

Galeria Estrany-de la Mota

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Keren Cytter

Opening: Friday, September 18th 2009, 7.00 p.m.

Exhibition: 18.09.2009 – 31.10.2009. Tuesday to Saturdays from 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

A story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end... but not necessarily in that order.

Jean-Luc Godard

Keren Cytter (Tel Aviv, 1977) is a world-renowned artist, as shown by her receipt, in 2006, of the Ba-loise Art Statement (Art Basel) prize which has led to her taking part in a variety of international exhibitions, such as the 53rd Biennale di Venezia, and to be a runner-up in the Neue Kunst awards organised by the Nationalgalerie in Berlin.

Her polymorphic production consists, above all, of the development of written ideas, including formats such as novels, screenplays, opera librettos, drawings and, for some time her most prolific format, audiovisual works, which are closer to film-making than to video art. This is because Cytter uses audiovisual language, literature, theory, musical and symbolic references and clichés; an amalgam of references which help construct her ideas, which she then deploys through fictions. She does this mainly through videographic production, notably following her time at De Ateliers at Amsterdam (2002–2004), writing screenplays like music rather than like stories, unstringing time into layers. She does this by starting from the characters' interventions: dirty, superimposed, reiterative, contradictory, incomplete and sometimes silent; and extrapolating them to a narrative structure: rhizomatic, cyclical and apparently unconnected. She abuses prose so that poetry may emerge from it. She polishes concepts and, when they are all perfectly polished, she gathers the shavings from the ground to, finally, use these rhizomatic structures to (re)construct reality from something symbolic.

But the apparent serendipity in Cytter's videos has little to do with coincidence, and complexity can be observed not only in their format but also in their contents. The deconstruction of structure (which places her in a conscious and intended post-modernity) pushes her even further into the treatment of the clichés of cinema and television popular culture, focusing mainly on the conflicts of human relationships, reflecting on the adoption of these behaviours and responses in the collective imagination.

She then adds to this mix the spectator's entrances and exits in the film's own atmosphere, expressly stating the idea of representation, using actors who are not actors and who arouse a feeling of falseness, of learnt behaviour, with austere sets and frugal special effects. The ongoing references to the medium and dislocations such as "I've forgotten my role" or "these are not my words" remind us that we are looking at a non-mimetic representation and that what we should be paying most attention to is that which lies beyond physiognomy.

Cytter shows herself to be rich in culture. She has no trouble admitting that "none of the stories I've written are properly original". Because it really would be quite a contradiction to state otherwise when

her work is based on clichés. Her film-making influences include the Nouvelle Vague, which doubtless has an influence on the distance with which her characters treat each other, and the use of the film aesthetics of auteur cinema such as Hitchcock's (becoming Cytter's work also art cinema) musical references from the world of film-making, such as Ferrante & Teicher and, finally, free remakes of works by authors such as Cortázar. An heiress to Brecht's daring, she lets out a glimpse of her Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze and Lynch influences.

Four Seasons, 2009

The film reflects Hitchcock's 1980s aesthetics (a celebration of neo-noir and kitsch), adding the unfolding of the main character Lucy/Stella's personality (a reference to Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*), set out as two alternating parallel stories. Cytter tells us of heartbreak and domestic murder, using architecture as a metaphor to define human behaviours. Enveloping it all in the combustion of various objects and lo-fi special effects. A tribute to falsehood.

Peacocks, 2009

Five chapters fragment the construction of the transition from one failed relationship to another, where two of the three people are trapped in a constant visual confrontation due to the sharing of living space. The film is approached mainly from the perspective of the person who is left behind, photographs and plays on words dress up the male character's literal exposure, his defencelessness and unease in interweaving visions.

Der Spiegel, 2007

In *Der Spiegel* (The Mirror), a sequence shot shows an internal reflection of deep-set frustrations, ambitions and desires in the form of a loop which, by repeating itself, affects the narrative itself. The own projection that a woman has of herself, of what she is looking for and of what she projects to the claimed male figure. Her thoughts approach her and share her space (reminding us of Lynch's *Inland Empire*) while interacting with the spectator like a mirror of oneself, in a cheeky and honest attitude.

Something Happened, 2007

In between its cyclical and complicated structure one can glimpse a very free adaptation of Natalia Ginzburg's *È stato così*, where an event is shown to the spectator through its emotional effects on the film's two main characters. The trigger itself is not the interesting part, the attitudes towards the construction of "us", cause the shaking of the foundations which have been supporting something which no longer has any support, to the extent that it is physically reflected in the actors' lines, an artificiality climaxing in a domestic situation which screams cheap drama.

— Maria Pons

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*For further information and/or images contact to galeria@estranydelamota.com.