

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 THREE: FILMS

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

WEDNESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY

A Place of Rage, Pratibha Parmar, UK, 1991, 54 min
Selected by Nicole Fernandez Ferrer

THURSDAY 24TH FEBRUARY

Plutonium Trilogy Selected by Hysteriography
Uranium Hex (Part 2 of the Trilogy) Selected by Tahani Nadim
Plutonium Blonde, Sandra Lahire, UK, 1987, 15 min
Uranium Hex, Sandra Lahire, UK, 1987, 11 min
Serpent River, Sandra Lahire, UK, 1989, 30 min

Hysteriography: Sandra Lahire was one of the most prominent and inspiring figures of the London experimental film scene in the 1980s and 90s. A member of Cinenova and the London FilmMakers' Coop, she was an artist for whom filmmaking was an intense work of the imagination, a constant intellectual engagement as well as a question of survival, art was for her a raw and profound experience whereby both mind and body were at stake. Her films intertwine visionary scenes, photography and sometimes animation work through an elaborate sense of editing and interaction with sound.

Sandra Lahire's 'Plutonium Trilogy' films are radiant works of art, bodies of light that are the product of the (al)chemical process from decay to beauty. The existential encounter between the flesh and radioactive energy, which is the subject in the three films 'Plutonium Blonde', 'Uranium Hex' and 'Serpent River', turns life into nothing but a thin raw energy, whose extreme intensity finds form in Lahire's unique cinematic aesthetic.

In this rarely screened trilogy Lahire's intense self-reflection, extrapolated into an extreme critique of institutional state power deftly combines her passionate engagement with these issues within a remarkably original, embodied medley of disparate film conventions. This remarkable trilogy gives us the chance to take stock of what the conditions were that were fuelling protest against nuclear industrialisation in the 1980s and re-engage with this question now.

I would say "now" at the end perhaps.

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Tahani Nadim: *Nuclear is coming back. This time not cloaked in the artless euphoria of the 1950s but buried in the surreptitious statistics of necessity. W.H Auden wrote:*

*'the tyrant's device:
whatever is possible
is necessary'*

And it is under the shroud of "clean energy" that modern tyrants once again want to erect concrete coffins. In order to counter such lethal programmes, I think it is vital and urgent that we build and engage a repertoire of terms (visual, textual, aural etc) that is both effective and affective in addressing the spectre of indiscriminate extinction (as Lindsay Lohan's t-shirt reminds us: "extinction is forever"). To me, Sandra Lahire's trilogy represents an exceptional document in this attempt of giving shape to a feminist, ecological, "cosmopolitical" (Isabelle Stengers) imaginary. It's a strikingly beautiful constellation of images and sounds which depicts with quiet vehemence what's at stake: her body, the women workers, the river, the land, our bodies, the cosmos.

FRIDAY 25TH FEBRUARY

B.U.C.K.L.E, Catherine Saalfeld, Julie Tolentino, USA, 1994, 11 min

Selected by Ginger Brooks Takahashi

Serious Undertakings, Helen Grace, Erika Addis, Australia, 1983, 28 min

Selected by Ingela Johansson

Ingela Johansson: Unfortunately I have never seen the film, so this is a bit abstract, but I am curious to watch it. I can identify with one of the ideas behind the film from an abstract and some clips, and especially the perspective of a quote; which is the most important stories to tell? The one about childcare or the one about terrorism? 'Serious Undertakings' brings to the surface the everyday intellectual struggles...as I think of childcare and motherhood more than I think of revolutions at the moment. Sometimes I have no choice but to see the world without illusions. There are interruptions, which are becoming more and more present, (also very nice ones), and there are moments which do not leave so much space for intellectual thoughts to grow. Life becomes pragmatic but there is nothing bad with it. I hope and suspect that this is one of the key points made in the film. Reality makes intrusions, when washing the dishes or nursing the baby. I am not sure what the film is pointing at, and my interpretation if is completely taken out of the blue, but I am not focusing so much on the old fashioned division of labour between the genders, or that the man is the authoritarian or idealistic figure in art history as well as in the household. For me, the film brings to mind the precarious work situation and the everyday scenario for contemporary cultural workers, which I think is a topic too little discussed. That is: the dedication to work and the wish to perform professionally and at the same time care for a family. From what I understand, 'Serious Undertakings' seems like a landmark film where the form is important to the content and were the film language is illustrating the mechanism behind the meaning we give to an idea. What is being constructed by culture, history and male-dominated discourses in film history and society at large.

SATURDAY 26TH FEBRUARY

Blind Spot, Claudia Von Alemann, Germany, 1980, 1hr 51min

Selected by Montse Romani and Pauline van Mourik Broekman

