

TATE FILM

LIS RHODES AND AURA SATZ TRANSFORM: ARTISTS' FILM, ARTISTS BEYOND FILM

Clore Auditorium, Tate Britain

Monday 22 September 2014

19.00-21.00



Lis Rhodes, *Certain Measures* 2014, HD video still. Courtesy the artist © Lis Rhodes



Aura Satz, *Oramics: Atlantis Anew* 2011, film still. Courtesy the artist © Aura Satz

UPCOMING TRANSFORM SCREENINGS IN THE CLORE AUDITORIUM

THEO ESHETU

13 October 2014, 19.00-21.00

IAIN FORSYTH & JANE POLLARD

3 November, 19.00-21.00

Transform is curated by Zoe Whitley,
Curator, Contemporary British Art at
Tate Britain. With thanks to the artists.

tate.org.uk/film

Thoughts, comments, reviews?

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Through existing films and never-before-seen works in progress, Aura Satz and Lis Rhodes reveal their profound engagement with the materiality of film alongside themes of notation, experimentation and agency.

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Autumn 2014 marks the launch of Tate Film’s monthly artists’ film programme at Tate Britain.

One Monday evening per month, *Transform* brings to the screen a selection of recent and rarely seen artists’ films to highlight the unparalleled ability of moving image to capture the immaterial and things unseen: the essence of sound, the passage of time and constructions of the self.

Celebrating the protean ability of film and video to conjure other forms, *Transform* looks at how artists push the medium into new narrative, sculptural and sensual realms. Each screening features the artists in conversation, allowing the audience the opportunity to engage more deeply and directly.

PROGRAMME NOTES Composed by the artists

NOTES FROM LIGHT MUSIC Lis Rhodes, 1975-77/2014 16 mm transferred to digital file, 12 min condensed edit

Light Music - motivated in part by the absence of women composers in European composition - has been played in several ways.

In its two screen 16mm version (1976) it is more or less different every time it is screened thanks to the intervention of the audience. With the two screens and the two projectors opposite one another, the audience can move in to stand or sit within the projection space. I thought the audience would move around - leave - return - and chat throughout - and they do.

Some of the original footage was made from line drawings which were filmed using a rostrum camera. The intervals between the lines register as differentiated noise - or notes - if you prefer. Sometimes the lens ‘zooms’ in on the lines. This changes the pitch of the sounds. You hear ‘the aural equivalent’ of the zoom. This filming orchestrated the rudimentary ‘score’ I had drawn for the playing of something which was literally ‘light’ music.

Light Music was first shown as a two-part 14 minute videotape at the Serpentine Gallery in the *Festival of Independent Video* (1975). One section was filmed from a video monitor that produced line patterns on the screen which varied according to sound signals produced by an oscillator. So here the sound produced the image. This filmed section was then printed on the optical edge of a film strip. So in this case the image produced the sound.

This is a single screen version of *Notes from Light Music* (the condensed edit of *Light Music*) in digital format. The film or ‘score’ is divided into five movements in which the images determine the duration, pitch and accent of the sounds.

ORAMICS Aura Satz, 2011 HD video, 7 min

Daphne Oram (1925-2003) was a pioneer of British electronic music and co-founded the BBC Radiophonic Workshop in 1958. She designed and built a radically new sound recording medium: Oramics. Oram used principles from graphical or drawn sound to compose ‘handwrought’ electronic music, and yet the visual nature of her work remains largely unseen and unsung.

Satz here pays homage to the inventor via a close-up portrait of the Oramics machine, now part of the collection of London’s Science Museum. The artist’s film brings back to life a now-obsolete technological fantasy, enabling the visualisation of sound material, translated into new filmic sequences. The soundtrack features electronic music composed by Daphne Oram, interlaced with Oram’s own voiceover reading excerpts from a first draft of her book *An Individual Note of Music, Sound and Electronics* (1971).

Filmed, directed and edited by Aura Satz. Music composed by Daphne Oram, courtesy of the Oram Trust. Research and film assistants Lina Hakim and Katherine Hunt. Funded by the London Consortium, the Science Museum and Sound & Music. Special thanks to Mick Grierson, Tim Boon, David Rogerson, Steven Connor, Dan Wilson, David Edelsztein and Shira Hess.

IN AND OUT OF SYNCH Aura Satz, 2012 16mm, 20 min

Collaboratively scripted and voiced by Aura Satz and Lis Rhodes, this film focuses on analogue technology teetering on the brink of obsolescence: soundtracks printed onto filmstrips as optical sound. The flashing abstract visual patterns are produced by the soundtrack: they are an image of the artists’ voices encoded as light from both 16mm mono and 35mm stereo optical sound cameras. The two voices alternate overlap and coincide, interrogating the sound-image synchronicity.

First premiered as a filmic performance at The Tanks, Tate Modern in 2012. Filmed, directed and edited by Aura Satz. Scripted in dialogue with Lis Rhodes. Voiceover Lis Rhodes and Aura Satz. DP Bevis Bowden. Dubbing mixer Gernot Fuhrmann. Support in kind from Pinewood Studios. Special thanks to Martin Sawyer, Jason Stevens, Simon Hill at Pinewood; Len Thornton and Tim Sidell, and Jackie and Peter Stewart.

LIGHT READING Lis Rhodes, 1978 16mm transferred to digital file, 20 min

“The bloodstained bed suggests a crime... No answers are given, after the torrent of words at the beginning of the film, all the film offers are closed images and more questions... Is it even blood on the bed, what fracture is there between seeing and certainty? If there has been a crime, ‘she’ might still be victim... How can a crime of such complexity and continuity be ‘solved’? The voice searches for clues, sifting through them, reading and re-reading until the words and letters loom up nightmarishly, no longer hung on the structure of language.”

(from Felicity Sparrow, *Her Image Fades as Her Voice Rises*, The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1983)

In between the making of *Dresden Dynamo* 1971-2 and *Light Music* 1975 I tried to see - I mean hear - whether there was an equivalence between the letters of the alphabet and sound; whether there could be ‘sound pictures’ of words. To do this, I printed used typewriter tapes on to 16mm film strip. These experiments in *Amanuensis* 1973 and the use of alphabetic imagery again in a three-screen projection *Print Slip* 1975 demonstrated the impossibility of making a material connection between ‘what is said to be seen’ and ‘what is seen to be said’. The results were not enthralling but were very useful later. Intention was misleading but accidentally essential - in the silence of reading the unreadable in *Light Reading* 1978.

The history of an English sentence is constructed on the backs of subject and object. In the film *Light Reading* the critical problem is whether this grammatical positioning is a translation of actual social relations. I mean, what do the structures of grammar tell us about society? There is the problem of whose meaning is meant. *The shock is not that things are, but that they are arranged as they are.*

certain measures an index of disbelief (WORK IN PROGRESS) Lis Rhodes, 2014 HD video, 6 min

certain measures is a work in progress an index of disbelief of the always now that is claimed to be in perpetual movement but this does not bear analysis or deserve its ephemeral images can it not be seen power hinges on impunity (page 201) to watch the dial pretend not to kill? in real time the government watch him being killed which is not at all what can be seen to be but what is needed to be seen (page 228) negotiations are held in secret (page 10) as minutes fly from the night stiff fingers wind the wind outrage steps over the precipice the capture of certain measures reoccurs within the ever moving now (page 320) the grander the scale the more theatrical the action staged in the fiction of authority force erases law in the name of law *they promised to take our land, and they took it* (page 0) certain measures is the contemplation of the illegal aspects of legality pages torn from the last ten years and pasted on the screen ephemeral after all.

BALLISTIC STUDY (WORK IN PROGRESS) Aura Satz, 2014 HD video, 3:48 min

Ballistic Study takes as its starting point the women ‘human computers’ who contributed to early computer programming and the acceleration of mathematical calculations used in warfare during the Second World War. Their purpose was to collect and assess numerical data in the study of ballistics and the science of projectile motion, analyzing, for example, the behaviour of bullets in flight. *Ballistic Study* features archival and more recent close-ups of abstract bullet patterns, diagrams and photographic documents, in order to question the ethics of perception in military analysis. A poetic voice-over narration will serve throughout the film to identify and examine the moral and aesthetic dilemmas raised by the human computers’ work.

Edgerton images courtesy Harold Edgerton Archive, Palm Press, Inc. and the Michael Hoppen Gallery. Additional electric spark photography from Dayton Clarence Miller, *Sound Waves: Their Shape and Speed* 1937 and Schlieren photography by Andrew Davidhazy. Special thanks to Simon Baker, Clemmie Cooke and Andrew Davidhazy.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lis Rhodes (born 1942, London)
Lives and works in London

Rhodes has been making films since the early 1970s and is a major figure in the history of artists’ filmmaking in Britain. She was a leading member of the influential London Filmmakers’ Co-op. Rhodes co-founded the women’s film and video distribution company, Circles (1980). Recent screenings include *In the Kettle*, as part of *Assembly: A Recent Survey of Artists’ Film and Video in Britain*, Tate Britain (2014), the installation *Light Music*, Tate Modern Tanks, and *Dissonance and Disturbance*, ICA, London (both 2012).

Aura Satz (born 1974, Barcelona)
Lives and works in London

Satz is an artist working across film, sound, performance and sculpture. She was nominated for the Film London Jarman Award (2012). Recent solo exhibitions include *Colour Opponent Process* at Paradise Row and *Impulsive Synchronisation* at the Hayward Gallery, London (both 2013). Forthcoming group exhibitions include *Mirror City: London Artists on Fiction and Reality*, Hayward Gallery and *They Used to Call it the Moon*, Baltic, Newcastle (both 2014-2015). Forthcoming solo projects are *Chromatic Aberration*, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle (2014), *Eyelids Leaking Light*, George Eastman House, New York (2015).

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