, as we join the artists in peering through the after hours darkness. The objects seem to enter into a dialogue across departments and classifications, creating a theatrical tension that builds a rhythmic pace.

Flash in the Metropolitan inevitably problematises the values and origins of such institutions, yet it also re-inforces the power they have in igniting our imaginations. Above all, the artists have made a beautiful film, distilling their experience of this museum in such a way that celebrates a moment where they move from the status of the visitor, like us, to an interloper. They have entered the secret world of the objects.

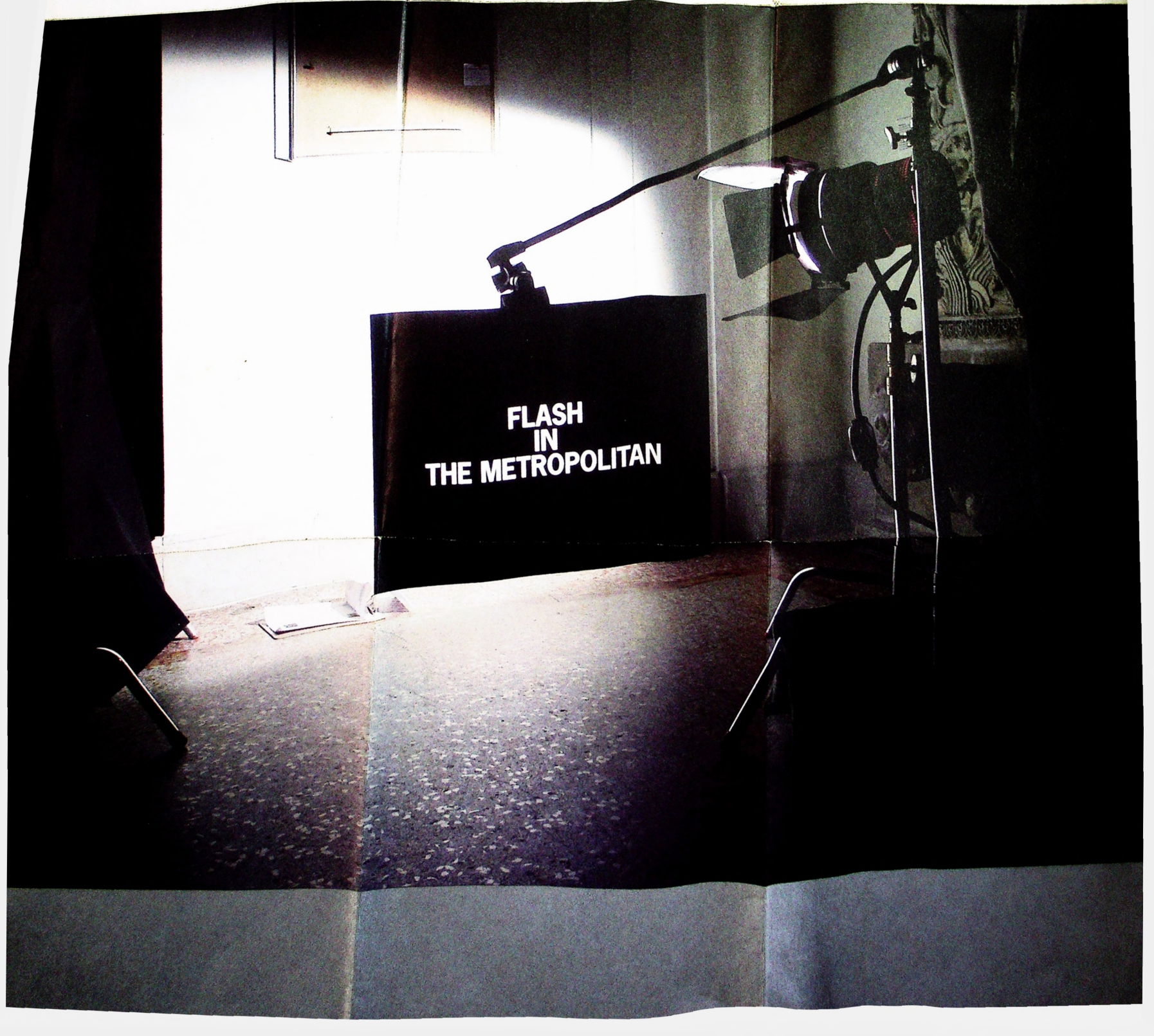
Flash in the Metropolitan

Nashashibi/Skaer

Gallery 2
14 July - 16 September
Tuesday - Sunday, 12 - 6pm

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FLASH
IN
THE METROPOLITAN