

HOLLYBUSH GARDENS

CLAIRE HOOPER

AUDITORIUM, 2005
SD, 8 MINUTES

Auditorium was originally commissioned for the exhibition *Les Merveilles du Monde* at the Musée National de Beaux Arts de la Ville de Dunkerque. The piece responds to The Musée, a 1960s Modernist edifice of concrete and glass, the interior of which has not been altered since its construction, featuring aerodynamic staircases and miles of louvered blinds. The Auditorium is also intact and beautiful with bitter chocolate coloured sound proofed walls and rows of sticky caramel bucket seats in the style of Charles and Ray Eames. This sensual interior is the set for the film and was originally also the set for the performance of watching the film, a performance created by the viewer.

The film is constructed as a series of frames within frames, heightening the viewer's awareness of the relationship between audience and performance. The sound of the slide projector (which is shown before the title) punctuates the edit of the film throughout and adds emphasis to the still images that establish the 'set' and define the limits and function of the real space. These apparently still images of the interior décor; the discussion table on the small stage, the speakers and lighting fixtures, the microphone waiting for a voice, the inert, expectant, empty seats seen from the front of the room, are interrupted by the appearance of a walking figure. The sound of the slides changing serves to literally insert new images, and characters, without introduction, into the set.

The primary character, a tanned young woman in tennis gear, hallucinates a host of others into the room, other audience members, although when the camera pans to take in the room she is seen to be alone. The characters could be co-existent, the edit implies that they are, but they could equally be each other's fantasies, or ghosts who inhabit the space but not the time of the auditorium. She sees a scantily clad black woman with a voluptuous figure sit on the discussion table and rock slowly from side to side, and this triggers a variety of subtly erotic actions from her fellows. These actions consist of gestures and glances often exchanged flirtatiously in the restrained conditions of a lecture theatre, museum or library. Although her appearance plays with the expected notions of exotic eroticism, the woman does not perform, she has her back to the audience and retains a rather severe mystery and power, she personifies the sexual charge in the still air and it is the audience members who perform in response to her presence. The choreography of the 'audience' is at one with the movement in the design of the seating and the chiaroscuro of the sound proofed walls, they have been brought into the space by the space itself.

Recent exhibitions include:

Eris: the path of Er, performance and screening, ICA, London, May 2012 as part of the LUX Biennale of Moving Images
Museum of Modern Art, Vienna – Baloise Art Prize Exhibition, September 2011 - solo show

A.I.O.D.E., Lothringer 13, Munich, July 2011 - solo

Nyx Kunstwerke, Berlin in association with the Köln Kunstfilm Biennale.

The Genealogy of Nyx, Serpentine Mapping Marathon, Serpentine Gallery, London.

Nyx screening at The Serpentine Cinema, London.

Winner of the Baloise Art Prize, Art Statements, Basel 2010. Shortlisted for the Jarman Award, 2011.

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