Gravitational Lensing: Feminist Film Dialogues Program 5: Process & Transformation Shapeshifters Cinema, Friday, November 22, 2024

Element by Amy Greenfield, 1973, 16mm, 11.5 mins

As both director and subject, Greenfield depicts the primal experience of a body in the world. The labored actions and visceral imagery conjure both birth and death and represent them through the scope of female sensuality.

Three Peonies by Stephanie Barber, 2017, 16mm shown on DV, 3:13 mins

A brief, poetic 16mm film on a simple sculptural action. An experimental film in which the simplicity of the image is offset by the sonic implications. What becomes apparent is the humor possible in material interactions and the tender and sometimes melodramatic symbolism of cut flowers. What begins as a reverence for natural beauty ends up pointing towards the abstract expressionism and color field work of high modernism which, in many cases eschewed the banality of such 'natural' beauty. The collaged soundtrack suggests weightier concerns, gently insistent behind the flatness of the utilitarian sounds of ripping tape.

Makeover Movie by Sue Ding, 2022, DV, 19 mins

A pop culture essay film on the makeover movies we grew up loving—and all the ways they taught us that we needed to fix ourselves. For more than a hundred years, movie makeovers have promised audiences that with a little help, any ugly duckling can transform into the belle of the ball. Featuring clips from nearly a hundred films, *Makeover Movie* immerses us in the candy-colored and kinetic world of the makeover montage. Alongside these iconic images, women of color and queer women reflect on the racialized, heteronormative, and contradictory beauty standards at the core of the movie makeover.

Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman by Dara Birnbaum, 1978/9, SV shown on DV, 5:50 mins

Appropriating imagery from the 1970s TV series *Wonder Woman*, Birnbaum isolates and repeats the moment of transformation from "real" woman to super-heroine. Trapped within her magical metamorphosis by stuttering edits, Wonder Woman spins dizzily like a music-box doll. The last few minutes of the film show only the lyrics to the song *Wonder Woman in Discoland* calling out the weakness inherent in (less-than-super-human) flesh.

Moon Cycle by Justine Tamiko Lai 2023, 16mm shown on DV, 2:05 mins

Moon Cycle is a direct animation in five chapters (four of which are depicted here) based on the anime TV series Sailor Moon (1992), which represents the girl-to-superheroine transformation sequences (also known as henshin) that are reused every episode to save on production. I. bran stakhage's moonlight; II. mercury retrograde; III. mars raver perseverance; IV. boys go to jupiter; V. venus in blurs

To the Earthen Red by Nika Pecarina, 2022, DV, 18:53 mins

To the Earthen Red is an experimental, ontological reflection on the nature and narratives of clay extraction that traces out the relation of landscape, object, and the senses. An epic poem meets pottery meets thermography meets the transformation of matter.

Well Dressed by Elliot Montague, 2006, Super-8 shown on DV, 10 mins.

This experimental documentary meditates on the space between two bodies and explores three key bodies in transition: the erotic "cruising" body, the transgender body, and the pregnant body. In depicting moments of change or redefinition for these physical bodies, *Well Dressed* imagines unexpected points of convergence. Integrating devices of narrative, fantasy, documentary, and the confessional, *Well Dressed* is a series of provocations. Each gesture points to failures and fantasies – the failed sexual cruise between the young queer body and an older male, the fantasy of sex between the gender queer body and the biological male, a friendship between a transitioned FTM and a pre-op FTM, the queering of maternity, and the return to the fetus and newborn. These scenes recontextualize narratives of sex, birth, and becoming.

Boi Oh Boi by Theo Jean Cuthand, 2012, DV, 9:32 mins

An exploration of gender identity, sexual preference, societal expectations, personal relationships, community and transition.

Since this video was completed, the artist has transitioned to male and uses he/him pronouns.

Siboney by Joiri Minaya, 2014, DV, 10:04

Siboney is a stylized documentation of a performance in which the artist spends a month handpainting the design from a found piece of fabric onto a museum wall. Once the mural is finished she pours water on herself and rubs herself against the wall while dancing to the beat of the song Siboney (written in 1929 by Ernesto Lecuona and later re-interpreted into a dramatic, drum-heavy, highly eroticized version by Connie Francis), partially washing off the paint. Siboney juxtaposes imagery and questions about institutional authority of what gets put on display with those of representation, authorship and woman's voice.

Gravitational Lensing: Feminist Film Dialogues is dedicated to exploring the visions, voices, concerns and lineage of women, non-binary, genderqueer and trans filmmakers through public film screenings, workshops, conversations and presentations.

Curators: Amy Reid and Kathleen Quillian

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