

***Ursula Mayer. Film***  
**text by Laura Barreca**

Ursula Mayer's film represent unstable circumstances in an indefinite time in the middle between past and present, through a language tended to develop a critical involvement instead of a simple emotional transport.

The viewer, by chance, finds himself in an already started speech, running up the stairs, wandering through the rooms of a flat, into the shoes of the main character of the movie. In some of her works, Ursula Mayer plays with images' seduction and with the metaphorical meaning of actions and objects. The sequences appear as a gallery of signs, details obtained by artistic and architectural tradition of 1900, key elements for art work comprehension. Some of her sceneries are definable more as places for intellect and memory than simple scenographical environments, in which presumed or real characters are the main stars of stories with no beginning and no end. The Viennese artist chooses an open and not linear narration realized with a classical filmic technique acquired during her prep in Viennese Academy of Fine Arts and Goldsmiths College in London. In *Lunch in Fur/ Le Déjeuner en Fourrure* (2008), the story is a knot of complicated and shady relations between three women, three main characters of artistic Avant- garde of 20th century, each of them related to an object they can identify with. We can recognize Meret Oppenheim by the presence of the surrealist object par excellence – the title of the movie is obtained by it – the coffee cup covered with fur, created for the exhibition organized by André Breton in 1936, part of the MoMA permanent collection. Josephine Baker's voice, French popular singer and promoter of the battle against apartheid in the 40's, appears in the first notes of a song. Dora Maar, surrealist photographer and poet, touches an old camera while on a chessboard, another key element of the surrealist poetic, the three women are playing a weird and mysterious match. Each character plays himself and the role of the artist-woman of the 20th century. The objects represent the diaphragm of the filmic present and historical past, each of them as a trace of a mystery that has to be solved. The narration in loop doesn't want to impose a hierarchy of places and images, the primacy of one or another woman, because the story involves us in a circular motion. Inside a modernist architecture, as in a perfect hollywoodian frame, the three women challenge in an enigmatic play that relates the sense of touching objects with the memory of them. The impossibility of establishing a contact is the reason for the entire story to develop, the cause of an eternal repetition.

In the movie *Memories of Mirror/ Theatralic Personalities after Mary Wigman and Madame d'Ora*, the artist uses the potentialities of cinematographic projection to reproduce the image through a mirror's reflection. The object passes through the hands of the characters, until it reveals the cinematographic fiction between the art work and the audience. Real time and filmic time are entwined together to solicit the viewer to ask himself about the relation between fiction and truth inside the narration.

Both the movies are projected in 16mm because of the inseparable connection between Ursula Mayer's works and the artistic cinema of the first years of 20th century.