

3/30-
5/20/
2012

Keren Cytter

凯伦·赛特

焦虑为艺术家的工具
Anxiety as an Artistic Tool

魔金石空间
MAGICIAN SPACE



Keren Cytter Solo Exhibition: *Anxiety as an artistic tool*

Text: Biljana Ciric

Over the last decade Keren Cytter has created a complex body of work, including a number of films, theatrical plays, published three novels, and established D.I.E Now, a theater company whose name stands for Dance International Europe Now. She is also one of a rare breed of contemporary artists in whose work writing and language takes a critical role. Cytter would probably argue that it is much easier to make films than to write novels, but her intensive way of writing - writing stories and novels in very short bursts of time - has, in many ways, influenced her approach to film-making.

Although Cytter shows her video works in an art context, she refers to them not as video works, but rather as films. Her films are closely related to her writing and very much depend on the script, as every shot in the film has already been written down and decided upon, from the movement of the camera to the physical movement, actors, and visual effects. All of her films can be accessed on her YouTube channel: The Definitive collection of Keren Cytter, the video artist from an obscure country. Thus, she gives her potential audience the option to either see the works online or in the exhibition context.

If you have a look at one of Cytter's scripts you will see that each sequence is already decided through the writing process, and there is very little improvisation in terms of the filming. The fragmented narratives in the films seem familiar but are still disturbing. The stories are at times absurd, and always structured around men and women, love, jealousy, relationships, and emotional states. The young people in her films - most of the time, non-professional actors - wear casual outfits, while the places that the stories take place remind us of our neighbors' rundown apartment (and actually, many of the films are shot in artists' apartments in Berlin).

As mentioned, the young people that Cytter collaborates with in her films and plays are not trained actors most of the time. They present the script in very different tone than would professional actors, marked by the lack of emotional expression. The selection of non-professional actors and the way in which she works with trained actors conveys an interesting aspect of the atmosphere produced between reality and the filmed performance, producing a certain conflict between reality and fiction as well as between reality and representation. She investigates the rules and norms of representation that we take for granted in art, and life as well. These rules not only govern our actions but emotional states and how we express them. She uses different genres too, from melodrama, thriller, and film noir to soap operas, making her films/stories very familiar but disturbing at the same time as they don't provide the expected satisfaction of pure entertainment.

Her work presents a certain degree of honesty in its representation so that its artificial side is made more than obvious. In her scripts, actors usually break the boundary between play and reality, through said sentences referring to the subtitles in the film of script itself, reminding us that what is seen is a staged performance, and that the players are paid to be there. In her play SHOW REAL DRAMA, actress Susanne Meyer says: My name is Susanne Meyer... I am paid to be standing here and talking to..."

Although called films, the videos are shot in a homemade style with a hand held camera and shaky shots. In interviews she usually mentions Quentin Tarantino, Lars von Trier, Alfred Hitchcock, Pier Paolo Pasolini as inspiration for the works. In her films language plays a very important role. Actors usually switch from English to German to French, voices overlap each other, voices in the background appear and disappear, and overlap again and again. In many of the works she challenges a chronological notion of time and how time is developed in mainstream film and theater. Thus, many actions and parts of the scripts appear over and over and the story usually progresses in unexpected directions. For her first exhibition in China, Cytter will present four films works that will act as a small overview of Cytter's work over the last decade (although this will be difficult to do, as she has produced over 40 films in that time).

Her early work "Brush" made in 2001 in Israel, was an important transition for her as it was her first lengthy film production. Dubbed into English much later in 2007, the artist developed a love story in six parts between a man and a woman who are brought together through a symbol on a metal hair brush that appears at the beginning of the movie. In this story the symbol is both the reason for them to fall in love and, in the end, the reason that they separate. The fact that their relationship turns out to be a one night stand gives further insight into the loneliness and anxiety within both of the characters. The fact that it is a black and white movie, dubbed in English, creates yet another

layer that somehow reminds the viewer of early film production, but in a very low-tech format, where the dubbed language creates a slight distance between the language heard and the actual language of the actors.

"Der Spiegel," produced in 2007, is one of the most exhibited works by Cytter, for which she worked with trained actors. The rhythm of the movie is very fast and the dialogues are chanted to an urgent rhythm. "Der Spiegel" tells the story of woman in her forty's facing her naked image in the mirror, and the fact that she is not a girl but a woman in the eyes of men. The desire for love and to be loved is enveloped in a complex love triangle between woman, husband and lover, presented in a looped format without end.

"Four Seasons" has the atmosphere of a thriller, with dramatic music. The opening scene involves a woman bleeding heavily in his bath tub while a woman - his neighbor, Lucy - comes over to complain about the noise. The neighbor calls her again and again "Stella." The story overlaps in time between two characters wherein one woman is brutally murdered by a man, while in the other they are shown in a home setting. The two seem to be strangers, but share the memory, full of passion and violence. The narrative between the two is interrupted by a rather neutral male voice, describing labyrinthine architecture inspired by Borges' short story "Immortal." Aside from the ways that the film uncovers and makes apparent certain artificial aspects of cinema, "Four Seasons" is filled with a great intensity and consists of poetic scenes.

In her latest work, "Video Art Manual," the piece starts with shot of a young man in an office like setting who confidently explains that he will reveal the mysteries of the new media that established a new type of viewer (i.e. those who became the producers of content). The story shifts when there is an electricity outage, and

consequently there is no internet, no hot water, no TV, no mobile phones, no refridgerator. The only thing working is a wooden duck telephone that was sitting on the table of the young man who first introduced the manual. "Video Art Manual" touches on issues of human boredom and melancholy, when the only thing them mind turns to in these moments when we are left alone is death and our own loneliness. There is no other possible entertainment. With a sense of humor, Cytter looks at today's image production - its distribution and consumption, as well as how it influences daily life. Asking simply: Can anyone imagine tomorrow without power?

Keren Cytter applies her own doubts as points of departure for her work - doubts and anxiety in human relations, communication, our choices of entertainment, image production in life and art, and so on. Her work reminds us of the lack of belief in basic human values.

About Artist

Keren Cytter was born 1977 in Tel Aviv, Israel. She lives and works in Berlin. In 2009 she was awarded the Absolut Art Award and shortlisted for the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst in Berlin. In 2008 she received the Ars Viva 2008; Preis für Bildende Kunst des Kulturkreises der deutschen Wirtschaft, Berlin, and in 2006 the Bâloise Art Prize in Basel.

Her recent solo exhibitions include: *Keren Cytter – Avalanche*, Stedelijk Museum , Amsterdam – NL,2011; *The Hottest Day of the Year*, Kunstverein Munchen, Munich – DE,2011; *Keren Cytter – Avalanch*, Pilar Corrias, London – UK,2011; *Keren Cytter – Avalanche*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London – UK,2011; *Moderna Museet*, Stockhol,2010

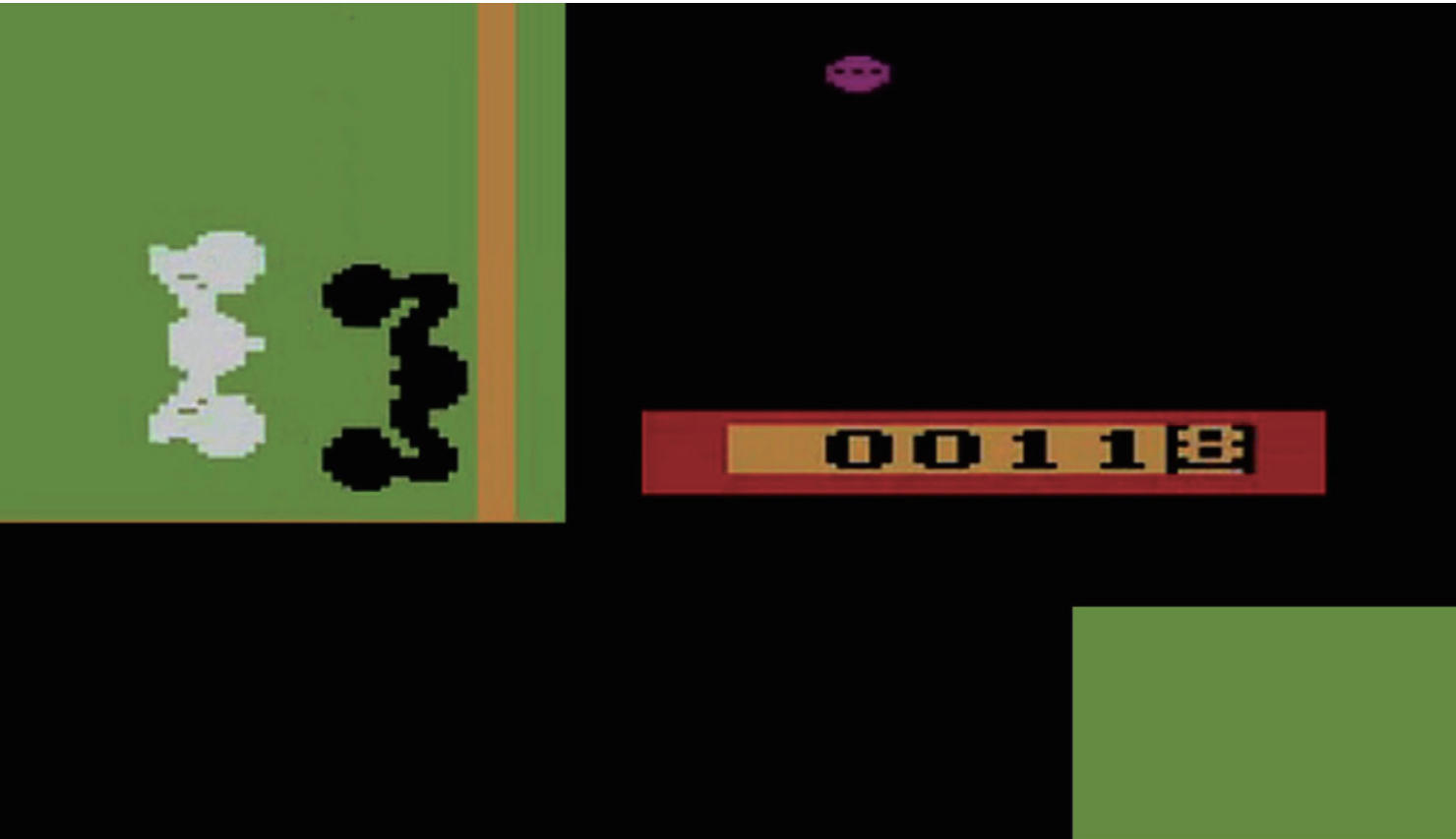
Her work was featured in Gwangju Biennale 2010, 53th Venice Biennale,2009, Generational- Younger then Jesus Triennale at New Museum 2009, Yokohama Triennale 2008, Manifesta 7, 2008.

Her play History in the Making, or the Secret Diaries of Linda Schultz with the dance company d.i.e. was presented at Tate Modern, London, Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

She is author of few books Keren Cytter: The amazing true story of Moshe Klinberg..., (limited edition, Paris 2009),Keren Cytter: The seven most exciting hours of Mr. Trier's life in twenty-four chapters, (Rotterdam, 2008) and recent book White Diaries published by CCA Kitakyushi. Cytter also started dance and theatre company D.I.E in 2008.



Der Spiegel
2007
digital video
4' 56"



Video Art Manual

2011

digital HD video

14' 43"

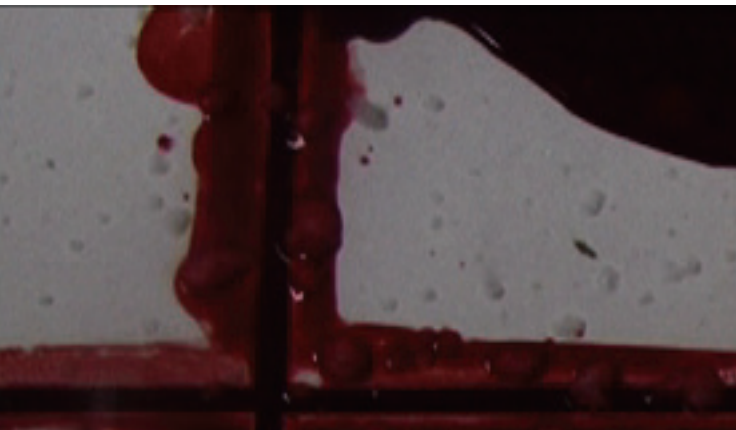


Video Art Manual
2011
digital HD video
14' 43"



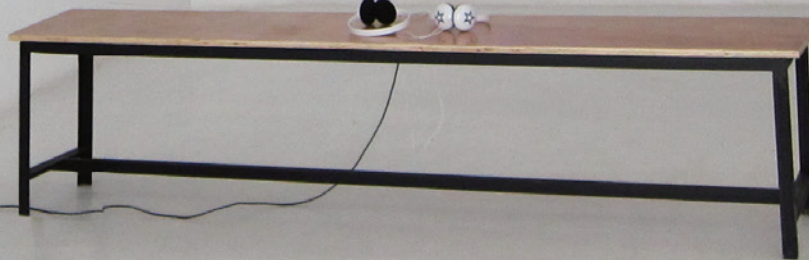
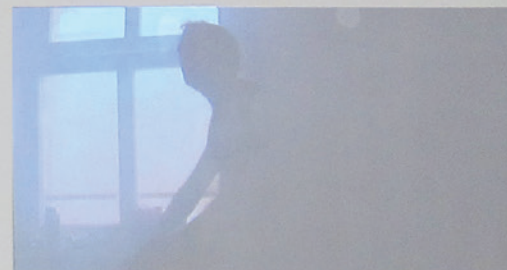


Brush
2001-2007
digital video
62' 10"



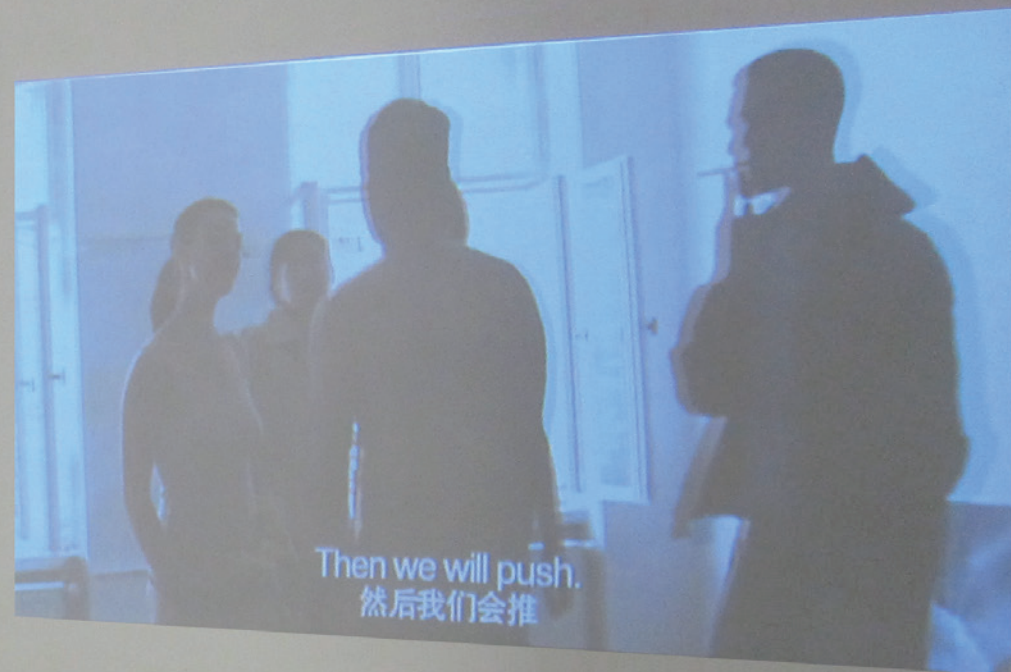
Four Seasons
2009
digital video
12' 15"

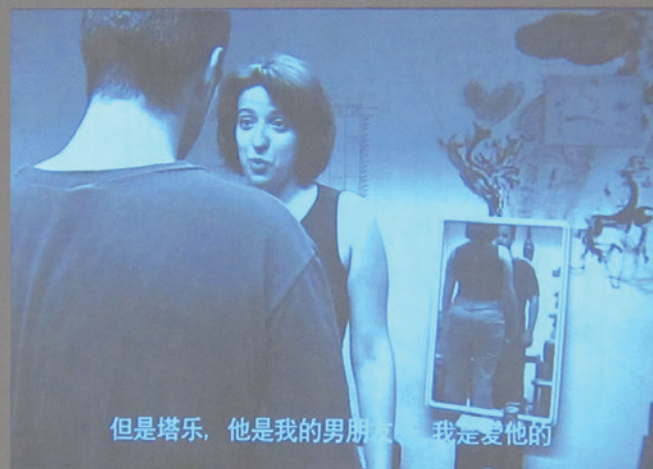
Exhibition Views

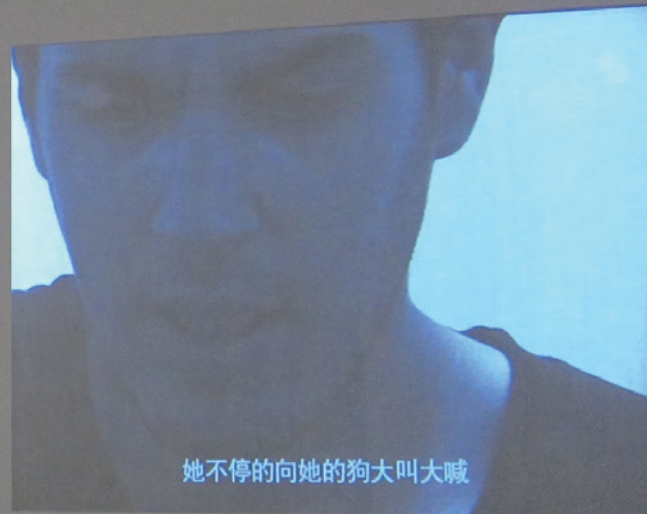












Media Reports

凯伦·赛特谈创作与近期展览

Text / Lu Jin

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凯伦·赛特谈创作与近期展览

2012.04.04



凯伦·赛特，《演绎·真实·戏剧》，2012年5月在上海，可当代艺术中心。

本文所有图片：由占领舞台提供

凯伦·赛特 (Keren Cytter) 生于以色列，目前在柏林和纽约工作。此次，她接受独立策展人比利安娜·恩瑞克 (Biljana Cinc) 的邀请，参与了“占领舞台” (Taking the Stage OVER) 项目。由她导演、费比安·斯塔姆 (Fabian Stumm)、苏珊娜·梅耶 (Susie Meyer) 出演的戏剧《演绎·真实·戏剧》 (Show Real Drama 2011) 在3月底相继在上海的可当代艺术中心与北京的蓬蒿剧场呈现，魔金石空间也在3月30日至5月20日举办她的个展“焦虑为艺术家的工具”。凯伦在访问中诉说了自己的成长与创作历程，以及在作品中经常用到的一些手法的一些初衷。

我在以色列的特拉维夫 (Tel Aviv) 长大，十岁时又搬到了另一个村庄，那边时常有武装冲突。在学校我不受欢迎，孩子们有时是可以特别冷酷和残忍的。然后我开始跟邻村的一个老师学习绘画，他是我父母的朋友。父母开始给我买一些艺术类的书籍和画册，比如毕加索、萨尔瓦多·达利和费舍尔，我一直很喜欢他们。我开始想成为一个作家，像杰克·伦敦那样冒险。心里开始有了各种想象，但对于当代艺术还一无所知。

然后我就去服役了，在以色列即使女孩也要服役两年，男孩要四年。指挥官知道我在写书和创作，她很鼓励我，觉得我应该离开。所以一年后我就走了。后来，我开始在特拉维夫的一家普通艺术学院学习。毕业后为当地的报纸写艺术评论。我也为艺术杂志工作，但逐渐发现不知道如何去做艺术批评，因为要诚实是很难的，我因此感到困惑。

一年后，我开始画画，制作录像和写书。我有一个朋友，她在军队里面负责视频编辑，在她的帮助下我做了四个录像，后来她有自己的想法，我们就没有继续合作了。我的另一个画家朋友，他所在的公司刚好破产，所以整幢楼被废弃了，我们就在里面借用了那些电脑完成了一些编辑。后来我获得了荷兰一所学校的奖学金，所以就去了阿姆斯特丹，在那里更好地学习了如何进行视频编辑。我的一部黑白录像《梳》 (Brush 2011) 里，两个主角在一个房间里，有70页的对白，光字幕就花了很长时间。后来我搬到了柏林，就重新剪辑了这部片子，还找了朋友用英语配音。比利·安娜非常喜欢这部片子，它这次会在北京的魔金石空间展出。

很多人会注意到我作品里有一些循环或者重复。这次在上海展出的戏剧《演绎·真实·戏剧》 (Show Real Drama 2011) 里也有台词重复部分。就像电影一样，场景或时间在不断转变，但肯定是同一个主角，所以观众能专注和进入整部片子。而《镜子》 (Der Spiegel 2007) 是摄像机在房间里是以无限符号的路径在拍摄，所以最后镜头会回到最初，因此全片是无限循环的。它能不断提醒你整部片子的内容，我想效果非常不错，片中的女主人公就一直纠结于同一个问题。问题一直在重复，她没有真正的希望，就像在现实生活中，也许一个人会爱上其他的什么人，但问题也许一直存在，因为关系模式没有改变。

这个循环的设置是在《受害者》 (The Victim 2006) 里也用到了，我觉得这种设置也非常适合画廊展示。我又想起那本说神话的书，里面有关于永恒这一概念的讨论，它说永恒不仅仅指时间上的永久，也存在着“一瞬间”的永恒。我们的剧团“D.I.E. Now – Dance International Europe Now”已经解散了，不过网站我还留着，因为它真的很漂亮。我跟团员们都成了好朋友，所以大家今后依然会一起活动。我们接下来会去北京、然后是韩国、多伦多，最后会到纽约在“厨房”剧场 (Kitchen Theatre) 演出。

— 文采访 / 卢婧

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Karen Cytter: *Anxiety as an artistic tool*

Text / Sammi

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《Art Bank》编辑 刘亦娜

凯伦·赛特: 焦虑为艺术家的工具

KAREN CYTTER: ANXIETY AS AN ARTIST TOOL

文 | 刘亦娜 图片提供 | 魔金石空间

最近几个月,北京艺术界最红火的莫过于影像艺术展。中国本土影像艺术家,黄然和马秋莎都有个展开幕,央美美术馆举行法国新浪潮导演阿涅斯·瓦尔达的影像装置展,中国第一个影像艺术档案馆——录像局也在近期成立……影像艺术似乎正在被大众接受和认可。凯伦·赛特在魔金石空间的个展《焦虑为艺术家的工具》,无疑印证了这一点。

这位1977年出生于以色列,现居住在德国的年轻影像艺术家已在世界影像艺术的舞台上崭露头角。在过去的10年间,她以不同的媒介创作了大量作品,包括近40部影像作品、话剧、小说等。

赛特在这次展览中展出了4件跨越10年时间创作的影像作品。其中最早的一件是创作于2001年的首部长篇电影《梳子》(BRUSH)。这件时长62分钟的作品也定下了赛特日后的影像基调。这个以梳子为引子的黑白影像作品,讲述了一男一女邂逅的爱情故事。两

位主角虽是业余演员,但在演绎长达70页的对白时,并不显得生涩。故事的构成非常简单,场景切换也局限在家中的不同房间内。镜头总是在切换男女主角的脸部特写,大量的对白成为唯一能让观众理解故事情节的工具。影片以短暂爱情的失败结尾,这个看似只是一夜情的情爱故事中却解构了情侣间各种各样的相处模式和恋爱时的内心独白。

整个展览让我印象最深刻的,是一件名为《四季》的作品,比起《梳》,这件影像作品就显得没有那么容易理解和消化了。紧凑的节奏,悬疑电影似的配乐;影片一开始就抓住了观众的心。一个满身鲜血的男人躺在浴缸中。他的邻居,露西跑来投诉男人家中的音乐声太大。两人相遇时,男人一丝不挂地从浴缸中站起来,不停地呼唤女主角为斯特拉。故事好像发生在重叠的时空中,镜头会突然切换到另一场景:燃烧的圣诞树,掉落的鞋子,插着蜡烛的蛋糕……女人的记忆也随着镜头的转换而

变化,时而是邻居露西,时而又变成男人口中的“斯特拉”。男人擦拭着身边的血迹,用手指玩弄着收集在箱子里的血,好像暗示着“斯特拉”已被男人凶残地谋杀。片中的男人与女人理应是陌路人却又共享着许多关于温情和暴力的记忆。在场景的切换当中,还穿插着第二个男性的旁白,具有磁性但机械化的声音描述着某个房子的结构。跳跃且模糊的叙事方法挑起观众更深层的好奇心。值得一提的是语言在赛特作品中的重要性。在每部作品中,语言均构筑了情感表达上的细节,也给跌宕起伏的情节增加了更强的戏剧感,提供给了观众更多的可能性,形成了一种只属于赛特的艺术表达方式。

在观看赛特的作品时,影像中的真相是否存在都已不重要,赛特并没有用影像去再现或是追忆真实。分不清是语言的能量还是叙事的方法,但艺术家在作品中置入的焦虑、忧愁等复杂情感更能打动我。



《梳子》(录像截图) 数码视频 4:56" 2007年



《梳子》(录像截图) 数码视频 62:10" 2001-2007年

Karen Cytter:

Anxiety as an artistic tool

Text / Su Wei



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ART AS DIPLOMACY

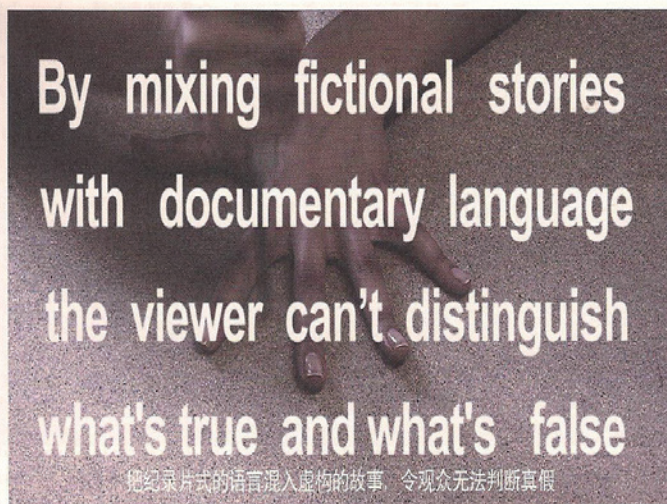
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208凯伦·赛特：焦虑为艺术家的工具
KEREN CYTTER: ANXIETY AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL

北京魔金石空间 MAGICIAN SPACE, BEIJING 2012.03.30-2012.05.20



《视频艺术手册》，2011年
高清数码视频，14分43秒
Video Art Manual, 2011
Digital HD video, 14 min. 43 sec.

凯伦·赛特自称是一个写作者，她对于影像语言的理解和使用明显有别于当代艺术中流行的、不断被讨论的图像观念。赛特自己撰写所有的剧本，她乐此不疲地在叙述方式和叙述结构大动手脚，她编排有趣的、冰冷的、荒诞的、直白的旁白、独白与对话，她用各种手段不断干扰任何可能形成的话语模式和受众的接受……

赛特是布莱希特的“后代”，她把间离效果推进到文本叙述的层面，辅之以不断出现的打破观众体验的小动作：《视频艺术手册》中诡异的旁白提醒观众字幕的作用；《梳子》里的英文配音冰冷生硬，语速似乎也无法完全对上演员的口型；在被广为提及的作品《镜子》中，演员像接力般地快速对白，如此等等。赛特最擅长的，是将单一的叙述拉伸为多个复杂的、互相穿插的层面，让文本和故事互相拆解，让故事衍生的故事变成文本形式的必须，也乐于把文本本身变成故事的要素。在《四季》中，

一个叫斯特拉的女人因为陌生男邻居的噪音过来投诉，而在重叠的时空里，她又是被这个男人谋杀的受害者。这个不可能发生的故事成为诉说爱情体验的最佳脚本，极端的谋杀和日常的交流被双重的、甚至是多重的叙述方式编织在一起。

但更重要的是，这些精巧的手段并没有脱离电影本身的需要。爱欲、焦虑、死亡的阴影贯穿在赛特电影中，她的电影从不离开这些总是不在场，却无时无刻决定了我们生存的要素。只不过，赛特无意于将这些要素在叙述主体和接受主体的心理区域中放大，也没有向我们投下一个精神自恋狂的阴影。赛特观看世界的视角既具有极端的私人性和诗意，也属于一个更大的有关“真实”的讨论。这决定了她的创作与当代艺术不可避免地产生交集。在电影《梳子》里，她让一把金色梳子成为男女主角相爱的象征，围绕它铺叙了一个六部曲的故事。在这部一小时之长的电影中，男女主角的对话常常呈现为互相无法理

解的自言自语，似乎两个在黑暗中无法碰触的爱者，只有一把梳子成为这段爱情唯一的支撑。在《梳子》里，爱失去了实质，沦为一个无底的象征，一次没有终结的诱惑之旅。任何真实的可能性——事件的、文本的、失去叙述主体的——都在这个虚无的情境中失去了意义，就像那把闪烁不在场和在场两种光芒的梳子，在任何意义效果之外，凝聚了所有的注意力。

赛特所探讨的这些主题也向我们通常称之为资本主义的意识形态发出质疑。《视频艺术手册》以一场即将发生的引发电力瘫痪的太阳风暴为引子，以一个能继续维持人们沟通的鸭型电话形象为结束，呈现了信息社会和娱乐社会中人的处境。“即将发生”成为整个故事的关键词，在一个“即将发生”的世界里，一切真实都是临时而无效的，我们像瘾君子一样，被那个从不存在的东西引诱着存在，这也是资本主义生产出的新意识形态中最有效的武器。与基督教“耶稣受难”的模式相反，意义不由已发生的事件决定，时间也不被这样的事件真理化。我们的生存，被抽去了救赎的时间、历史的时间，像电影里所说，活在由“一种语言的流失营造（出）的浪漫化记忆”里。作为创作者的赛特，在她熟练的形式和技巧之外，是否也意识到，精神生产也面临着相似的危机？苏伟

In her work, Keren Cyttter is an “offspring” of Bertolt Brecht. She injects the sensation of alienation into the textual narrative of her pieces, breaking up the audience's experience with subtle tricks and slights of hand. The strange voice-overs of *Video Art Manual* are a reminder to the viewer of the role of subtitles; the pace and rhythm of the over-dubbing in *Brush*, cold and stiff, is a little off, not quite keeping with the movements and shapes formed by the actor's mouth. In the widely discussed *Der Spiegel*, the actors exchange rapid-fire words, as if participating in an elocutionary relay. Cyttter's greatest skill lies in her ability to stretch a singular narrative into a complex lattice of interwoven sub-narratives, so that text and story dismantle one another: stories within stories become inextricable components of textual form, and Cyttter happily takes that textual form and reinforces it as an essential component of the story. In *Four Seasons*, a woman goes over to complain about the noise her male neighbor, a stranger, is making. Simultaneously, in an alternate and overlapping time and space, she is the same man's murder victim. Here, an extreme murder scenario and an everyday exchange have been woven together through a doubly-or perhaps multiply-angled narrative approach.

But even more importantly, these refined

techniques have not been separated from the needs of the film itself. Passion, anxiety, and the shadow of death all move through Cyttter's films, which never part with these ever-present elements. Yet Cyttter has no intention of magnifying them within the main body of the narrative, or of making them psychologically acceptable; nor has she cast a shadow of narcissism upon us. Cyttter's take on the world is extremely personal and poetic, but it is also part of a larger discussion of “truth”—which ultimately determines the inevitable intersection between her creations and contemporary art. In *Brush*, Cyttter focuses on a golden comb as a symbol for a man and woman's love. A story laid out in six parts, this hour-long film features dialogue between the male and female protagonists that often manifests itself as two mutually unintelligible monologues. It is as if the two are lovers in the dark, feeling out but unable to make contact. All that is left is the single brush, bracing their love from collapse. In *Brush*, love loses its essence and is degraded to a bottomless symbol, a road of temptation stretching infinitely into the distance with no final destination. Any truth—whether in terms of an event, an evolution of text, or even the loss of narrative theme—loses its meaning against this nihilistic backdrop, just as if that hairbrush has concentrated every inkling of attention within the material grasp of its bristles.

The topics that Cyttter explores are what we would typically call challenges to capitalist ideology. The preface to *Video Art Manual* is an imminent power blackout caused by a solar storm, and the finale is the image of a duck-shaped telephone that serves to sustain human communication. Between unfolds the state of an information society, of an entertainment society. “Imminent” becomes the keyword; in an “imminent” world, all truth confronts the possibility of losing effectiveness. Like drug addicts, we are lured to existence by that which has never existed. This is the most effective weapon produced by capitalist ideology. Contrary to the Christian “Good Friday” model, meaning is not decided by previous events, and time is not awarded the essence of truth by the hand of these events either. Our survival is pulled from times of redemption, from history. As it is said in the film, we are living inside of “a kind of romanticized memory made possible by the loss of language.” Aside from her familiarity with form and technique, is Cyttter, as the creator, perhaps also aware that spiritual production faces a similar crisis? Su Wei (Translated by Katy Pinke)

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