



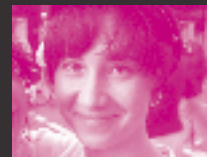
Selina Braine

Selina Braine uses video, sound, light and text-based installations to explore inter-cultural female subjectivities. Braine holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours from the Queensland University of Technology. Exhibitions include highlight (Blindside & Metro Arts), QUT Graduate Highlights (QUT Art Museum), Loose Threads (SOOB), Swarm (H Block Gallery), per:form (Metro Arts), Trigger (H Block Gallery) and inter (Palace Gallery).



Simone Hine

Simone Hine uses performance and video installation to explore codes and conventions that construct images of the feminine. Hine holds a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) with First Class Honours from the Queensland University of Technology and is currently undertaking Master of Creative Arts at University of Melbourne. Exhibitions include highlight (Blindside), con:text (Metro Arts), type (The Farm), Untitled (Metro Arts), The Click (Institute of Modern Art), inscribe (SOOB), post-performance (The Farm), Prime (Queensland Art Gallery) and Fresh Cuts (Institute of Modern Art).



top to bottom:
Selina Braine
Simone Hine
Katherine Taube
(left) Linda Murray
(right) Germaine Woodward

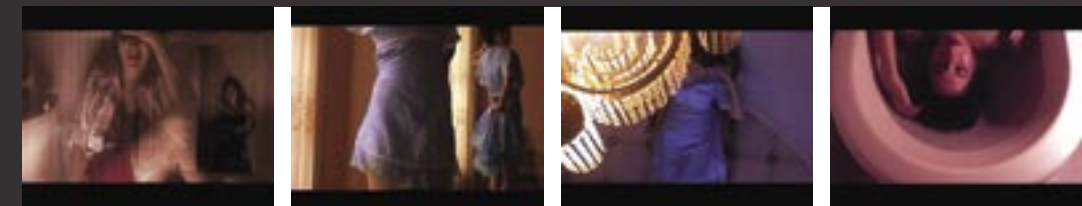
Katherine Taube

Katherine Taube uses elements of performance, photography, video and installation to explore issues of desire, voyeurism and identity in relation to the female body. Taube holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with First Class Honours from the Queensland University of Technology. Exhibitions include soft.pilot.watch (The Farm), NY03 (QUT Art Museum), Fresh Cuts (Institute of Modern Art), per:form (Metro Arts), DECOY (Metro Arts) and D-TOUR (Metro Arts).

Linda Murray & Germaine Woodward

Linda Murray & Germaine Woodward use collaborative performance and video to explore and subvert social constructions of female behaviour and inter-subjectivity. Both artists are currently completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Queensland University of Technology. Exhibitions include On Loop (QUT CI Precinct), Trip (Metro Arts), NY03 (QUT Art Museum), Camouflage & Display (Metro Arts), Scopic (QUT CI Precinct), Hidden Agenda (QUT Gardens Point), Through The Looking Glass (Metro Arts), Expect Respect (C Block Gallery), and Popcorn (Metro Arts).

locus voci state library of queensland



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locus voci a contemplation Helen Yeates

Feminist artists and academic writers alike have taken issue with the inherently elitist, male-identified traditions of avant-garde and experimental art. Such movements have tended to be auteurist, masculinist and individualistic in inclination, virtually obliterating female voices as well as invalidating collective creative authorship. Thus there is an enduring theoretical conflict in relation to female creative works that begs a re-examination.

Eschewing static theoretical inhibitions, the female artists featured in this rewarding exhibition make us look afresh at standard cultural/film theories about both performance art and film/video production. Their productions engage feminist ideas such as tensions around female spectatorship, subjectivity/objectivity, and the shifting nature of the gendered body. They have achieved an unruly re-examination of well-worn filmic representational codes through the negotiation of different, provocative ones.

Of course, we may enjoy the impact of the productions on a number of levels - intellectual, emotional and sensual/visceral. However, as a suggested key for exploring their individual and collective creativities, it is worth contemplating the already raised notion of female authorship, despite the spectre of the phallogocentric notion of artistic creation in relation to the moving image. One weakness of past feminist authorship theory was that in privileging female authorship, there was a risk of placing women into an already pre-conceived notion of patriarchal cinematic creation (Mayne, 1990; Rich, 1998). Columpar (2003) interrogates the very language of the theory by challenging the masculine noun 'auteur', transforming it into the feminine 'auteure'. This deceptively simple advance has implications regarding concepts of female creativity, female desire and pleasure. While these particular feminist artists may not, arguably, be fully fledged 'auteures', they do fulfil three suggested criteria: '...autobiographical reference; a filmmaker's actual presence in the film; the evidence of a female voice within the narrative [however located]'. (Silverman, cited in Martin, 2003: 34).

Therefore, the structured absence of standard audio codes at the heart of this exhibition highlights notions of their various budding 'auteurist' voices, raised in relation

to the ongoing suppression of female voices in many world cultures. By absenting vocality, these works create differential 'evidence' of strong female narrative voices. A fluid, soundless forcefield embraces the actual works, as well as, significantly, the liminal spaces and slippages created by these works, spaces where meanings shift, transmute and glow, spaces located both within and around the works.

As a final 'auteurist' touch, these artists are collectively concerned about issues of materiality relating to their diverse representations of the female form, foregrounding at the same time the materiality of the very mediums they are manipulating: film and video production. Such fundamental challenges engage us by moving forward the whole debate on female authorship, creating glimmering, winking liminal spaces within that debate itself.

Columpur, C. (2003) 'The Dancing Body: Sally Potter as Feminist Auteure' in Levetin, J., Plessis, J. and Raoul, V. (eds.) Women Filmmakers: Refocusing, London: Routledge, pp.108-118.

Martin, A. (2003) 'Refocusing Authorship in Women's Filmmaking' in Levetin, J., Plessis, J. and Raoul, V. (eds.) Women Filmmakers: Refocusing, London: Routledge, pp.29-37

Mayne, J. (1990) The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Rich, B. R. (1998) Chick Flicks: theories and memories of the feminist film movement. Durham: Duke University Press

locus voci a place of voices Chris Comer

locus voci is a place of voices: the "voices" of women. By performing the subject in silence, the artists isolate and address the lack of voice and subject position traditionally afforded to women in mainstream and avant garde cinema. As spectators, we can take pleasure in this renegotiation of the performance of gender.

The development of the self is deeply rooted in the signifying system of linguistics and cinema has traditionally cited the male subject with mastering speech and vision from the site of textual origin. In this well worn code, the female voice and body are contained within the inner space of the classic cinema text. Women are not adequately represented and black or ethnic women are not represented at all.

The repeated trope of performance in contemporary cultural theory reveals an increasing awareness of the limitations of the metaphor of culture as text. The theorist, Judith Butler, has radically challenged essentialist theories of gender by claiming that gender is not innate but is performative, produced through the ritualized repetition of conventions. Whilst Butler claims that gender is expressed by actions, gestures and speech she, nonetheless, persists in utilizing methodologies that derive from modernist literary assumptions of verbal signification that have a distinct anti-performative bias.¹ Although Butler has opened up J.L. Austin's speech act theory to include non-verbal modes of communication, she persists in understanding acts of non-verbal significance as if they were verbal utterances. By transposing the rules of language to gender, Butler takes the performance out of performativity. The performance video artists in locus voci reinscribe performance as a possibility for individual agency by allowing emotional and experiential knowledge to be included with conceptual knowledge in the concept of performativity.

Performance art signifies a more inclusive set of practices to include those of unheard, repressed or overlooked voices. As Elin Diamond argues, "When performativity materializes as performance in that risky and dangerous negotiation between a doing (a reiteration of norms) and a thing done (discursive conventions that frame our interpretation), between somebody's body

and the conventions of embodiment, we have access to cultural meanings and critique. Performativity, I would suggest, must be rooted in the materiality and historical density of performance."²

In *Watching*, Simone Hine returns us to the clichéd representations of women in popular culture and cinema. The flickering, dated, black and white cinematic representation claims that the male voyeur's role as the holder of the gaze and the text is also dated. Simone, as woman and artist, isolates the well-worn cinematic tropes temporally, to expose "the limitations of (the) medium's ability to present 'accurate' and 'unmediated' representations of the feminine" as 'complete' modes of representation.³ The implication of the work is that the "images of women explored are fluid and therefore malleable and subject to change."⁴ The important ideological shift here exposes cinema's claim as a reflection of reality to be nothing more than the construction of an illusion. It is a shift that allows a space for the reformulation of the female spectator's role.

Selina Braine performs her desire to be white:

"I have no words
movement bleaching
you make me
lentement (slowly)
want to be white
I'm so sorry
I want to be white"⁶

The imposed desire to be white reflects the ethnic woman's search for placement. She has been excluded from the forms of representation as non-human and uncoded as the category of race problematizes the paradigm of the male gaze possessing the female image. The male gaze is not a universal given but is negotiated via whiteness, allowing some social groups the licence to look whilst allowing others permission to look illicitly only.⁵ Insidiously, this look is not just that of the white male gaze that objectifies the female but is the Western look that tries to objectify the racial "Other". This provides indigenous peoples with a subjectivity that is contingent upon a self-regulation of their otherness and a denial of historical agency.⁶ Selina has been forced into a position that allows no cultural translation. Yet, the seemingly masochistic performance of applying white clown paint, strips through the mask to provide a voice

for the unheard and unrepresented. It subverts the multiple axes of oppression by decolonizing the screen and locating subjectivity.

Katherine Taube is interested in the shifting nature of "the term femininity while also giving close scrutiny to its representation, meaning and construction within contemporary society."⁷ The artist believes that the central question is how a woman sees herself: is there a space for a subjective self in a culture that still treats her as an object?⁸ *sometimes her and i are the same* questions the split female subject of conventional cinema whilst acknowledging the pressures and consequences of a society that equates identity with image.

Linda Murray and Germaine Woodward rejoice in a collaboration of misbehaviour. As video performance artists, they respond to the representation of the ideal woman in art, cinema and society. The *Hanging Bridesmaids* series exploits their wicked sense of humour and aging bodies. Their bridesmaids perform in shabby, ill-fitting opportunity shop garments, slung loosely over their everyday clothes to deprecate society's notions of beauty and youth as vital ingredients for success. They are but "human accessories to the bride's social transcendence through marriage."¹⁰ The artists subvert the notion of social transcendence in *Hanging Bridesmaids: Hanging* and the constructed reality of conventional cinema. The eerily beautiful, garroted bodies suggest possible violence or death but this view is defeated by the sometimes barely discernible movements of the bridesmaids or their dresses. The viewer is left to negotiate the paradoxes of perception between the constructed and the real and between the serious and the comic.¹¹ It is a fitting challenge to the suspension of belief upon which cinematic conventions depend, and the role of spectatorship. *Hanging Bridesmaids: Fightclub Live* choreographs the blurring of boundaries between accepted male and female behaviour. Their sisterly bond of misbehaviour is put to the test here as the artists negotiate the collaborative relationship: to reveal that even relationships which are based on trust and honesty, are open to moments of competition and conflict.¹² It is a performance that excludes the male as the reason for female conflict.

locus voci performs a polyphony of voices: the voices of the contemporary female subject to allow a possibility for individual agency for both performer and spectator.

¹ Butler, Judith, 1990 and 1993

² Diamond, E. E. 1996. Performance and Cultural Politics. London: Routledge.

³ Artist's notes, 2005.

⁴ ibid

⁵ Artist's notes, 2005

⁶ Gaines, Jane, 'White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory', in Screen 29 (4), 1988: 12-27.

⁷ Columpar, C. "The gaze as theoretical touchstone: The intersection of film studies, feminist theory, and postcolonial theory". Women's Studies Quarterly 30 (1/2), 2002: 25-45.

⁸ Artist's notes, 2005.

⁹ ibid.

¹⁰ Artists' notes, 2005.

¹¹ ibid.

¹² ibid.

- 1 Simone Hine**
Watching (2005)
3:25min DVD
- 2 Selina Braine**
i want to be white (2005)
3:59min DVD
- 3 Katherine Taube**
sometimes her and i are the same (2005)
6:30min DVD
- 4 Linda Murray & Germaine Woodward**
Flight Club Live (2005)
2:38min DVD

Hanging Bridesmaids (2005)
2:38min DVD

This exhibition is one of a series of screening programs held in the State Library of Queensland's infozone. During the construction phase of the Millennium Library Project, infozone is the public access facility for the State Library operating at South Bank. Exhibitions throughout the new building will provide innovative ways of interpreting and responding to the collections held in the State Library. This unconventional collaboration between the State Library and social experience, as well as an artistic and learning nucleus for communities to gather and discuss communal issues. locus voci is a collaborative project between the State Library of Queensland and Artworkers Alliance.