

Narcisa Hirsch, A Pioneer of Experimental Video Art (1967-1974)

Cinema is what occurs between photogram and photogram, Werner Nekes has said, as it is also the light in motion reflected on a wall, and also the large image caught by the lens, minimalized, concentrated into 8, 16 or 35 millimeters, and amplified, larger than reality, *larger than life*.

Cinema is what flows and goes away, what doesn't stay, an image every 24th part of a second; cinema is being in the dark with others in a room, sharing a ritual.

But, above all, it is the luminosity of images, the images that, projected, make visible to others, the internal ones, the images saved, the dark and forgotten ones, in the beam of light that runs over the right terrain in order to pull us out of where we are seated, to be almost fused with that light in an almost passionate surrender.

It is sometimes called experimental cinema, underground cinema or independent cinema, in order to distinguish its anarchic form of stripping the image of history, of the cord that is the argument with which we have passed by the abysses of that reflected light which threatens to spill over our unconscious, to pull us toward dangerous and dreaded places.

There is fear, fear of an unconventional rhythm and time, fast or slow, the real time that is never cinematographic time, the time of the commercial cinema; there is amazement and distrust of the frames slipped out of place, of the out of focus, of the insinuated, of what is opened to be filled up, there is fear of acceleration and also of the threat that it may never end.

I mean that the cinema without visible argument, with other times, which are not known, with the description of daily life or of the seldom seen, the dreamed-of -- that cinema awakens passions, great loves and great refusals, and is also boredom before images that have no echo.

It is clear that the violence of a scene such as the bloodbaths they offer us every day doesn't alter the public so much as a sequence of peaceful images in which, for a time longer than is customary, apparently 'nothing' happens. In the former, the violence is that of the 'other', whereas in the latter, it is our own. Yet also ours is the happiness in the face of an image that is totally what we've needed to see; the mind rests then, and there is an instant of perfection.

They sometimes say that this isn't cinema. Those who say so are unable to open the doors of perception without prejudices, to feel what is rather than what ought to be.

HENRIQUE FARIA | BUENOS AIRES



Dalí, Buñuel and Cocteau were the first, and after followed the Germans from the Bauhaus era and cubism, and it later moved on to the United States, where today there exists the largest school, the longest tradition of this cinema, which can be seen in museums, universities, galleries and spaces where projections are held with the filmmaker present.

The freedom to work with very little money is the freedom not to have to sell, it is the freedom to work at home in a home-made way, without big crews or stage settings. Without time pressure. You make a photogram a day, or a year. Each one chooses his or her time or space. For this reason and for all the rest, the experimental cinema is a subversive art, more than the documentary or political cinema.

More subversive than an intellectual or conceptual cinema. For that reason there are few who go and even fewer who stay.

Narcisa Hirsch

Videos exhibidos

Marabunta [A Rowdy Group], 1967

Documentary record, original 16 mm, 7'55", black and white, Beta SP PAL, 4:3, stereo, no dialog

Director: Narcisa Hirsch

Camera and editing: Raymundo Gleyzer

Music: Edgar Varèse

Protagonists: Narcisa Hirsch, Marie Louise Alemann and Walther Mejía

Synopsis: Documentary on the happening of the same name, which took place at the Teatro Coliseo in the City of Buenos Aires, on October 3, 1967. A ceremony or group anthropophagy around a four-meter skeleton completely covered by food and which inside it contains live doves and magpies painted with phosphorescent colors, which fly away while people are eating.

Come out, 1971

Original 16 mm, 24 f/s, 10', color, Mono magnetic sound, no dialog

Director: Narcisa Hirsch

Camera: Horacio Maira

Synopsis: Over music by Steve Reich, a phrase gets out of synch electronically, while the image makes an inverse motion. It starts out of focus and very slowly comes into focus.

Canciones napolitanas [Neapolitan Songs], 1971

Original 16 mm, 10', color, HD, 4:3, stereo, no dialog

Director and camera: Narcisa Hirsch

Performer: Agustina Muñoz Paz

Synopsis: While romantic Neapolitan songs play, a blend of abstract images with a large mouth in the foreground that eats a raw liver and later, a postcard.

Muñecos [Dolls]/Have a Baby, 1972

Documentary record of a performance. Original Super 8, 15', color, video 4:3, no dialog

Director: Narcisa Hirsch

Synopsis: Buenos Aires, London and New York as a stage for the distribution of 500 baby dolls at some central corner of these cities.

Retrato de una artista como ser humano [Portrait of a Woman Artist as a Human Being], 1973

Original 16 mm, 15'51", color, 24 f/s, magnetic sound, Video .avi, mono, no dialog

Director: Narcisa Hirsch

Camera: Horacio Maira

Performers: Narcisa Hirsch, Marie Louise Alemann, Walther Mejía and Paul Hirsch

Synopsis: Experimental documentary of the artist, showing various happenings, which she has been holding for years with Marie Louise Alemann and Walther Mejía. As in some ritual, they haul to the river the various elements they have intervened in in these

happenings. This is a film in the form of a personal diary, documenting artistic events created over an era.

Bebés [Babies], 1974

Original Super 8, 10'37", color, AVI [Audio Video Interleave] PAL, 4:3, stereo, no dialog

Director and camera: Narcisa Hirsch.

Synopsis: Images of dolls and women. The dolls invade the screen until they become a nightmare.