

# ARTFORUM

## **DASHIELL MANLEY: "Review: The Great Train Robbery"**

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Upon entering Dashiell Manley's installation, *The Great Train Robbery (Scene 3 version B)*, 2013, the viewer is immediately confronted with a large steel wall frame and, leaning against it, a glossy Plexiglas surface. Beneath the acrylic plane is a pastiche of ink spatters, pencil-drawn notes and storyboards, and brightly colored lighting gels. This flat surface's opposing side, of gouache on linen, showcases painted geometric forms (checkers, arcs, rectangles) overlaid by dripping turn of the century shorthand symbols. Five iterations of these two-part structures are dispersed throughout the gallery.

Edwin S. Porter's 1903 film *The Great Train Robbery*, known for its innovative use of camera angles, transitions, and composite editing to convey climactic narrative, inspired Manley's eponymous series. The artist initially constructed the panels and frames to serve as a reconfigurable set for a film of the same name, currently on view at LAXART, Los Angeles. The two-channel video work is a stop-motion sequence of JPEG files that show the artist performing a series of actions (dictated by the leaning panels' shorthand inscriptions) through and around the vertical structures.

Following filmmaking's extensive production process, Manley produced three different versions of these five structures for his scene takes: *A* (also on view at LAXART), *B*, and *C*. (The latter configuration is mounted in an offsite storage unit, accessible with the gallery's assistance.) This stored third set of structures is more tightly arranged than those found within the gallery, as their steel frames intersect with the wooden frames of the rented space and match the building's foot-long distance between studs. The accord in proportions may be due to both coincidence and artistic intent. Regardless of their fate on or off the market, these works, like most art, will live in storage. Here, situated three blocks from Redling's gallery walls, one can wonder—Is this still Manley's film set or is it art's cutting-room floor?