



**NOW
SHOWING:**

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Cinenova

A monthly film programme

**Holly Antrum,
Robina Rose,
Clara van Gool**

Cinenova Feminist Film and Video Distributor was founded in 1991 following the merger of two feminist film and video distributors, Circles and Cinema of Women. Each was formed in the early 1980s in response to the lack of recognition of women in the history of the moving image. Both organisations, although initially self-organised and unfunded, aimed to provide the means to support the production and distribution of women's work in this area, and played critical roles in the creation of an independent and radical media.

Cinenova currently distributes over 500 titles that include experimental film, narrative feature films, artists' film and video, documentary and educational videos made from the 1920s to the present. Cinenova holds a large collection of paper materials, books and posters related to works it distributes, and the history and politics of film and video production. The thematic in the work at Cinenova include oppositional histories, post-colonial struggles, domestic and care work, representation of gender and sexuality, and importantly, the relations and alliances between these different struggles.

NOW SHOWING is a monthly intending to materialise relationships between contemporary artist moving image practice and the feminist and organising legacies present in the Cinenova collection. In this light, we are approaching practitioners whose work seems to already have a resonance, whether formal, contextual or thematic, with some of the films and videos in the collection, and where an exciting dialogue can be developed. The screening series as a whole will represent a research process for the Cinenova Working Group which we will be drawing on once the organisation is in a position to take new work into distribution.

The format of the series is that an artist filmmaker is invited to select a film from the Cinenova collection which they would like to screen alongside a work of theirs.

February 2018 Event details:

For the first Cinenova Now Showing of 2018, artist filmmaker Holly Antrum has chosen to present two films from the Cinenova collection in dialogue with her own works: *Asides* (2011), *to the microphone please* (2013) and her new film *EIDOLON* (2017).

Asides, Super-16mm on SD, 6.19 mins, 2011

Asides explores a fragmented recording of real-time speech, where sound continues and image cuts out. Stitching together an attempted 'lip synch' around the subjects is aided by a repetitious template in the form of a Sanskrit chant. In acknowledgement to the ever separate sources of sound and image, they diverge apart and close together again. The instance of something known off by heart, and the unfolding ambiguities of

the relationships established by three voices in front and behind the camera build upon the limitations of analogue filming.

To the microphone, please (with Mrs Soprano), Holly Antrum with Rose O’Gallivan, Super-16mm on HD, 8 mins, 2013

“The title Mrs Soprano, like the reference to the microphone evokes themes of presentation, performance, and specifically in the title Mrs Soprano refers to the common assumption of the presence of a voice within artworks. The artist is expected to have this ‘voice’ which is often audible in a certain ‘pitch’. The pitch becomes the tone or texture of the artwork whether light, earnest, dry, shrill, sombre.” Extract from *To the microphone, please (with Mrs Soprano)*: Holly Antrum and Rose O’Gallivan – Quote from interview in 2013 by Regina Barunke – Director, Temporary Gallery, Cologne. Text and *Mrs Soprano (silk)* by Rose O’Gallivan

EIDOLON, HD, 17.30 mins, 2017

EIDOLON (2017) responds to Sandeep Parmar’s epic-inspired English language poem of the same title, published 2015: The narrative of *Eidolon* is sweeping and fragmentary, archival in nature, where plural modernist and contemporary voices converge around Helen. “Partly a modern revision of the Helen myth, *Eidolon* meditates on the visible and invisible forces of Western civilisation from classical antiquity to present-day America” writes Parmar. In the film the obstacle and intimacy of camera, text, page and voice come to the surface, as well as a postcolonial feminist engagement with the presented histories of the text. This is set within two experiences of its reading: the authorial voice of Parmar interweaves with an anonymous reader who separately encounters the writing and its rhythm for the first time. EIDOLON is a new film commission by Holly Antrum who was invited to respond to a piece of writing within the International Literature Showcase. The commission was funded by International Literature Showcase (Writer’s Centre Norwich) and British Council in 2017. The project will have its first gallery screening within Cinenova Now Showing.

Reservaat – Clara van Gool, Netherlands, 8 mins, 1988

Stunningly shot (originally on 35mm) and beautifully edited, *Reservaat* is a witty pastiche about women and nature. Two women in fur dresses closely embracing, create an animal-like choreographed dance in deserted woodland. We hear only the sound of occasional distant traffic, the snap of a twig, birds singing. The camera whirls with the women as though part of the dance and the careful editing adds to the rhythm of the piece. Removed from the rest of the world, the women are free to express their desire.

Robina Rose’s film *Birth Rites* will be shown on a monitor at The Showroom alongside the screening.

Birth Rites – Robina Rose, UK, 53mins, 1977

Birth Rites is a film about ‘natural’ childbirth. It presents one woman’s experience of giving birth as filmed by another woman, without any insistence on simple answers.

BIO:

Holly Antrum (b. London 1983) is an artist filmmaker based in London, and a current work-live participant of the Programme 5 residency at the Acme Fire Station in Bow. She earned her Masters in Printmaking at the Royal College of Art, London (2011), and her BA Fine Art Painting at Wimbledon School of Art, London (2005). Through her work on 16mm, on paper and digital mediums, she is interested in the arrival of our customisation to celluloid-as-digital-material at once archived, and removed from the original and native aesthetic. This extends to the poetics connecting layered film processes, presence, communication and templates of speech, memory and in-situ sound. *Catalogue*, a 19-minute work on Super16mm-HD (2012-14) has received solo gallery installations: *Catalogue* at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, Edinburgh (2016) and *A Diffuse Citizen* at Grand Union, Birmingham (2014). The film was the focus of an edition of the Flat Time House / *Electra* curated events series *Someone else can clean up this mess* at Flat Time House in 2014. Her work has had international screenings since 2012 including *Flatness* curated by Shama Khanna at Microscope, Brooklyn (2015). A new HD 17-minute film commissioned by International Literature Showcase has yet to be shown publicly, EIDOLON (2017).

Now Showing future invited protagonists for 2018 include: Kimberley O’Neill, Alberta Whittle, Victoria Sin and more to be announced.

During my access to Cinenova's materials, I watched Robina Rose's *Birtherites* (1977) alone in my studio and found it very powerful to watch a woman give birth filmed by another woman. While I shortlisted it to show, I could not tell if the emotional intimacy I had experienced watching the film on my computer monitor, would exist among a screening audience or if her nudity and the rarely expressed eros of joy in childbirth against a backdrop of the scorching but necessary throes of *Me Too* that are happening now, would endanger the highly personal and empathetic work of the film, unless I drew attention to a mode of viewing and making. There's a book called *The Experience of Childbirth* from the 1962 by birth educator, social anthropologist and mother, Sheila Kitzinger: chapter one is called *Childbirth with Joy* and to my reading of the film *Birtherites* is within what Kitzinger describes there... a different image of birth than what we get used to hearing about, it contains the psycho-sexual element, a continuity of experience from the act of sex and the moment of conception. Consent is an indivisible aspect around this piece of work – between the subjects present in the film including the filmmaker and the mother. That consent extended to viewership and I again, like a discovery of a photo of my birth last year, felt somehow protective of the mother's 41 years of nakedness and birth experience within the index of the Cinenova catalogue - now that I was considering projecting it large, or wondering who else might browse it just as I had found it. That conflicted sense of looking pushed towards inclusion for this evening because it is more than these things but I wanted to explain.

Many thoughts from engaging with the collection lead me to reflect on the quantity of material I feel 'protective' over which I include in my films – which includes and possibly centres on my mother's image, who appears in *Asides* (2011). Using subjects that have a precious value to you as a filmmaker creates a tension, because it is fiercely important to you and because it heightens a legacy of moving image or film stills that must not be misused. The power of the image of those we love appearing as cultural content in the wider world can be problematic to those close to the material, but I would not have known this when I was first drawn to make films as a student. *Asides* was my Royal College of Art degree show film. I noticed Robina Rose's film is also cited as an RCA production and I wondered if the mother in the film was a close friend she had known. The baby we see born is six years older than me... I hope he has some relationship with the film and that he has ease with it, for the depth Robina Rose and the mother Julia Laurer bind and imbue into the film.

But its not specifically the act of labour that I was drawn to. Ursula le Guin, who sadly passed away last week, once said at a Q&A "The less explicit [the story's] meanings are, the more powerful they may be", and this emphasis on the worth of the journey is what I keep coming back to. I liked my encounter with the digital copy of *Birtherites* for it's rough image quality; its film graininess, barely featured but apparent domestic setting, and the tiny scraps of language caught in the fabric of the process of the birth: these small things hold my attention. Nothing is scripted and it's all about touch. These aesthetic fragmentary atmospheric translations are things I look for in my work. For the screening I am placing *Birtherites* in tandem with a film I made with friend, artist and writer Rose O'Gallivan *To the microphone, please (with mrs soprano)* (2013) which will be shown first.

With the addition of Clara van Gool's dance film *Reservaat* (1988) and a certain value around cinematography and celluloid that has always interested me to film works myself, I have chosen to put together works that weave around notions of gender and layered voice, duality, intimacy, 'nature', movement and an attuned ear for sound recorded at the site of filming, embedded within the filming.

I am also delighted to present *EIDOLON* (2017)– making this immersed me sonically before I could shape the film and spent many hours balancing the readings of Sandeep Parmar's postcolonial feminist poem to discover what it could do as a film. It formed a really close engagement with poem, grabbing me as soon as I found it within the collection of the International Literature Showcase, who have commissioned the work and shared with their members in July 2017.