

ELI CORTIÑAS

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Eli Cortiñas often makes videos from found footage that she re-edits. She particularly likes to use art house films, deconstructing them to create new narratives, perspectives and layers of meaning. Common themes in her work are the way female identity is constructed and family or social networks.

Dial M for Mother, 2008

Dial M for Mother was the artist's final piece when she graduated at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. It essentially consists of extracts from three films by director John Cassavetes starring Gena Rowlands. A contrast is set up between the opulent imagery and the sound track: a telephone repeatedly ringing followed by a conversation between mother and daughter. Cortiñas recorded phone calls with her own mother for this piece, integrating fragments to create a complex mother-and-daughter portrait which is typical of our times and yet also cites archetypal role assumptions.

Confessions with an open curtain, 2011

In *Confessions with an open curtain* Cortiñas addresses the way female identity is presented in films and the cinematographic idiom in the footage she takes as her starting point. The work shows a number of blonde female characters from the back. Their physiognomy and hairstyles are similar, but their faces are invisible, and so in the spectator's mind they blur into a single anonymous figure. The recurrent curtain motif focuses our attention on the process of concealing and revealing. In conjunction with the title, it recalls the confession of sins as practised in the Catholic religion. However, rather than admitting guilt or telling a linear story, these characters simply posit different ideas about identity and self-determination – undermined by a deadpan statement from off: "Every woman has a career – the career of being a woman."

In the most recent of the videos displayed here, Eli Cortiñas works entirely with footage of her own, taking her filmic idiom and methodology a stage further. In *Paraíso Animal* she dons a bear mask, slipping into the role of an animal that has been deprived of its original habitat and is being increasingly displaced into an urban environment. Images of the lonely city alternate with those of a lush natural setting. In its allegedly authentic setting, the beast seems to lose its vitality. The work is designed in chapters as an open series which is continually expanded.

Quella che camina, 2014

The point of departure for this work is the character of an ageing Rome prostitute from *Amore che si paga*, Carlo Lizzani's contribution to the episodic neo-realist film *L'amore in città* (1953). Here Cortiñas departs from her earlier technique by building the video primarily around material she has shot herself. A key role is played, too, by sculptural constructions of her own making, exploring how a real object is translated into its cinematic equivalent. Cortiñas combines this with found footage to develop an associative montage of images and sounds, investigating her identity as a woman, a working-class child, a daughter and an artist.

Eli Cortiñas was born in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain) in 1976. She studied at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne and at the European Film College in Denmark. Her work has been exhibited *inter alia* at the Museum Ludwig (Cologne), the Martin-Gropius-Bau (Berlin), MUSAC (León) and numerous film festivals. Cortiñas participated in the studio programme at the Kölnischer Kunstverein and has held a Villa Massimo fellowship and a Karl Schmidt Rottluff bursary. She is currently in residence with the Goethe Institute in Turin.

Paraíso Animal, 2015

