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Episodes of Starlite I-V

Date: 2011-2012 Length: 50:00 min. Format: 16:9

Specifications: Colour, Sound, Single Channel Courtesy Sprüth Magers Berlin London

Veronika Kornas und Sabine Schiffer

Produced by stopthebus Productions and Cosima von Bonin

Pictures projected on a woman's naked body and on untouched landscapes act as the stage for the battle of the sexes. The film "Episodes of Starlight 1-V" (2011-2012) by artist and film maker Frances Scholz is based on a fantasy-tale by the American science fiction author Mark von Schlegell. In five episodes the film illustrates the concept of a matriarchal monarchy threatened by male opponents. The scene of the story is a fictional continent shaped like the body of a goddess. As inspiration, the naked female body repeatedly emerges from the various zones of the overlaid projections. The episodes demonstrate the stages of the creation of a myth by combining elements such as musical performance, theatre and light and documenting them. In irregular sequences, the tale shows extracts from the making-of of a mythical, imaginary film, while fragments of the original tale can be heard off-camera. The work modifies archetypes of fantasy genre by showing them from the perspective of art and of the female sex. This abstract film attempts to develop its own iconography separately from the traditional arthistorical role. Its purpose is to reverse this, to show it "as a fantasy of pure light, pure filmic art and painting" (Frances Scholz), free of gender roles and idealised pictures.

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Interview:

1. Your work has been chosen among over 2000 festival entries to participate in VIDEONALE.14. In which context do you prefer to present your work, festival/cinema context or exhibition? And what kind of difference does the respective mode of presentation mean for you / your work?

The Episodes of Starlite were originally made to be presented in a museum exhibition as five simultaneous parallel projections. In such an installation sound plays in narrative order, with headphones available for those episodes not currently playing aloud. This way each episode is dynamically contextualized among the others. Images and sounds connect and reform in new and unpredictable synchronicities. Each visitor sees a new film; its painterly origin is always potentially liberated from its narrative burden. On five (or several) walls, embracing a space in more than its entirety, landscape, sound and repetition raise an immersive fantasy all around.

The films can also be shown in order. In this case the project relates to the multi- episodic structure of tv viewing in the internet age. A paradoxical situation arrises, of serialized trailers, teasers of other teasers etc. Gained is a clear sense of the powerful narrative arc of the Starlite project and the wonderful story it is based on.

2. Art can be seen as a mirror that registers and reflects life or as a tool that transforms it. Is there a particular theme, concept or problem your art addresses the most?

I'm looking for art as something real on its own. Art can stand next to life, representing itself and its own reality. Mimetic art transforms and changes the perception of reality it claims to reflect or register. How does the mimesis within a self-concerned artwork (the art film) transform the art's understanding of itself? Starlite's concern with itself as a film (a teaser of itself etc.) begins such an investigation.

With Starlite I relied on my personal style and history as a filmmaker. In terms of shooting, directing, costuming etc., the film (as my films and videos always are) is a collaboration with reality. In a process relatable to the so-called docu-fable, the real world is constantly offering ideas, solutions, throwing rainbows, tantrums etc.

3. In which way is the video medium an excellent possibility to express your intended subjects, especially in contrast to other media you use? Or do you work exclusively with video?

As a painter, one natural subject is painting itself. Obviously video aids easy collaboration with the world. But I have found it also ables me to work and think in film like a painter. I use projection within my films as I do in my paintings, calling attention to layers of projection that define the phenomenology of visual art, intellectual, psychological, physical, etc. The endlessness of current editing possibilities blurs the line between painting and video. I bring what remains as video's difference to painting (narrative, sound, etc.,) to where it too becomes painting. Or at least it seems that way to me.

4. If you have the chance to ask the visitors of the VIDEONALE.14 exhibition questions about your own work, what would be your question?

If you watch to the end you will find the entire film is actually announcing the publication of the literary story it is based on. My question is, have you read it? Also: would you like to be in the next film?