# 28 October 2005 - 15 January 2006

# Screening

Krzysztof Kieslowski, Camera Buff (Amator), 1979, 1 h 52 min.

Key film in the seventies in Poland. Filip Mosz, an amateur film-maker, goes from documenting official factory events to freely observing the world and finally himself.

Sundays 6 p.m.

30 October 2005 27 November 2005 Fundació Antoni Tàpies Auditorium

15 January 2006 Admission free

## Friends of Fundació Antoni Tàpies

Thursday 24 november 2005, 7 p.m. Guided visit by Carles Guerra

#### Talk

Thursday 12 January 2006, 7 p.m. Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska

### Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue includes an interview by the curator Anthony Spira with Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska. The art historian Amelia Jones, the anthropologist Rachel Moore and the sociologist Magda Pustola analyse the extraordinary nature of the Polish workers' films about love, longing and labour. The film critic Tadeusz Sobolewski explores life "behind the Iron Curtain", whilst the artist and critic Carles Guerra places the enthusiasm in a contemporary cultural context. The catalogue also contains a selection of images from films in the archive.

# ENTHUSIASM

A PROJECT BY NEIL CUMMINGS AND MARYSIA LEWANDOWSKA





Talk between Chris Dercon (director of haus der kunst, Munich),













For ten years now, the artists Neil Cummings (Britain) and Marysia Lewandowska (Poland) have been working together on an analysis of forms of collaborative cultural production. The projects they have been engaged in during that time are an indepth study and investigation of new ways of artistic production and relation with the cultural institutions that define, promote and distribute art.

On this occasion, Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska have created a large archive of the work produced by the Polish amateur film movement between the fifties and mid eighties. In Poland in the socialist era leisure was organised through factory clubs sponsored by the state, and one of the most popular was the kind that encouraged film making. Alongside – or against – the official culture of the late Cold War in the Soviet block, those enthusiastic workers managed to capture the scenes around them subversively and offered narratives of love and loss, of desire and yearning, while showing relations with work, celebrations, consumption and leisure.

With this project, whose first part was presented at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw (Enthusiasts, summer 2004), Cummings and Lewandowska explore the unexpectedly creative response of ordinary people to the oppressions of official culture. The exhibition offers a reconstruction of the inside of a meeting room at one of those film clubs and a recreation of three projection rooms, inside which a selection of those found films is shown, divided into three subjects, love, labour and longing: from satirical short cartoons and "experimental" films to documentaries and epic narratives. The exhibition

is rounded off by an archive room which contains the films and original posters from the time.

Working with archives and collections is nothing new in Cummings and Lewandowska's artistic career. They are interested in the idea of the archive and the collection insofar as they are typical features of contemporary culture, concerned with its conservation and reproduction. Like collections, archives have been put together with the property of different authors and former owners. But unlike collections, an archive designates a territory and not a particular narrative. The fact that most archives charge for access and rights of reproduction means that a large part of the cultural memory of a nation is not accessible to the people who created it. And so Cummings and Lewandowska have compiled a critical archive of amateur films which, as opposed to what happens with traditional state archives, is not only free of charge but allows future film-makers to use the films as a material resource. With the authors of the films, they have decided to register the material under a Creative Commons licence and soon the beginnings of the Enthusiast Archive will be on line.

Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska have turned their attention from the production of works of art to the technologies and institutions that designate the object as a work of art. They understand the world as an immense ready-made and so they act as 'facilitators' or 'conductors' of connections or situations, in such a way that, like the Duchamp gesture, they do not create a new object but a new potential. The cooperative models they propose provide interesting ways of looking at cultural activity and artistic practice.

#### FROM ENTHUSIASM TO THE CREATIVE COMMONS

An email exchange between Anthony Spina, Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska

Anthony Spira: Apparently the root of the word amateur means one who has fallen in love and an enthusiast is one whom the 'god' has entered. How have you distinguished between amateurs and enthusiasts?

**Neil Cummings and Marysia** Lewandowska: We're always nervous in the presence of god! "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." said the very quotable Ralph Waldo Emerson.

AS: This publication, titled Enthusiasm, is the second volume produced in relation to your project with Polish amateur films from the Socialist era. Volume one accompanied the project's first manifestation in Warsaw and was called Enthusiasts. Why did the title change for the shows in London, archival, documentary impulse Berlin and Barcelona?

NC&ML: The first exhibition looked particularly at the social and cultural context of the films and their makers – Enthusiasts. As we rethink and re-present the films, the phenomenon of enthusiasm has become an important concept. Enthusiasm is the motivating force that enables all kinds of exchanges. We are using the films to trace a trajectory of enthusiasm, which seems to have been drained from the spaces of art, culture, free time, sport and self-organization to become thoroughly instrumentalised; enthusiasm has replaced labour as a resource for contemporary

AS: So your decision to examine the role of 'enthusiasm' in a contemporary context came through the activity of collecting and archiving forgotten films, that films form a pivotal element of recent European history. [...] Could you describe your interest in archives and collections? You have previously said that an in the west is motivated by self-

capital.

promotion rather than selfpreservation; it's a way of writing one's own subjectivity into the historical process.

NC&ML: Well, we've become interested in working with archives as they seem to have an increasingly powerful grip upon culture and its reproduction. There is an astonishing growth in digital databases of images and information, through data banks and image libraries. www.archive.org for instance regularly archives the whole publicly available www. It's a gigantic data hoard that already dwarfs public libraries. Public museums and galleries store most (perhaps up to 80%) of their collection at any one time. And these collections (in Britain at least) can never let go of their accumulated material, they can never de-accession. Archives, like collections are built with the property of multiple authors and previous owners. But unlike the collection, an archive designates narrative. There is no

imperative, within the logic of the archive, to display or interpret. And therefore the meanings of the things contained are 'up-for-grabs'; it's a discursive terrain. There's a creative potential for things to be brought to the level of speech, as they are not already authored as someone's (eg a curator's) narrative or property. Interpretations are invited and not already determined, which is maybe why there is a creative space that many artists are responding too.

AS: What motivates you to make an exhibition out of an archive?

NC&ML: In the case of Enthusiast, there was no pre-existing archive. There has been absolutely no interest from public institutions in the cultural production of the amateur or enthusiast unless it conforms to a notion of 'folk art' or craft. We had to track down former film club members of money for access, and even by travelling all over Poland. The a territory – and not a particular films were often stored in their houses and in some cases

literally under their beds. We carried a portable 16mm filmviewer, so if we couldn't screen the films we could at least glimpse them there and then. Once we had a sense of the range of material, we realized we would have to try and at least seed the idea of an archive. It's a long story but we met ?ukasz Ronduda, curator at the CCA in Warsaw and set about trying to clean, restore and digitalize as much material as we could find money or goodwill for. As the collection of films grew, we thought about an exhibition to start the process of interpretation and narration. In some ways we wanted to return the films to their audience. So we contacted the former state and film broadcasting archives in Poland as it occurred to us that it would be interesting to create an 'official' context into which the enthusiasts films could be placed. The archives are now charging extraordinary amounts more for reproduction rights even in 'educational' contexts. Essentially, a large part of the

Jan Piechura, 1973 Courtesy AKF Sawa, Warsow Jan Dzida, 1971 Courtesy AKF Klaps, Chybie









F. Dzida, Through the Mirror, 1985



cultural memory of a nation, which the state produced, is now denied to the very people who contributed to it. [...] It's like charging for access to museums and libraries. So we began to think about creating a 'critical' archive of amateur film. which in contrast to the former state archives, would – to use a term from software development – be 'free' or 'open over the values and meanings source'. This means that donated films will be digitalized and made available online, not only to view, but to be used as a material resource for future filmmakers. We have been working with Alek Tarkowski, Justyna Hofmokl, ?ukasz Ronduda and the filmmakers to enable the films to be licensed under versions of the **Creative Commons licenses** (www.creativecommons.org). The licenses are currently being translated, negotiations are underway and the beginnings of the Enthusiast Archive will be online soon. The Archive Lounge in the exhibition enables visitors to curate their own film programs. We hope it allows our selection of films under Love,

Longing and Labour to be seen as partial, as one possible narrative strand amongst others and not in material displayed. any way authorial or definitive.[...]

AS: Your own website opens with the following words: 'We recognise that it's no longer helpful to pretend that artists originate the products they make, interpretation or display; what or more importantly, have control attributed to their practice: interpretation has superseded intention.' This explicitly explains your choice not to make objects but to treat the world as freely available ready-made material. This attitude is shared by many artists today, even if less explicitly inbuilt deference. And I guess than you, just like a musician sampling and mixing existing tracks.Could this equally be considered as a curatorial strategy? Perhaps the distinction between your practice and a curatorial one is the degree of intervention with the material that you use. Can you as artists take more liberties with the material than a curator? In a sense, the context, environment, discussions, publicity – the whole system and presentation -

becomes as important, if not more important, than the

NC&ML: We think this is getting close to what we've talked about before as a feeling of responsibility or ownership of material for exhibition, you refer to as liberties. I guess for us there are only liberties. We are conscious that when you work with a curator - and of course this is a generalisation there is a pressure to act responsibly towards the artwork and the imagined intention of the maker or artist. There is an we feel little of that deference. Partly because much of the material we use already exists outside of the museum or art gallery in a wider 'material culture', it becomes art momentarily through our intervention, but can also dissolve back again into the realms of the 'everyday'. And partly because we have been working with the technologies that enable objects and experiences to become artworks

- museums and galleries, or the curator or the hacker making exhibitions, producing become much more appropriate publications and catalogues, metaphors. In fact they are writing wall and text-labels, and more than metaphors, they're so on. When you work with specifically chosen practices. these technologies you become Because if the idea of a readyaware that they can be turned made is still vital, it's in upon any object, image, artist, Duchamp's gesture, a gesture maker, experience, city, country which didn't create a new or nation. These important and object, but a new potential. He powerful technologies are the precisely exposed the conditions means of interpretation, of that enable the work of a work producing the work of the work of art. He acted curatorially you of art. This is where our recent might say. efforts have resided, in taking

> AS: If all the codes of culture are exploit, but would like to avoid freely available as materials and tools is it possible to distinguish between appropriation and exploitation?

NC&ML: There is a very, very fine line between appropriation and exploitation. And while we talked earlier about feeling little or no deference towards the art object, we take enormous care of social relationships when working with the cultural products of others. This often involves endless negotiation, explanation and collaboration so that everyone involved can see how the project develops

and what our aspirations are, and they can decide whether to contribute (or not). Any responsibility resides in these personal exchanges between us and the people we are working with. Clearly, as artists - and again we'd suggest all artists do the same whether it's acknowledged or not we are able to capitalise on the creativity of others. The difference is that we acknowledge, make explicit and negotiate the terms under which it happens. We inevitably exploitation.

AS: If people do not 'own' what they produce, does the idea of labour become redundant?

NC&ML: Very few people own what they produce. This used to be the privileged position held open for the idea of the artist, someone who was not alienated from the fruits of their labour. But this is clearly no longer the case. The ideal artist has become a model employee in deregulated economies reliant on self-motivation, enthusiasm. creativity, flexibility, and

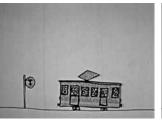
#### Z. Zinczuk, Function, 1981







A. Kreis, Song for the Worker of the Morning Shift, 1982



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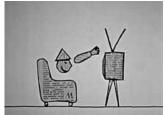
and images that already exist;

to originate, to struggling to

artists, whether they

made. And with this in mind,





intuition. Labour, far from being redundant has merely changed its nature.

AS: What I meant to get at was that people are remunerated for their time (and effort). If the fruit of our time and effort becomes freely available, it loses any financial incentive. How are people supposed to earn a living if what they produce is not remunerated? Does intellectual property not have a similar value to physical property?

NC&ML: Maybe this is something of a contradiction, but the fact that something is freely available does not necessarily mean that there are no financial incentives to produce it. There is an enormous cultural shift underway as we move – in Europe at least – to financial economies of immaterial labour; from the production of goods to the production of services, knowledge and information like education, or creating exhibitions, or consultation. As for intellectual property, this seems one of the most keenly

contested areas of cultural struggle at the moment across a range of otherwise disparate disciplines. And the simple answer is no. Unlike physical property where my 'use' of that good deprives others, or at least depletes the common pool of available resources – animal grazing rights is the example usually given. With ideas and knowledge this model is radically languages, peer reviewed and inverted. My 'use' of an idea does not necessarily stop other people using the idea. And it goes further, instead of 'use' depleting available resources, the more people using an idea the better it becomes. Sharing ideas and knowledge enriches, restricting their use does not. By extending property relations to knowledge, we limit rather than enhance. If this applies to knowledge, then why should it not apply to digital goods and copyright? And then why not creativity, or genetic material, or language, or environmental resources? One of the most interesting on-line developments is the growth in 'free' and 'open source' software, where the program is collaboratively

developed, modified and redistributed - often based on gift economies, like blood banks or organ donation. [...] Peer-topeer networks have re-animated generosity, and wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org) which is an on-line, 'free content' encyclopedia is the fastest growing resource on the web currently expanding in 27 constantly under revision. All of these endeavors are sharpening interest in the public domain or the notions of the commons. Essentially they attempt to limit the power of copyright and patents to turn all creativity and knowledge into private property. These models developed in the digital realm offer interesting ways for thinking about cultural activity, and even for practicing as artists.

AS: The limitless pool of material provided by the internet has accelerated shifts (not only for artists) from passive positions of voyeurism or spectatorship to 'empowered' roles as editors, witnesses, judges. As we discussed earlier,

instead of creating material in a vacuum, artists frequently perform as 'facilitators' or 'conduits' providing connections or constructing situations. Who do you see as pioneers of this way of working?

NC&ML: As for pioneers, the Situationists seem to be precursors (theoretically and practically) for much of what is happening at the moment, both on and off-line. And a whole range of (particularly American) artists and practices that emerged during the late 1980s were very influential for us, Artists who began to turn their attention to the structures through which art is produced, promoted, distributed and 'consumed'. We're thinking of artists like Julie Ault and Group Material, Andrea Fraser, Sylvia Kolbowski and a slightly older generation of Michael Asher and Hans Haacke: artwork that became tagged as 'institutional critique'. We found this work both liberating and critical in that it enabled a model of 'art' and its circulation to be built and intervened in. At the same time

we were conscious of how the notion of the 'institution' – and the museum is a great example - is devolving out into subtle social structures. The exhibitionary function of Museums and Galleries merge into Public Relations, Education, **Development and Sponsorship** opportunities; networks of images, brands and knowledge that work upon emotional economies of loyalty, trust and enthusiasm. So here European artists have proved more supportive: Thomas Hirschhorn, Superflex, Tone O. Nielsen, Inventory, Copenhagen Free University, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Matthew Higgs, Jeremy Deller, to name but a few, have been very, very important to us. The role of sociology and anthropology has been key too, the work of Michel de Certeau on the practice of everyday life, Pierre Bourdieu and his attempt to develop a methodology for representing cultural practices and Tony Bennett describing the 'exhibitionary' complex. There have also been a couple of manifestos published recently

The Libre Society (www.libresociety.org) take models from 'free' software culture and see if they can be applied to other cultural and creative practices while The Hacker Manifesto by Mckenzie Wark, reformats a political economy derived from Karl Marx for our new networked times. And yet for all the opportunities opened by collaborative models of cultural production there is still a tendency – and artists are their own worst enemies in this respect – to play down the amount of sharing, influence, collaboration and plagiarism that constantly goes on. These more collaborative models, evident in the film enthusiasts and resurfacing in the digital realm, offer interesting ways for thinking about cultural activity and practicing as artists.

Excerpts from: "From Enthusiasm to the Creative Commons", Enthusiasm (London: Whitechapel Gallery; Berlin: KW, Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin and Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2005): 22-25.

E. Kral. Are we Cool or What...?. 1974/1975











which are also very inspiring.



T. Wudzki, Sysyphus, 1971

#### LOVE

## Narodziny cz**∏**wieka

[Birth of Man], 1963 R. Wawrynowicz & J. Jaskólski 16mm, 10'56, B&W AKF X Muza, Gdafsk

Inspired by Italian neo-realist cinema, this beautifully photographed feature unfolds as a tender portrait of family life. With the birth of a new child, everyday life becomes an epic drama, as the mutual dependence of work and home are fused together by love.

Ewa i ma" [Eve and Her Husband], 1968/69 K. & J. Czoska 16mm, 7'17, B&W AKF Alka, Puck

A wicked, wicked satire on gender stereotyping. Eve whiles her life away in endless pleasure as Adam[?] the robot/husband ministers to her every need. And even in bed, Eve prefers a soft toy to the dull company of a robot/husband.

**Anatomia** [Anatomy], 1974 T. Wudzki 16mm, 3', B&W AKF Pegaz, Warszawa

Anatomia is an erotic poem. Shot in extreme close-up, and accompanied by a heightened sound track; flesh, smoke, paint and pencil take on an extraordinary materiality.

#### Nieporozumienie

[Misunderstanding], 1978 P. Majdrowicz 16mm, 20'30, B&W AKF Awa, Poznaf

In the docu-drama Nieporozumienie a politically explosive subject unfolds with real empathy. An artist pursues the object of his affection; forbidden love, a male athlete. And, unable to sublimate his passion, persists until humiliation and violence ensue.

Romanza ludzika [Flirt], 1963 M. Koim 16mm, 2'34, colour AKF Bielsko, Bielsko-Bia∏ This mixture of live action and animation conjures-up the figure of love as a cartoon character. *Romanza ludzika* is a wry, witty glance at first love.

Funkcja [Function], 1981 Z. Zinczuk 16mm, 1'07, colour AKF Awa, Poznaf

A Freudian chain of erotic exchanges pour from the minianimation *Funkcja*. The body is represented by lips. Lips that eat, drink and communicate love with a narcissistic kiss.

**Przez lustro** [Through the Mirror], 1985 F. Dzida 16mm, 15'42, colour AKF Klaps, Chybie

Former lovers meet. And, through drink, old photographs, letters and flash-back reminiscences slowly rekindle their former affection. With shocking intimacy passion erupts through an erotic tenderness rarely seen on screen.

#### LONGING

**Motyle** [Butterflies], 1971 F. Dzida 8mm, 12'49, B&W AKF Klaps, Chybie

Small town youth abandon themselves in a psychedelic fantasy of endless drinking, dancing and sex. Driven by a pounding rock soundtrack, *Motyle* with its swirling hand-held camera captures an imagined summer of love.

**Karuzela** [Carousel], 1984 K. Szafraniec 16mm, 2'20, colour AKF Nowa Huta, Kraków

Accompanied by a 'happy' marching soundtrack, this experimental animation inter-cuts spinning childhood toys, with brooding violence and military force. The sly critique extends to film itself, where the hand drawn time code mimics the digital precision of video.

Plakaciarz [Flyposter], 1980 H. Urbafczyk 16mm, 10'45, colour AKF Bielsko, Bielsko-Bia

This gentle documentary film follows a day-in-the-life of a man employed to post posters. His job, which is barely recognizable as work, weaves seamlessly into the everyday texture of the small town.

Humbug, 1970s G. Piszczek & M. Kuczmi∫ski 16mm, 3'40, colour AKF lks, Miko]ow

The deceptively simple animation *Humbug*, unfolds as a wicked satire on authority.

A czy my to jacy tacy...
[Are we Cool or What..?], 1974/75

E. Kral 16mm, 8'30, B&W AKF Alchemik, K´dzierzyn

The imagined and depicted seduction of women is wittily punctured through a critique of advertising, media glamour and branding.

**Gwiazdà byç** [A Star is Born], 1970's H. Urbafczyk & B. Bia∏k, 16mm, 8'46, B&W AKF Bielsko, Bielsko-Bia∏

Young smiling women, scantily dressed, dance endlessly. Our gaze fuses with that of a gaggle of men sitting in cinema seats, we're witnessing an audition for a feature film; and through looking, become part of the process itself.

**Przed zmierzchem** [Before Dusk], 1976 L. Boguszewski 8mm, 6'26, colour AKF Sawa, Warszawa

A young couple visit an ageing grandmother for an afternoon; of course they bring a present. In this achingly beautiful colour film, shot in the last light before darkness, we glimpse a chasm of loneliness that no gift could ever repair.

#### Dotknàc dźwi ku

[Touch the Sound], 1981 Z. Zinczuk 16mm, 6'13, colour AKF Awa, Poznaf

Shot on saturated colour filmstock, a single guitar melody accompanies the slow preparation for a music festival; crowds gather, punks mix with hippies as darkness falls. At night, expectation gives way to excess.

#### **LABOUR**

#### Wspó dzesna Symfonia

[Contemporary Symphony], 1971 M. Korus & J. Ridan 16mm, 5'25, colour AKF Nowa Huta, Krakow

The labour of film-making is reflexively spliced into a portrait of the steelworks where the film-makers work.

**Ludzie z bazy** [Site workers], 1965 A. Stefafski 16mm, 15'08, B&W AKF Grunwald, Olsztyn

In the documentary *Ludzie z bazy* we witness itinerant workers draining vast tracts of marshland through ditch-digging and drainage. This is brute hard work in freezing conditions. When the job is done, drink spills into song and drunken celebration.

Ziemia [Earth], 1976 Z. Zinczuk 16mm, 3'21, B&W AKF Awa, Poznaf

An experimental homage to agricultural labour. An old woman plants seedlings, and as the camera pulls back from her task she shrinks to the size of an ant compared to the enormity of the field before her.

Piosenka dla robotnika rannej zmiany [Song for the Worker of the Morning Shift], 1982 A. Kreis 16mm, 5'50, B&W

AKF Chorzowska Ósemka, Chorzów

A short animation that traces a typical day-in-the-life-of a factory worker. The newspaper graphics and ever-smiling face of our protagonist are at odds with the poignant paper tears that fall at the end of another unsatisfactory day.

Symbioza [Symbiosis], 1969 T. Junak 16mm, 10'14, B&W STK Rotunda, Krakow

This documentary reveals an interdependence between women and machine in a textile factory. Ancient imagery is edited to a musical rhythm; intense concentration enables arms, fingers, feet and machinery to weave fabric and film together.

Homo, 1975 K. Janicki & M. Baranski 16mm, 2'50, B&W AKF Grunwald, Olsztyn

A rare plasticine stop-motion animation; *Homo* condenses a sophisticated critique of the human condition.

Dense smoke bellows from multiple chimneys, lime is being slaked and cement manufactured. Thick layers of cement dust cover everything causing untold environmental carnage.

Razem [Together], 1977 K. Janicki & M. Barafski, 16mm, 3'30, B&W AKF Grunwald, Olsztyn

Razem is a biting political critique disguised as playful animation.

**Petent** [Petitioner], 1970s Z. Dusza, I. Radz 16mm, 3'25, colour AKF Groteska, K´dzierzyn-Koźle

A rare Polish funk sound track drives this light-hearted feature that depicts petty bribery and corruption. **Syzyfowie** [Sisyphus], 1971 T. Wudzki 8mm, 5'30, B&W AKF Wiedza. Warszawa

Like warriors preparing for battle, these labourers strap on all manner of protective equipment before going to work down on their hands and knees in molten tar, road-laying. The final application of paintmarkings indicate a job well-done, but with the terrifying fall of a pickaxe, the cycle begins again.

#### **CLUB LIFE**

Running on the monitor in the club room

Members meeting, 1985 16mm, 4'01, B&W AKF Klaps, Chybie

Premiere of "Camera Buff" by Krzysztof Kieslowski at the AKF Klaps, Chybie, 1979 16mm, 6'40, colour

Club Life Stills, 1985 2'30, B&W AKF Sawa, Warszawa

Fragments of the film **Behind the Window-Pane**, 1981 Janusz Piwowarski 16mm, 5'25, colour AKF Awa, Poznan

How to Make a Grand Prix Winning Film, c1970s, A. Filipiuk, I.Radz 16mm, 9'09, colour AKF Groteska, Kedzierzyn-Kozle

Fragments of the film French Love including newsreel of the National Amateur Film Festival in Olsztyn, 1973 16mm, 10'33, B&W AKF Grunwald, Olsztyn

http://www.chanceprojects.com