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INEMAKERS

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WOMENCINEMAKERS OFFERS ITS OVER 300'000 READERS INSIGHT INTO THE WORK OF EMERGING DIRECTORS IN THE SHORT FILM AND EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA SECTIONS. WOMEN PRODUCERS, WRITERS, AND DIRECTORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR FILMS TO THE WIDE ATTENTION OF THE ENGLISH-READING AUDIENCE. SINCE 2012 WOMENCINEMAKERS HAS BEEN PROMOTING NEW EXPERIMENTS BY CREATING THE SECTION NINE NEW WOMEN FILMMAKERS THAT AWARDS DEBUTS AND AND INNOVATIVE FILMS. WITH A MIXTURE OF

NEWCOMERS AND ESTABLISHED DIRECTORS, OUR ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY HAS FEATURED MORE THAN 100 ARTISTS, WITH MANY OF THEM COMPETING IN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, AND THE VENICE BIENNALE. FILM DIRECTORS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DETERMINING HOW WE SEE OURSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND US. GENDER OF THE STORYTELLER MATTERS. THE WORLD NEEDS THE CREATIVE ENERGY AND VISION OF WOMEN. JOIN WOMENCINEMAKERS.

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TOP: CAMILLE DE GALBERT, GUAN XI, URSZULA PIEREGONCZUK
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COVER: NAJAT ALSHERIDAH)

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where I create deceiving portraits and withholding close-ups that do not partake in a postmodern "emptiness of the image" (Parveen Adams). "Rather, an unexpected and disorienting plenitude flows out of these representational shells. Beneath the hollowed out faces lies a motley crew of passions and ideas: the eternal vicissitudes of carnality: love lost and found; the feminist art historical imperative of (re)discovering women artists of the past; that old chestnut, looking and being looked at; the troubled marriage between images and meaning." (1) My fascination with the face has always been at the core of my practice; even before I embarked on my current work with digital video in 2014 therefore it is inevitable that it permeates every aspect of my current video practice where I continue to explore the face as Masque, especially the female face where the revelatory promise of portraiture is disturbed through facial mash-ups, splicing and sound desynchronization. My video practice explores disturbances, ruptures and disruptions by taking very short segments of both appropriated and original footage and splicing them up into small portions, approximately one to ten frames These are then repositioned, repeated and some times also reversed.

The repetitive repositioning of the frames dislodges the original narrative from the emerging piece, making it rhythmic both on the visual and audio level with at times guite funny results. The aim is to remove these short films from the usual rather passive event of watching a Movie where one sits down and enjoys (or not) what is occurring on the screen. The plot is laid out, nothing much to do except to follow it.

Additionally, adding new sound-tracks to some pieces accentuates already existing narratives as for example, the heightened salient sense of unfortunate fate of two protagonists engaged in a disjointed, ludicrously silly "Dance Macabre". (Cock fight) or by adding birdsong in an attempt to remove the performer's incoherent dialogue and spasmodic movements from the surreal. (The penetration of twitter onto a soundtrack of missing)

each frame serving as representation of an individual's space where the performers interaction happens when entering the other's frame

The positioning of the frames next to each other and the black space surrounding both frames on the screen is an attempt to negate the "out-of-field; that which exists elsewhere, to one side or around" (Deleuze 1986: 17), the out-of-field that potentially could be considered threatening as it cannot be observed.

These attempts at disrupting narratives are informed by Riddles of the Sphinx by Laura Mulvey / Peter Wollen, Granular Synthesis. «Model 5», 1994 – 1996 and also. Passage à l'acte by Martin Arnold. The "Face" central to the majority of my short digital films, is most appropriately thought of in relation to what is visible to the viewer and as posited by Rushton; "relating to or reading a face is not a matter of interpreting certain performed codes and applying those codes to the markings one sees expressed on a face; it is rather, an intuitive mode of seeing." (Rushton 2002: 220)

1: Alexandra M. Kokoli BA Fine Art Joint Programme Leader and Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture at Middlesex University and Research Associate at VIAD, University of Johannesburg, Part of text about mywork for MA Degree Show Catalogue 2016

Born in Paris and raised in Sweden, Corinne Charton decided to pursue her interest in art following a career as a fashion model. Graduating from Central Saint Martins with a 2:1 BA (Hons) in Fine in 2003. She went on to complete her MA in Fine Art at Middlesex University in 2106 graduating with Distinction. The revelatory promise of portraiture in both her painting and video practice is obstructed through facial mashups, splicing, reordering and sound desynchronization. The artist probes and comments on these emergent conditions by giving form to their potential fallout. Her work is in public and private collections, including Central St Martins, UAL.

WomenCinemakers meets

Corinne Charton

An interview by **Bonnie Curtis** and **Barbara Scott**

Hello Corinne and welcome to WomenCinemakers: we would start this interview about a couple of questions about your multifaceted background. You have a solid formal training and after having earned your BA (Hons) in Fine Art from the prestigious Central Saint Martins you nurtured your education with a MA in Fine Art, that you recently received from the Middlesex University: how did these experiences along with your career as a fashion model influence your evolution as an artist? In particular, how does your cultural substratum address the themes of your artistic research?

For a while I was as much an emigrant as an immigrant. And I am sure these experiences sneak through to find their position, niche, or little corner within my art practice. However I do not consciously take that part of my background and separate it from the rest. To me it is nothing out of the ordinary. It is simply the life that I have lived, and part of who I am.

I can very much relate to parts of Stuart Hall's "Minimal Selves" (1988) as I consider myself to be a migrant as well and have never been anything else, I don't even know what the opposite would be. Is there one?

This might sound silly, however I just realised that I kind of migrate back and forth from different art-practices as well. So I guess that could be the link; being a perpetual migrant! I am very much migrating from one discipline to another,







Stills from (Paroxysms erupting because) Mr Rochester does not quite get it





appropriating cultural references from wherever I feel a connection and just discarding the rest. The piece that I consider incorporates reflections and ideas relating to my background as a fashion model is "S&L @ 70% or the deerotification of "touch" where I specifically chose to use two fairly young and good looking performers. I asked them to reach in to each other's spaces and calmly without haste, touch the other person's face in a manner that should be as diametrically opposite as possible to anything that could be interpreted as "erotic. The idea was for the piece to counteract the relentless erotification of "touch" especially when involving people that are attractive and often young, its ubiquity in fashion, advertising and media in general, today is relentless and hard to avoid.

The piece is shot concurrently on two cameras, each frame serve as representation of an individual space where the person occupying it stares straight out at the viewer and only looks away when scrutinizing the other person's face. The interaction between the performers 'occurs' when each performer enters the adjacent frame, highlighting a gap that can or cannot be bridged by touch.

Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production, we would invite to our readers to visit http://www.corinnecharton.com in order to get a synoptic view of your work: while walking us through your process, would you like to tell to our readers something about the evolution of your style? In particular, do you think that there is a central idea that connects all your works?

The first works were made or are directly linked to the work I produce during my final year at Central Saint Martin's and is heavily influenced by my stepdad's Alzheimer's. As his illness progress I became more and more obsesses with photographs and 8mm home movies he had recorded and kept.

With the aid of these films and "paper symbols" (Kabakov 1989, "Ilya Kabakov", 1998: 100) I placed nostalgia; an emotion/symptom that I consider to be in search of an identity at the centre of my practice. This was a direct, possibly slightly petulant response after being advice by a tutor to "Be wary of straying into nostalgia" Why should anyone be dissuaded from venturing into a territory where there is so

much potential? As long as I was aware of the possible pitfalls of that space, I should be safe from too much self-pity and sickly sugar coated memories, framed by soft, fluffy summer clouds.

Looking through my writings for this interview I found some old notes relating to my approach to the continuation of memory as a succession of archived films running through our heads. How they are cut and edited depends on perception. Although not yet immersed in my video practice it was still somehow waiting to pop out...

After graduating from CSM's my practice continued to touch on memories exploring what part of us has been shaped by lived sensory experiences and what might be an amalgam derived from events lived via mass media. Especially important to me are childhood iconology, hence the Disney characters, especially Donald Duck because I absolutely loved him for being naughty and maladroit and so completely diametrically opposite to Mickey Mouse who was always so nice and perfect!

Photography continued to be an important part in my work, as I examined photographs of my childhood questioning the truth and authenticity rigidly frozen at a specific moment. While continuing to position nostalgia at the centre of my practice, I never allowed its emotions to consume my paintings but instead attempted to utilise nostalgia's subversive qualities to underpin my recollections. And by introducing strangers, for example the twin boys in photographs from an old family album bought at a flea market into my very own familiar spaces I extend my interrogations of my own identity and existence and that of others. Doing this I pretend to give them a new and more recent history thereby temporarily preventing traces of their existence to disappear into oblivion while also questioning if things would have been different had other people inhabited the scenery and backdrops of my childhood and vice versa. Nostalgia then became not simply about the glorification of bygone times but also an attempt to deconstruct it.

Although I still remove the personages depicted in my paintings from their original background/context, my recent body of work has moved away from the "personal" and is







exploring notions of identity, especially female, in addition to the refusal of the gaze.

In some I have scavenged images found in magazines and on the web such as the image of a bird demanding to be fed, a fifties pin-up, a lonely child, and the interior of a hotel room that reminds me of a screenshot from a film seen on the TV or from a movie. Similarly to the paintings with the twins I use these "stolen" fragments and merge them with photographs of actual spaces from my childhood recently re-visited and photographed.

Oh dear I better stop here, otherwise this interview will go on and on and on....... and I realise I've basically just talked about my painting practice...

For this special edition of WomenCinemakers we have selected (Paroxysms erupting because) Mr Rochester does not quite get it., an extremely interesting video that our readers have already began to get to know in the introductory pages of this article and that is available at https://vimeo.com/169368522: what has at once captured our attention of your successful attempt to disrupt narrative is the way you have provided the visual results of your analysis with coherent combination between autonomous aesthetics and visual consistence. While walking our readers through the genesis of (Paroxysms erupting because) Mr Rochester does not quite get it., would you tell what did draw you to inquire into the notion of narrative from a perceptual point of view?

It is very much a continuation of my painting practice where I corrupt narratives by blending visual anecdotes, and "(Paroxysms erupting because)...." was most probably an intentional accident waiting to happen, specially taking into consideration my research and writings about the face, where I examine the gaze's ubiquitous residency within the frame of a photographed portrait: The "Face" is most appropriately thought of in relation to what is visible to the viewer and as posited by Rushton; "relating to or reading a face is not a matter of interpreting certain performed codes and applying those codes to the markings one sees expressed on a face; it is rather, an intuitive mode of seeing." (Rushton 2002: 220) By splicing up this animated "portrait" I attempt to disrupt

and refuse this slightly voyeuristic and interfering facet of the gaze, resulting in a piece that automatically now is extricated from its original chronology.

These attempts at disrupting narratives are informed by Riddles of the Sphinx by Laura Mulvey / Peter Wollen, Granular Synthesis, «Model 5», 1994 – 1996 and also, Passage à l'acte by Martin Arnold.

As you have remarked in your artist's statement, you explore the face as Masque. German multidisciplinary artist Thomas Demand once stated that, "nowadays art can no longer rely so much on symbolic strategies and has to probe psychological, narrative elements within the medium instead". Do faces act as symbols in the non linear narrative of your works?

I am fascinated by the face because it is a significant element of social interaction carrying essential information required to communicate, I'm interested in exploring whether our ability to retain the automatic reference points we are familiar with are still intact, or are these fractured once a face has been modified either by doctoring an image, still or moving.? The consequence of this modification can initially be confusing, for although there remains a sense of familiarity, our ability to instantly recognise these composite images is obstructed. As in the series of collages where I used images of generally recognisable people found in magazines, altering their appearance only slightly by cutting out their eyes and mouths, then adding new ones from images of different people underneath

This is similarly applicable to my piece "Mumblings and the impossibility of speaking through a gaze." A work consisting of four separate digital videos, each around 3 minutes in length. The "Face" of the women in the short fragments cannot return your gaze, cannot reveal its vulnerability. It can only exclusively stare back with the frozen emotion attached to the photograph from where the eyes were taken. The women's eyes have been removed from the footage then and there faces then repositioned over four separate sets of photographed eyes belonging to men. There is no visual evidence of



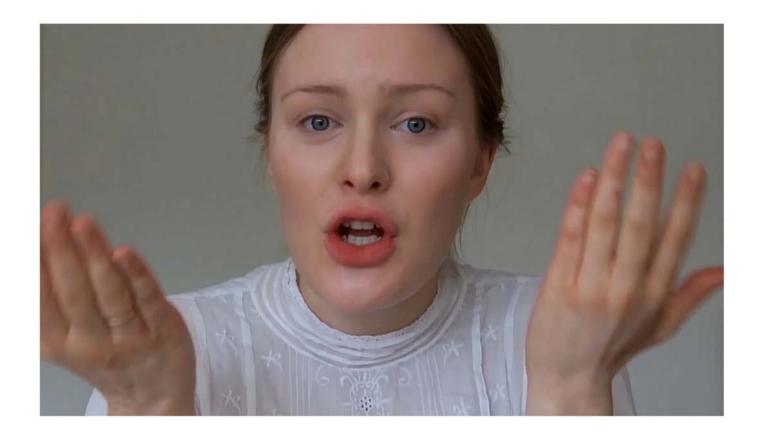
the male face, only its rigid gaze peering back at the viewer from behind the "Masque" of the female face. In addition to the disconcerting stare, the bare background occupying the frame behind the women filmed in near "Close Up" reveal the salient presence of the ominous threat in G Deleuze's "out-of-field" "...it testifies to a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist..." (Deleuze 2005:18)

This video piece and the face collages together with the series of loosely painted faces based on photographs of my Swedish Stepdad's Co-workers from the late 1970's emerged from my initial research into in polemic regarding facial transplants, where questions have been raised concerning deep, possibly disturbing psychological

influence on the recipients' identity. Could the new face rupture a person's sense of self?

How does this compare, with the parallel effects cosmetic surgery could have on a person's identity, when ultimately a new breed of humans, void of unique characteristics is being crafted, resulting in an absurdly anonymous look, making them look virtually identical. What impact has this had and will in the future have on Art practices and portraiture in particular?

Within photography, Phillip Toleado, Michelle Shank and Ji Yeo have produced captivating, if somewhat disturbing images around the subject of cosmetic surgery. I have yet to find much of interest in painting with the exception of Mark Gilbert's very interesting engaging if somewhat gory Saving



Faces Art project, and there is of course Khader Attia's comprehensive practice examining facial deformities.

We have appreciated your unconventional approach to video and sound manipulation: many artists express the ideas that they explore through representations of the body in their creative process. German visual artist Gerhard Richter once remarked that "it is always only a matter of seeing: the physical act is unavoidable": how would you consider the relation between the abstract nature of the ideas you explore and the physical act of the action that stays behind of the production of a video? How would you consider the relationship between your post editing work and the performers?

I find it interesting and a little perplexing that my ideas could be considered abstract in any way? To me they are concrete almost physical before they emerge, acted out and recorded in front of a camera. Perhaps this is because they exists written down on paper, therefore I cannot consider them abstract.... Which is silly really as I have no problems whatsoever acknowledge that marks on a piece of paper, a canvas, you name it, be considered abstract. So why not marks assembled into words...?

I really truly believed that I had complete control and had mastery of the direction in editing. Well this delusion did not last long. I rapidly realized that I needed to work with professional people actors or performers. The exception being "Ahnectdauten om Beurken" where the participant were hastily gathered and had virtually no idea what

would be asked of them. The video piece was produced for an interim show Gasworks1 as part of the Middlesex MAFA course involving a poem being translated back and forth from English to Swedish via email. The poem was then read out in Swedish and transcribed by a native English speaker spelling the sounds made phonetically. The video shot with two cameras simultaneously and shown together next to each other on one screen, and it documents these randomly selected participants whose native tongue is not English reading out the transcribed poem.

(https://vimeo.com/169372494)

I tend to use the same actors/performers in my work especially Salka Backman a young Swedish actress based here in London. This is not a flippant remark, but using an actor performer I have grown accustomed to and trust, equates a little to me always using the same brush and paint brands. Having said this I'm always open to try new people out, but only once! It is too costly and not only financial but also time wise when a booked session goes to waste because I cannot convey what I require from the participants.

I admit to having to develop my directing skill, for sure, because I am certain that the responsibility of a good performance is as much the one of a director as it is the performer's. My editing is only as good as the performance I can manage to get from the actors, I cannot, or at least until now have not been able to rescue a performance I was not happy with.

How would you consider the relationship between analysis and spontaneity within your work? In particular, do you like spontaneity or do you prefer to meticulously schedule every details of your works? how much importance does play improvisation in your process?

I usually have a very clear, specific idea of what I wish to achieve, however within that framework I give the performers as much freedom they require to interpreted my idea. For example I let them chose their own monologue. Sometimes I just ask them to talk about anything that pops into their mind, something they feel comfortable recounting. So I would say improvisation is

very important as long as I have setup and conveyed the boundaries within which I want to keep the performance. Anyway I am a firm believer that boundaries are often a safe space to be spontaneous and in.

Where I am quite rigid is the set up of studio lighting etc. As I am a complete novice I have always had help with setting up the lights and cameras and that can be a struggle when trying to convey slightly nonconventional ideas. However so far so good... I'm becoming rather accomplished at bossing people around! As I shot Paroxysms in daylight I had to slightly tweak the footage in post-production to try and eliminate the variation in light.

The soundtrack of (Paroxysms erupting because) Mr Rochester does not quite get it. plays a crucial role, as well: according to media theorist Marshall McLuhan there is a 'sense bias' that affects Western societies favouring visual logic, a shift that occurred with the advent of the alphabet as the eye became more essential than ear. How do you see the relationship between sound and moving images?

I totally agree with the fact that there is a sense bias and that ocular-centrism is way to prevalent and this bothers me, perhaps because I increasingly recognise how little I am able to remember with any of my senses other than the visual. My head is filled with images, with some being more vivid than others. However, my olfactory sense is virtually devoid of any recollection of the past. I can hardly ever summon up a smell that once was, the way I can invoke a visual memory. The few times that I have had a whiff from the past glide under my nose I have had to stop and think hard trying to remember where it came from. Although from time to time I am able to retrieve sounds that I once heard, I can hardly ever remember any sounds other than music. I so wish that I could remember the voice of my daughter when she was a small child, the way I so perfectly remember her face. (If I had recorded her voice for posterity and thus able to listen to it in the same way that I can just take out photographs to look at her as she was back then, would I now remember her voice as it was when she was younger?

As to sound and the moving image... I have an aversion to soundtracks that overtly directs the viewer through a film and becomes almost dictatorial and. Having said that I will now contradict myself as I am working on similar pieces to "Cock fight" where the main purpose of the "soundtrack" is to direct the viewer. The original footage is from "Hemsöborna" a Swedish TV series adapted from the novel of by August Strindberg, shot in black and white first aired in 1965. There is such a sense of animosity between the two men in that clip and don't ask me why but Stravinsky's Le Sacre Du Printemps, The Adoration Of The Earth, Dances Of The Young Girls, began to infiltrate the space between my ears where my brain resides.

I decided to attempt making the version I could visualise in my head where the obvious resentment the two male characters have towards each other in the original footage was exaggerated. Removing the original sound and adding this new soundtrack emphasised the salient sense of unfortunate fate in edited piece and conversely made the resulting short film where the men are now implicated in a strange disjointed macho "Dance Macabre", ludicrously silly. This also removes the edited piece from the original narrative and relates back to my painting practice where I as mentioned above, seek to bestow new altered biographies to the strangers in my paintings.

As for the sound on Paroxysms, I am eternally grateful for the assistance and guidance I received from Senior Sound Technician, Peter Williams at Middlesex University. To be honest I don't think I would even have a video practice without the enormous support I had from the tutors and technicians there. The fact that should consider develop my art practice to include these two at first completely different mediums seemed to be a natural progression to them, probably before it was evident to me.

To quote Alexandra M. Kokoli's words, your work explores the feminist art historical imperative of (re)discovering women artists of the past: we want to catch this occasion to ask you to express your view on the future of women in contemporary-art. For more than half a century women have been discouraged from producing artworks, however in the last decades

there are signs that something is changing. What's your view on the future of women in Art?

Half a century!!!..? you mean half a millennia... if not longer, right? How many female artists are known to the general public? Not many! That was made clear to me when answering questions about the series of paintings I made and exhibited during my time at Middlesex University. They are all based on paintings of women by female artists such as Louise Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun. (1755-1842). Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, (1749-1803), Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann (1819-1881) and Marie-Guillemine Benoist (1768-1826). Despite thorough and insightful texts by writers such as Germaine Greer (The Obstacle Race, 1979), Frances Borzello (Seeing Ourselves, 1998), Liz Rideal (Mirror Mirror, 2001) and Whitney Chatwick (Women, Art and Society, 1990) these often highly skilled women and many others are still regularly hidden from the annals of history.

It took France until 2015 to show a comprehensive retrospective of Vigée Le Brun's work! That's crazy considering her extensive body of work and its amazing craftsmanship and quality. Even during their lifetimes although admired by some, both Vigée Le Brun and Labille-Guiard had to fight hard to be accepted and respected and not discarded as some frivolous little damsels. Hillay Robinson who during my time at MDX served as Dean of the Fine Art Faculty, writes that Labille-Guiard "who was often given the compliment that she painted like a man, had to go so far as to paint portraits of the male academicians in order to prove that she not a man had produced the painting. (Robinson 2006: 185) ... So absurd!!!

True things are slowly changing and work by living artists such as Cady Noland, Tracy Emin, Jenny Saville and Beatriz Milhazes, to name just a few, do very well at auctions. However, it is still less than their contemporary male artists achieve at auction for their work.

Others such as Ida Applebroog are respected and represented by a major commercial gallery, and women artists like Carolee Schneemann , Judy Chicago and Joan Jonas are well known but perhaps mostly within a "feminist context"



Thankfully the anonymous feminist group "Guerrilla Girls" are still around persevering on their mission devoted to fighting sexism, racism and highlighting inequality in the Art world! It is really sad that their actions are still necessary especially their work exposing the sad reality regarding to how few women artist have their work collected and exhibited in the world's big National Galleries and museums. As written on one of their posters, from 1889 "Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art Sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female." This was related to the Met in NYC but is valid for most if not all large art establishment

This is a subject that drives me bonkers as I was around when feminism started to become a force to be reckoned

with in the late 1960, although I was way too young to burn any brassieres! I just cannot understand that we still have to confront sexism in addition to race issues.

During the duration of my Master's degree I was incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by a bunch of super dedicated female tutors such as the artists Sonia Boyse, Rebecca Fortnum, Judy Cowan and Tanzy Spinks just to mention a few. These women I am sure will inspire a new generation of female artists to fight for their just deserves. There were some really good men teaching there as well!

Over the years your work has been showcased on several occasions: you also held two solo shows the first at The Muse at 269 and Twin Obsession, StART SPACE, both London: one of the hallmarks of your





work is the capability to create direct involvement with the viewers, who are provided with the opportunity to become active participants and are urged to evolve from a condition of mere spectatorship. So before leaving this conversation we would like to pose a question about the nature of the relationship of your art with your audience. Do you consider the issue of audience reception as being a crucial component of your decision-making process, in terms of what type of language is used in a particular context?

Yeah.... It is a question I have been asked a couple times and I am really bad at answering it...

I obviously want people to like my work. I'm not producing a bunch of paintings for them to be stored in a bedroom, although a few are, or videos that are never shown although thankfully they take up much less space! Like any artist I desire to exhibit and sell my work. All this "suffering for your art malarkey" is really not my cup of tea!

It is interesting to invigilate my exhibitions anonymously because I find that people talk more about their view, their feelings about the work compared to when they know whom I am.

Nope, I do not take into consideration the audience perception into my "decision-making process" that would be claustrophobic and limiting! Although admittedly, I like making people slightly uncomfortable... I'm not making art to caress or pamper anybody's ego except for possibly my own.

The best I can aim for is being able to convey my intentions without excluding a space for the viewer to fill it with whatever reflections, reactions or understanding they may get from my work. Does this make any sense?

Thanks a lot for your time and for sharing your thoughts, Corinne. Finally, would you like to tell us readers something about your future projects? How do you see your work evolving?

Well I am going to enrol on film making courses, I have not decided where though. I feel that I have so much to learn and worry that my lack of knowledge could restrict developing my video art practice. That's about it really.... And thank you! I am still high-fiving myself because of your interest in my work!

