

Video works by Maria Pomiansky in the Corner College series Home of the Brave: Archeology of the Moving Image

Maria Pomiansky ist Gast bei *Home of the Brave: Archeology of the Moving Image*. Eine Veranstaltungsreihe des Corner College.

Friday, 30 September 2016, 20:00h

Esther Eppstein über Maria Pomianskys Trilogie

Maria Pomianskys Film «Glück это глюк» (Happiness is a trip) ist der letzte Film aus der Trilogie (Beauty 2006, Fears 2009), einer Langzeitstudie über die Frage menschlicher Zustände, Sehnsüchte und Ängste. Maria Pomiansky ist in der sowjetischen Moskauer geboren, emigrierte Anfang der neunziger Jahre als Jugendliche nach Israel und lebt heute, seit bald zehn Jahren in Zürich. In diesen drei Städten ihres Lebenslaufs befragte Maria Pomiansky für ihre in 2005 begonnene Trilogie Bekannte, Freundinnen und Freunde über deren Einstellung zum Leben, zur Kunst, zur Liebe, zum Rausch, zur Ewigkeit und zur Vergänglichkeit. Jugend in Moskau, in Tel Aviv, in Zürich ... Die Künstlerin reist zwischen den Städten, findet das Verbindende, das Einzigartige und das gegenseitig Fremde zwischen Nahem Osten, West- und Osteuropa. Es wird Russisch, Hebräisch, Deutsch und Englisch gesprochen. Die Filmemacherin ist die kosmopolitische Weltbürgerin und distanzlose Beobachterin, wobei auch immer wieder unvermittelt ein diffuses Gefühl der Heimatlosigkeit, Verwirrung und Melancholie mitschwingt. Die Künstlerin führt ihre Protagonisten und die Zuschauer von leichten, verspielten Plaudereien zu tief berührenden existenziellen Gesprächen, die Kamera zeigt komponierte Bilder mit Gesichtern und Landschaften. Die Trilogie, während eines Zeitraum von fast zehn Jahren entstanden, zeigt die Veränderung und die Entwicklung der jungen Freunde. Die stark autobiografisch gefärbte Filmsprache bewegt sich zwischen Dokumentar- Reise- Experimental- und inszeniertem Kunstfilm. Maria Pomiansky sucht in ihrer Filmreise Antworten auf ihre ganz persönliche Frage der Zugehörigkeit. Der Film zitiert und mischt in Inhalt und Ästhetik das Kino jüdischer Diaspora, den russischen und sowjetischen Pathos und die Popkultur des Westens. Musik spielt in allen drei Filmen eine wichtige Rolle, ist für Maria Pomiansky ein Verbindungsglied zwischen den Kulturen in denen sie sich bewegt und die sich neben vieler Ähnlichkeiten, Gemeinsamkeiten und der Universalität menschlicher Bedürfnisse und Ängste doch auch sehr unterscheiden.

Vadim Levin on Maria Pomiansky's video works

Maria Pomiansky's career began in the late 90s with the video installation "Los Amigos de Maria," which was her diploma work when she graduated from the "Bezalel" Academy of Arts and Design.

"Los Amigos" was a formative work for the artist. Following in the traditions of the classical portrait, she found her own unique, individual style and arrived at her guiding creative principles: her video work over

the past two decades features close friends as the protagonists, with other people being merely background.

The whole story began when Maria found a strange "artifact" in a Jerusalem street: two-inch-thick glasses in a massive horn frame. Whoever lost the glasses – maybe one of the Hasids – would never find them.

The glasses changed ownership and became one of Maria's favorite toys. Everyone who came to her home went through the ritual of trying them on, getting pulled immediately into a murky world of shadows and blurs. The faces of guests trying the glasses on exhibited a full range of emotions: surprise, excitement, bewilderment. This process was documented on video. The heavy frame, thick lenses, and magnified eyes turned the wearers into exaggerated, grotesque caricatures. Thus was created a video installation – the diploma project, "Los Amigos de Maria."

This first success spawned a series of works dedicated to the senses: "Head Wash," "Iron Eyes," "The Nose," "Pingpong," and others. Through the Hasid's glasses, Pomiansky's early videos explored elements of meditative Kabbalistic practices associated with the stimulation of different senses. (It is important to imagine the original owner of the glasses: oily sidelocks, an old black suit, an eternally pregnant wife, in a world redolent always of diapers and screaming children. And in dirty, dusty corners of Jerusalem synagogues, lit only by dimming neon lamps, the monotonous singing of his colleagues, the endless, tiny letters of the Talmud and the Kabbalah, the shouts of "amen!") Only magic can explain the wonders wrought by Pomiansky's short videos – most of the people captured on film fell into a strange, hypnotic trance. In her current video work, Maria experiments on her friends in an exploration of childhood. Volunteers play childhood games: spitting tennis balls, wearing tea strainer as eyeglasses, putting on a pig's snout, and so on. The viewer also enjoys the game. There is something intimate, perhaps "pornographic," in the recordings of this pseudo-scientific activity – the complete lack of aggression gives the viewer freedom to empathize and associate with the physiological adventures of the people on the screen.

The composition "Urban Myths," which consists of two parts – "Fountains in Tel-Aviv" and "Future Sound of Hulon" – is the link between the infantile and playful scenes of the early period, and a new era in the work of the artist. This new era was made possible by the material and technical support of the Israeli Center for Digital Art and The New Fund for Cinema and Television, which have raised Pomiansky's videos to another level. But her new projects haven't lost the innocent spontaneity and charm of her earlier work. The video installation "Urban Sculptures" was featured as a representative of contemporary Israeli art at several major international exhibitions.

Each genre has its own dynamics and by the end of the first decade of the new century, technological breakthroughs in the field of video technology and communications completely distorted the video art scene: to put it plainly, the internet filled up with trash, and galleries, museums, and exhibition spaces became platforms focused primarily on political and high-tech (and therefore very expensive) projects. In 2003, in search of new ideas and new platforms, Maria moved from Israel to Switzerland and immersed herself in the study of contemporary scenography.

Her methods have changed. While the characters, still mostly friends of the artist, have remained the same, the innocent and pastoral themes have been left behind. The dramatis personae have grown up, stopped playing games, and learned to speak. The dominant form is now dialogue. Pomiansky explores the themes of beauty, fear, and happiness.