

Patrick Jolley and Reynold Reynolds

Sugar, Roebing Hall Gallery, New York

By Ken Johnson

New York Times, Art in Review, December 23rd, 2005

A young woman descends into madness in a gripping one-hour looped film by Reynold Reynolds and Patrick Jolley. That's what seems to happen, anyway, as the film's nonlinear narrative and mix of grainy black-and-white and lucid color tend to confuse what is real and what is hallucinated or dreamed.

By turns funny, sad, mysterious and scary, the film's events take place in a squalid studio apartment. A young woman played by Samara Golden arrives carrying a suitcase and begins cleaning up. At one point, she extracts a corpse resembling her from behind a radiator screen and tends to it as though preparing it for a funeral. In other scenes the room violently shakes and water starts to flood it. Light bulbs pop and overloaded electrical connections crackle and buzz. A man appears out of nowhere and tries to rape the woman, but he quickly disappears. At another point she mixes up a batter including roach powder that she had put into a sugar container -- hence, presumably, the film's title "Sugar" -- and eats it. Finally, she transfers her doppelganger's body from the refrigerator to the suitcase she came in with and departs.

Film students will detect references to famous movies -- Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* most conspicuously. But because Ms. Golden plays her role with such understated earnestness, the film isn't just an arch exercise in appropriation, it immerses you in a harrowing dark night of the soul. (By the way, don't be discouraged by the ugly, hyperrealistic life-size sculptures representing scenes in the film that are on display outside the projection room.)

Ken Johnson, December 2005