

THE SHOW ROOM

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Reproductive Labour: An exhibition exploring the work of Cinenova 9 February – 26 March 2011

In the exhibition *Reproductive Labour*, Cinenova's films, videos and paper materials were worked on and displayed in a number of ways. Invited selectors nominated a work from the collection that was featured daily. Bringing these together with a series of screenings and events, this formed a rare opportunity to watch and research pivotal works from the history of feminist, black, queer and experimental film and video, and together consider how they activate the present.

WEEK FIVE: FILMS

Each selected film was shown throughout the day. They were not looped, but were played when there were visitors in the space.

WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH

The Decision, Vera Neubauer, UK, 1981, 33min

Selected by Vera Neubauer

Keep Your Laws Off My Body, Catherine Saalfield, Zoe Leonard, USA, 1990, 13min

Selected by The Yes Association

THURSDAY 10TH MARCH

Kore, Tran T Kim Trang, USA, 1994, 17min

Selected by Angelika Bartl

Light Reading, Lis Rhodes, UK, 1978, 20min

Selected by Christine Lemke

FRIDAY 11TH MARCH

The Smiling Madame Beudet, Germaine Dulac, France, 1922, 35min

Selected by Alison McClosky

The Seashell and The Clergyman, Germaine Dulac, France, 1927, 30min

Selected by Anne-Sophie Dinant and Virginia Villaplana

Anne-Sophie Dinant: *French director Germaine Dulac is one of the first women to have made a career in Cinema. This avant-garde film was based on a script by Antonin Artaud and is considered as the first surrealist film, even if it has been overshadowed by Buñuel's 'Un Chien Andalou', released in the following year. When first screened in a cinema in Paris, the film caused much controversy amongst the Surrealists who accused Dulac to have distorted Artaud's original script to the extreme. The Seashell and the Clergyman was for a long time considered as shocking and provocative due to his highly sexual content and its rather subversive approach to film -as through superimposition of images and its incredibly free way of editing, it renders the lustful thoughts of a Clergyman. In 1927, it was banned by the British Board of Film Censors. Dulac's films and her concept of film-making, which was prevailing the notion of Author Cinema, was later much celebrated by the French New Wave.*

Anne-Sophie is the Associate Curator at the South London Gallery

Virginia Villaplana: *For my contribution to upcoming exhibition Reproductive Labour at The*

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Showroom in London, both films of Dulac are important points as reproductive work of women, but also Dulac as an avantgarde filmmaker and all her works as member and founder in cineclubs culture: 'The Smiling Madame Beudet' (1922) and 'The Seashell and The Clergyman' (1927).

Virginia Villaplana (MBA in Media Studies; PhD in Arts and Visual Culture) is an artist whose practice expands into critical theory, editorial work, curatorship and teaching. She has written: 'El instante de la memoria', 'Zones of Intensity', '24 Back Beats', 'Cárcel de amor', 'Relatos culturales sobre la violencia' and 'Infinite Film'. She is also editor of Arte y Políticas de Identidad (<http://revistas.um.es/api>) and teaches at the University of Valencia. She is a member of the collective group Las Lindes art, radical pedagogy and cultural practices. Her work explores writing as a negotiation between memory and history tales of fiction and documentaries, gender narratives, and contextual participation (for further information visit www.virginiaivillaplana.com).

SATURDAY 12TH MARCH

Polygamy - Senegalese Style, Sokhna Dieng, Senegal, 1985, 30min

Selected by Stephen Robinson

***Stephen Robinson:** Looking through the catalogue the Sokhna Dieng film, 'Polygamy Senegalese Style', caught my interest because of a representation of polygamy in the film 'The Money Order' (1968) by another Senegalese filmmaker, Ousmane Sembene. The women in his film are effectively in a relationship with each other, which is practically closer than with their husband. I suppose it relates to statements about homosexuality as being 'un-African', (though it is not homosexuality that is explored in this film), it is different, loving, dependent and emotional. The film suggests a potentially warmer, open, interconnected and diverse family than imperial, evangelical and modern conservative templates desire.*

Polygamy is interesting because whilst it's institutionalised it exposes the arbitrary nature of institutional definitions. Marriage is not a well-defined thing. Marriage may be ubiquitous but its diversity across human cultures demonstrates that it is ours to define.

Though polygamy, like keeping a mistress, supports and is supported by a hierarchical and patriarchal society, perhaps by breaking the perfect image of monogamous marriage it gives a hopeful hint at the possibility of more open multi-centered relationships.

I'm interested in whether or not there can be any positive element in something that immediately seems 'wrong', especially given the sex bias of the institution, whether it can allow women to form protective structures and relationships in a society that is not equal. For example, in Ousmane Sembene's film 'Moolaadé' (2004), younger and older wives subtly support each other and grow together until they are strong enough to end the institution of female genital mutilation.

It's also interesting to challenge our discomfort with the subject and our assumptions about it's 'wrongness', and to have this discussion led by a woman who was a successful part of the culture (Sokhna Dieng is listed in 'With African Eyes: Women and African Cinema' as one of a group of "women who... were directors of ministries or other national institutions related to film, radio and television".)

In her 1917 pamphlet 'Marriage and Love' Emma Goldman attacks the assumption that marriage and love are synonymous, that they cover the same human needs. One hundred years later, have we rid ourselves of this notion? The assumption seems to be that in the wake of sexual and social liberation movements (which are represented as being complete) people are entirely free today to enter into love-match marriages, and that since these marriages are driven by love they must be equal, free, non-exploitative. The overwhelming representation of marriage is as a natural, happy, healthy, liberating experience. The propaganda of marriage even extends the 'marriage-franchise' to those

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previously excluded homosexuals who, we all seem to agree, desperately want in. Even when the discourse refers to queer people seeking to 'undermine' or 'redefine' marriage the subtext is that everyone agrees that marriage has intrinsic value.

With the remove allowed by cultural distance and the probable incomprehensibility of 'Polygamy' to many Cinenova visitors, Sokhna Dieng's film might allow us to see exploded the structure and relationships between marriage and love, to fracture the comfort of the more common monogamous structures and expose the institutionalisation and restriction of love and relationships between people.

