



LA FERME SCÈNE NATIONALE
DE MARNE-LA-VALLÉE
DU BUISSON
CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN



CHANTAL AKERMAN

«MANIAC SHADOWS»

EXHIBITION
19 NOVEMBER 2016
19 FEBRUARY 2017

Press Officer

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PressVisit Thursday 17 November at 10:30 am

Opening Saturday 19 November at 4:00 pm
Shuttle leaves from Paris at 3:00 pm,
advanced booking required

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in partnership with Wallonie-Bruxelles International
and with the support of the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles in Paris
also with the backing of the Marian Goodman Gallery
and Vidi Square



cover: Chantal Akerman in the frame of the shooting « Grands-mères » (1980) realised for TV show « Dis moi ».
© Laszlo Ruzska / Ina / AFP

Creator of unforgettable films, Chantal Akerman is one of the great artists and filmmakers of the last fifty years. This exhibition, envisaged with her before her death, brings together historic works and recent installations as a tribute to her importance in the field of contemporary art.

Chantal Akerman's work in film brought her international recognition. From her beginnings until her death last year she ceaselessly reinvented her formal vocabulary and way of looking at the world, moving with unparalleled freedom between genres: feature-length fiction and documentary, comedy and drama, and video installation. Her influence on the cinema's most famous directors is indisputable, but **her legacy to the visual arts**, while less known, is just as fundamental.

In her host of different projects Akerman blazed a trail – between reality and fiction, the narrative and the experimental, history and memory – that artists of all kinds are exploring more and more. Summoning up all the possibilities of the cinema image and of vision, space and performance, her singular approach to so many issues – frontiers, changes of place, racism, identity, the relationship between personal and public space – has played a crucial part in the evolution of the visual arts.

For the first time in France, the art centre is presenting *Maniac Shadows*, one of her last video installations. In images shot in or from her living spaces in Paris, Brussels and New York – and in an intertwining of here and there, of interior and exterior – we hear her reading her novel *Ma mère rit* in which she meditates on her life and the world. *Maniac Shadows* is at the core of a journey of rediscovery, taking us through unknown parts of her oeuvre, from that first short feature made when she was eighteen to a recent work for radio. This immersion in her personal universe **is brilliantly accompanied by Sonia Wieder-Atherton's cello** and an imagining of how to inhabit space.

Space, time, the image, music, the intimate, politics: through these multiple points of view the exhibition speaks eloquently of the relevance of Akerman's practice and ideas.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Brussels in 1950, Chantal Akerman died in Paris in 2015.

Her **pioneering, essentially nomadic film oeuvre** is shot through with personal and historical speculation and formal explorations fundamental to cinematic modernity. Strongly influenced at first by American experimental filmmakers like **Michael Snow, Andy Warhol and Stan Brakhage**, she spent her life seeking emancipation from labels and narrative forms. Each decade of her eclectic filmography – with its permanently porous boundaries between documentary and fiction, and between literature, music and contemporary art – is marked by **towering achievements:** from the fiercely feminist modernist masterpiece *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) to the sublime adaptation of Marcel Proust's *The Captive* (2000) and her final intimist experiment, *No Home Movie* (2015); not to mention the documentary trilogy *From the East* (1993), *South* (1998) and *From the Other Side* (2002), shown in the form of **installations** around the world. In the 1990s she concentrated on video works for exhibitions, often in the form of reinterpretations of her films.



© Marthe Lemelle

A SELECTION OF WORKS

Maniac Shadows, 2013

Two-room installation/6 videos, 100 photographs, sound track (Chantal Akerman reading *Ma mère rit* [My Mother Laughs])

The **autobiographical installation** *Maniac Shadows* is a concentrate of Akerman's favourite dialectics and tensions: here and over there, presence and absence, domestic space/urban space, movement and confinement, the relationship with the mother. In the first room a big, three-part split screen offers images from places Akerman lived in: her mother's home in Brussels, her Paris apartment, and New York and Tel Aviv. In these parallel montages interior and exterior interact via windows or the television screen. Meanwhile, shadowy images on two other screens, one on each side wall, are accompanied by the artist's hoarse reading of a long text about her mother and herself; the voice is coming, in fact, from the second room where a monitor shows Akerman reading *Ma mère rit* [My Mother Laughs], the book she was writing at the time. There, on another wall, is a grid of photographs: stills from the films being shown in the first room. *Thus Maniac Shadows* brings a new complexity to Akerman's forte, the portrayal of **the disjunction between subjective voice and objective vision**.

Production

The Kitchen New York, coproduction Kunstenfestivaldesarts and LVMH

Saute ma ville [Blow Up My Town], 1968

35 mm film, transferred, black and white, sound, 13'

The Brussels suburbs. A young woman shuts herself up in her apartment kitchen, stops off the door and window and runs through a gamut of everyday activities – cleaning, cooking, feeding the cat, etc. – all the time humming frenetically to herself. Gradually, though, chaos takes over: she polishes her shoes (and her calves), splashes her face and clothes with cream, then turns on the gas and blows everything sky high. This radical portrait of a teenager rejecting a world of female alienation prefigures the films to come, with their mix of humour and despair, their scrupulous logging of everyday life and their sense of confinement. *Saute ma ville* was the **first film directed and acted by Chantal Akerman**, barely eighteen years old at the time. This literal, utterly physical performance defied all the conventions of its age on a single reel of the 35 mm film used for «real» cinema: «I sing, I dance, I eat, I clean and I jump. Basically I could have stopped there. But no – cinema already had me in its clutches.»



La Chambre [The Room], 1972

16 mm film, transferred, colour, silent, 11'

With no beginning and no end, *La Chambre* was made with cinematographer **Babette Mangolte** in the early 1970s. With Mangolte Akerman discovered the American avant-garde – dance, the visual arts, experimental cinema – and it was after a viewing of Michael Snow's mythical *La Région Centrale* that they decided to make a **continuous motion** film. In two 360° panoramic shots the room in question is described firstly as a succession of still lifes – a chair, fruit on a table, a bed by the window, a waiting kettle – and then in reverse order. A single human presence figures in these movements: a young woman – Akerman – sitting up in bed. As film historian Jacques Polet has pointed out, «The movement of the camera is literally a process of encirclement, as if marking out the minimum, essential space of the performance.» Well in advance of her installations and some of the feature-length films to come, this small masterpiece uses for the first time the strategies Akerman was fond of as ways of making the viewer conscious of the act of viewing.

Marcher à côté de ses lacets dans un frigidaire vide [Walking next to your shoelaces inside an empty fridge]

Work for radio based on the installation of 2004, 24'

Marcher à côté de ses lacets can be considered **the Rosetta Stone of the Akerman œuvre**, haunted by the Holocaust, daughterhood, and words. This is an exploration of her grandmother's diary, discovered after her death in Auschwitz. Beginning with the words «I am a woman, and so cannot...», the diary was later annotated by Akerman's mother, then by her sister and Akerman herself when they were still children. Taking as her starting point this link between three generations of women, Akerman engages in a conversation with her mother, a Holocaust survivor. They talk about her grandmother, being a woman, history and the experience of the camps, and reminisce about the first time *Saute ma ville* was shown on television. Asking her mother to translate the diary for her, **the filmmaker of lack scrutinises «the only thing that's left».**



Cello Recitals

Sonia Wieder-Atherton

A child prodigy who grew up in San Francisco and Paris, Sonia Wieder-Atherton went into voluntary exile in the USSR to study under cellist Natalia Shakhovskaya. Her life path has always been a singular one, a musical quest often also pursued through images and words.

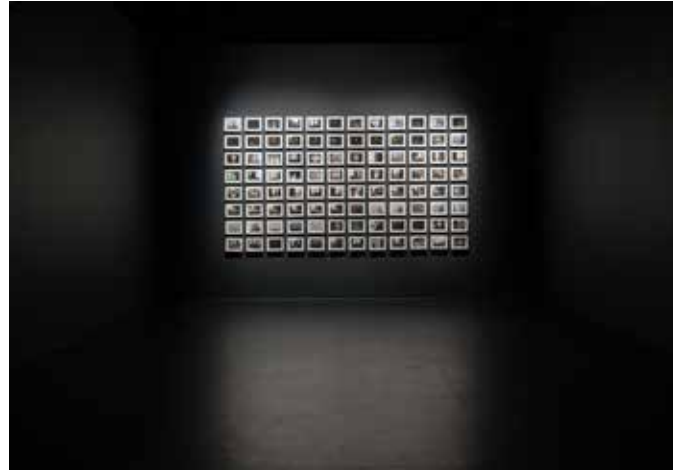
Until her meeting with Wieder-Atherton, Akerman had steadfastly refused to include music in her films; but seeing her work, interpret, explore and take risks in order to push back the limits of her playing was a revelation. The two lived and worked together: Wieder-Atherton composed the music for a number of Akerman's films, and Akerman filmed her in concert and on her travels through Eastern Europe in search of her musical roots.

Sonia Wieder-Atherton has decided to move into the exhibition with her cello. Like a «25th screen» – the reference is to the 24 screens making up *D'Est* [From the East] – she will make discreet appearances in one of the exhibition rooms, playing solos for small groups of visitors.

AVAILABLE IMAGES



Chantal Akerman, *Maniac Shadows*, 2011-2012, courtesy The Chantal Akerman Estate and Marian Goodman Gallery © Jason Mandella



Chantal Akerman, *Maniac Shadows*, 2011-2012, courtesy The Chantal Akerman Estate and Marian Goodman Gallery © Jason Mandella



Chantal Akerman, *Saute ma ville*, 1968, courtesy of The Chantal Akerman Estate, Brussels Cinematek and Marian Goodman Gallery



Chantal Akerman, *La Chambre*, 1972-2012, courtesy of The Chantal Akerman Estate, Brussels Cinematek and Marian Goodman Gallery



Chantal Akerman, *La Chambre*, 1972-2012, courtesy of The Chantal Akerman Estate, Brussels Cinematek and Marian Goodman Gallery

AUDIO & VIDEO EXCERPTS

Saute ma ville on Youtube :

in its entirety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx2RNzl-p3Q>

official clip of the Cinematek of Bruxelles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG4-vIAV5G4>

La Chambre on Youtube :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AGakyb3eBU>

Marcher à côté de ses lacets on France Culture :

<http://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/la-nuit-revee-de/acr-marcher-cote-de-ses-lacets-dans-un-frigidaire-vide-de-chantal-akerman>

Radio program « Atelier de Création Radiophonique – *Marcher à côté de ses lacets dans un frigidaire vide* »

by Philippe Langlois and Franck Smith, broadcasted on 9/3/2008 on France Culture



EVENTS

Saturday 19 November
2016, at 4:00 pm

Exhibition opening

Shuttle from Paris
reservation required
2:30 pm visit of Centre
Wallonie-Bruxelles exhibition
3:00 pm shuttle departure

Dates to be announced

Recitals by the cellist

Sonia Wieder-Atherton

Tuesday 13 December
2016 at 6:00 pm

Talk by Sébastien Rémy: *Tant que
je vous parle ce n'est pas une frontière*
[As long as I'm talking to you there's
no border between us]
École nationale supérieure
des beaux-arts de Paris

Saturday 14 January 2017

**An entire day dedicated to Chantal
Akerman**, in association with the
Ferme du Buisson cinema.

PLUS

4 - 15 November 2016

**Festival: Je, tu, il, elle nous
manque. Regards sur l'œuvre
de Chantal Akerman.**

Projections, lectures, concerts,
performances in homage to Chantal
Akerman organised by the Lorraine
Region Contemporary Art Collection,
aka 49 Nord 6 Est, in different venues
in and around Metz: Frac Lorraine,
Théâtre de l'Arsenal, libraries and media
centres in Metz, Centre Pompidou-Metz,
Ciné Art, Java, European Jewish Culture
Days, La Cour des Grands bookshop,
L'Oeil à l'Ecran, Osez le Féminisme,
Synagogue de Delme, University
of Lorraine.

SAVE THE DATE

11 March -
16 July 2017

**SoixanteDixSept: Les 40 ans
du Centre Pompidou**

exhibition at la Ferme du Buisson
Centre Photographique d'Île-de-France,
Parc Culturel de Rentilly / FRAC
- in partnership with
Centre Pompidou, Paris

Sat 3, Sun 4 June 2017

Performance Day

Performance festival
in collaboration with
Centre Photographique d'Île-de-France,
Parc Culturel de Rentilly / FRAC
- in partnership with
Centre Pompidou, Paris
- with the backing of Serralves
Foundation

THE CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE OF LA FERME DU BUISSON

Located on an exceptional site, La Ferme du Buisson is a national cultural centre of international reach. This 19th Century “model-farm” features an art centre, a theatre, a cinema and a concert hall, all enabling in an exemplary manner the permeability between disciplines.

The art centre has for over 25 years been an active producer, diffuser and publisher. Insisting on emerging or rarely seen artists in France, it is a reference for performance, pluridisciplinarity and experimentation on exhibition formats, focused on a dialogue between visual arts and other fields. Under the direction of Julie Pellegrin, the centre aims to seize every opportunity to create a dialogue between contemporary art and other art forms (with a particular

emphasis on theatre and dance), as well as social science (economics, philosophy, anthropology, etc.) The art scene is viewed as being part and parcel of the wider social, political and cultural context. Solo and group exhibitions mix with publications, talks and performances. The programme focuses on new or rarely seen talent in France, and on the significance of processes and experimentation in the performative dimension of art.



Yael Davids,
A Variation on A Reading that Writes, 2014,
La Ferme du Buisson © Émile Ouroumov

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Centre d'art contemporain de la Ferme du Buisson

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how to get there

public transport
RER A to Noisiel
(20 mins from Paris Nation)

by car
A4 towards Marne-la-Vallée,
exit Noisiel-Torcy towards Noisiel-Luzard

opening hours

wednesday — sunday
2 — 7:30 pm
open to 9 pm on event days

guided tours

every Saturday at 4 pm
exhibition tour + afternoon tea:
1st Sunday of the month at 4 pm
group tours available daily:
book on rp@lafermedubuisson.com

admission

free

The Centre d'art contemporain de la Ferme du Buisson is supported by : Drac Ile-de-France/ Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Maubuée, Conseil Général de Seine-et-Marne, Conseil Régional d'Ile-de-France.

It is a member of the Relais network of art centres in the Seine-et-Marne département, of the Ile-de-France contemporary art network Tram, and of d.c.a., the French Association for the Development of Art Centres.

