

Claudia Kappenberg, Senior Lecturer, University of Brighton, UK

Program: "Paradoxical Bodies"

"Element" (Amy Greenfield)

"Hwyrgran (by the late hour)" (Simon Whitehead)

"K" (Jayne Parker)

"The Nightingale" (Grace Ndiritu)

"Sand Little Sand" (Becky Edmunds)

"Habit" (Miranda Pennell)

"it is aching like birds" (Lucy Baldwin)

"Sprue" (The 5 Andrews)

This program of screenings seeks to address the peculiar premise of real bodies on screen, in itself a paradoxical proposition, which mixes and purposefully confounds mental states and actual physical existence.

The program explores the potential of dance on screen to fathom a physical visuality, which combines bodies and ideas, the real and the imaginary, to articulate a complexity of experience and selfhood perhaps unlike any other art form.

The works that have been brought together in this screening explore states of self that may be confused, contradictory and paradoxical, but definitely real. The program begins with Amy Greenfield's "Element," an energetic film from the early 1970s, which consists of a forceful encounter between a female body, a wet and muddy environment and a camera.

Greenfield says about "Element": "I wasn't interested in film space and time in and of themselves, but as a means to create metaphors for inner human states. This aim was very direct and violent in 'Dirt', and became more complex in my film 'Element' (1973). I found that one movement, when filmed with a close-up moving camera, could communicate opposite states of being. 'Element' is about annihilation and birth, simultaneously."¹

This work by Amy Greenfield sets the scene for my subsequent exploration, for I am also asking what ever happened to the complex, strange and real bodies, that became visible in the 1960s and 1970s. On screen bodies often perform familiar routines, which say something about the physical potentiality of bodies, but not much else. Screendance needs to move beyond movement conventions and a pervasive aesthetics of grace to develop a more radical visual exploration and performance, which embraces the ambivalence of human experience and its uncertainties. More often than not we cannot predict the outcome of the journeys we are on and the work ought to be able to reflect on this unpredictability.

Amy Greenfield's film is followed by works drawn from experimental cinema, video art and screendance, whose sensibilities cross over into each other's genres and categories. The subsequent works are by Jayne Parker, Simon Whitehead, Grace Ndiritu, Becky Edmunds, Lucy Cash and the 5 Andrews.

After a career as professional dancer in Europe and New Zealand, **Claudia Kappenberg** completed an MA in Fine Art/Film and Video at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London (1998) and taught on the BA Fine Art faculty until 2002. Since October 2003 she has been Senior Lecturer on the Dance and Visual Arts Course at the University of Brighton. Her performances and installations have been shown in Britain and internationally, at VOGELFREI (Darmstadt 2007), THE WHITE SPACE (London 2004), CENTRE D'ART EN ILE (Geneva, Switzerland 2002), ALBA UNIVERSITY (Beirut, Lebanon 2001) and HAZIRA PERFORMING ARTS (Jerusalem, Israel 2001). Her latest video project, "Moebius." has toured internationally and is being shown as an installation at MOVES (Manchester 2008). Publications include catalogue essays and contributions to *Anarchic Dance*, Routledge 2006.

¹ Greenfield, Amy, Artist Statement, Catalogue of the Filmdance Festival at the Public Theatre in New York City, November 29th to December 11th, 1983, 26