

# Lucile Desamory

## *Still Film*

### 9.11.—21.12.2024

In Lucile Desamory's practice as a filmmaker, visual artist, and performer, *Still Film* is conceived as a reflection on cinema through painting. In Desamory's work, painting and filmmaking are always found in a mutualistic relationship, pushing beyond a clear-cut distinction between the two disciplines and questioning their artistic and material entanglements. Desamory is constantly going back and forth between not only filmmaking and painting, but also drawing, performance, photography, and music, building upon one another and wandering through a vast artistic landscape.

Embracing filmmaking and painting as the basis of her artistic practice is historically informed by an interest in women filmmakers who have also encompassed painting and who transitioned from making films for cinema to creating video installations within the contemporary art institutional circuit. At a point in their career, many of them turned to spatialised installation of their films in museum exhibitions. While this transition followed an artistic desire to translate expanded cinema in an institutional context, it was also a reaction on the financial hurdles that constrain women film makers when fundraising for a film and making ends meet. Nevertheless, it was under these circumstances that their practices expanded, opening up interesting artistic avenues in which to explore other ways of storytelling. Desamory situates herself within this genealogy of women filmmakers who embrace the precarious balance between the artistic and the economic aspects regarding the format of their work, yet simultaneously she also makes a plea for a multidisciplinary practice for its own sake. Desamory's work is situated in this feminist genealogy in art history, which permeates throughout her practice as she navigates different media, reflecting on it along the way.

In her work, Desamory pursues a counterstrategy and develops formats that allow her films to become visible in her painting. Instead of transforming her films to fit in an exhibition context, she presents her painting work as an alternative access to her films. In *Still Film*, they

open up another means to the film, another access point to the story that is being told. The film, rather than absent from the exhibition, is arguably latent in the paintings, as they depict both film stills of her newest film *De Werwelende Wirrwar* (2024) and one of the sets from her former film *TÉLÉ RÉALITÉ* (2020)—which was also previously used in her performance with Antonia Baehr *Feuer und Flame*. Some of them were painted before the film began shooting, whilst others were made afterwards. These works are not conceived as complements to the film, they are a different materialisations of the project. We observe a leitmotiv of the frame in them: the frame of a mirror, the frame of a painting, the frame of a digital camera... The mirror, as a symbol of liminality, reflects a threshold between reality and representation, enclosing images, reflections, and subjects, while alluding to the film frame as the capture of a live moment and a latent narrative waiting to be uncovered. Further reflecting on the mediums of cinema and painting, and following the logic of the frame, Desamory asks: how can film stills be condensed, overlapped or combined? How can painting be used to turn the intentions or feelings of a moment in the film into a narrative of the film? How can frozen time be animated?

**Lucile Desamory** (Brussels, 1977) lives and works in Berlin. She is interested in the frontiers of perception, in the “too much“, the falsified—in the spurned narratives. This interest in marginal phenomena always requires to change the medium. She uses painting, collage, photography, film, and her voice. She combines these techniques into larger webs such as installations, films, radio plays and live performances.

Her feature films are *De Werwelende Wirrwar* (2024), *TÉLÉ RÉALITÉ*, in cooperation with Gustave Fundi and Goldie Mubikay (2020), and *ABRACADABRA* (2013). Short films include *Dark Matter* (2011), *Haut les Coeur* (2007), *Countdown to Nothing* (2005), and *La Série* (1999-2001).

Recent solo presentations include *De Werwelende Wirrwar—The Billboard Series*, Ghent (2024); *Retrospective / Carte Blanche*, CINEMATEK, Brussels (2023); *Some Matters Have Layers*, Fächer, Berlin (2022); *My People (Heaps and Piles)*, Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam (2021); *TÉLÉ RÉALITÉ*, World Première at Berlinale Forum Expanded (2020); *ABRACADABRA*, Kirche Zwingli, Berlin (2019); *Pasigrafia*, Super Deals, Brussels (2018); *Communication with the beyond*, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin (2018); *Communication avec l’au-delà*, BOZAR, Brussels (2018). Recent group exhibitions include *Cosmos Cinema*, Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai (2023); *Steirischer Herbst*, Graz (2023); *Listening to the Stones*, Kunsthaus Dresden (2021); *Part of the Problem*, Forum Expanded Ausstellung, Silent Green, Berlin (2020); *die Antwort commit*, Kunstverein Leipzig (2020); *Hubert Fichte: Liebe und Ethnologie*, Kanon Fragen, HKW, Berlin (2019); *Alias*, Netwerk Aalst (2019). Recent performances include *Feuer und Flamme*, with Antonia Baehr, Wolfgang Müller, Teta Lyrica and guests (2021); *Die besondere Perücke*, with Antonia Bauer, Residenz Leipzig, HAU (Berlin), and BUDA (Belgium); and *Asteroseismology*, collaboration with Sabine Erklenz and Margareth Kammerer, Ausland, Berlin Acker Stadt Palast, Berlin Beursschouwburg, Brussels (2017-2019).