

Ulrike Ottinger: En Face. The Portrait in Her Films and Photographs.

**An exhibition of the Ursula Blicke Foundation
November 13 – December 18, 2005**

Ulrike Ottinger's films and photographs take the observer to faraway locations, as distant as the Ukraine, Mongolia, or China. Her filmic explorations range from fiction to documentation. In her associative forays the artist is interested more than anything in investigating the peripheries of cities, countries, and societies. In her films and photographs it is against this background that she portrays the splendor and wretchedness of mankind. The staging of contrasts such as reality and illusion, surface and underground, normalcy and eccentricity, lends her films tension and depth. Ottinger's sense of aesthetics tends to be theatrical, she loves extravagant staging and hyperbole, though she always manages to give her work a sense of balance through the portrayal of simple everyday scenes.

At the core of the exhibition "En Face" is Ulrike Ottinger's passion for the portrait, her obsessive search for life's markings. Ottinger's images are tales of personal biographies, cryptic secrets and wishes, experiences and adventures, as well as their inscription in faces and bodies. In her productions she collaborates with figures like Tabea Blumenschein, Valeska Gert, Eddie Constantine, or Martin Kippenberger as beings that hover phantomlike between reality and glamorous superficial worlds. Ulrike Ottinger also creates portraits of literary and historical figures like Dorian Gray and Joan of Arc. She stages eccentric freaks and jarring figures as well as glamour girls and flamboyant bohemian characters. But even the group and individual portraits she brings back with her from her many journeys are not so much ethnological studies as they are visual manifestations of the existential. With her photographs and films, Ottinger paces off the spatial and temporal continuum, searching out human existence in its varying social and cultural settings. In this way she transforms the faces in her portraits into ontological masks of the world.

In addition to the Ursula Blicke Foundation's presentation of Ottinger's photographic work, visitors will also be able to see "Usinimage," a short film which arose as a montage of Ottinger's Berlin Trilogy – "Bildnis einer Trinkerin" (Ticket of No Return), "Freak Orlando," and "Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse" (The Image of Dorian Gray in the Yellow Press) – as well as the short film "Das Exemplar eines Spießers" (The Specimen). The latter film portrays a Czarist civil servant who falls into a deep sleep for 20 years and wakes up in the Soviet Union. Also being shown is "Superbia – Der Stolz" (Superbia – Pride), a film that addresses one of the seven deadly sins and unfolds as a human tableau vivant of exquisite artificiality.

Ulrike Ottinger, who lives in Berlin, is known mainly as a filmmaker. The Ursula Blicke Foundation is currently presenting a large show of her work in Germany which will not only focus on her films but also mainly on her photographic work, screenplays, archived material, and fotonovelas. Retrospectives of Ulrike Ottinger's work have been featured at MOMA in New York, the Tate Modern in London, and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid. In 2002, Ottinger presented her films "Südostpassage" (Southeast Passage) and "Das Exemplar eines Spießers" at the documenta11. In 2004, the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam presented an extensive exhibition of the artist's work.

In conjunction with the exhibition at the Ursula Blicke Foundation, the Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg, will publish the first comprehensive artist's book about Ottinger's work in which the portrait plays a major role. In addition, the publication will include texts by Gertrud Koch, Michael Oppitz, Laurence Rickels, and Katharina Sykora, as well as an interview with the artist by Gerald Matt. Published by: Ursula Blicke Foundation, Catherine David/Witte de With, Gerald Matt/Kunsthalle Wien.

The book "Ulrike Ottinger: En Face" will later be presented at the Kunsthalle Wien. In cooperation with the Kunsthalle Wien and ursula blicke video lounge the Filmcasino will be screening the films "Bildnis einer Trinkerin," "Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse," and the Austrian premiere of "12 Stühle" (Twelve Chairs).

Exhibition venue

Ursula Blicke Foundation, Mühlweg 18
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Curator

Dr. Gerald Matt, Director of the Kunsthalle Wien

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Preopening viewing

Please call for an appointment:
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Press photos

Available on our website:
www.ursula-blicke-stiftung.de

Duration of the exhibition

November 13 – December 18, 2005

Opening

Saturday, November 12, 2005, 7:00 p.m.

Opening hours

Wed. 2:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m.
Sun. 2:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m.
and by appointment

We'd appreciate an announcement of our exhibition in your medium. If publicized, please send us a copy for our files. Thank you.