

Foxy Production
2 East Broadway, 200
New York, NY 10038, USA
T +1 212 239 2758 foxyproduction.com

ELLEN CANTOR

Sept. 11 - Oct. 23, 2016.

Gallery hours: Wed. - Sun., 11-6:00 PM.

Foxy Production is proud to present an exhibition of video and photography by Ellen Cantor. Cantor's multi-channel video installation *Be My Baby* (1999) comprises three screens of montaged image and sound, including excerpts from independent American cinema, Hollywood, pop music, and documentaries of space exploration. Her photo-collages (1995-1996) consist of multiple snapshots of people filmed in the throes of passion. Interlacing stills from romantic and erotic films, Cantor produced grids of different shapes, including rectangular diptychs and a cross formation.

Be My Baby counterpoints the tumultuous dramatic crescendos of romantic films with expansive vistas of space. The US space program and its climax in the moon landings symbolize post-War American optimism and exceptionalism; they also pose existential questions about humanity's relationship to the universe, questions that Cantor pits against the existential disquiet of emotional crises. She saw the lightness of space as a liberation from the heaviness of being:

"In this video I was concerned with how to transcend tragic experience and heal painful memory... By imaging a "gravityless" world - an astronaut floating in space for the first time, a couple laughing doing front flips down a hill, another astronaut doing somersaults in his space ship - I tried to externalize inner metaphors for innocence and freedom from constrained confusion."¹

Be My Baby also includes classic R&B songs from the 1960s and the idealized bodies of Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938), infusing the work with a visceral sense of longing that is mediated through the histories that these materials touch on, including the urban African-American experience and the rise of the Nazis. Memory and how the past inflects the present, both personally and politically, are central themes of Cantor's work.

Cantor's photo-collages comprise grids of small stills shot off a television set. Images from sex films are interwoven with a classic romance, a Madonna video, and a French New Wave film. The artist's synthesis of these different materials is so expert that each work appears to be sourced from just one film. While Cantor seems to be visualizing the erotic subtext of romantic narratives, she may also be acknowledging the desires - for romance or emotional intimacy - that underpin pornography.

The two diptychs are almost identical: both left-hand frames have stills, some with subtitles, from a vintage romantic film; the right-hand frames mix stills from that film with images of people kissing and having sex in what appears to be an old porn film. The large cross-shaped photomontage mixes Madonna's made for TV, S&M inspired *Erotica* video (1992) with an actual S&M film. The final collage blends porn with the stylish and iconoclastic romance of Godard's *Breathless* (1960).

¹ Matt, Gerald, Conversation with: Ellen Cantor, Vertigo, Published by Triton Verlag, Kunsthalles Wien, Ursula Blickle, Stiftung, Kraichtal, 2001:22.

FOXY PRODUCTION

Foxy Production
2 East Broadway, 200
New York, NY 10038, USA
T +1 212 239 2758 foxyproduction.com

Ellen Cantor (Detroit, 1961 – New York City, 2013) lived and worked in London and New York City. She received a BA with honors in painting from Brandeis University, Waltham, MA (1983), and attended Skowhegan School of Art, ME (1991). Cantor's painting, sculpture, drawing, and video combine autobiography with fiction from sources including fairy tales, Disney, Hollywood, and arthouse cinema. She wove sexuality, violence, innocence, and obsession into mythical tales that are confronting, poetic, and oftentimes humorous. Her abiding interest was in the human drive for transcendence and its sublimation within narratives of romance, desire, and tragedy.

A gifted painter and sculptor, Cantor concentrated more on video and drawing in her later career. Showing more widely in Europe than in her native United States, she had major exhibitions and screenings in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Solo exhibitions include: Ellen Cantor: Cinderella Syndrome, curated by Jamie Stevens and Fatima Hellberg at the Kunsterhaus Stuttgart (2016) and CCA Wattis, San Francisco (2015-2016); Within a Budding Grove, curated by Lia Gangitano at PARTICIPANT INC, New York (2009); Be My Baby at Delfina, London (1999); and Remember the 14 Days and Nights at the Bregenzer Kunstverein, Austria (1997). Screenings include: Profile: Ellen Cantor in the ICA Artists' Film Biennial, London (2016); Ellen Cantor Cerith Wyn Evans at the Prince Charles Cinema, London (2005); and Video 1995-1998 at the Kunstverein, Salzburg, Austria (1999).

Ellen Cantor at Foxy Production is part of a series of concurrent exhibitions, public programs, and screenings featuring the work of Ellen Cantor, scheduled throughout September and October 2016 in New York City:

EXHIBITIONS:

Ellen Cantor: Are You Ready For Love?
80WSE Gallery | NYU, New York
7 Sept. 7 – 12 Nov. 2016

Coming To Power: 25 Years of Sexually X-Plicit
Art by Women
Restaged by Pati Hertling and Julie Tolentino,
Maccarone, New York
9 Sept – 16 Oct. 2016

Ellen Cantor, Lovely Girl's Emotions
PARTICIPANT INC, New York
18 Sept. – 30 Oct. 2016

Foxy Production, New York
11 Sept. – 23 Oct. 2016

SCREENINGS AND EVENTS:

Ellen Cantor: Screening
Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York
5 Oct. 2016, 6:30pm

Modern Monday: Ellen Cantor's Pinochet Porn
Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2
Museum of Modern Art, New York
31 Oct. 2016, 7:00pm

Skowhegan New York: Public programs series
Skowhegan Space, New York
Sept - Nov. 2016

With many thanks to Jonathan Berger; Mark Cantor, Lia Gangitano, and the Estate of Ellen Cantor; and Karl McCool and Electronic Arts Intermix.

FOXY PRODUCTION