

CINÉMA&CIE

INTERNATIONAL FILM STUDIES JOURNAL

CALL FOR ESSAYS | Special Issue no. 34

Experimental Women: Mapping Cinema and Video Practices from the Post-War Period up to Present

Edited by Sarah Keller, Elena Marcheschi and Giulia Simi

Deadline for abstract proposal: May 10, 2019

Experimental cinema, as well as experimental video practices, have always been art forms in which women have excelled. Yet, if cinema studies have devoted research – although only recently – to women involved in narrative and commercial films, as directors, actresses, screenwriters, as well in other roles of cinema industry, the history of women’s Western experimental audio-visual production is still little explored and would benefit from being retraced and framed in a wider historical and theoretical perspective.

If women avant-garde filmmakers can be found in publications devoted to the history of experimental cinema (D. Noguez, 1979; A. Sitney, 2002), it has been only in the last 15 years that a few studies have been focused on the presence of women in this form of low-budget, non-narrative cinema, by analyzing both the figure of seminal filmmakers, as Maya Deren or Chantal Akerman (V. Pravadelli, 2000; A. Trivelli, 2003; S. Keller, 2010), and the varied landscape of women’s audiovisual research, particularly in the American scene (L. Rabinovitz, 2003; J. Petrolle, V. Wright (eds.), 2005; R. Blaetz (ed.), 2007). Other contributions on the experimental scene have been recently published in volumes devoted to the wider relationship between women and cinema (L. Buffoni (ed.), 2018), in the last few years investigated in Italy by studies connected to the Forum of Women Cinema and Audiovisual Scholars (L. Cardone, S. Filippelli, 2015; L. Cardone, C. Tognolotti, 2016; L. Cardone, M. Fanchi, 2017; G. Maina, C. Tognolotti, 2018).

Yet an investigation with a transnational and cross-medial perspective, able to shape an international map linking together avant-garde films with contemporary video-based practices is still missing. On the one hand, we need to reshape the history of the avant-garde cinema to include women, most of whom are still forgotten or little explored; on the other hand, we need to map the variety of languages and poetics through which women’s subjectivity has found a cinematic means of expression.

As Feminist Film Theory has suggested (L. Mulvey, 1975; T. de Lauretis, 1984; K. Silverman, 1988; B. Creed, 1993) audio-visual experimental practices have been a privileged place to bring women’s agency to light, as it offered a greater amount of liberty compared to the economic ties of cinema industry. Moreover, by often connecting with different arts languages and places, experimental practices have avoided censorship and so allowed women to push boundaries of sex and gender constructions. In this sense, women’s experimental works have acted as a laboratory for new forms of womensubjectivities.

This special issue of *Cinéma&Cie* is therefore aimed at tracing experiences of women’s practices at the intersection of cinema and the arts by intertwining a theoretical and historical approach through the analysis of cases of studies from the mid-century up to the present time.

We welcome papers addressing (but not limited to) these topics:

- the history of experimental women filmmakers and artists (from mid-century up to the present);
- the history of women art dealers and gallerists who have supported and promoted avant-garde films and video art works (particularly in the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s);
- how national and transnational feminist movements have intertwined with experimental practices;

- the dialogue between cinema and the arts in a feminist perspective (e.g. the relationship between filmmakers and artists or films made by women artists);
- how women filmmakers have retrieved imageries, materials and tools traditionally belonging to female work and places, such as embroidery, textiles, kitchen tools, etc.;
- the relationship between women's private writings (notes, diaries) and the so-called First-Person Cinema;
- the presence of women in animated cinema;
- the construction of gender and sexuality in relation to ethnic identity in a feminist and postcolonialist perspective;
- the female body as a language for expressing subjectivity;
- the use of creative documentaries to narrate women's stories and imagery;
- the influence of women's experimental cinema on the forms of narration in fiction films;
- cases of women's collective works, with a focus on feminist activism, both in the past and in the present;
- forms of agency built by young women through post-media languages, included grassroots audio-visual productions (e.g. animated gifs or videos distributed on web platforms and mobile apps).

Submission details

Please send your abstract (300–500 words in English + bibliographical references) and a short biographical note to submissions@cinemaetcie.net by **May 10, 2019**. All notifications of acceptance will be emailed no later than **June 10, 2019**. If accepted, 5,000/6,000-word essays will then be required for peer review by **November 10, 2019**.

CINÉMA&CIE

is an international peer-reviewed journal directed by Tim Bergfelder (University of Southampton), Gianni Canova (Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione IULM), Erica Carter (King's College London), Francesco Casetti (Yale University), Philippe Dubois (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3), Ruggero Eugeni (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main), Sandra Lischi (Università degli Studi di Pisa), Guglielmo Pescatore (Università di Bologna-Alma Mater Studiorum), Leonardo Quaresima (Università degli Studi di Udine), Valentina Re (Università degli Studi Link Campus University) and published by Mimesis International.

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