

Review

Sheila and Nick Pye

“A Life of Errors,” Kasia Kay Art Projects, through Jul 8.



Sheila and Nick Pye, *Sway: A Life of Errors*, 2006.

Malaise, deceit, perpetual tug-of-war—they are all parts of a vigorous marriage. Or so we infer from the recent work of Sheila and Nick Pye, a married couple of five years whose collaborative output often explores the psychological minefield of committed relations.

In their short film “A Life of Errors”—on display here along with a series of photos—the strange and sometimes subtle power struggles that arise as folks submit to one another are given bleak and slightly baroque caricature.

A couple (played by the Pyes) living in a dilapidated apartment with no windows and rotting wallpaper for decor engages in all sorts of strange activities that reek of subtext, such as a passive game of tug-of-war played with a fraying rope. The two lean back on their heels while the rope frays further and further before snapping and sending them both to the floor. A makeup kiss births a pink-ribbon tongue that binds them as they move away from one another across the confines of their grimy apartment and into separate bedrooms. In another dubious game, Sheila leads a blindfolded Nick around broken glass on the floor. Their faces remain void of emotion as they go through motions that seem to pantomime varying degrees of discomfort. Bound together yet isolated, they share wordless meals or cut off bits of one another’s hair.

In the accompanying photos, Sheila and Nick drown separately in a bathtub, set fire to a mattresses and, in one particularly uplifting and vigor-evident shot, make out covered in topsoil. We know life is messy, but the Pyes make it look worthwhile.—*Josh Tyson*