

WET LOUNGE #2

6PM 18TH OCT 2019 - TENT ROTTERDAM

ABOUT US

WET is a Rotterdam-based production and distribution cooperative for experimental film and video, founded by Anna Łuczak, Erika Roux, Marta Hryniuk, Nick Thomas and Sophie Bates in 2018. We come together to pursue a mode of production based on collaboration and mutual support, assisting each other through the exchange of labour, equipment and expertise. WET is also a platform for distribution, curating and programming with a focus on works which question existing film orthodoxies, and which propose alternative (social, historical, political and aesthetic) perspectives on the medium. We host an online screening platform at wetfilm.org. You can contact us at info@wetfilm.org.

ABOUT WET LOUNGE

WET Lounge is a series of five expanded screenings. The events take place between mid 2019 and early 2020, and are hosted by TENT Welcomes. During each Lounge, we will showcase works by artists operating in the gaps between video art and cinema, somewhere between the communality of cinema and the architectural experimentation of contemporary art.



Still from *Soft Fiction*, Chick Strand, 1979.

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This programme features six works, made by women, which combine documentary with avant-garde and feminist strategies. These artists direct the camera both inwards, inviting the audience into a frank intimacy; and outwards, towards their friends, lovers and communities. Through these tactics, they investigate heterogeneous aspects of female sexuality, desire and motherhood in various historical contexts.

WET Lounge #2 draws a connection between contemporaneous artists - with pieces from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s - working in diverse geopolitical contexts (the USA, Mexico and Poland). Chick Strand, Jolanta Marcolla, Pola Weiss and Teresa Tyszkiewicz have all made major contributions to alternative filmic canons, but represent very different takes on a feminist filmmaking practice, ranging from experimental ethnography to early video explorations and the production of explicitly sexual work under communist censorship.

Alongside these works, the programme features Kathryn Elkin's recent take on labour and motherhood and Erika Roux's lyrical fusion of the vegetal world with female sensitivity. In portraying a complex kinship that is both biological and communal, the works serve as a contemporary link back to our assembled international sisterhood, through which we hope to raise the question of what legacy these works leave for us in the present.

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WET Lounge is supported by the Subsidie Visuele Kunsten from Gemeente Rotterdam, and by TENT.



Pola Weiss recording one of her videos.

SCHEDULE

18:00-21:00

Teresa Tyszkiewicz - Day After Day
16'44" (looped)
1981

Jolanta Marcolla - Kiss
1'51" (looped)
1975

19:00

Erika Roux - Petals in the Ring
6'25"
2019

Pola Weiss - Mi Corazon
10'49"
1978/ 1986

Kathryn Elkin - Queen
12'48"
2019

19:45

Break

20:00

Chick Strand - Soft Fiction
55'56'
1979



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ARTISTS

Teresa Tyszkiewicz produced a diverse body of work, with many of her pieces exploring feminine sexuality. She often pointed the camera at herself, appearing nude in her films, a pointed digression from the intellectually dominated filmic language employed in Poland at the time. In contrast with many artists and filmmakers, she sought a highly emotional and subjective means of expression which centred the body and various everyday phenomena.

Day after day oscillates between the mundane, the theatrical and the irrational; employing repetition, the film becomes an obsessive record of the emotions and subconscious desires of the artist. Tyszkiewicz portrays her subjective experience of the film's micro-environment by focusing on ordinary objects, whose existence loses its rationality in the course of the arranged situations.

In **Jolanta Marcolla's** moving image work, she focuses on the specificity of film and video, using similar means to many structural filmmakers of the time, but with an embodied feminist critique which goes hand-in hand with the commentary on and exploitation of the medium. She often presents her films as very long loops, their repetition evoking the ways in which filmic mechanisms structure life, sexuality, and bodies.

Kiss is based on the insistent repetition of one gesture, utilising the mechanics of the filmic medium to play the eponymous action in an endless loop. Marcolla sends her kisses towards the viewer with a characteristic hand signal, eventually rendering her movements abstract and stripping them of their original, culturally imposed intention.

Pola Weiss is widely considered a pioneer of video art in Mexico. In her work, the body is a vessel for daily life in Mexico City, combining an interest in her cultural heritage with an affinity to the emerging medium of video art. She produced diverse experiments with the language of video: incorporating performance and dance while holding the camera, as well as employing optical illusions and video feedback, resulting in a psychedelic filmic lexicon.

In *Mi Corazón*, Weiss draws on the relationship between her body and Mexico City, specifically the twin traumas of the loss of her child and the 1986 earthquake. As the video begins, the camera focuses on Weiss' mouth as she spells out *mi co ra zón*, meaning 'my heart'. She continues *mi ojo es mi corazón* ('my eye is my heart'), we see her dancing, body parts, and the ruined city; Weiss collapses into the urban landscape in a storm of video effects.

Erika Roux is an artist and filmmaker based in Rotterdam. She works with observational modes of filming mixed with fictive elements, which often results in an ambiguous play between performance and rehearsal. By orchestrating contained situations, and recording their evolution, she gives importance to moments of becoming and hesitation, resulting in an outcome which is in constant negotiation.

Operating on a boundary of separation between the human and vegetal world (Roux's garden), *Petals in the Ring* is a speculative attempt to make a connection between cultivation, forms of living and non-human existence. With a lyrical approach, the video reflects on plant intelligence and the intersections of the erotic and the botanical.

Chick Strand studied anthropology and ethnographic film before becoming a filmmaker, and her work is frequently referred to in the context of these traditions, although her films were often deemed 'non-academic' and rejected from male-dominated intellectual circles. Indeed, her work deviates from a normative understanding of categories such as ethnographic (and perhaps categorisation in general) eschewing critical distance in favour of desire, texture, pain and movement.

Soft Fiction blends poetic documentary with lyrical abstraction, exploring the dynamic range of female sensuality. The camera spends time with five women, who talk about experiences which veer between the sensual and the traumatic, questioning hard distinctions between victimhood and pleasure, while capturing subtle nuances in facial expressions and gestures in a rare example of empathetic filmmaking.

Kathryn Elkin works within performance, writing and video. Her practice concerns role-play, improvisation, outtakes and humour, with an interest in shared cultural memory, as produced by popular music, television and cinema. Often featuring in her own films, as a presence on screen, or singing in the audio track, she imbues her work with a distinctive personality.

In *Queen* (which Elkin describes, tongue-in-cheek, as her 'pregnancy and baby video') bodily labour, leisure and domestic work are drawn into comparison via an irreverent memoir. *Queen* was conceived and shot during the artist's pregnancy and first months of parenthood, but transcends these conditions to become a deconstruction of her roles as mother and artist.

WET LOUNGE #3

Our third event will take place on 29th November 2019, also at TENT, and will focus on ideas of transit and place, with works which explore the politics and poetics of landscapes.