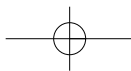
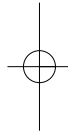
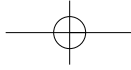
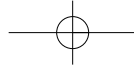


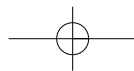
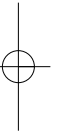
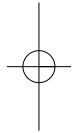


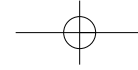
Keren Cytter





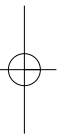
Keren Cytter






Keren Cytter

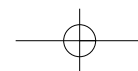
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Vorwort

Mit Keren Cytter zeigt das Museum eine bildende Künstlerin, Autorin und Filmemacherin, die in ihren Arbeiten einen neuen, experimentellen Erzählstil vertritt und den Einfluss der Medienkultur auf die zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen untersucht. Wie sehr unter den Bedingungen einer von Massen- und Kommunikationsmedien durchdrungenen Gesellschaft auch private Lebensverhältnisse und emotionale Bindungen medial geprägt werden, zeigt Cytter, indem sie die Sprache der Medien und die damit verbundenen Verhaltensweisen filmisch analysiert. Um auf medienbestimmte Sprach- und Handlungskonventionen im Alltag aufmerksam zu machen, unterläuft und dekonstruiert die Künstlerin gewohnte Sprach- und Verhaltensmuster. Sie verweist gerade durch das Aufbrechen verinnerlichter Normen auf deren Existenz und Wirksamkeit. Mit ihrem sprach- und bildanalytischen Ansatz thematisiert Cytter auch das Medium Film an sich. Ihre Darsteller, die ihrem persönlichen Freundes- und Bekanntenkreis entstammen, sind sich ihrer filmischen Rollen bewusst und vermitteln dies auch in ihren Aussagen und Gesten, während zudem die Kameras und Aufnahmegeräte selbst ins Bild rücken. Der uns immer wieder beschäftigende Gedanke, dass das Leben wie im Film bzw. wie ein Film abläuft, findet in Cytters Werk seinen zeitgemäßen und künstlerisch innovativen Ausdruck.

Mit *The Victim* (2006), einem Film, der ein gemeinsames Abendessen von Personen zeigt, deren Gespräche mit dem Selbstmord eines Beteiligten enden, hat Cytter auf der vorjährigen Art Basel den renommierten „Bâloise-Kunstpreis“ gewonnen. Dieser Preis wird seit 1999 jährlich im Sektor Art Statements der internationalen Kunstmesse Art Basel verliehen. In Abstimmung mit einem Expertengremium erwirbt die Bâloise darüber hinaus Kunstwerke der Preisträger und macht sie zwei bedeutenden Museen – es sind dies das MUMOK und die Hamburger Kunsthalle, deren Direktoren dem Expertengremium angehören – zum Geschenk. Das Engagement der Bâloise stellt eine vorbildliche Verbindung von Künstler- und Institutionsförderung dar.

The Victim wurde dem MUMOK gemeinsam mit *Dreamtalk* (2005), einer weiteren filmischen Arbeit über die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen menschlichen Gefühlen und Medienkonsum, von der Bâloise-Gruppe geschenkt. Zusammen mit den Filmen wird in der Ausstellung auch Keren Cytters zeichnerisches Œuvre anhand ausgewählter Beispiele vorgestellt. Mit Kugelschreiber und Filzstiften bezieht sich Cytter dabei auf Motive und Slogans der Film-, Computer- und Werbeindustrie. Sie porträtiert deren digitalisierte Ästhetik und verknüpft sie zugleich mit surrealem Bildwitz. So entstehen comicartige Zeichnungen, in denen die Sprache bildhafte Qualitäten und die gegenständlichen Bildmotive zeichenhaften Charakter besitzen.

Für die Realisierung dieser Ausstellung gilt unserer herzlicher Dank der Künstlerin sowie der Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann in Zürich, die unsere organisatorische und publizistische Arbeit wesentlich unterstützt hat. Besonders danken möchten wir auch der Bâloise-Gruppe, die unser Museum als Partner ihrer mäzenatischen Initiative ausgewählt hat. Auch danke ich meinen Mitarbeitern Rainer Fuchs, Ulrike Todoroff, Susanne Koppensteiner und Bärbel Holaus für die Ausstellungsbetreuung im MUMOK.

Edelbert Köb
Direktor, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien

Improvisiere

Zu den Zeichnungen von Keren Cytter

Marlene Dumas

Lalala und Halloo

„Soll ich beim Weinen die Tränen ganz runterrinnen lassen,
oder soll ich sie auf halbem Weg stoppen?“

Margaret O'Brien, Kinderdarstellerin

„Shirley Temple wurde gewöhnlich durch Gaze fotografiert,
mich sollte man durch Linoleum fotografieren“

Tallulah Bankhead, Schauspielerin (1902–1968)

Wo soll ich anfangen, da ich doch weiß, dass der Sinn
einer Geschichte wesentlich davon abhängt, wo man anfängt,
weil das Ende schon darin enthalten ist.

Wie soll ich anfangen, in welchem Ton, da ich doch
weiß, dass der Tonfall alles Nachfolgende einfärbt.

Improvisiere einfach – sagte sie zu mir.

Warum nicht – dachte ich also, mach es wie sie.

Improvisation ist der Schlüssel.

Es war einmal ...

Mein Vater war ein Bauer, der gerne Geige spielte. Obwohl ihr
eine Saite fehlte. Er spielte bei jedem Lied mit, ob er es kannte
oder nicht. Er pflegte zu sagen: Ich improvisiere einfach.

(Andere Lieblingsprüche von ihm waren: Man kann ein paar
Leute ein paar Mal zum Narren halten, aber man kann nicht das
ganze Volk die ganze Zeit zum Narren halten. Und: Traue
keinem, nicht einmal deinem Vater.)

Ich bin 1953 in Südafrika geboren, Keren 1977 in Tel Aviv.
Das ist vielleicht einer der Gründe, warum wir uns sympathisch
sind. Wir trafen uns in Amsterdam, als sie 2003 zum Studieren
herkam. Ich war eine ihrer (vermeintlichen) Tutorinnen. Hab ihr
eigentlich nie was beigebracht. Hatte nie das Gefühl, sie wollte
etwas beigebracht bekommen. Das Institut hatte sie eigentlich
wegen ihrer Filme, Texte und Dialoge aufgenommen, nicht
wegen ihrer Zeichnungen.

Mochte ich ihre Arbeiten? Waren sie „nett“ in dem Sinne, wie
Warhol das Wort verwendet hat? Nein, waren sie nicht, und sie
war es auch nicht. Sie war aber schön, auch wenn sie dieses
Wort nicht viel gebrauchte.

Diana Vreeland (*Harper's Bazaar* und *Vogue*) hat recht:

Es gibt keine Eleganz ohne einen Schuss guten Humors. Und
ja – Keren hat Humor. Einen verdammt raffinierten.

Sie erzählt keine Witze. Leute, die dauernd Witze reißen, sind

nicht besonders anziehend. Es geht nicht darum, Gelächter zu ernten. Es ist kein Schenkelklopfer-Humor, auch kein bitterer Humor. Es ist ein Humor, der was von Beleidigung versteht. Grausamkeit, die einem scharfen Verstand entspringt, gepaart mit extremer emotionaler Verletzlichkeit und einem feinen Gespür für die eigene Dummheit und die Unfähigkeit, einander zu verstehen. Und doch ist das alles, was wir haben. Wir spielen nicht Narren. Wir sind Narren, keine Clowns.

Laurence Olivier nannte Marilyn Monroe eine professionelle Amateurin. Keren ist auch so etwas. Sie verwendet künstliche Merkmale ihres Mediums ganz natürlich. Sie ist ein „und“ und ein „und“-Mädchen. Sie dekonstruiert, überlagert, lässt aus, überspringt, mischt, unterteilt, in Videos, die wie Fernsehen sind, wie Film, wie Seifenopern, wie Kino, wie Theater ..., wie wenn Vielschichtigkeit ihr zweiter Vorname wäre.

Ich hab sogar was bei Fellini gefunden, das mich an sie erinnert. Federico Fellini spricht einmal davon, dass er ein elastisches Szenario benötigt und dass er sich bei Schauspielern, die ihre Rolle auswendig lernen, immer unwohl fühlt.

„Wenn ich nun den Text ändern möchte? Wenn mir eine neue Szene in den Sinn käme? Wenn ich ganz plötzlich Lust hätte, einen anderen Film zu machen? Oder den Beruf zu wechseln?“

Er beobachtet seine Schauspieler abseits der Dreharbeiten beim Essen, beim Reden über Fußball oder andere Alltagsdinge, sodass er ihnen, wenn dann im Film ein Schauspieler zu seiner Geliebten oder seinem Sohn sagen muss: „Verschwinde aus diesem Haus!“, die Anweisung geben kann: „Mach's doch einfach wie damals, als du dem Kellner gesagt hast: ‚Der Reis ist zerkocht!‘ Ja manchmal lasse ich den Schauspieler sogar, ‚Der Reis ist zerkocht!‘ sagen und nicht ‚Verschwinde aus diesem Haus!‘, später, beim Synchronisieren, kriegt man das schon wieder hin.“

(*Fellini's Faces*, 1981)

Keren, könnte man sagen, ließe den Satz über das Essen vielleicht einfach drin, aber es wären vermutlich Spaghetti statt Reis.

Die Lehrerin kommt zurück, niemand weiß, wo sie gewesen ist. Mit lauter, gebieterischer Stimme sagt sie: „Los, Kinder, bringt mir die Zeichnungen! Heute wird die Zeichnung der Woche gewählt.“ Die Kinder nähern sich, die Blätter in Händen, dem Katheder und laufen, wenn sie aufgerufen werden, zur Lehrerin. Jeff macht es wie sie, nimmt die Zeichnung und legt sie der

Lehrerin auf den Tisch. Die Lehrerin prüft die Zeichnungen. Sie prüft sie sehr sorgfältig. Jeff prüft die Gesichter der Kinder, die mit Interesse das Gesicht der Lehrerin prüfen.

(Keren Cytter, *The Man Who Climbed Up the Stairs of Life and Found Out They Were Cinema Seats*, 2005, Seite 18)

Alles geht weiter schief, aber es bricht nie ganz zusammen. Die Tragödie ist verschoben. Als mir Keren vor der Deadline die Bilder von ihren Zeichnungen per E-Mail schickte, geriet ich in leichte Panik. Nennen wir's eine (Kon-)Fusion. Noch nicht allzu computerfreundlich gesinnt und wenig vertraut mit der Handhabung des digitalen Informationsüberflusses, verlor ich mich in Abkürzungen und nicht existierenden Anhängen. Einer Welt ungeschlachter Annahmen und platter Mitteilungen. Ihre Nachrichten fand ich nicht.

Unsere Kommunikation verlief etwa so:

Keren: Bald werden drei seltsame E-Mails gesendet ...

Betreff lautet Lala

Betreff lautet Lalala

Betreff lautet Hallo

Viele Mails später gelangte ich schließlich dahin, wo ich hingelangen sollte.

Die Titel der Zeichnungen waren:

Pattern of Violence 1 2 3, Chair, Boredom, Vertigo, 2 Lobby Cards, Untitled, Ovgu, A Bag on the Floor Camouflaged

Die Titel waren nicht:

Explore the Seven Wonders of the World Learn more Get better answers from someone who knows Try it now Get news entertainment and everything you care about in Live.com. Check it out.

(Das waren Hotmail-Texte, die auf den Seiten standen, die ich aufsuchte, um relevante Informationen über Keren zu lesen.)

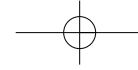
Schließlich finde ich die Bilder.

Kerens Zeichnungen sind schrecklich.

Sie sind mit einem Marker gezeichnet und koloriert. Hart und „unsensibel“ wie die Stimmen ihrer Freunde, die für sie die Schauspieler geben;

mit unnötigen dekorativen Elementen, die an die unpersönlichen Zeichnungen von Geisteskranken erinnern.

Die *Pattern of Violence*-Zeichnungen erinnern mich an den Werbespruch für die Verfilmung des Stücks



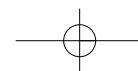
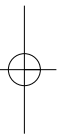
Wer hat Angst vor Virginia Woolf:

„Sie sind herzlich eingeladen zu einem heiteren
Abend bei George und Martha ...“

Ihre Zeichnungen gefallen mir nicht.

Weil sie mir – und Ihnen – nicht zu Gefallen sein will.

Deshalb sind sie so gut.



„Wie im Film“

Rainer Fuchs

Keren Cytter vertritt in ihren Filmen einen experimentellen Erzählstil, der Zwischenmenschliches und Privates vor dem Hintergrund medial geprägter Rollenbilder und Beziehungsklischees beleuchtet. So machen sich in *The Victim* (2006) und *Dreamtalk* (2005) die Darsteller keine Illusionen über die Durchdringung von Medienrealität und Lebenswirklichkeit, sondern legen sie mit ihrem Spiel offen.

The Victim ist als Loop angelegt, in dem Anfang und Ende der Handlung aufeinander Bezug nehmen und die handelnden Figuren sich als Gefangene einer endlosen Schleife erkennen: Fünf namenlose Personen treffen bei einem Abendessen zusammen, in dessen Gesprächsverlauf verwandtschaftliche und persönliche Beziehungen erkennbar werden. Im Mittelpunkt der Handlung steht eine Frau, die sich zwischen ihrem Liebhaber und ihrem Sohn, beide vom selben Darsteller gespielt, entscheiden muss. Die rhythmische Verzahnung von Bildern und Sprache, die sich wie in einer musikalischen Komposition dynamisch verdichten, mündet in Schuldzuweisungen, die mit dem Selbstmord des Beschuldigten als buchstäblichem Knalleffekt enden, der immer wieder zum Anfang der Geschichte zurückführt.

Die Akteure in *Dreamtalk* treten zugleich als Darsteller einer Reality-Soap wie auch als deren Betrachter und Interpreten auf. Zwei Realitäten verbinden sich also in ein und denselben Figuren und Situationen, sodass die eigentliche Wirklichkeit für die Darsteller jene des Fernsehens ist, ohne dessen Flimmern auch ihre eigene Existenz erlischt. *Dreamtalk* handelt nicht nur vom Einfluss der Medien auf die Selbstwahrnehmung, sondern treibt die Verwechslung von persönlichen Gefühlen und ihrer medialen Darstellung auf die Spitze. Auch in diesem Film geht es um Beziehungsfragen und daran gebundene Entscheidungsprozesse. Wiederum steht eine weibliche Figur unter dem Zwang, zwischen gesellschaftlicher Verpflichtung und persönlichem Glück wählen zu müssen.

Als Autorin, die auch die Drehbücher ihrer Filme schreibt, bricht Cytter gewohnte Dialogformen und Handlungsabläufe auf. Sie arbeitet mit überraschenden Schnitten und asynchronen Neumontagen von Sätzen und Bildern, sodass mitunter eine merkwürdige Distanz und Fremdheit zwischen Sprache und Sprechern sowie ein

unnatürlich erscheinendes Verhalten der Darsteller zu beobachten sind. Indem sie so die unhintergehbare Distanz zwischen den Begriffen und dem Begriffenen im gebrochenen Verhältnis der Sprecher zur Sprache widerspiegelt, entreißt sie in ihren Filmen die Sprache der Verinnerlichung und führt sie einer poetischen Selbstbesprechung zu. Sie gibt ihr so gegenüber ihren Sprechern eine Eigenständigkeit zurück, die im alltäglichen Sprachgebrauch selbstvergessener Kommunikation verlorengeht.

Cytter baut stillebenartige Bilder in die Handlungen ein, lässt für Augenblicke ihre Darsteller aus dem Bild verschwinden und unterbricht damit zusätzlich die ohnehin dekonstruierte Logik ihrer Erzählungen. Die Stimmen bleiben stellenweise hörbar, ohne ihre Sprecher im Bild zu belassen, so als ob ihr Denken als innerer Monolog nachhallen würde. Dass filminterne Dialoge und Monologe immer an ein Außen gerichtet sind, dass sie von vorneherein eine Beziehung aufspannen, in die der Seher/Hörer miteingebunden ist, seine Kompetenz als Leser und Interpret erfordert ist, wird bei Cytter ebenfalls zum Thema indem die Blickführung der Sprecher und die Kameraeinstellungen mit häufigen Perspektivwechseln einen unmittelbar ins Geschehen einbeziehen und einem so die Rolle als Außenstehendem gleichsam entziehen.

Zudem wiederholt Cytter Bild- und Tonsequenzen mit leichten Abweichungen. Figuren betreten immer wieder denselben Raum, sprechen einander auf ähnliche Weise an, während die Handlung einfach fortzuschreiten scheint. Es ist, als ob die übliche Methode, eine Szene so oft durchzuspielen, bis sie optimal funktioniert, um dann die beste Sequenz auszuwählen, hier einfach selbst zum Inhalt der Filme würde. Damit wird die gewohnte Einheit von Ort, Zeit und Handlung untergraben und die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Beziehungen zwischen Sprechen und Verhalten gelenkt.

Als Betrachter und Zuhörer gewinnt man mitunter den Eindruck, synchronisierte Sprachsituationen zu hören, in denen die Sprache wie ein in die Münder und Körper gelegtes Medium erscheint, das von außen hergetragen und woanders ausgebildet wurde. Es ist die Sprache der Medien, der literarischen Verdichtungen und der Filmdrehbücher, die von den Schauspielern einstudiert werden muss, aber nicht von ihnen selbst stammt. Dass einem diese Selbstverständlichkeit bewusst und fragwürdig wird, ergibt sich aus Cytters Ansatz. Ebenso wie die Struktur der Sprache sind auch die Abfolge und der Aufbau der Bilder (de)konstruiert, zerschnitten und neu montiert, sodass man von den Bildern und ihrem Perspektivwechsel mit der Geschichte, die sie transportieren, immer auch das Ungewöhnliche und Arbiträre ihrer Konstruktion gezeitigt bekommt.

Cytter definiert also Sprache als semantischen Transmitter, gerade insofern sie übliche und gängige Sprachregelungen und Bedeutungsschemata zerstört. Ihre Sprache verschwindet nicht in den Dialogen, sie wird von den Darstellern nicht einfach in Handlungen „weggespielt“, gleichsam verschluckt oder naturalisiert, sondern sie bleibt als rhythmisch eigenwertiges Konstrukt hörbar bestehen. Dieser Art der Sprachbehandlung, bei der die Physis, Tonalität, Vorläufigkeit, Kontingenz und Relativität der Sprache in den Vordergrund rücken, korrespondiert die Sichtbarkeit der Kameras und Mikrofone als Aufnahmegereäte bzw. die damit beabsichtigte Wahrnehmbarkeit des Mediums Film.

In den Filmen und Seifenopern des Kinos und Fernsehens werden jene Sprachbilder und Bildersprachen formuliert, in denen sich ihre Konsumenten wiedererkennen und an denen sie sich orientieren können. Sie vermögen dies aber nur deshalb, weil sie diese Art von Information auch selbst begehren und als passive Konsumenten aktiv zu deren Nachfrage beitragen, oder wie es Vilém Flusser formuliert hat: „Die Bilder verfügen über Feedback-Kanäle, die in umgekehrter Richtung der Verteilungskanäle laufen und die Sender über die Reaktionen der Empfänger informieren [...]. Dank dieses Feedbacks verändern sich die Bilder, werden immer besser und immer mehr so, wie sie die Empfänger haben wollen. Das heißt: Die Bilder werden immer mehr so, wie sie die Empfänger haben wollen, damit die Empfänger immer mehr so werden, wie sie die Bilder haben wollen. Das ist, kurz gesagt, der Verkehr zwischen Bild und Menschen.“¹

Cytter unterläuft die klischeehaften und stereotypen Bild- und Textstrategien der Film- und Fernsehindustrie, sie macht sie durch analytische Spiegelung als das erkennbar, was sie letztlich sind: Klischees, die ihren Betrachtern nicht äußerlich bleiben, sondern eine Art mediengesteuertes Empfindungsverhalten nahelegen, das zur zweiten Natur ihrer Konsumenten wird. Dieses Ineinander von Identitätsprofilen thematisiert Cytter in *Dreamtalk*, wenn sich beispielsweise die Gespräche der Darsteller über ihre Beziehungsprobleme auch auf ihr eigenes mediatisiertes Rollenverhalten beziehen. Sie sehen einer Seifenoper zu, deren Protagonisten sie zugleich sind, weshalb ihre Existenz auch mit dem Ende des Films im Film erlischt.

Sich nicht nur wie in den Medien zu verhalten, sondern auch noch darüber zu reflektieren bedeutet, die von außen übernommenen Verhaltensweisen mit zum Thema dieses Verhaltens zu machen, also im Sprechen über Beziehungen über dessen mediatisierte Bedingungen zu sprechen. Dass zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen immer auch Sprachbeziehungen sind und dass sich die Allianzen und Konflikte zwischen den Beteiligten auch in sprachlichen Verknüpfungen und Kollisionen spiegeln, ist eine weitere aus Cytters experimentellen Bild- und Sprachpoesien ableitbare Einsicht.

Die Bezugnahme der Medien auf das wirkliche Leben und die Menschen „draußen“ ermöglicht Cytter auch durch die Einbeziehung ihres persönlichen Umfeldes als Handlungsträger. Ihre Filme spielen im eigenen Umfeld, mit ihren Freunden und Bekannten als Darstellern. Damit wird die private, ohnehin medial durchdrungene Wirklichkeit stellvertretend für die von anderen zur filmischen Bühne, sodass die Kulissenarchitektur der Film- und Fernsehstudios nun ihren wahren Bestimmungsort, ihr echtes Double findet. Auch die Schauspieler werden nun von jenen gespielt, die ihnen sonst nur beim Spiel zusehen. Für den Betrachter wird aber auch sein eigenes Schauspielertum sichtbar, das er immerzu in sich trägt und das nur manchmal ins Bewusstsein tritt, wenn er den Eindruck hat, dass sein Leben wie im Film abläuft und er sein eigenes Verhalten schon zuvor in einem Film gesehen hat. So als ob das Leben ohnehin ein fortwährendes, aber als solches nur in seltenen Augenblicken wahrgenommenes Laienschauspiel wäre.

Wie in den klassischen Dramen seit der Antike sind die „Helden“ in *The Victim* und *Dreamtalk* dem Schicksal unterworfen, repräsentieren sie als Individuen idealtypische Konfliktsituationen, über deren Verlauf und Ausgang sie letztlich keine Macht haben. Es ist immer ein von außen und anderen mitbestimmtes Leben, das sich in den dramatischen Erzählungen und Handlungen abbildet und daher stets auch ein Bild der sozialen Kontexte liefert, deren Spielregeln ihre Protagonisten festlegen, um ihnen zugleich unterworfen zu sein. Die bei Cytter in die heutige Wirklichkeit versetzte Dramaturgie des klassischen Heldenschicksals lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit auf die aktuellen Massen- und Kommunikationsmedien als meinungsbildende Sprachrohre gesellschaftlicher und sozialer Zustände. In der von außen kommenden und den Darstellern auch äußerlich bleibenden Sprache wird auf diesen sozialen Mechanismus des Denkens und Handelns verwiesen.

¹ Vilém Flusser, *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder*, Göttingen 1989, S. 47

Zwei Filme von Keren Cytter – *Dreamtalk* und *The Victim*

Bart van der Heide

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Für die 1977 in Tel Aviv geborene Filmemacherin Keren Cytter bildet Schreiben einen wesentlichen Bestandteil ihrer künstlerischen Praxis. Es war für sie, wie sie kürzlich in einem Interview sagte, reizvoller, als „Medizin zu studieren oder eine nationale Berühmtheit zu werden“.¹ Zur „Videokunst“ kam sie erst, als ihr Vater ihr eine Videokamera schenkte. Seit damals wendet Keren Cytter ihre pragmatische Intelligenz mit Erfolg auf die gesamte visuelle Kultur an und entwickelt ihr Schreiben in verschiedenen öffentlichen Repräsentationsformen weiter: Diese reichen von Videos, einem Kinderbuch, einem Roman (*The Man Who Climbed Up the Stairs of Life and Found Out They Were Cinema Seats*, 2005) bis zu einer großen Kinoproduktion.

Nach Abschluss ihres Studiums bei De Ateliers in Amsterdam im Jahr 2004 produzierte Cytter eine Reihe international gezeigter Arbeiten, bei denen es sich vorwiegend um Experimentalfilme und Videoinstallationen handelt. Ihre Filme sind kurze Geschichten über die Konvergenz von Kunst und Leben, zeigen aber zugleich, dass dies nichts Neues ist. Sie lässt filmische Archetypen – von der Nouvelle Vague bis Tarantino – zwanglos ihre Rollen tauschen. Mit den Filmen *Dreamtalk* (2005) und *The Victim* (2006) – beide in ihrer Ausstellung im MUMOK vertreten – scheint Cytter dieses Spiel auf die Spitze eines extremen akademischen Paradoxons zu treiben,² indem sie eine beliebige häusliche Alltagssituation mit Hochkultur – vom klassischen Drama bis zu lyrischer Dichtung – überlagert.

In beiden Filmen stehen die Protagonisten vor einer existenziellen Entscheidung, ohne jedoch eine Wahl zu haben. Wie in der klassischen griechischen Tragödie kann eine Entscheidung nie getroffen, sondern nur von einer stärkeren Kraft namens Schicksal angeordnet werden. Jen, die „Mädchen“-Figur in *Dreamtalk*, muss sich zwischen Engagement (dem Helden) und persönlichem Glück (dem Loser) entscheiden,³ in *The Victim* steht eine Frau vor der Entscheidung zwischen ihrem Liebhaber und ihrem Sohn,⁴ hin und her gerissen zwischen ihrem Gewissen (gespielt von einem Chor und einem Filmregisseur), ihrem Sohn und ihrem Liebhaber (beide von derselben Person gespielt).

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Das Schicksal liegt in den Händen der Autorin. Die Geschichte, dramatisch wie ein Stück von Harold Pinter, ist stets gegenwärtig, in Scheiben geschnitten wie die konkrete Poesie R. D. Laings, verdreht und wieder auf sich selbst zurückgeführt, wundervolle Akkorde und Rhythmen bildend.

Doch diese Filme zeigen auch, dass Cytters Praxis nicht nur eine selbstreflexive formale Übung ist, sondern voller sozialer Erwartungen steckt. Die Schauspieler werden zu Exponenten sozialer Rollen, die auf eine Diskrepanz zwischen Erzählung und Repräsentation verweisen.

Die Komödie *Sechs Personen suchen einen Autor* (1921) des italienischen Dramatikers Luigi Pirandello⁵ ist ein klassisches Beispiel für eine solche Diskrepanz. In dem Stück platzen sechs fiktive Personen in eine Theaterprobe. Während die Schauspieler auf der Bühne gerade die Proben zu einem Stück aufnehmen, geht es den sechs Charakteren um etwas anderes: Traumatisiert durch einen anonymen Autor, der sie allein gelassen hat, suchen sie nach einem Bühnentext, der ihrem Drama⁶ Wirklichkeit verleiht. Sie sind fest entschlossen, den die Probe leitenden Theaterdirektor dazu zu überreden, das Manuskript zugunsten ihrer Geschichte abzuändern.

Das Faszinierende an dieser Komödie ist der Verhandlungsprozess, der zwischen den fiktiven Charakteren und den Schauspielern, die dazu überredet werden, diese zu verkörpern, einsetzt. In diesem Stück-im-Stück erweisen sich die fiktionalen Geschöpfe und ihre alltägliche Repräsentation am Ende als vereinbar. Insofern verbindet Pirandello zwei Ebenen des Dramas: das „Form-Sein“ (die sechs Figuren und ihre Geschichte) und das „Form-Haben“ (die Schauspieler oder ihre Repräsentation).⁷ In *Sechs Personen* tauschen diese beiden Wirklichkeiten allmählich die Plätze: Die Schauspieler sind den von ihrem Autor verlassenen Figuren letztlich unterlegen.⁸

In Pirandellos Ästhetik sind diejenigen, die „Form sind“, stabil, unveränderlich, ewig wahr. Die Schauspieler aus Fleisch und Blut hingegen bleiben an das Manuskript gefesselt. Sie sind instabil und wandelbar, weil sie dem Einfluss ihrer Zeitumstände und ihrer Eitelkeit unterliegen. Kurzum, die, die „Form sind“, werden zur ewigen Realität, und die, die „Form haben“, werden zur praktischen Notwendigkeit für die Verwirklichung der Ersteren.

Keren Cytters reichhaltiges und vielfältiges künstlerisches Schaffen spiegelt ihre tiefe Faszination für die Rollenteilung zwischen dem, „was Form ist“, und dem, „was Form hat“, wider. Ihre Filme *Dreamtalk* und *The Victim* scheinen das Pirandello'sche Spiel sogar noch weiter zu treiben, wenn die, die „Form haben“ – die Schauspieler und das Publikum –, ganz eindeutig von ihrem Skript gesteuert

werden. Der Unterschied ist, dass sich Form bei Cytter nicht auf einen bestimmten künstlerischen Diskurs, auf ein bestimmtes Medium beschränkt. Das „Form-Sein“ in Cytters Filmen besteht nicht bloß in der künstlerischen Hervorbringung durch das Genie eines individuellen Autors, sondern ist auch durch kulturelle Repräsentation, Genres und Klischees determiniert. „Für mich ist ein Klischee eine absolute Wahrheit“, sagt Cytter, „es ist wie ein praktischer Bibelspruch, etwas, das durch viele Menschen hindurchgegangen und [...] bei ihnen allen haften geblieben ist.“⁹ Insofern ist der selbstreflexive Diskurs von Experimentalfilmen¹⁰ gleichermaßen unveränderlich und ewig gültig wie Blockbuster-Genrefilme (Western, Actionfilme, Seifenopern) – und wir sind ihnen alle ausgesetzt.

In dieser Hinsicht könnte man *Dreamtalk* und *The Victim* als Cytters Version von *The Matrix* (1999) ansehen, einem Film, der ebenfalls mit Modellen von Repräsentation und Realität operiert, wobei Erstere zur Realität und Letztere zu deren Simulation wird. Die Mittel, mit denen *The Matrix* die Diskrepanz zwischen Realität und Simulation (sprich: einer Welt der „lebenden Toten“ und einer Hightech-Konstruktion von Realität) darstellt, sind seit dem Kinostart des Films im Jahr 1999 zum festen Bestandteil kulturwissenschaftlicher Forschung geworden. In *Regime of Visibility* (2005) erörtert der holländische Kunstkritiker Camiel Van Winkel anhand dieser Diskrepanz die zeitgenössische Realitätsrepräsentation in Reality-Shows wie *Big Brother*. Fernsehshows dieser Art übersetzen eine bestimmte Realitätsauffassung in ein Ensemble von Codes, das die visuelle Kultur im Allgemeinen ständig weiter verwendet. Die Hierarchie zwischen der existierenden Alltagswelt (die mit der Kamera aufgezeichnet werden kann) und der Welt der Spezialeffekte (einer Realität, die etwa in *The Matrix* von Computern mit phänomenaler Rechenleistung erzeugt wurde) wird auf den Kopf gestellt: Realität selbst wird zu einer Form, die von einer Matrix der Sichtbarkeit gesteuert wird. Sowohl in *The Matrix* als auch in *Dreamtalk* und *The Victim* ist die autonome Realität, die in unserer Gesellschaft einen so hohen Stellenwert besitzt, eine bloße Simulation, wohingegen die digital produzierten „Fantasie“-Szenen den kümmerlichen Rest der nicht-simulierten Realität („die Wüste des Realen“) darstellen. „Als wäre die Realität selbst“ – so Van Winkel – „eine Dimension der Spezialeffekte, die sich mit den raffinierten Digital-techniken von heute sichtbar machen lässt.“¹¹

In Cytters Filmen wie in *The Matrix* rufen Spezialeffekte, Montage und Skript eine „Überbelichtung der Realität“ hervor.¹² Eben aufgrund dieser Überbelichtung können die beiden Realitäten – das „Form-Sein“ und das „Form-Haben“ – miteinander koexistieren. Eine emblematische Szene in *The Matrix* ist zum Beispiel der Moment, in dem eine Figur ein Geschoss abwehrt, indem sie sich nach hinten beugt – ein Spezialeffekt namens „Bullet-Time“. Die Kamera umkreist die Figur daraufhin, und wir sehen, wie sich das Geschoss maulwurfartig durch die Luft wühlt und – an den sich in extremer Zeitlupe bewegenden Armen und Beinen des Schauspielers

vorbei – viskose spiralförmige Spuren zieht. Es scheint, als würde durch diesen Spezialeffekt die Visualität der Szene wie eine Orange abgeschält und in einer vierdimensionalen Raumzeit zerlegt.¹³

Die Spezialeffekte von Keren Cytter sind vom Kaliber einer Low-Budget-Produktion, aber nicht minder faszinierend. Ähnlich wie die „Bullet-Time“ in *The Matrix* zeigt uns Cytter zwei Realitäten in einer einzigen Situation. In *Dreamtalk* und *The Victim* tragen Skript, Montage und Kameraeinsatz alle auf ihre Weise zur Umkehrung der Hierarchie von Erzählung und Repräsentation bei und beeinflussen so auch das hierarchische Verhältnis zwischen diesen Filmen und ihren Zuschauern. Da Cytters Filme vorwiegend häusliche Szenen zeigen, die sich nicht grundlegend von unseren eigenen Fantasien oder Ängsten unterscheiden, stellen sie die kulturelle Distanz zwischen der Dokumentation von Realität (in Film und Fernsehen) und unserer Inszenierung von Realität im Alltag infrage. Wer hatte noch nie das Gefühl, sich in manchen Situationen wie in einem bestimmten Film zu verhalten?

Die Skripts beider Filme sind äußerst elaboriert: Die Zeilen, über die sich ein Satz erstreckt, sind zerschnitten und auf verschiedene Akteure aufgeteilt. Dierichsen schrieb über Cytters Arbeit: „Das Alltägliche und seine Ausdrucksformen werden ihrer Semantik entkleidet, aber nicht, um den Blick auf etwas Wahreres und Tieferes freizugeben, sondern um vorübergehend eben die Schreckensherrschaft zu brechen, die Sinn und Bedeutung ausüben.“¹⁴ Gedanken werden gleich behandelt wie das gesprochene Wort, wodurch ein ständiger Dialog zwischen geheimen und öffentlichen Gedanken entsteht. So kann Cytter das „Form-Sein“ und das „Form-Haben“ in ein und derselben Geschichte vereinen: durch die Banalität der Situation und die Konstruktion ihrer Darstellung.

Beide Filme spielen im Haus eines der Schauspieler. Die Vorherrschaft des Skripts unterstreicht jedoch, dass alle Mitwirkenden spielen. In *The Victim* liegt das Skript sogar auf dem Tisch, so als würden die Schauspieler während des Drehens proben. Damit erhalten wir auch einen Hinweis, warum die Schauspieler in beiden Filmen so schlecht spielen. Es scheint, als ob sie das Skript zum ersten Mal sehen: An den Augen einiger Schauspieler erkennt man, dass sie den Text während der Aufnahme manchmal regelrecht ablesen.

Die Kamera wechselt ständig die Perspektive: Manchmal nimmt sie den Blickwinkel der Schauspieler ein, manchmal den der Zuschauer, die nachdrücklich daran erinnert werden, dass das Medium Film ein technisches Produktionsmittel ist. In *Dreamtalk* entwickelt sich diese filmische Qualität zu einem separaten Handlungsstrang in Form von eingeflochtenen Stills, die die lineare Entwicklung des Films aufbrechen und eine eigene Parallelgeschichte erzählen. Im Lauf dieser Geschichte sieht man einen Mann seinen Hosenschlitz schließen und die Klospülung

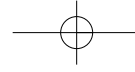
betätigen, man sieht Stiefel, die in einen Schrank geworfen werden, eine von der Decke hängende Glühbirne und eine Steckdose. All diese Bilder werden als Einzelbilder gezeigt und scheinen in keiner unmittelbaren Beziehung zur eigentlichen Erzählung zu stehen. Sie stellen eher einen „künstlerischen“ Blick auf den häuslichen Kontext dar, in dem die Handlung spielt, und tragen zur Vielfalt der Perspektiven bei.

Es gibt noch eine weitere Ähnlichkeit zwischen *The Matrix* und *Dreamtalk*. In *The Matrix* können die Hauptfiguren mithilfe eines analogen Telefons heimlich von einer Realität in die andere wechseln oder, anders ausgedrückt, zwischen „Form-Sein“ (ihrer Existenz als Zombies) und „Form-Haben“ (ihrer Existenz in einer digital gesteuerten Realität) hin und her springen. In *Dreamtalk* wird „Form-Sein“ durch eine Seifenoper und ihre weibliche Hauptfigur „Sandra“ repräsentiert, die die von den Schauspielern gespielte häusliche Szene manipuliert. Die Schauspieler pendeln ständig zwischen der Rolle der Figuren in der Seifenoper und der Rolle der Betrachter dieser Figuren auf dem Bildschirm. Es ist das Fernsehen, das dieses Transitgeschehen mit all seinen Konsequenzen gewährleistet: Wenn die Seifenoper endet, endet auch die Alltagsrealität. Der Bildschirm wird abrupt schwarz; der Abspann setzt ein.

The camera is gone someone took the camera is gone Sandra took the camera is gone, sagt der „Held“ der Geschichte. Trotz des nahenden Endes gibt das „Mädchen“ die Hoffnung nicht auf: *What shall we do? Where shall we go?* Der „Held“ aber kann sich nur in sein Schicksal ergeben: *Where is Sandra I'm dying I'm dead [...] I cannot see beyond the box. My heart disappeared with the camera.*

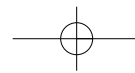
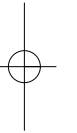
Die Schauspieler werden von dem verlassen, was ihre Existenz gesichert hat. Sind die Figuren in Pirandellos Stück ohne Schauspieler verloren, so sind es die Schauspieler in *Dreamtalk* ohne ihre Figur („Sandra“). Um zu überleben, müssen sie sich wieder auf die Suche nach einer neuen Form begeben.¹⁵ Die Filme von Keren Cytter zeigen uns ihre *Matrix*-Realität, in der Individuen ohne Form verloren sind.

- ¹ Keren Cytter, Avi Pitchon, „Anyone Who is Not Mentally Ill Likes a Happy Ending“, in: Hila Peleg (Hg.), *Keren Cytter: I was the good and he was the bad and the ugly*, Frankfurt am Main 2006, S. 93
- ² Keren Cytter: „*The Victim* ist vielleicht der formalste [Film], und *Dreamtalk* nicht minder.“ Ebd., S. 96
- ³ Wie die schöne Helena in der Odyssee.
- ⁴ Wie Iokaste in Sophokles' *König Oedipus*.
- ⁵ Luigi Pirandello, geboren 1867 in Girgenti (Sizilien), gestorben 1936 in Rom.
- ⁶ „Das Stück ist in uns, wir selber sind das Drama, und wir brennen leidenschaftlich darauf, es darzustellen.“ Luigi Pirandello, *Sechs Personen suchen einen Autor*, übers. v. Georg Richert, Stuttgart 1976, S. 34
- ⁷ Mark Musa, „Introduction“, in: Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author and Other Plays*, tr. and intr. by Mark Musa, New York 1995, S. X
- ⁸ „Vater: [...] wen das Schicksal, wie uns, als lebendige Gestalt auf die Welt kommen lässt, der braucht sich auch um den Tod nicht zu scheren. Er stirbt nicht mehr. [...] das Geschöpf stirbt nicht mehr!“ Pirandello, *Sechs Personen ...*, a. a. O. (s. Anm. 6), S. 33 f.
- ⁹ Cytter in: Peleg (Hg.), *Keren Cytter*, a. a. O. (s. Anm. 1), S. 77
- ¹⁰ „In ihrer Welt ist Selbstreflexivität so banal wie ein in den Sonnenuntergang reitender Mann“, hieß es kürzlich in einer Rezension von Cytters Arbeiten. Melissa Gronlund, „True Romance“, in: *Frieze Magazine*, 110, Oktober 2007, S. 269–271
- ¹¹ Camiel Van Winkel, *The Regime of Visibility*, Rotterdam 2005, S. 27
- ¹² Baudrillard: „Heute, wo das Reale und das Imaginäre zu einer gemeinsamen operationalen Totalität verschmolzen sind, herrscht die ästhetische Faszination überall: es ist die unterschwellige Wahrnehmung (eine Art sechster Sinn) des Tricks, der Montage, des Szenarios, von der Überbelichtung der Realität bis zum Ausleuchten der Modelle.“ Jean Baudrillard, *Der symbolische Tausch und der Tod* [1976], übers. v. Gerd Bergfleth et al., München 1991, S. 118
- ¹³ Van Winkel, *The Regime of Visibility*, a. a. O. (s. Anm. 11), S. 23
- ¹⁴ Diedrich Diederichsen, „Small Fugues Avoidance, Narrative, Economy, and Meaning in Keren Cytter's Films and Film Installations“, in: Peleg (Hg.), *Keren Cytter*, a. a. O. (s. Anm. 1), S. 70
- ¹⁵ In *Dreamtalk* geschieht dies im Rahmen des Films *Atmosphere* (2005), zu dem *Dreamtalk* ursprünglich als Teil eines Triptychons gehörte.



The Victim, 2006 — Dreamtalk, 2005

Videostills / Video stills



The Victim, 2006

Digitales Video, Farbe, Ton / Digitalvideo, color, sound
5 min, looped





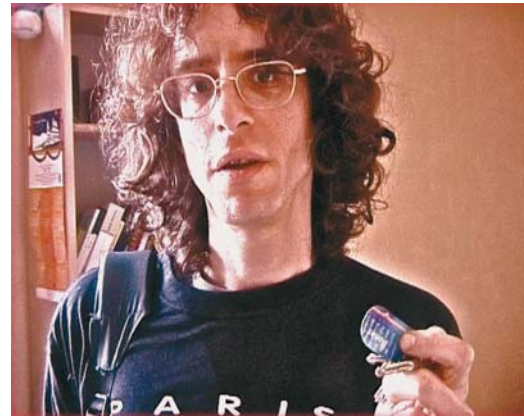




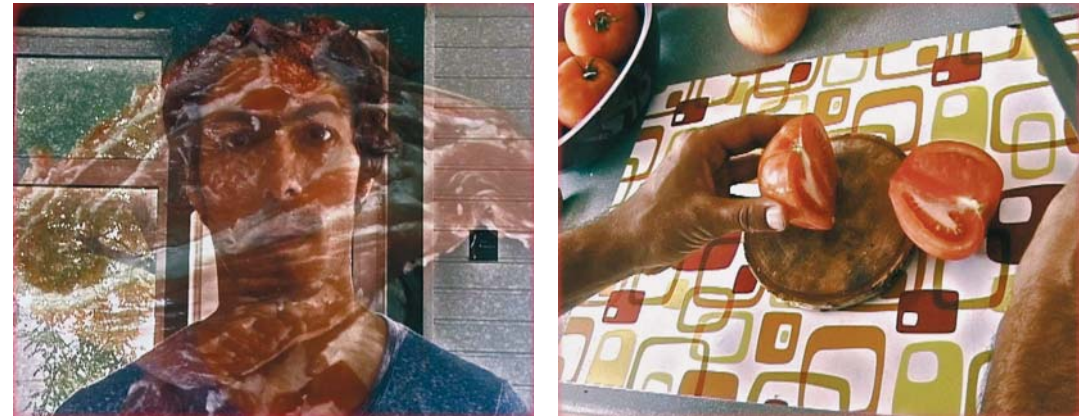
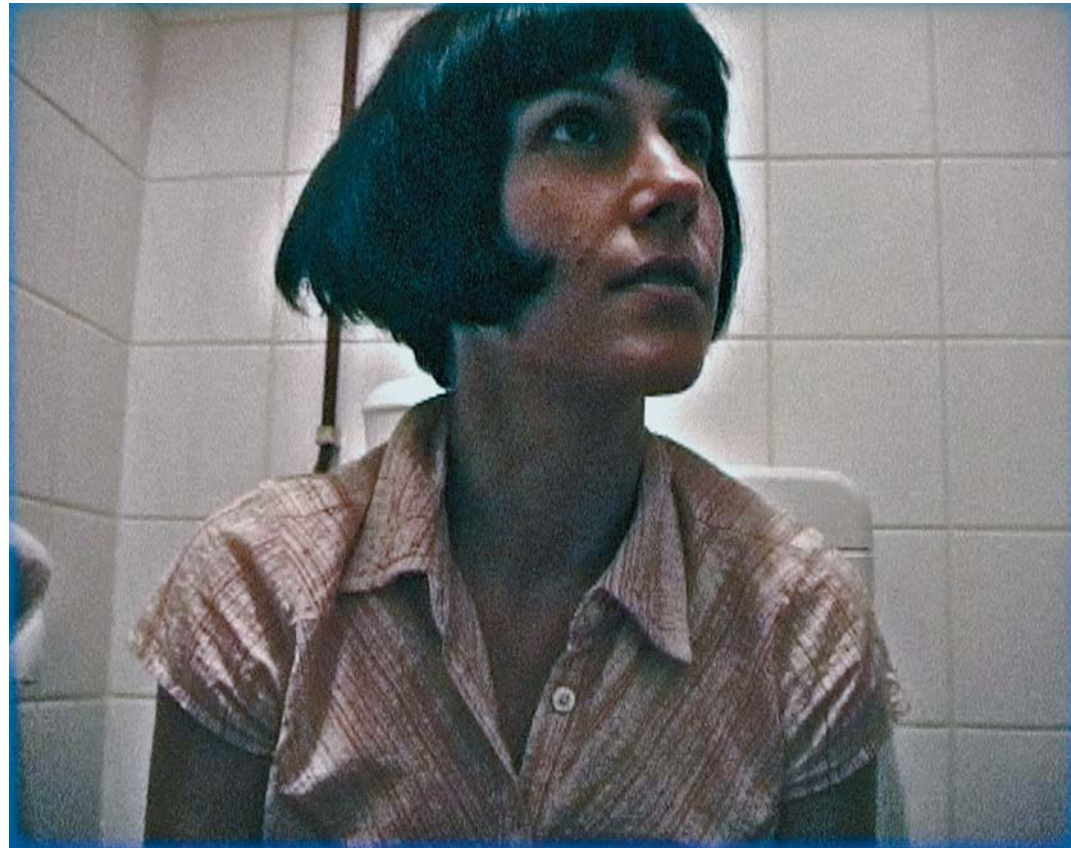
Dreamtalk, 2005

Digitales Video, Farbe, Ton / Digitalvideo, color, sound
11 min





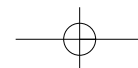
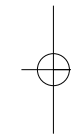








The Victim, 2006 — Dreamtalk, 2005
Scripts



The Victim

H: Hero V: Victim S: Silly one T1: Twin no. 1 T2: Twin no. 2

1. The Silly one goes to the kitchen. When she asks, "What is my role?", it's (as it's signed) with a question mark. As if she stops to remember. The twins should be on the set when their voice is heard. And say their part behind the camera. All of the characters should be "live". Because it is a loop, the Silly one should start from the end of the page for the sake of continuity.

S: What happened? Where am I? What is my role?
 T1: I lost what's happened
 T2: My appetite what's happened

2. She stops in front of the counter or the table in the kitchen. When the hero tells her to look at her clothes, she looks at her clothes. She lowers her head. The twins should be quick and rhythmic.

H: Look at your clothes and concentrate.
 T1: I'm leaving He died. He is dead. He shot himself in
 T2: He died. He is dead. He shot himself in

3. When the Silly one says, "My son", she raises her head. When the hero says, "Quiet," he speaks with authority. When the Silly one says, "Wow," she smiles and claps her hands - The camera focuses on her hands from that point on. Her hands are on the table. She opens the palm of her hand when she says, "Son" and the other hand when she says, "Lover."

T1: the head. Your son. Your son and your
 T2: the head. Your son lover Your son and your
 S: My son WOW! My son and my lover! - how
 H: QUIET!

4. The Silly one is clapping her hands again. Then the hero moves into the picture. He is the director of the movie. The camera is back on the Silly one when she says, "No?". Then back to the hero.

S: romantic! No?
 H: QUIET! It's not professional you are a mother
 T1: He's not your son and he is not your
 T2: He's not your son and he is not your

5. There is a pause between the "lover!" and the "mother". As if the hero is correcting the twins. Then the camera is on the Silly one when she says, "Yes". Then the hero comes closer to the Silly one and tells her the rest of the sentence. They are both in the same frame, at the end.

T2: lover!
 T1: lover! No! No
 H: mother you are waiting for your son to come back from
 S: mother with a lover yes to come back from

6. The Silly one wakes up from a daydream. When she says "cook" and "clean", the camera is still focused on her face. Then she puts objects on the table that fit the content of her words. (goof to make two versions, one with her face and one with the objects) When the hero says "quiet" the camera focuses on his face.

S: the war I must cook and clean and wash and cut
 H: the shop QUIET!

T2: cook is clean your wash and cut
 T1: cook he clean not son wash not cut

7. The camera is again on the face of the Silly one. And more objects are being laid on the table and the camera might move slowly toward the door to the victim that comes through, saying, "Hi."

S: and cook and clean and cut and eat
 T2: lover cook he clean figure cut He is a figure
 T1: your cook is a cut He is a figure
 H: QUIET!
 V: Hi!

8. The Silly one says - "he is back" and "the cake is not ready" in the hero's "out" the victim closes the door to the sound of the twins saying "loser". The Silly one says "dick-head" and then looks for improvement at the camera.

S: He is back the cake is not ready DICK-HEAD
 H: out! Out you understand your role
 T2: loser She into her role
 T1: loser go into her role

9. The Silly one looks at the door when the victim is heard. The hero then says - and you two, then the camera moves for the first time to the twins and stays there until the "thank God". From there it focuses on the Silly one, who raises a cloth and after that her other hand.

V: What about me?
 H: And you two you fired!
 T1: me us Thanks god clitipi
 T2: me clop
 S: God the cake and the knife

10. The hand of the hero enters the frame and offers a knife. The hand points to the left again. The Silly one says, "oh, yes" and walks to the left, out of the frame. The twins move toward the set.

T1: clitipi clitipi
 T2: clop clop
 S: Thank you the powder? Oh, yes The gun?
 H: Here there you don't need

11. The camera focuses back on the Silly one when she says, "No?". Pause. When the twins say "finger", the Silly one raises her finger in a silly way. Then the camera is again on the hero. Until he says "hear the voice". Then the camera is back on the Silly one. This time the twins are standing behind her.

H: a gun look at the camera and raise the hear the voice
 T2: your finger finger
 T1: use finger finger
 S: no? My what?

12. The camera focuses on the Silly one until the Hero says "you are" - the camera is on his face. When the Silly one says "baking a cake", the camera focuses on the "things" on the table. Pause. Then again on the Silly one's face -

H: Inside your head your are
 S: talking mocking baking a cake
 T2: and the voices behind your back
 T1: and the voices behind your back

13. Then again on the Twins and the Silly one, who raises her head as if she woke up again "my finger". The twins stand on either side when they say "shoot". The Silly one says "the powder". The Twins walk to the right. The camera follows them when the director shouts. When they answer, they are no longer next to the Silly one.

S: my finger the powder
 T2: raise finger shoot 100 Euro is not a salary
 T1: your and shoot 100 Euro is not a salary
 H: you two are fired

14. The camera focuses on the Hero. And then the Victim opens the door and says his lines. When he finish, the camera focuses on the Silly one, who is half-singing "he wants my ass".

H: and you are not a choir go back
 V: honey, I'm home go back go back my ass
 S: my ass he wants my ass

15. The camera is on the Victim again. The Twins join him with hands on his back when they say their lines. The camera is on the Silly one from the moment she says "put the cake". When she turns to the oven, the camera follows her from the front.

V: I'm getting only 50 Euro
 T2: we rental twins
 T2: And are rental twins
 S: I will put the cake in the oven
 H: The woman is

16. The victim stands behind the woman who is bending towards the oven. The camera moves to him when he corrects the hero and says "a lover". The frame widens and the twins sit and smoke a cigarette next to the kitchen table. They can light a cigarette from each other.

H: very confused, her son came back from the shop
 T2: not today what did he buy?
 T1: not today
 V: her lover

17. The frame is wide when the first twin is talking. Then the victim talks. The camera is in front of the Silly one, so one can see her face (while she is bending) and the victim in the same shot. When she says, "he wants my ass", she repeats the same tune.

T1: And what did he get?
 H: He wants to run away with her
 V: I want to run away with you I want to run
 S: he wants my ass

18. The shot continues from the same position. And when the twins talk, they drink beer. The victim talks over their words and then the camera focuses on him.

V: away with you because I fear the war
 T2: not - his parents are conservatives
 T1: not - his parents are conservatives
 S: the oven is so hot

19. The camera is still on the victim. When the hero says "to slow down", the rhythm of all the talking slows down. When he "fears for her life", the camera focuses on the door of the oven closing.

H: now slow down
 V: that will come and I fear for your life
 T2: and the sex and your body
 T1: and the sex and your body

20. The Silly one rises and says her lines. Then she looks at the camera and says her lines.

S: Don't talk so loudly. Who is this guy and what is that camera?
 H: Loud

21. The Victim pulls the Silly one to the corner. It might be an "over shoulder dialog", but then they are in the same frame (again - wide shot) when the Twins are "singing" - he wants her ass.

V: Lets go to the corner and talk I let you guess
 S: why? What? yes
 T2: he wants her ass
 T1: he wants her ass

22. The Victim and the Silly one go to the corner while the Twins are fixing the table. (To make two shots - one to the corner, the second - raising and fixing the table). The Victim sits on the couch while the Silly one looks for the corner. Then one of the Twins enters the screen, wondering about the food. Then he leaves the frame (very fast).

H: now choir fix the table
 V: here is a couch
 S: but where is the corner?
 T2: you will bring the food

23. The other twin enters the frame, says his lines and leaves immediately. The camera focuses on the couple sitting on the couch. The hero's voice whispers to the camera.

T1: and I will bring the drinks
 H: while they are cleaning and talking
 V: I love you and it is so painful

24. The camera focuses on the Twins. The second twin. On the lines of the Victim, the twin gets the salt. And then the face of the first twin saying "here is the salt". When the Silly one asks "why" again, the camera is on her face. The Victim looks at the horizon when he says his lines.

T2: bring me the fish
 V: and I'm worried I'm sensitive and small
 T1: here is the salt
 S: why? Why?
 H: Louder

25. Close-up on the fork. The Twins look around them while the Victim is talking, then one of them points - "here is the closet" - the closet. Then (if there is time), the camera is back on the Victim face.

T2: Give me one fork
 V: and the world is so big sometimes I feel that
 T1: here is the closet
 S: so?

26. The camera focuses on the Victim's face as he lowers his head. Then it focuses on the second twin, and then on the fire that is being turned off. The Victim says his lines - the camera focuses on him and the Silly one, who is rushing to hug him when she says her sentence.

V: killing myself will be the best beginning
 T2: not again
 T1: close the fire
 S: And what about me?

27. The Victim says his lines and while the twins talk the camera moves between the faces of all the actors. The Twins will be shot saying their sentences and the other actors will be shot. The Silly one talks to the camera and then the first twin says "me". The camera stays on his face while the Victim says his sentence.

V: you saved my life. And my history
 T2: All time you and you
 T1: the it's you me
 S: and what about

28. Then the Silly one asks "what history?" Now the camera moves between the second twin and the Victim. First the second twin and then the Victim.

S: What history
V: the history of my family, my childhood my friends my country my love life
T2: so if we are twins why we are cleaning the table?
T1: and why do we look so

29. When the first twin says "different", the camera points to both of them. The second twin says his lines. And the Victim continues them. The Silly one ends these lines.

T1: different? And what about our name?
T2: maybe our parents were different gender
V: it all comes different and again is not quite similar.
S: lets go to the table

30. Every character says his lines and reaches the table. The Twins are already next to the table. The Victim hesitates on the couch.

T1: you will bring the do what ever I tell where is my chair?
T2: the things I need to do
S: you too, come
V: where?

31. The chair. The Victim's legs when he stands up (and saying his lines). The legs of the Silly one are next to him. The legs of the Twins pass by (do it quickly), stepping on each other.

T2: Here it is my foot
V: will you run with me to the mountains
T1: watch out
S: are you kidding me?

32. The camera ends on the girl's legs. The Hero's face, when he asks to repeat the same actions. The actions are repeated backward – the actors repeat their movements.

S: no way no way are you kidding me?
H: now say it again
T1: watch out
T2: my foot
V: will you run with me

33. When the woman says "no", the camera focuses on her face. The Twins are somehow in the same frame. One is looking for the food like a sailor looking for land. The other twin points to the food. When the woman says, "a glass is missing", she is already next to the table. She lifts a glass.

V: to the bushes?
S: no a glass is missing
T1: now get out of the way where is it?
T2: the food looks great there

34. They all sit at once. It's the same shot as the last line. It's cut when the woman says, "The victim looks so ugly." The Victim is at the head of the table. The Silly one is sitting one chair further from him. The first shot of all of them talking together until the woman says, "The victim looks so ugly." Then the camera focuses on the conversation between the two Twins.

H: now sit.
S: Oh, the food looks so great and the victim looks so ugly. Who was he? Son or
V: oh, she doesn't love me I can feel what will come out of me?
T1: oh, great drama don't you think?
T2: what's the story? I didn't

35. The two Twins are talking, then they look at the Hero (the camera, too), who is looking at the food, and they speak their lines. The camera focuses on the lettuce and moves from there to the Silly one's face.

S: ooohh, I think it is lettuce
V: oh, God, I feel like dying I'm dead
T1: it is very very simple – he is dead. Dead he shot himself in the head
T2: get it he is dead. Dead he shot himself in the head

36. The voice of the Hero will be recorded later. The woman takes a bite from the lettuce, then starts to say her sentence, and then the camera focuses on the Victim, who says his sentence. Then the camera focuses on the Twins.

H: now on the dinner table the victim is looking around searching for a last grasp
S: I can see more food on the table and more drinks too. Where is my son?
V: my life is miserable and bad and sad if I only had another solution to this
T1: yes, you're right so what shall we do now as the twins choir?
T2: he is dead, dead inside

37. The camera is still on the Twins. And then on the Victim and the Silly one, who says "oh, God" and continues eating.

H: of love. will he find it? And the woman is immersed in the food
S: who is this guy? God, no
V: trouble. I'll try one more time do you love me? Yes or no? Tell me now before
T1: are we twins? No, she doesn't like you so take out the gun
T2: are we twins? No, she doesn't like you so take out the gun

38. The camera focuses on the Twins. When the woman says her lines, the Twins appear with the script on the table. And talk.

H: and her identity while the choir is undressing the plot
S: so I didn't get it, who is this guy, a son or a lover?
V: I die please say yes, say it for me - I'm dead, no reason to live. I'll take out
T1: and finish the job and what is this script, a joke or a cover?
T2: and finish the job and what is this script, a joke or a cover?

39. The camera is still focused on their face. And then on the Victim's face looking at the bag. Looking for something. The camera isolates him, from the angle of the bag.

H: Conclusions are raised and fall down
S: oh a woman at my age is looking for something else
V: gun no one will see me taking out no one will see
T1: so maybe we are what does it mean?
T2: so reading the wrong script?

40. It is still the Victim talking, then the Twins with their scripts, and then the Silly one who is talking while holding a fork with a piece of lettuce on it.

H: to the corner
S: But for what? For love and some comfort?
V: see how I finished my life. The sky is so blue and my soul's getting darker
T1: It means we are lying, how can we lie if we don't know the truth?
T2: it means we are lying, how can we lie if we don't know the truth?

41. It is still the Silly one, the Victim joins her with the word "death". Then the Twins say, "sex." (make two versions – one without a cut and the other with a cut.) The camera moves between all the characters who talk.

S: Or just comfortable life? Death? Threesome, sounds great!
V: Death? You say yes and
T1: what about sex?
T2: what about sex? Yes she says and

42. The same idea in these lines, too.

S: **now go** **I say sex is yes. Love – no.**
 V: **rejecting me** **how can you say?**
 T1: **yes go like the wind go**
 T2: **yes or just go**

43. The same idea in these lines, too.

S: **End of story now please go.**
 T1: **now go fuck off**
 T2: **now go**

44. The camera is from the point of view of the Victim. All the characters are praying together.

S: **now let's pray, oh, God almighty, please save our souls and this**
 T1: **now lets' pray, oh, God almighty, please save our souls and this**
 T2: **now let's pray, oh, God almighty, please save our souls and this**

45. When the victim talks, all the characters look at the camera – his point of view.

V: **As I walk in the valley of the shadow of death.**
 T1: **he's dead he is dead shot himself in the...**
 T2: **he's dead he is dead shot himself in the...**

Bang

46. They all look for a second in disgust and then keep on talking. First the twins and then the hero for a second. Again the twins. The Silly one looks down to where his body was supposed to be. And again the twins say, "check his wallet" and leave the frame, going to the body that is lying on the floor.

T1: **The script was correct we eat? Check his wallet**
 T2: **The script was correct how can Check his wallet**
 H: **now eat**
 S: **was he a son or a lover?**

47. The Silly one remembers (from the dead victim's point of view). Then the chair is moved, while the Twins are talking

T2: **the oven is there and the body is here**
 T1: **the oven the oven**
 S: **Oh the cake! please move this chair**

48. The Twins are talking, standing or bending next to the Victim's body. The Silly one walks, confused, back to her chair and then, because of the Hero's directions, to the kitchen.

T1: **Where is my appetite? Nothing is clear**
 T2: **Nothing is clear**
 S: **maybe I can find I'll go to the kitchen**
 H: **no – the cake, go to the kitchen**

49. The Silly one leaves the frame. The Twins sit or bend around the Victim's body...

S: **And try to remember...**

Loop.

Dreamtalk

H: Hero G: Girl F: Friend S: Story teller

H: When my voice is heard and continue till the end of the dream

H: I remember the last chapter with Sandra in reality t.v
 I forgot to buy tomatoes Sandra need to choose one of two men
 She is so pretty and special naked blonde and the camera is following here in every step confronting the dilemma who will

G: step

H: She choose?

G: step

H: The winner or the loser

G: Lock the house and go

H: The winner is pretty and rich and smart

G: Down the stairs

H: The loser is Ugly and rich and smart

G: Right

H: Like the man who lived for ever by listening to the story that never ends
 I don't stop breathing

G: Left

H: working

G: Bus station

H: Cutting tomatoes

G: The knife is not sharp it will surprise at the last act cut the meat and
 vegetables leave the blood and the leaves

G: I love him

H: on the table

G: I love him

H: Sandra

G: I love him I love him I love him. I'll call him

H: Sandra Sandra Sandra And the camera will follow
 her beautiful body and her beautiful smile and her beautiful hair and
 her beautiful mother that came to visit her one time in the beginning of

the show and now they are talking on the phone and the mother tells her to choose the winner that he is her boyfriend but she doesn't know because he is boring and not really loving and caring and she is so cute and so fine and so charming where is the balsamic and where is the ravioli?
Here is the phone and Halo? Sandra

G: I love you did you hear me?
H: Yes Jen are you coming? I'm cooking and Mark will come too

G: I'm in the bus station waiting for the bus to come to the station

H: Then come fast don't be late I don't want to miss
G: I will I will

H: This chapter with Sandra
G: Stop! I'm jealous

H: So come
G: The bus came
H: Come
G: I'm on
H: Come
G: I'm paying
H: come now
G: I'm sitting and
H: looking the view is so calm bye and so quiet
bye

Sandra looks so sad when she is looking on the ground and look so beautiful when she is looking at the camera and she has problems with her liver in the body that is full of blood but her heart is full of love

G: two more stations

H: like my heart and my house looks so boring and my bed is stiff and cold and her bed is hot and burnt from the t.v lights and my passion
G: one station

H: that is heating my crotch and my mind are they the same am I dreaming or is she dreaming me or my crotch my life is gray and lonely with all the love and the friends and the sex I forgot them all
G: I'm off the bus

H: and where is the knife
G: step
H: and where is my life and my friend mark?

F: I'm wearing my clothes and take my bag
G: Step
H: Mark is my best ugly
friend from High school

G: step
F: Oh I can hear her from here walking to her boring boyfriend

H: Sandra is perfect

G: step
F: Oh he doesn't love her he's just my best pretty friend from high school

G: Knock knock
H: Who's there?
F: I'm leaving the house while she is coming to his

H: Jen?
G: Hello love
F: Good bye happy life

G: I love you so much do you love me the same
F: Step Step Step Step Step

G: way or a bit different?
F: Step Step Step Step
H: Of-course I love you common Come help me cook and clean

G: You don't look so keen are you sure you love me? tell me the truth
F: He doesn't love her but I do I love her as if
H: of-course I love you I do I love you as if

F: tomorrow is gone and the day stops at dawn step I love to see you
G: Oh
H: tomorrow is gone and the day stops at dawn I love to see you

F: smiling you are the yolk inside my egg step the cloud the sun now
G: Oh
H: smiling you are the yolk inside my egg the cloud the sun now

F: please I beg
H: Help me clean and cook
G: Here I brought a book

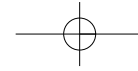
F: Step
G: What do you think will happen today? Will Sandra choose the loser? I hope she will he is so ugly rich and smart so sensitive and sad he loves art and hates sport and loves flowers wine and port

H: There is no chance here take the cloth and clean the table Sandra is the most important part in this plot not who will she choose for she herself got all the

F: Knock knock
G: Stop it makes me jealous where are

F: knock knock
G: plates did you wash them all?
H: with the cups the mugs the glass

F: Knock knock



G: Who is there?
H: My best ugly friend from

F: Mark
G: Come in let me move this chair

H: Lets eat fast and watch t.v

F: Hi Jen how are you did I ever told you that I love you?
G: I love you so you look so sexy in this apron
F: Let me help
H: No it's fine

G: You are mine
F: And what am I? A friend or a sexy secret?

G: Stop it you are so funny look how he is serving and how he cooks
H: la la la la la la la
G: he is so perfect and so not and that makes him even more than he was if
H: la la la la la la la
G: he wasn't Singing a song or wasn't cleaning and wasn't so strong and so handsome he is gorgeous!

H: The food is ready and it's look gorgeous
F: You didn't taste the food so how do you know?

G: Here sit come and sit
F: I don't want to
H: pass me the salt

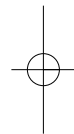
F: The winner takes it all although it's in the movies
G: Reality t.v
H: The pepper

G: Here love
F: He doesn't love her but he is rich pretty
H: Thank you
G: Noodles?
F: And smart and that makes the winner and that makes me want to be him....
That's reminds me... and fuck you all night Jen
H: Jen why do you love the loser just I wonder for Sandra

F: Sandra his real love
G: imaginary love
H: Because the choice between charm or fantasy is aint easy

GF: winner loser

H: It's aint easy to wake up in the morning sleep eat and breath
F: or to go to sleep
G: Love or



F: or hate and decide
GF: And still you need to choose and decide and react

H: React my ass and all the rest she's best put me in arrest for this stress the
ass of the case of the chase of my life
F: Friend need some help? Give me five - Give me your wife

G: yes
H: no she is just my girlfriend
F: I will love to kiss her all over inside and outside soft and hard
in-between and out

G: no
H: What did you say I didn't listen I was dreaming of Sandra and
G: me too
F: I would ask Jen if she like the loser
she might like me

G: That's romantic it could be I feel my stomach it's unpleasant I must sit and go and rest
F: Here

G: thank you dear how did you come so fast?
F: I come every time I see you
H: What is the time?

G: What is in the food? I don't feel so good The walls are so white and so bright

H: The toilets are on the right

F: Listen to me high school friend
H: I think the show is starting

F: Listen carefully I'm in-love with Jen as if she was my mother before I was born
H: As if I was Sandra

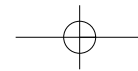
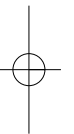
F: Listen I'm torn inside me but my heart is winning my brain
H: She is so sweet looking at the rain

F: Listen to me damn
FH: Here she is again in the bathroom why do they censure the beautiful part
G: Did it start?

H: yes come if you can
G: not yet
F: I can't wait I must fuck your girlfriend and later on marry her

G: yes

H: No Sandra cut her finger, its horrible someone need to call an ambulance but this program is not live
so it's fine everything is okay



G: I'm shitting can you hear it come?
 F: yes I'll come and say at the right time

G: one
 H: why they focus on the men?
 F: I will tell how much I love you

G: Two
 H: Where is Sandra?
 F: I will tell you the story about the bird

G: Three
 F: with the thorn that got into her heart
 H: why do I feel like crying?

G: Four five six seven Eight
 F: And she sang for her love and the thorn got in and blood came out and

G: Nine
 F: she sacrifice her
 G: Ten
 F: I'm getting in

H: She is getting out with a towel am I'm dreaming I have an
 G: I might be naive but I'm not stupid and if I
 F: I loved you for a long long time I know this love is real

H: almost there I can see her wet wet wet body shining
 G: but also success and if Mark yes you are the looser and with all
 F: how it's all went wrong it doesn't

H: into tears from my erection
 G: due believe in one thing is
 F: change the way I feel and I can't believe that time will heal these wounds

H: to eyes into my crotch and back to my eyes her body is glittering like gold
 G: love respect to beauty and fantasy they don't exist in this world because
 F: please Jen take off you trousers and spread your legs fuck me and then

H: inside a plastic box called the television I love
 G: the world is money and fire and water and we are materials our
 F: marry I love myself in your presence and hate the present when you leave

H: and I hate and she is flesh blood and I'm flesh and blood and she is
 G: heart is full of blood and our love is full of dreams with green grass and
 F: the room my heart is exploding can

H: changing her clothes in front of my eyes that cry and cry and cry and cry
 G: tennis bet and innocence that cry and cry and cry and cry
 F: exploding can you hear it cry and cry and cry and cry

H: Cry me a river Sandra says and goes to the phone
 G: I tell you listen to me
 F: To talk to her mother and cry on the shoulder of her beautiful boyfriend

HG: The winner
 F: takes it all and throw it to the sea

FHG: the loser
 F: go away

HG: We Forgot him already
 H: Sandra
 G: she chose the beautiful the rich and smart
 F: she chose the beautiful it brakes my heart
 G: She chose the winner how boring
 F: and I have left with my longing
 H: To Sandra the woman of my dreams

G: She is a dream!
 H: Reality for me a lie

G: on t.v! That's a lee
 F: Good bye

GH: Mark don't go the chapter is not finished
 F: for me it is I'm leaving you

GH: The loser left it's just and
 G: me - the winner
 H: you shut up Sandra is touching the camera don't move don't
 talk let me watch.

(silent)

GH: OH GOD !!! OH GOD!!! OH GOD!!!

H: The camera is gone some one took the camera is gone Sandra took the camera is gone someone
 took the camera is gone

G: The screen is black someone took the camera is gone someone took the camera is gone someone
 took the camera is gone someone took the camera

GH: The camera is gone someone took the camera is gone someone took the
 camera is gone

G: camera

G: someone took the camera What shell we do? where shell we go?
 Where is Sandra I'm dying I am dead

G: I can be your Sandra

S: Said the girl friend but the hero could not see beyond the box
 H: I can not see beyond the box my heart

G: disappeared with the camera
camera someone took the camera What shall we do?

G: What a mistake Mark at least loved me noticed me where is Mark?

H: Sandra Sandra Sandra Sandra
does my heart hear right did I do something wrong where is my head I'm
dying and I'm going to bed Where is my head

G: Where is the camera

H: is gone

S: is gone and the man went to bed the woman went with him

G: wait for me

S: And in the bed her dreamt of closed but distance places

GH: phases
chases
races
love
death

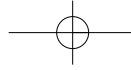
S: They were lying in their bed

G: It so sad I'm sleeping with an idiot and not a friend

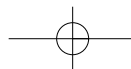
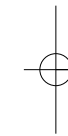
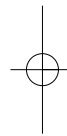
H: Sandra Sandra

G: I'm the loser

S: And the man didn't know if he existed or documented for he forgot
that he was just another dream...



Zeichnungen / Drawings

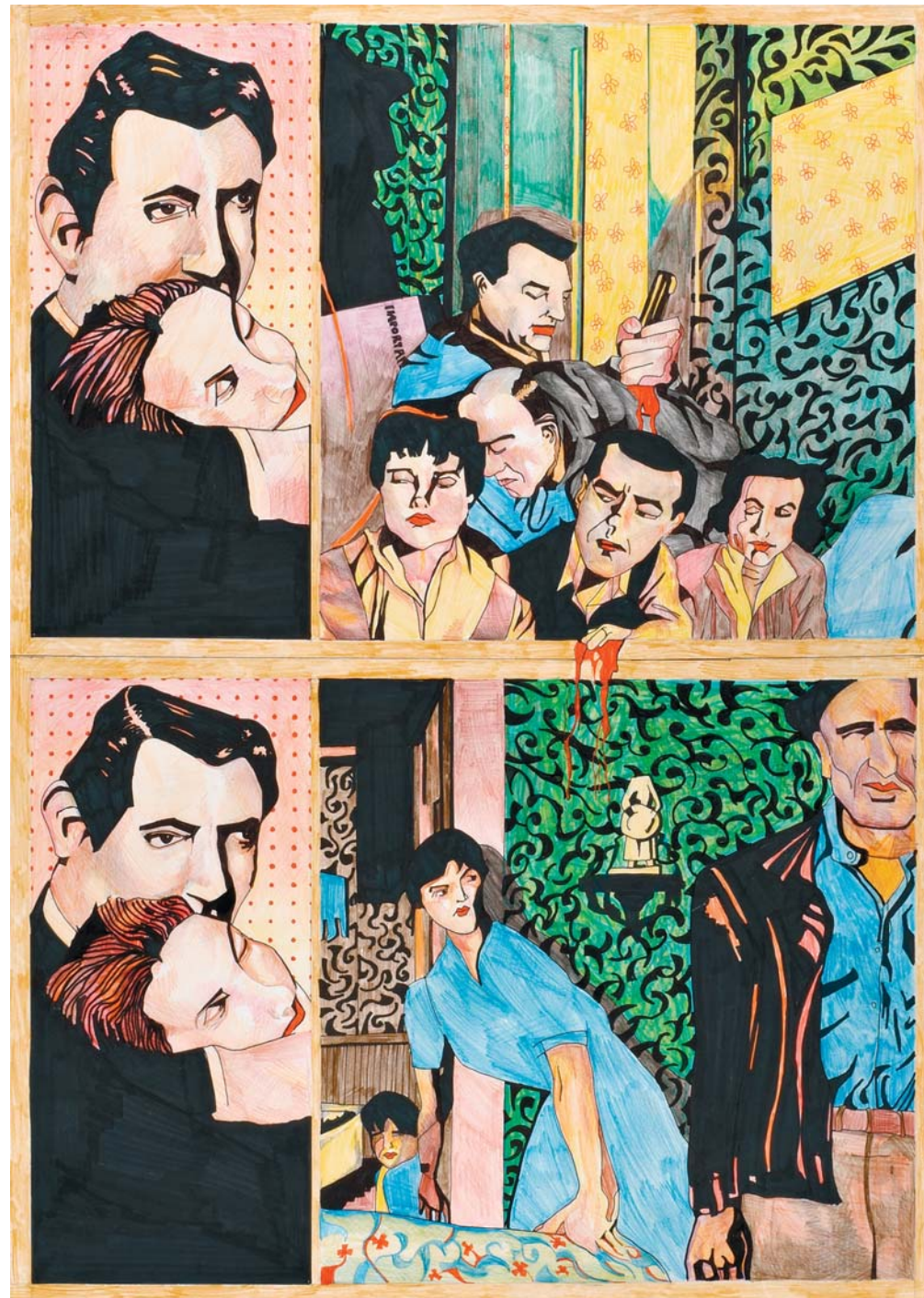




Chair, 2006
118x104 cm, Kugelschreiber auf Papier / Ballpoint pen on paper
Courtesy Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich / Zurich



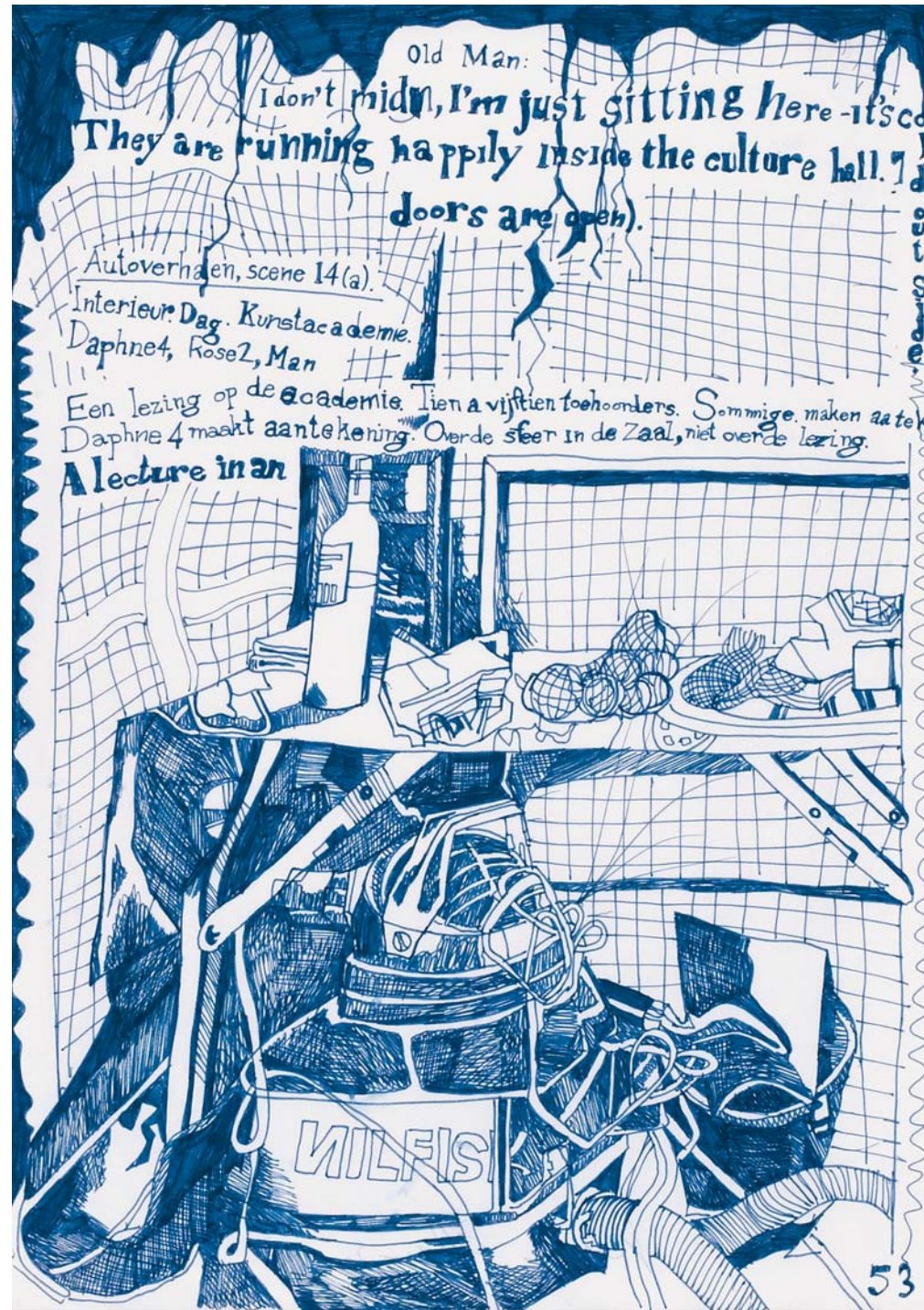
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, 2007
74x58 cm, Buntstift und Marker auf Papier / Color pencil and marker on paper
Courtesy Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich / Zurich



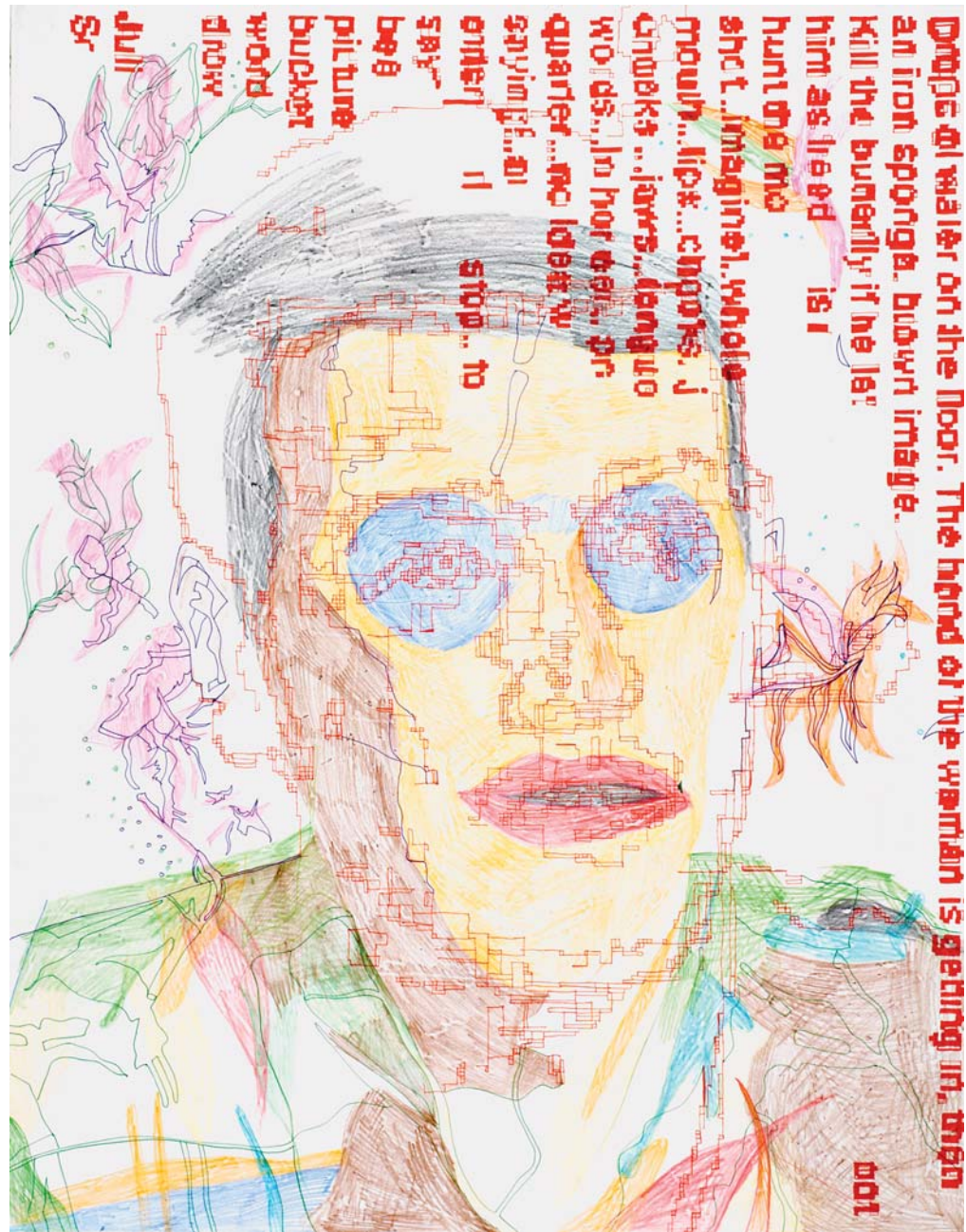
Lobby cards, 2006
70 x 50 cm, Buntstift und Marker auf Papier / Color pencil and marker on paper,
Courtesy Baloise Gruppe, Basel

When I was little near Hanover
they'd spoken their language. A
bunch of loud-mouthed little h
alfwits, that's what they were.
But from that to shooting at us
right in the middle of the road,
without so much as a word of i
ntroduction, was a long way a
very long way. If you asked m
e, they were going too far.

A Quote, 2007
98 x 115 cm, Marker auf Papier / Marker on paper
Courtesy Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich / Zurich



Arbeiten aus der Serie / Works from the series: 9 Zeichnungen / 9 Drawings, 2006
DIN A-4, Blaue Füllfeder / Blue pen
Courtesy Bâloise Gruppe, Basel



British Soldier, 2007
74 x 58 cm, Buntstift und Marker auf Papier / Color pencil and marker on paper
Courtesy Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich / Zurich



Vertigo, 2006
50 x 70 cm, Kugelschreiber und Marker auf Papier / Ballpoint pen and marker on paper
Courtesy Galerie Elisabeth Kaufmann, Zürich / Zurich



A Bag on the Floor Camouflaged, 2007
58 x 58 cm, Buntstift und Marker auf Papier / Color pencil and marker on paper
Courtesy Bâloise Gruppe, Basel

Foreword

In Keren Cytter the Museum presents an artist, author and film-maker whose work represents a new and experimental narrative style, as she investigates the influence of media culture on interpersonal relationships. Cytter shows to what an extent, under the conditions set by a society completely penetrated by the mass media and the world of communications, even private lives and emotional ties are subject to media influences. She does this by analyzing the language of the media and associated patterns of behavior in the mode of film. In order to draw our attention to media-determined conventions of speech and action in everyday life, the artist undermines and deconstructs familiar patterns of language and behavior. By taking apart norms that have come to be taken for granted, she exposes that they exist and the ways in which we use them. With her analytic approach to language and image, Cytter is also thematically concerned with the medium of film itself. Her actors and actresses, who are drawn from her circle of personal friends and acquaintances, are conscious that they are playing a role on screen, and succeed in putting this across through their statements and gestures; while at the same time the film cameras and recording equipment are shown in the picture. The idea that we keep coming back to – that life resembles or imitates film – finds in Cytter's work a contemporary and artistically innovative form of expression.

Cytter's *The Victim*, a film that shows a group of persons having dinner together, whose conversations end with the suicide of one of the party, won the prestigious Bâloise Art Prize at Art Basel last year. This prize has been awarded annually since 1999 in the Art Statements section of the international art trade fair. In consultation with a panel of experts, the Bâloise Group moreover acquires works of art by the prizewinners and presents them to two important museums, MUMOK and the Hamburger Kunsthalle. Directors of both museums are members of the panel of experts. The sponsorship of the Bâloise Bank is a showcase example of the promotion of art by an institution.

Both *The Victim* and *Dreamtalk*, another film dealing with the interrelation between human feelings and media consumption, have been donated to MUMOK by the Bâloise Group. Together with the films, select examples of Keren Cytter's drawings are being shown as part of the exhibition. Using biro and felt tips, the artist engages with the motifs and slogans of the film, computer and advertising industries. She portrays their typically digitalized esthetic, while at the same time linking them together with surreal cartoonish humor. This results in quasi comic strip drawings, in which the idiom relies on pictorial qualities and the objective graphic motifs take on a figurative character.

For the realization of this exhibition, we owe our warmest thanks to the artist herself, as well as to the Elisabeth Kaufmann Gallery in Zurich, which has given us notable support in connection with the catalogue and with the organizational work involved. Moreover, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the Bâloise Group for selecting our museum as a partner for this sponsorship project. I would also like to thank my colleagues Rainer Fuchs, Ulrike Todoroff, Susanne Koppensteiner and Bärbel Holaus for helping to make the MUMOK exhibition happen.

Edelbert Köb
Director, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien

Improvise

On the drawings of Keren Cytter

Marlene Dumas

Lalala and halloo

"When I cry, do you want the tears to run all the way
or shall I stop halfway down?"

Child actress Magret O'Brien

"They used to photograph Shirley Temple through gauze,
they should photograph me through linoleum"
Actress Tallulah Bankhead (1902-1968)

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Where shall I start, knowing that where one starts is crucial to
the meaning of a story, because the end is already there,
determined by, the beginning.

How shall I start, in what way, knowing that the tone will color
all the rest that follows.

She said to me – just improvise.

So I thought – yes, let's do it, as she does it.

Improvisation is the key.

Once upon a time...

My father was a farmer that liked to play the violin. Although
one of his strings was missing. He would accompany anyone's
song he did not know. He would say – I'll just improvise.

(Apart from that, his other favorite sayings were, you can fool
some of the people some of the time but you can't fool all of the
people all of the time and never trust anyone, not even your own
father.)

I was born in South Africa in 1953. Keren in Tel Aviv in 1977.

Maybe that is one of the reasons why we have sympathy for one
another. We met in Amsterdam when she came to study there in
2003. I was (suppose to be) one of her tutors. Never really
taught her anything. Never really thought she wanted to be
taught. She was accepted at the institute because of her films,
her writings and dialogues and not really her drawings.

Did I like the work? Was it nice, like Warhol would use the
word "nice"? No, it was not and she wasn't nice either. She was
beautiful though, although she did not use that word much.

As Diana Vreeland (*Harpers Bazaar* and *Vogue*) said – There is
no elegance without very good humor. And yes – she's has
humor. Sophisticated as hell. She doesn't tell jokes. People who
try to crack jokes all the time are not very attractive. It is not
about laughter. It's not a hahaha funny humor, nor a sour
humor. It is a humor that understands the insult. It is a cruelty

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that comes from a keen intelligence, mixed with an extreme emotional vulnerability and a cute awareness of one's own stupidity and inability to understand one another. And yet that's all we've got. We don't play the fool. We are fools, not clowns. Laurence Olivier called Marilyn Monroe – A professional amateur. Keren is one too. She uses the artificial characteristics of her medium quite naturally. She is an “and” and an “and” girl supreme. She deconstructs, superimposes, leaves out, jumps, mixes, subtitles, in videos like television, like films, like movies, like soaps, like cinema, like theater..., like multi-layeredness was her middle name.

I even found some Fellini that made me think of her. Federico Fellini was talking about how he needs an elastic scenario, and how actors who learn their part by heart make him feel uncomfortable.

“What if I want to change the text? What if a new scene comes to mind? What if I feel like improvising a completely different movie? Or taking up another profession?”

He watches his actors off screen eating and talking about soccer or ordinary things. So, in the movie when the actor has to say, to his love or his son, “Get out of this house”, Fellini can say to him, “Please do it like the day you told the waiter, ‘You have brought me overcooked rice’. Indeed, I sometimes go as far as making the actor actually say: ‘You have brought me overcooked rice’, instead of: ‘Get out of this house’. Later on, when dubbing, you can always get that line back in.” (*Fellini's Faces*, 1981) Maybe Keren would just leave the food sentence in there, as a manner of speaking, but it would probably be spaghetti instead of rice.

The teacher comes back, no one knows where she's been. With a loud and authoritative voice she demands: “Come on children, hand me the drawings. Today we select the drawing of the week”. The children approach the desk, hold the papers and run to the teacher on cue. Jeff follows their actions, takes the drawing and puts it on the teacher's desk. The teacher examines the drawings. She examines them with great care. Jeff examines the children's faces, who examine the teacher's face with interest.

(Keren Cytter, *The Man Who Climbed Up the Stairs of Life and Found Out They Were Cinema Seats*, 2005, page 18)

Things keep on going wrong, yet they never totally collapse.

Tragedy is postponed. When, before the deadline, Keren sent me the pictures of her drawings by e-mail I ended up in a slight state of panic. Lets call it (con-)fusion. Me not being so computer friendly yet and not being used to handling the world of digital information overflow, getting lost in abbreviations and non-existent attachments. A world of blunt assumptions and messages.

I couldn't find her messages.

Our communication went somewhat like this.

Keren: Soon three strange e-mails will be sent...

The subject is lala

The subject is lalala

The subject is halloo

Many mails later I at last reached what I should.

The titles of the drawings were:

Pattern of Violence 1 2 3, Chair, Boredom, Vertigo, 2 Lobby Cards, Untitled, Ovgu, A Bag on the Floor Camouflaged

The titles were not:

Explore the Seven Wonders of the World Learn More Get better answers from someone who knows Try it now Get news entertainment and everything you care about in Live.com. Check it out

(These were the hotmail texts that were on the same pages that I read as relevant information on Keren.)

I find the images.

Keren's drawings are terrible.

They are drawn and colored in with a marker. Hard and “insensitive” like the voices of her friends playing her actors; with unnecessary decorative patterning that reminds one of the impersonal drawings of the insane.

The Pattern of Violence drawings remind me of the publicity line for the film made of the play *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf*. “You are cordially invited to George and Martha's for an evening of fun and games...”

Her drawings do not please me.

Because she does not want to please me, or you.

This is what makes them so good.

“Like in a film”

Rainer Fuchs

Keren Cytter's films adopt an experimental narrative style, one that illuminates interpersonal relations and private life against a background of clichéd roles and relationships based on the influence of the media. In *The Victim* (2006) and *Dreamtalk* (2005), for example, the actors and actresses have no illusions about real life's penetration by the reality of the media—instead, their actions reveal it.

The Victim is designed as an infinite loop, in which the beginning and the end cross-reference one another, so that the characters find themselves trapped and unable to get out. Five unnamed people meet over dinner: their conversation reveals their family relationships and how they stand to one another. At the center of the action is a woman who is faced with deciding between her lover and her son, both played by the same actor. The rhythmical interlocking of images and language, both of which have the dynamic density of a musical composition, leads to recriminations. These end with the suicide of the person denounced—a literal big bang, which repeatedly takes us back to the beginning of the story.

In *Dreamtalk* the characters appear both to be acting in a reality soap and at the same time to be watching and interpreting it. Thus two realities are linked in the self-same figures and situations, in such a way that for the actors actual reality becomes that of the television screen: without its flickering space, their very existence would be snuffed out. *Dreamtalk* does not just deal with the influence of the media on our self-perception, it also pushes the confusion between personal emotions and their representation in the media to an extreme pitch. This film, too, is concerned with questions of relationships and the processes of decision that they involve. And again a female figure finds herself compelled to choose between her social obligations and personal happiness.

As an author who also writes the screenplays for her films, Cytter takes apart traditional forms of dialogue and plot sequences. She works with surprising cuts, and the asynchronous reassembly of sentences and images, which can lead to a curious distance and alienation between the speakers and the words they utter, as well as to behavior on the part of the actors that seems unnatural. By reflecting the

unfathomable distance between the concept and the object defined by the concept in the broken relationship between the speakers and their own words, her films deprive language of its internalisation, instead making it increasingly poetic and self-referential. This restores to language a kind of independence in relation to the speakers, such as otherwise tends to be lost in the everyday usage of casual communication.

Cytter intersperses the storyline with scenes that seem to be drawn from a still life, letting her actors disappear from the picture for a moment or two, interrupting at the same time the already deconstructed logic of her narratives. At times voices remain audible when the speakers are no longer in the picture, as if their thinking is still echoing in an inner monologue. Cytter is also concerned to show how dialogues and monologues internal to the film are always directed toward an outside world—from the start they span a relationship in which the viewer or listener is equally involved, and where an intelligent reading and interpretation is called for. She does this by means of the frequent changes of perspective in the speakers' point of view and in the camera angle, which involve us directly in the action and deprive us of the role of the outside observer.

Cytter is also given to repeating sequences of images and sounds with slight deviations. Characters re-enter the same room, or address each other in the same way as before, while the story simply seems to move on. It is as if the standard method of acting a scene repeatedly until everything works, so as to be able to select the best out of the many sequences, has here actually become the subject matter of the film. This succeeds in undermining the traditional unity of time, place and action, and draws our attention to the relationship between language and behavior.

As viewers and listeners, we get the impression at times that we are experiencing linguistically synchronized situations: the language appears to be a medium that has been put into the mouths or built into the bodies of the speakers, but is has been brought from some other place where it has actually been constituted. It is the language of the media, of literary compression or that of a film screenplay, which must be learned by the actors but which does not originate with them. If we become conscious of the self-evidence of this, and at the same time inclined to question it, that is the result of Cytter's approach. Just as the structure of the language, the sequence and the development of the images too is constructed and deconstructed, cut and reassembled: Parallel to the story they convey, through this changes of perspective the images emphasize what is arbitrary and out of the ordinary in their design.

Cytter thus defines language as a semantic transmitter, most of all in the way in which she destroys common and standard linguistic rules and traditional interpretation schemata. Her language does not disappear in the dialogues, it does not just

get "acted out" through the actions of the characters, and so become swallowed and naturalized—instead it remains audible as a rhythmic construct in its own right. This approach to language, which underlines its physical basis, tonality, provisional nature, contingency and relativity, is echoed in the way the recording equipment, the cameras and the microphones are shown on the screen, deliberately making the medium of film itself into an object of perception.

The films and soaps of cinema and television formulate the linguistic images and pictorial idioms in which those who consume them find their identity, and to which they can relate. But they are only able to do this because they themselves actually crave this kind of information: as passive consumers, they contribute actively to the demand. As Vilém Flusser puts it: "The images include feedback channels which run in reverse direction to the distribution channels, and inform the broadcaster of the response of the recipient [...]. Thanks to this feedback the images change—they go on improving all the time, coming to be more and more in keeping with what the consumer wants. This means that the images become closer and closer to what the consumer wants, so as to make the consumer closer and closer to what the images want them to be. What we have, in short, is a transaction between the image and the human being." ¹

Cytter undermines the stereotyped and cliché-ridden strategies on which the images and texts of the film and television industry are based. Her analytic mirroring of them reveals what, in the last resort, they really are—clichés that are not just external to the viewer, but which inculcate media-controlled behavioral patterns which become second nature for the consumer. This mutual implication of identity profiles becomes the subject of Cytter's *Dreamtalk*—for example, when the characters' talking about their relationship problems simultaneously refers to their own mediatized playing of roles. They are watching a soap opera of which they are at the same time the protagonists, which is why when the soap comes to an end their own film existence also terminates.

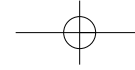
When people do not just behave as if they were in the media, but can actually talk about it as well, this means the modes of behavior they have adopted from outside themselves have been made thematic to their behavior itself, so that talking about relationships also involves talking about the mediatized conditions of speech. Interpersonal relations are at the same time linguistic relations, and the alliances and conflicts between the persons involved are also reflected in linguistic links and collisions—this is another insight that we can derive from Cytter's experimental poetry of language and image.

Cytter also reinforces the reference of the media to the real life of people "out there" by incorporating her personal situation as the author of the drama. The films are

set in her own environment, with her friends and acquaintances as the actors and actresses. In this way the private reality which is already penetrated by the media comes to stand for the other reality of the film stage, so that the backdrop architecture of the film or television studio now finds its true destination, its genuine double. Likewise the actors and actresses are played by persons who in other circumstances would only watch them when they are acting. But this means that we, as the viewers, are also made aware that we ourselves are acting a part all the time, in a way that has become second nature to us and which only penetrates our consciousness occasionally—at times, that is, when we get the impression that our life is imitating film, that we have seen our own behavior played out on the film screen previously. It is as if life were nothing but a continuous play put on by amateur actors who only at rare moments can see it for what it is.

As has been the case in classic drama since the tragedy of ancient Greece, in both *The Victim* and *Dreamtalk* the "heroes" are subject to destiny. As individuals, they represent archetypal situations of conflict, the development and issue of which they are finally powerless to control. What is mapped out in the dramatic narrative and action is always a life subject to external factors and determined by others. This also invariably gives us a picture of the social contexts where the protagonists determine the rules, the rules which they themselves are then in turn compelled to obey. Cytter's transposition of the classic fate of the hero to the reality of today draws our attention to the effect of contemporary mass communications and the media as an opinion-forming mouthpiece for social circumstances. The way in which the characters' language comes from outside them, and remains external to them, points to this social mechanism by which our thoughts and actions are directed.

¹ Vilém Flusser, *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder* [*Into the Universe of Technical Images*], Göttingen 1989, p. 47.



Two films by Keren Cytter – *Dreamtalk* and *The Victim*

Bart van der Heide

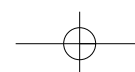


For filmmaker Keren Cytter (Tel Aviv, 1977), writing is a fundamental part of her artistic practice. It turned out to be more challenging than "...medicine or becoming popular in a national level", as she states in a recent interview.¹ It was only when her father gave her a video camera when Cytter actually decided to make "video art". Ever since Keren Cytter successfully addressed her pragmatic intelligence to visual culture at large, developing her writing into different forms of public representation: varying ranging from video's and a children's book to a novel (*The Man Who Climbed Up the Stairs of Life and Found Out They Where Cinema Seats*, 2004) and even a large scale cinema production.

After her graduation from De Ateliers in Amsterdam in 2004 Cytter has produced several works that have been shown internationally in recent years, in particular experimental films and video installations. Her films depict short narratives concerning the way art and life converge, showing at the same time that this is nothing new. One can see filmic archetypes casually change roles – from *Nouvelle Vague* to Tarentino. With the films *Dreamtalk* and *The Victim*, both present in her solo show at the MUMOK, Cytter seems to push the limits of this game to an extreme academic paradox², subjecting a random domestic setting to High Culture, ranging from classical drama to lyrical poetry.

In both movies the protagonist is forced to make an existential choice, however without having an option. Comparable to a classic Greek tragedy a choice can never be made; it can only be directed by a stronger force called destiny. Jen, the "Girl" character in *Dreamtalk*, has to choose between her commitment (the Hero) and her personal happiness (the Loser)³, *The Victim* shows a woman who has to choose between her lover and her son⁴, tossed between her conscience (played by a Choir and a film director), her son and her lover (both played by the same character).

Destiny is in the hand of the author. The narrative, dramatic as a Pinter play, is ever present, cut and sliced like the concrete poetry of R.D. Laing, twisted around and turned back again, resulting in wonderful chords of sounds and rhythm.



However, these movies also demonstrate that the practice of Cytter isn't merely a formal exercise of self-reflexivity, but is charged with social expectations. The actors become exponents of social roles, showing a discrepancy between narrative and representation.

The theatre comedy *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) by the Italian play writer Luigi Pirandello⁵ is a classical example of such discrepancy. In this play six fictional characters crash into a play-rehearsal. Even though the actors on stage are about to rehearse another play, the characters have a different agenda on their minds: traumatized by an anonymous author who abandoned them, they are in search for a script in which their drama⁶ can become reality. The characters are determined to convince the director of the rehearsal to change the script in favour of their story.

The thing that makes this particular comedy fascinating is the abstract negotiation this generates between characters and the actors, who are persuaded to portray them. In this play-within-a-play, both the fictional creation and its every-day representation end up compatible with each other. With this in mind, two levels of drama are connected by Pirandello: this is "being form" (the six characters and their narrative) and "having form" (the actors or their representation).⁷ Gradually these two realities change position in *Six Characters*: the actors turn out to be inferior to the lost characters.⁸

In Pirandello's aesthetic ideology, the ones that "are form", are stable, immutable and enjoy an eternal truth. The human actors, however, stay subject to the script. They are unstable and changeable, because of the influence of their contemporary context, conditions and their vanity. In short, the ones the "are form" become the eternal reality and the ones that "have form" become a practical necessity to execute the former.

Keren Cytter's rich and diverse artistic production reflects her genuine fascination with the division of roles between "what is form" and "what has form". Her films *Dreamtalk* and *The Victim* seem to push this "Pirandellian" game even further to the limit when the ones that "have form" – the actors as well as the viewer – are clearly directed by her narrative. However the difference is that Cytters form doesn't limit itself to the one particular artistic discourse or medium. "Being form" in Cytter's film's does not solely consist of the artistic creation out of the single author's genius, but is actually defined by cultural representation, genre's and cliché's⁹. "A cliché for me is an absolute truth", tells Cytter, "...it is like a practical bible, it is something that passed through many people and [...] stuck with them all." In this way the self-reflexive discourse of experimental films¹⁰ is equally immutable

and eternal as the blockbuster genre films (western, action, soap) – and we are all subjected to it.

In this respect, *Dreamtalk* and *The Victim* might be seen as Cytter's version of the blockbuster movie *The Matrix* (1999), which also deals with models of representation and everyday reality, in which the first becomes reality and the second its constructed simulation. The means by which *The Matrix* depicts the discrepancy between reality and simulation (i.e. a world of the "living-dead" and a high tech construction of reality) has been the topic of cultural research ever since its release in 1999. In *Regime of Visibility* (2005), the Dutch art critic Camiel van Winkel uses this discrepancy to address the contemporary cultural representation of reality by Reality-TV shows, Big- Brother, etc. These types of show turn a sense of the reality into a set of codes, which visual culture at large persistently keeps on applying. There is an inversion of hierarchy between the existing, every day world (which can be recorded with a camera) and a world of special effects (a reality that in *The Matrix* was produced by computers with phenomenal calculating power): reality itself becomes a form that is governed by a Matrix of visibility. In *The Matrix*, as well as in *Dreamtalk* and *The Victim*, the autonomous reality that we hold so dear in current society is merely a simulation, while the digitally produced "fantasy" scenes represent what is left from non-simulated reality ("the desert of the real"). "As if reality itself is a dimension of special effects that might be made visible with today's sophisticated digital techniques", as Van Winkel puts it.¹¹

The special effects, editing and the script in both Cytter's films and *The Matrix* generate this "overexposing reality".¹² It is through this overexposure that both realities of "being form" and "having form" co-exist. An emblematic scene in *The Matrix* is, for instance, the moment when a character fends off a bullet by bending his body backwards – the special effects called "The Bullet Time". The camera cycles around him and we see the bullet plough through the air like a mole, leaving viscous, spiraling traces past the actors slowly moving arms and legs. It is as though the visuality of the scene is peeled off and separated by this special effect, like an opened-up orange, in a four-dimensional space-time.¹³

The special effects of Keren Cytter are more of a "low-budget" calibre, but nonetheless equally fascinating. Comparable to the "Bullet Time" in *The Matrix*, Cytter shows us two realities in one single situation. In *Dreamtalk* and *The Victim*, script, editing and the use of the camera all acknowledge, in their own way, the inversion of hierarchy between narrative and representation and, subsequently, continue to project their influence on the hierarchy between these particular movies and the viewer. Because the films of Cytter depict mainly domestic scenes that don't seem to be so different from one's own fantasies or anxieties, these films start to question the cultural distance between the documentation of reality (on television and

film) and the enactment of reality in one's everyday life. Who didn't have the awareness once of seeing oneself replying to a situation as if it was straight from an existing movie?

The scripts of both films are intelligently elaborated: lines constructing a sentence are cut and divided between different actors. Diedrich Diederichsen wrote on her work: "The everyday and its expressions are stripped of their semantics, not in order to open up a view of something truer and deeper but rather to break down temporarily this very reign of terror, that is meaning".¹⁴ Thoughts are treated in the same way as spoken words, creating a continuous dialogue between silent and public thoughts. Within a single narrative Cytter manages to portray "being form" and "having form", through the banality of the situation and the construction of its depiction.

Both movies are situated in the house of one of the actors. Yet the dominance of the script in both movies accentuates the fact that every participant is acting. In *The Victim* the script is even on the table as if the actors were rehearsing it during filming. This actually gives a clue why the acting in both movies is so poor. It seems as if the actors see the script for the first time: looking at the eyes of some of the actors they are sometimes literally reading the script during the take.

The camera constantly changes perspective and shifts its viewpoints: one time using the viewpoint of the actor and another time using the viewpoint of a viewer, who is pointedly reminded that the film medium is a technical means of reproduction. In *Dreamtalk* this filmic quality is developed into its own narrative by weaving visual stills into the film that break up the linear development of the movie, creating a parallel narrative of its own. In the course of the narrative one sees a man zipping up his trousers and flushing the toilet afterwards, boots are shown that are tossed in a closet, a lamp bulb hanging from the ceiling and an electricity outlet. All these images are depicted in a single frame and don't seem to have a direct, literal, relation to the narrative. Instead they provide more of an "artistic" view into the domestic context in which the narrative takes place; adding up to the palette of perspectives.

There is another similarity between *The Matrix* and *Dreamtalk*. With the help of an analogue telephone, the main characters in *The Matrix* have a secret portal that allows them to change from one reality to another: or, in other words, go back and forth between that what "is form" (their existence as zombies) and that what "has form" (their existence in a digitally controlled reality). In *Dreamtalk* "being form" is represented by a soap-opera and its leading lady called "Sandra", that manipulates the domestic scene played by the actors. Back and forth the actors transit from being the characters of the soap and spectators of these characters on the

screen. It is the television that secures this transit with all its consequences: when the soap ends everyday reality ends as well. Abruptly the screen turns black; the closing credits set in.

The camera is gone someone took the camera is gone Sandra took the camera is gone, tells the hero of the story. Despite this approaching end, the "Girl" in the story stays hopeful: *What shall we do? Where shall we go?* But the "Hero" can only resign to his destiny: *Where is Sandra I'm dying I'm dead [...] I cannot see beyond the box. My heart disappeared with the camera.*

The one thing that secured their existence abandons the actors. Where in the Pirandello play the characters were lost in search of actors, in *Dreamtalk* the actors are lost without their character ('Sandra'). In order to survive they need to search for a different form again.¹⁵ The films of Keren Cytter show us her *Matrix* reality, in which every individual is lost without form.

¹ See: Avi Pitchon, interview with Keren Cytter, "Anyone Who is Not Mentally Ill Likes a Happy Ending", in: *Keren Cytter: I was the good and he was the bad and the ugly*, Hila Peleg (Ed.), Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 93

² Keren Cytter: "*The Victim* is perhaps the most formal, and *Dreamtalk* as well". See: *Ibid.*, p.96

³ Like Helena of Troy in the Odysseus story

⁴ As queen Jocasta does in Oedipus Rex

⁵ Luigi Pirandello, *Girgenty (Sicily) 1867–Rome 1935*

⁶ "The drama is in us; we are it; and we are anxious to play it the passion in us drives us to it." Luigi Pirandello, *Six characters in search of an author and other plays*, tr. and intr. Mark Musa, New York, 1995, p.14

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. X

⁸ FATHER: "... he who has luck to be born a live character can even laugh to death. He will never die. [...] The creation never dies". See: *Ibid.*, p.14

⁹ Keren Cytter, *op. cit.* note 1, p. 77

¹⁰ "Her world is one in which self-reflexivity is as banal as a man riding a horse into the distance", stated a recent review of the work of Cytter in *Frieze Magazine*. See Melissa Gronlund, "True Romance", *Frieze Magazine* 110, October 2007, pp. 269-271

¹¹ Camiel van Winkel, *The Regime of Visibility*, Rotterdam, 2005, p. 27

¹² Baudrillard, "Today, where the real and the imaginary are intermixed in one and the same operational totality, aesthetic fascination reigns supreme: with subliminal perception (a sort of sixth sense) of special effects, editing and script, reality is overexposed to the glare of models." Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* [1976], tr. Ian Hamilton Grant, London/Thousand Oaks/New Dehli, 1993, p. 75

¹³ Van Winkel, *op. cit.* note 11, p. 23

¹⁴ Diedrich Diederichsen, "Small Fugues Avoidance, Narrative, Economy, and Meaning in Keren Cytter's Films and Film Installations", in: *op. cit.* note 1, p.70

¹⁵ In the case of *Dreamtalk* this is done in the movie *Atmosphere* (2005). *Dreamtalk* was originally conceived as part of a triptych to which *Atmosphere* belonged as well

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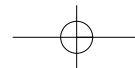
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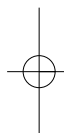
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