

NINA MENKES: *HITPARKUT (DISSOLUTION)*

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California Institute of the Arts

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NINA MENKES: *HITPARKUT (DISSOLUTION)*

Monday, September 20 | 8:30 pm

Jack H. Skirball Series

North American premiere

Israel/USA, 2010, 88 min., HDCAM

Inspired by Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Nina Menkes returns to Israel, the site of some of her earlier work, and continues her exploration of sumptuous, digital black-and-white as a metaphor for the dark corners of the human psyche. She also takes a giant step by focusing on a male character (nonprofessional actor Didi Fire) who is both the subject of his own tale and an object of desire for the camera, subverting the tropes of cinematic discourse. Shot in Yafo, the predominantly Arab area of Tel Aviv, *Hitparkut* follows the moral collapse and first glimmer of redemption of a morose young Israeli Jew who murders a female pawnbroker. Menkes weaves realistic views with surreal images to suggest a dialectic of violence: one man's alienation and spiritual journey versus the war mentality that permeates contemporary Israeli society and the devaluation of the feminine within a context of intra-ethnic hostility.

Anat Pirchi Award for Best Drama at the 2010 Jerusalem International Film Festival.

In person: Nina Menkes

"Nina Menkes's richly nuanced films are distinguished by luminous, surreal, and often disturbing imagery, and accompanied by soundtracks that are carefully modulated to suggest the simultaneity of the psychological and outside worlds." – Lawrence Kardish, NY Museum of Modern Art

"Menkes's achievement in deploying the qualities of Maya Deren's vision of the personal film in feature length is without parallel." – David E. James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*

Hailed as “one of the greatest figures in new wave feminist cinema” at her recent retrospective at the Viennale, and “brilliant, one of the most provocative artists in film today” by *The Los Angeles Times*, **Nina Menkes** synthesizes inner dream-worlds with harsh, outer realities. Her six features are a body of work *Sight and Sound* has called “controversial, intense and visually stunning.”

Her visual style is distinctive and personal: even when working with a director of photography, she usually handles the camera herself – as the case in *Dissolution*. Since 1981, she has explored a range of media and possibilities, including super-8 film – *A Soft Warrior* (1981); 16 mm film – *The Great Sadness of Zohara* (1983), *Magdalena Viraga* (1986); 35 mm film – *Queen of Diamond* (1991), *The Bloody Child* (1996); CD-ROM, such as the 3-hour long *The Crazy Bloody Female Center* (2000); and, starting with *Phantom Love* (2007), black-and-white HD.

Menkes’s films have been shown in festivals and venues around the world, including Sundance, Rotterdam, Locarno, London, The Viennale, San Francisco, Berlin, Cairo, Toronto, as well as at La Cinémathèque Française, The British Film Institute, the ICA in London, the Beijing Film Academy in China, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, MOCA and LACMA in Los Angeles. She has received numerous honors including a Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, an Annenberg Foundation Independent Media Grant, an American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker Award, three Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships and two Senior Fulbright Research Awards.

“For me, cinema is sorcery, a creative way to interact with the world in order to rearrange perception and expand consciousness, both the viewers’ and my own.” – Nina Menkes

See www.ninamenkes.com

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud.

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Erie by Kevin Jerome Everson

October 11:

Lewis Klahr: Dreaming Over the Flux of Things Past

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Between Displacement and Nostalgia: Conflicted Memories of Cuba

October 25:

Revelations of the Everyday: Films and Videos by Vincent Grenier

November 1:

Spectacles of Light: Films and Videos by Peter Rose

November 22:

Thom Andersen: Out of the Car and into the Music of the Street

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