

## NARCISA HIRSCH. PORTRAITS<sup>1</sup>

Andrea Giunta  
The University of Texas at Austin

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*The mechanisms that structure any work can be analyzed on the basis of the operations employed in its articulation, and, at the same time, on the basis of the aesthetic or biographical genealogies it calls into play. An analysis of Narcisa Hirsch's experimental film Taller (1975) allows access to a particular period of experimental film in Argentina during the sixties and seventies, and also to aspects of her biography at the time she made the film, including frictions present throughout her life—as in many other lives—related to exile, the co-existence of experimental film and political film and the emergence of a second wave of feminism in Argentina. Taller is analyzed as a portrait “in absentia”. It is a portrait consisting of maps of personal and cultural experiences, but in which Hirsch's face never appears. On the other hand, it is a strategy by way of which the system of quotes and collage characteristic of her work is made visible. Her work poses questions regarding an identity in transit, inscribed in a circular route of references to an image archive where film and photography are juxtaposed. The tension between these two languages and the timeframes involved is the key to the way in which her films activate aesthetic, historical and cultural questions.*

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“...we're in the studio, what you see is the studio wall, one of the walls of the studio...” During the first two minutes of a film that lasts for almost eleven, we hear Narcisa Hirsch's voice meticulously describing what can be seen in the single image projected during the entire film. It is a single take in which the only changes are the light and the shadows cast by certain objects, fluctuations that indicate that something is moving. The slightly indexical nature

emphasizes that what is being filmed is not a photo, but a space where things happen. It is a framed image of the place where the artist works.

We can identify quotes from many of the author's other experimental films in the image and in what the narrative describes. Here, experimental can be understood as an insubordination of a linear account, a continual intervention in the image's visibility, cutting and editing frames and cumulative sequences with a particular rhythm, a collision between narration and abstraction in terms of the image and sound track. When we allude to quoting one film in another we refer to a certain circular aspect of her work. Each film provides a point of entry into her entire body of work, the devices that organize it and its recurring themes: her own biography, her children, her husband, her ancestors, her friends, the experimental atmosphere at the Di Tella during the sixties, things that happen in her studio, the landscape of southern Argentina and Chile, bodies, faces and mouths.

An analysis of *Taller* (or *Workshop*), from 1975, allows us to sustain that in addition to her minimalism in formal terms, it is possible to visualize a tension between the public dimension and the innate introspectiveness of any portrait. These are portraits "in absentia," where cultural and familiar aspects merge (Taquini 39). The detailed description that the film provides of the studio configures an archive of objects and photographs that appear in prior and posterior films. The structural key to this piece also enables access to the scenario of a subjective world whose potential unfolds in other films. There are areas of Narcisa Hirsch's work that connect with practices from the sixties in Buenos Aires that interrogated the constitution of the female subject. Although we cannot refer to this as strictly feminist art or feminine art,<sup>2</sup> the themes handled and the language employed are permeated by recurring questions regarding the construction of an identity in transit, one that participates in different cultural universes with different roles, activated from diverse genealogical lines (Marín 23).<sup>3</sup> In many ways, her films are impregnated with references to the world of a woman immersed in the cultural milieu of the sixties and seventies.

The description of *Taller* (1975) begins at the center, with the photograph of Pucatrihue, a small cove and beach in southern Chile to which she often used to travel. It is a shot of an



Narcisa Hirsch, *Taller (Workshop)*, 1975, 16 mm, color, 11 min.

interior with a bed, a small table, something that looks like an ashtray and a window through which the sea, the Pacific Ocean, can be seen. Below it, a photo of a river in Bariloche, a place where she spends the summer. To the right, an albino gorilla. Above that, photos “of the kids,” Narcisa’s children in an antique bathtub. In the lower right corner, an orange lamp in the form of a big ball, a link with design from the sixties. To the left there is a poster from Oscar Smoje’s exhibition at the *Galatea* gallery in 1973, with the grotesque figures so characteristic of that period of his work. Below, part of a red pillow on a couch or a bedspread with a quilt-like design. The voice continues to describe the other walls of the studio that remain off-screen, including one that is divided in half by hallway. That is why there are five walls instead of four.

Different moments of the description allow one to infer that the voice was recorded some time after the filming.<sup>4</sup> The wall that we see as white, she says, is now orange.

The detailed description of the single image that we see generates the trust needed in order to mentally reconstruct other surfaces. The paused, almost photographic image stands in for what surrounds it during the full duration of the narrative. This tension between what we see and what is described to us, between the photographic image and the film image, between time frozen still and time that passes by articulates this language as a persistent state of “being in-between” which, along with other images and devices, can also be identified in other films.

In principle, *Taller* can be inscribed within what has been denominated structural or minimal cinema, where the audiovisual, temporal and narrative composition make up the primary parameters of the film. As Pablo Marín points out, this film trend is defined by the tradition established by *Empire* (Andy Warhol, 1964), *Wavelength* (Michael Snow, 1967), *Variations on a Cellophane Wrapper* (David Rimmer, 1970) or *One Way Boogie Woogie* (James Benning, 1977) (Marín 23). *A Casing Shelved* (Michael Snow, 1970) can be added to this list of references, in which Snow’s voice describes what he sees on shelves full of papers and paint cans for 45 minutes. The radical difference in Hirsch’s films is that she introduces the narration of what takes place off-screen. She even describes the position she finds herself in, looking at the image projected on the wall opposite the one she filmed. In this way, she leads us to mentally reproduce the paradox of having the same image in front of and behind us; one projected and the other, real. She also lets us know that while she describes, she is also filming. This film is one that can give rise to new narratives, in which past and future are activated in relation to the time in which the film takes place.

This is not a case of cold recitation. It is full of bits of laughter or adjectives that translate her taste. Comments about tea, toast or cigarettes are made along with the description. The sound of a spoon stirring in a cup can be heard in addition to the voice (Narcisa talking with Horacio Maira or Leopoldo Maler), and it is muffled while eating toast. The texture is of a shared, incidental, everyday moment. The analytical-descriptive approach is laced with emotions.

During the time filmed, there are multiple references to sixties and early seventies culture in Buenos Aires. These include the work of Oscar Smoje, photographs of dancer Áida Laib (member of a contemporary dance group along with Ana Kamien and Marilú Marini), and of Irina Ionesco, whose book “the kids,” her children, gave to her as a Christmas gift.<sup>5</sup>

When the film ends, we know who her friends are, some of her aesthetic tastes (the colors orange and green, in which she painted the studio walls), and that she traveled to New York (not Nueva York), where she bought a paper butterfly in Chinatown. We also know that Bariloche and the coast of Chile form part of her geographies, that she has two Moviolas and a Super-8 camera, that she celebrated her silver wedding anniversary, that she has children, that she keeps photos of her grandparents and great-grandparents, that she put up a poster from *Evergreen Review*, the *avant garde* literary magazine, the one of the woman with a butterfly on her forehead.<sup>6</sup>

What the film draws us into is, in a sense, a space where family history is reorganized within the realm of the studio. In the author’s biography, the experiences of a middle class woman who travels and has a family intersects with the experimental vein of cinematic language, where the biographical archive is dis-ordered to enable it to be introduced into a cultural archive linked to her work as an artist.

Both the language and the cultural context that activate *Taller* become even more complex in *El mito de Narciso* (*The Myth of Narcissus*, 1974-2005), a film that also began during the mid-seventies. Here a succession of women’s faces look at the camera in silence, with a minimum of expression. Each one speaks to her portrait. The descriptions are neither analytical nor biographical. They simply refer to the sensations experienced in front of the face, which at first, they feel to be foreign. Narcisa Hirsch considers this accumulation of portraits to be closer to documentary than to experimental film. Nevertheless, the formal mechanism grazes close to mimesis. The descriptions reinstate subjective references, feelings that each one has regarding an image of themselves, unrelated to that which we see. They do not narrate biographies or episodes from that life. They present us with the proposal of sensitizing the impact of finding one’s self estranged in front of one’s own face. At the same time, they update aspects of discourse regarding women, femininity and feminism’s inscription in Buenos Aires during the

early sixties. This basically includes issues that were articulated by groups typical of the second wave of feminism that emphasized raising consciousness and sought to produce “gender awareness;” in other words, the process of acquiring a consciousness linked to women’s social and cultural situation. There were meetings of small groups of women with rules and procedures. As recent bibliography reveals, different groups were organized in different spaces.<sup>7</sup> During this timeframe, the early seventies, Narcisa Hirsch participated in a women’s workshop coordinated by psychologist Susana Balán.<sup>8</sup> Jointly with her, the proposal of making a documentary film of the women who had participated emerged, inviting the women to speak about themselves to their own images. This dialog creates a link with subjective, intimate reflection more so than with a feminist political agenda. From these early films in black and white onward, Narcisa continued with the project, filming in color in 1979 and in 2005, when the video was edited. Narcisa appears in all three films, which converts these films into work that constitutes an autobiographical reflection over time.

Narcisa Hirsch saw experimental film for the first time at the MoMA. They were showing Michael Snow’s *Wavelength*: “...I sat down and soon thought ‘this will never end’, because it is a manual zoom 45 minutes long, inside a room where no action takes place. But then I calmed down and said, ‘OK, at some point it will end’, and I began to see it, to really look at it and see it. And that’s how it all started” (Interviewed qtd in Marín 25). She had already produced *Marabunta* (1967), for which she had planned and developed the performance that Raymundo Gleyzer filmed.<sup>9</sup> Narcisa tells that once she saw him film and edit, she decided to dedicate herself to film (Taquini 37). She had also done *Manzanas (Apples)*, filmed by Gerardo Vallejo, whose 1968 film, *El camino hacia la muerte del viejo Reales (Old Man Reales’s Road to Death)*, Narcisa had already seen (Torres 51-52).<sup>10</sup> These overlaps delineate the co-existence between experimental film and political film, which would later develop along different paths.

*Marabunta* shows the process of assembling a huge, three-meter long plaster skeleton in the artist’s studio that was presented in the Coliseo theater on October 31, 1967. Positioned on top of a table with a checkered tablecloth and completely covered with oranges, bananas and sandwiches and live pigeons inside it, this (feminine) “body” was presented to the public so





Narcisa Hirsch, *Marabunta*, 1967, 16 mm, documentary, black & white, color, sound, 7.55 min

that they might devour it until leaving its bones exposed once again. At that moment, *Blow up* (titled *Deseo de una mañana de verano* in Argentina) by Michelangelo Antonioni was being shown at the Coliseo. A different story and a different body, *Marabunta* produces laughter, amazement and aversion. The voracious public eats and takes away everything, including oranges in purses and sandwiches in suit pockets. While the pigeons escape from the wire mesh that had them enclosed and fly away, music by Edgar Varese is heard. The spectacle transmits the violence of a predatory situation, where the public is assimilated with insects. Grotesque and violent, the performance contains a powerfully critical component: well-dressed ladies and gentlemen pounce on the food or throw bread up to the balconies, from which part of the audience looks on and takes pictures. Behind the camera, Gleyzer surely delighted in these demonstrations of bourgeoisie decadence. As well must have Narcisa Hirsch, who left all these takes in the final edited version of the film.

It is at this very moment, linked to Argentina's post-Pop spirit, that she produces *Retrato* (*Portrait*, 1968), with Marie Louise Alemann, Walther Mejía and manning the camera, Horacio Maira. The film mixes shots of all three in the studio along with Edgardo Giménez, author of a painting also seen on the wall. In a collage of images, photographs of her mother and grandmother are interleaved along with moments filmed at a ranch, on the beach or in the street, where a woman with a bag walks beside a little girl. Among the urban graffiti, the phrase "Perón ya" (Perón now) can be read. Narcisa is also seen making one of her paintings with sand, while she was exploring the visual arts. We see her friends in costumes, naked, dancing, wearing masks. Narcisa, Marie Louise and Walther are seen walking in the Recoleta cemetery or dancing in the studio. We see Narcisa eating raw liver or installing the skeleton from *Marabunta* on the beach. The edition of different scenes introduces moments of intrigue, elements of fiction or surrealist atmospheres. Much of what appears in this film allows us a view of some of the objects and images described in *Taller*. It also anticipates editing procedures and certain moments that create a surreal mood that can be observed in later films. We should remember that Narcisa recognizes Surrealism in the experimental film's genealogy, in addition to *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid.

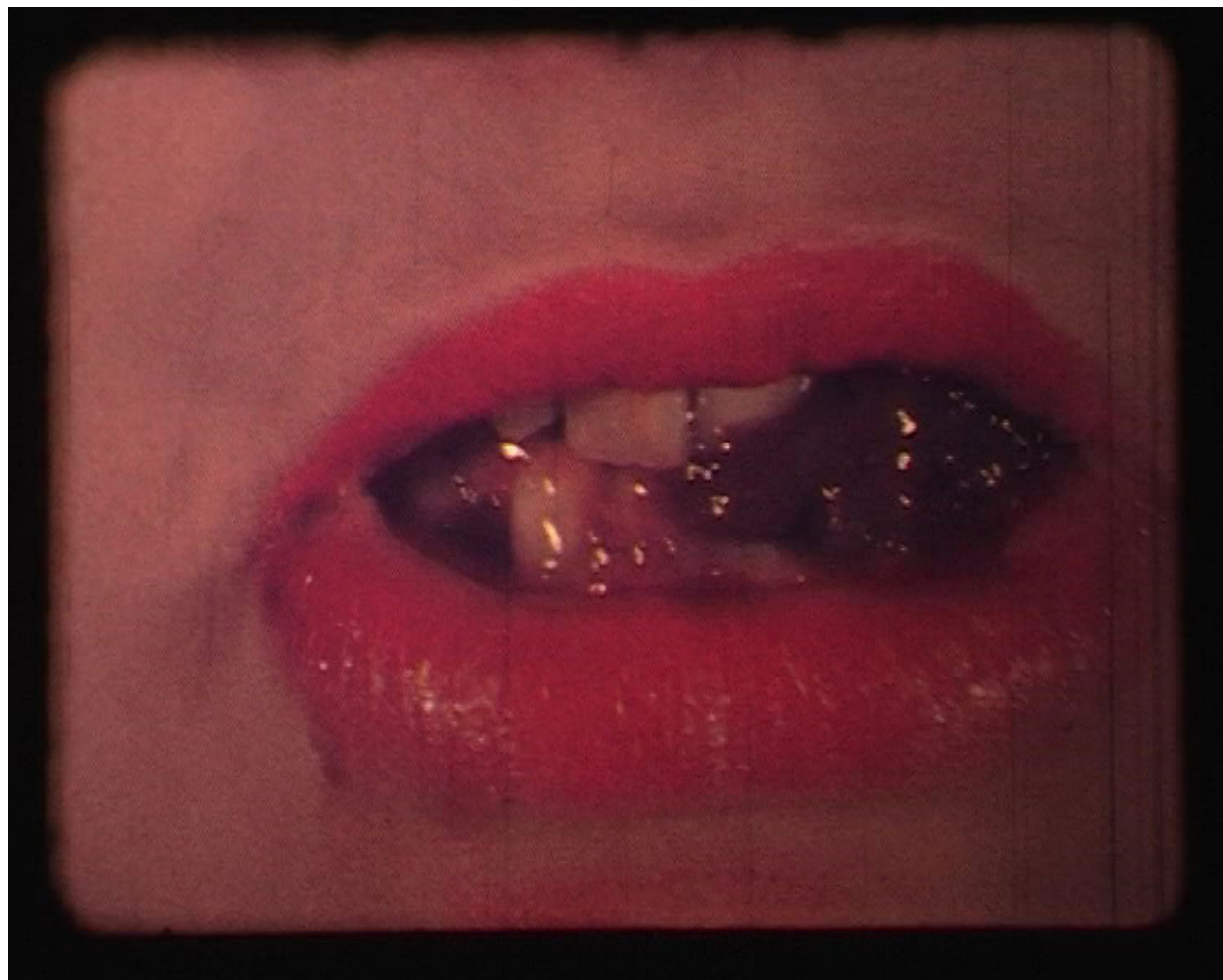


*Manzanas* is filmed on the corner of Florida Street and Diagonal Norte in Buenos Aires in 1968. It is an urban performance in which Narcisa, Marie Louise Alemann and Walther Mejía give out apples. The action evidences positive comments by the public (“it’s the first time that anyone has given me anything in Argentina”) or critiques (“tell me why”, since “Adam lost Paradise with that excuse” or saying that “this is an illogical country”). The film is interrupted by stills, translated into advertising language, where the aim and the action are summarized (“we went out into the street to give away apples / the place is Florida Street, in Buenos Aires / this apple is different from an everyday apple / we make work with the people / the work is the moment that is shared”).

In 1968 Narcisa Hirsch makes *Celebración* (*Celebration*), a film in a reductionist key. The image is always the same one: a close-up of lips with red lipstick that gesticulate, smile and devour raw liver, just as Narcisa does in *Retrato*. The mouth is that of Agustina Muñiz Paz, a friend’s daughter, who disappeared in 1976 at the hands of the dictatorship.<sup>11</sup> The lips recall the lips in Man Ray’s landscape. At the same time, they also function as a hyperbole of femininity, registered fully within a Pop aesthetic (both lips and makeup are perfect), where the raw meat introduces an element of extreme transgression creating scatological tensions.

After making these films, Narcisa sees *Wavelength* and carries out her two most conceptual films: *Come Out* (1971) and *Taller* (1975), both in 16mm. Pablo Marín considers both to be a reaction to film understood as an impulsive practice, typical of Argentina’s incipient experimental film scene. *Come Out*, a “programmatically, hermetic and minimal” film, consists of only two scenes (Marín 27). The first begins with a fuzzy image that gradually comes into focus, until we see that it is the needle of a record player; the second permits a view of the title and the author of the piece we are listening to: *Come Out* (1966) by Steve Reich. Marín points out the opposite movements of the visuals and the sound track: the moment when the sound is clearest coincides with the greatest degree of visual abstraction, and vice versa (Marín 27). Marín situates *Taller* in this same concrete, minimalist process, and it also swerves slightly away toward an autobiographical context. As we have already pointed out, the single long shot that comprises the film expands in the voice in off which, from right to left, introduces us to a mental representation. The order of the objects we see and that of those we imagine lay out a

personal and cultural universe that we link to the broader context of the themes that run throughout the author's work. However, the film is programmatic and reconstructing the space does require an effort. It is organized on the basis of a device, a mechanism (still image and narrated space) that situate it among the films of the second phase of experimentation that Marín makes reference to.



Narcisa Hirsch, *Celebración (Celebration)*, 2007, video, color, sound, 5 min.

What did working with experimental film in Argentina during the seventies imply? In the first place, it involved taking an aesthetic stance with ties to a genealogy of recent experimental film. As mentioned above, this meant Warhol, Benning, Rimmer and Snow, to which Narcisa also added Dalí, Buñuel, Vertov, Richter, Duchamp, Deren and Hammid. One line that can be

detected in Argentina during the '30s would include films by Horacio Coppola or some works on celluloid by Víctor Iturralde or Luis Bras (Marín 26). In addition, there was the experimental climate of the sixties, in which figure films by Oscar Bony.<sup>12</sup> The Di Tella would bring *New American Cinema* (1965) from New York by way of Jonas Mekas.

The sixties can be read in terms of the contemporary as understood from an interdisciplinary viewpoint. In this laboratory, the possibility of flowing from one language and medium to another was established. Silvestre Byrón characterized this moment as the national “underground phenomenon”, during the period that spans from the Di Tella to the CAYC. In his view, underground cinema’s most decisive moment developed between 1971 and 1974, and the distribution circuit included the Instituto Hi Photography, the Centro Dramático Buenos Aires, the Unión de Cinematografistas, the Teatro Libre Florencio Sánchez and the Instituto Goethe. With the exception of the Goethe, Narcisa didn’t know these places. She mentions the encounters at UNCIPAR (Unión de Cineastas de Paso Reducido) as one of the first places she used to frequent, where she met Claudio Caldini.<sup>13</sup> There, ardent discussions were held with the public, who would maintain that “my five-year-old son made a better film than the one I’ve just seen” or “this isn’t cinema” (Hirsch in Paparella 66).

The members of the experimental film group with whom Narcisa interacted included Marie Louis Alemann, Claudio Caldini, Juan Villola, Horacio Vallereggio, Juan José Mugni, and Adrián Tubio. In the context of the late sixties and early seventies, she describes herself as “someone who was working very much on the margins of everything, like a sleepwalker, and as such it wasn’t very important when and where and with whom I would do things; it was like a game” (Hirsch in Torres 45).

The other meeting place was the Instituto Goethe, where films were shown regularly since roughly 1976 on. The passage of Super-8 to video made an impact in dispersing the group. The Goethe was a place to meet that would lend them a projector; they also invited Werner Nekes, a German experimental filmmaker who was minimalist, conceptual and exacting. “The seminar that he gave was excellent, it was fantastic because he would also show us his films and explain them, he had a theory, a clear theory, he was also very didactic. For the seminar, the Goethe rented a place in Ezeiza for us and we lived there with mattresses on the floor and

sleeping bags, and we filmed what was filmed using the elements we had” (Hirsch on Paparella 67). All this happened apart from the critics. They would work, in a certain sense, guided by a mission: “Structures had to be dismantled. In order to begin from the standpoint of ideology, conventional and traditional ideologies had to be dismantled, just as painting had done at the outset of the Century. (...) I was on the side of those who were dismantling, that was my choice” (Hirsch in Paparella 69). Public reaction confirmed that her choice made sense: “We weren’t against anything, but in favor of a language and we wanted to be able to transmit that to people, to open up access to that language. (...) the people who would get up, indignant, were part of the show. When you’re on the barricades you need that, too” (Hirsch in Paparella 72).

The films were made without scripts or budgets, around people who were working “intuitively, on hunches from visual artists, poets, actors and dancers who were eager to ‘do things’” (Byrón “Arte y rebelión”). It was an impulsive context, in the face of which Marín sustains that *Come Out* and *Taller* represented a reaction, given their focus on form rather than content.<sup>14</sup>

This type of cinema was produced and circulated in particular ways. Byrón highlights the search for open forms and metonymic relationships; flight from massification and from institutions. Film was considered to be a generator of optional images. He would define it as a Cuarto Cine (Fourth Cinema) “that seeks the rare and occult, the mysterious and unknown.” As such, this distanced him from the 1969 manifesto by Solanas and Gettino, “Hacia un tercer cine” (Toward a Third Cinema), referring to films that differed from Hollywood but also from European art films. This Cuarto Cine was cinema that sought optional images, explored the irrational and the amoral, without leadership and without funding from foundations, political parties or associations. It had no press and no industry. According to Byrón, they were works produced in and against a particular political context: “Those were, at the same time, years of repression, militarism and political violence. The only support of the movement came from the public, exposing itself to the [era’s] dominant authoritarianism. Those rebellious images, full of irrational and amoral spirit, were entirely at odds with the recommendations of a ‘national identity’” (Byrón “Arte y rebelión”).

What we have reconstructed thus far provides a glimpse of the co-existence between experimental film and activist film. It also allows us to draw parallels between techniques of exploring subjectivity and questions regarding the construction of feminine identity that run throughout the practices developed at the heart of feminist groups as well as other, independent groups such as the women that Narcisa filmed. Although she was not directly in contact María Luisa Bemberg or with other feminist groups formed during the early seventies, they did have practices (groups to raise awareness) and ideas (reflection regarding identity, one's own face, beauty and femininity) in common. There was an overlap between these contexts with some shared spaces, but they were not the same. During a short time Narcisa participated in *Lugar de Mujer (Women's Place)*; she was one of its founding members when the group organized, in August of 1983 in the midst of the return to democracy, to take up the agenda of making women's place and rights more visible once again.<sup>15</sup>

Narcisa's work also had ties with the experimental scene at the Di Tella and the interventions in public space that became widespread from '68 onward. During the seventies under the dictatorship, Narcisa returned to interventions in the street with poetic texts written in aerosol: "A veces todo brilla, todo... La vida es lo que nos pasa cuando hacemos otra cosa...escribo a pleno sol... y señales de vida..." ("At times everything shimmers, everything... Life is what happens when we're doing something else... I write in the bright light of the sun... and signs of life..."). The graffiti was published in Miguel Grimberg's *Mutantia* magazine under the title "Algo está pasando en Buenos Aires" (Something is happening in Buenos Aires). She then stopped producing graffiti. The street was a dangerous place in those days (Taquini 39).

This experimentation also had political implications. "My films—Narcisa stated—have to do with the idea of the *avant garde*. This is also political, not in a militant sense but political in the end in terms of a paradigm change, breaking away from tradition and the idea of intervening in other, non-traditional circuits" (Taquini 42). She was using the technical resources available at the time: a Super-8 camera using it to film whatever was at hand. Even a cookie. "I have physically burned celluloid, we have burned it, we have drawn on it and we have scratched it. I have constructed my own filters to put in front of the lens, things that



couldn't be bought commercially and therefore had to be invented along the way. Or projecting onto just about anything, smoke, dry ice, or a live white rabbit in a gallery" (Hirsch in Torres 49).

Activist film and experimental film aspired to change the world. The two trends didn't act jointly, but neither were they completely separate from one another. The cinematographic language employed by activist and experimental film had strategies in common (collage and editing). In film, as was the case in the visual arts, the process of separation between the political *avant garde* and the artistic *avant garde* would begin to become clearly visible after '68.

Hirsch's most recent film, *El mito de Narciso*,<sup>16</sup> can be understood as a complex portrait, constructed by way of collage and montage of material from the archive of her own, thoroughly filmed life. This is an archive of family moments, philosophical references, quotes from her films and those of others in which her friend, theater director Alberto Félix Alberto, interrogates the silent image of Narcisa, the same that appears in the first section of *El mito de Narciso* from 2005. His reiterated comments express doubts regarding an impossible desire: "What you are telling me is quite strange, a woman who says that she will go someplace else in order to recognize the life she would have had if she had stayed there, something that I believe to be completely absurd."

The film edits together photographs of her time in Germany, where she was born in 1928. Photographs with her father, a painter whom she would only see years later and whom she will not ask everything that she would have liked to know. The hypothesis has to do with a life—one that has been lived as well as that which has not—that might be reconstructed, at least along the route that the film proposes, based on a compilation of images from spaces and moments in which different, parallel stories have transpired. The images refer to what happened in Germany when she was no longer living there, at the time when siblings Hans and Sophie Scholl were handing out leaflets against the war. Paul Hirsch, the man she would marry, appears, then manager for the Hochschild mining group, who would create the Fundación Antorchas during the eighties, an institution that was key to the architecture of research and artistic creation during the post-dictatorship era. The film speaks of the frustration of a little girl taken away from a happy environment in Germany, distanced from her father "with whom you



Narcisa Hirsch, *El mito de Narciso* (The Myth of Narciso), 2011, super 8, 16 mm, video, color, sound, 60 min.

had a relationship with a certain sensuality” as Alberto Félix Alberto says. Her father who was an artist who made a living painting portraits during the war. Taken away from that daydream, she lived with her mother in Buenos Aires at a boarding house at Sucre and Conesa.

*El mito de Narciso* includes constant quotes of her other films, her archive of photos and the films of others as well, such as *Triumph of the Will* by Leni Riefenstahl or Rex Blumenstein’s *Germans Against Hitler* or images of the implosion of the Warnes Inn in the city of Buenos Aires on March 16, 1991. In one scene, Narcisa is seen walking through Peter Eisenman’s *Monument to the Holocaust* in Berlin, moving between its hundreds of stone blocks, amidst the instability of the space that ascends and descends between slightly inclined verticals. There, with her own body, she recreates a possible experience of that time that she did not live, a sensitive way of reflecting upon the past. This image condenses the tension between the different contexts and cultural universes that are compressed into this film in the search to give form to an impossible hypothesis, that of living a life that has not been lived. “Don’t turn it around, Narcisa, your life is this one,” the voice says. Narcisa concludes: “I will be the one to pronounce the feared phrase: there is no I that can be known. It’s that simple. There is no reflection in the water. There are only particles, physical particles. Dances of matter. Matter that is unknown but infinite. And brief, very brief instants of light.”

The film, however, does make the attempt. It investigates contiguous relationships between images and it explores the intervals and the tension between different times and spaces, unfolding tensions between her image and the ways in which the archive activates the formation of a subject in transit.

*Translated by Tamara Stuby*<sup>17</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Daniela Muttis, María Laura Rosa, Ana Amado, Nora Domínguez, Mariano Mestman, Susana

<sup>2</sup> Here I consider feminist art to be that which the artists produced in relation to the political work carried out by feminist groups. I understand feminine production to be that in which artists deal with issues linked to the world of women from a critical, deconstructive standpoint with respect to social stereotypes or as a form of questioning the constitution of their own subjectivity.

<sup>3</sup> She is an educated woman with a husband and children who lives in Vicente López, and yet at the same time forms part of the bohemian universe of the sixties and seventies, with a studio in San Telmo and friends who are artists, dancers, painters and filmmakers. Narcisa Hirsch was born in Germany; her father was a painter and half Jewish. At five years of age, prior to the Second World War, she came to Argentina with her mother and grandmother. They pertain to a German-Argentinean family that reaches back as far as the Rosas period, when a creole, Narcisa Pérez Millán de la Quintana married a German from Hannover (assumed to be) a businessman. They had 10 children. Her mother, a mystic Catholic, fled from Nazi Germany and carried out a manner of resistance. According to Narcisa, if she had stayed in Berlin, she could have been a Sophie Scholl. It wasn't a question of political action but a militant friendship with the Alemann family, the head of which was Ernesto Alemann, founder of *Argentinisches Tageblatt* and *Pestalozzi Schule*, two German-speaking sites with strong anti-Nazi politics during the entire war, in a country with a strong pro-German component. The Alemann family, of Swiss origin, was opposed to the Nazi movement and was important for German-speaking Jewish emigrants who arrived during that time. Narcisa Hirsch, correspondence with the author, April 1 and 2, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> There are two narratives, one in Spanish, where the interlocutor is Horacio Maira, and another in English, where she converses with Leopoldo Maler. The texts of these two versions differ. It is likely that the one recorded with Leopoldo Maler is later, since it includes the description of objects that do not seem to be present in the first version. For example, a poem by Federico Peralta Ramos.

<sup>5</sup> The book is most likely *Liliacées langoureuses aux parfums d'Arabie*, Chêne, 1974.

<sup>6</sup> Founded by Barney Rosset, the magazine was published in the United States between 1957 and 1973, reappearing in 1998. They published writers such as Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, Charles Bukowski, William S. Burroughs, Marguerite Duras, Jean Genet, Allen Ginsberg, Günter Grass, Jack Kerouac, Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, Pablo Neruda, Vladimir Nabokov, Frank O'Hara, Susan Sontag and Malcom X, among others.

<sup>7</sup> Alejandra Vasallo explains the history of this first phase of feminism, between 1970 and 1975, and the confrontations that arose with political activism. See Vasallo in Andújar et al comp. Regarding the second wave of feminism, see Rosa and the precursor article by Cano.

<sup>8</sup> Psychologist Susana Balán coordinated women's groups. In 1975 she wrote *La manzana de París*, in which she analyzes the meetings of a group of professional women who discuss their multiple inscription (housewives, spouses, professionals) as a process of searching for identity. I thank her for the access afforded to this previously unpublished material and for her observations during a telephone conversation in March of 2013.



<sup>9</sup> Narcisa wanted to film the action and consulted the director of Alex Laboratories, Aldo Sessa, who recommended Raymundo Gleyzer (Taquini 37). Soon after this, Gleyzer participated in the PRT (Party of Revolutionary Workers), while the FATRAC (Anti-Imperialist Front of Workers of Culture), which operated between 1968 and 1972, was active. On May 27, 1976, Gleyzer joined the list of those disappeared by Argentina's military dictatorship. See Peña and Vallina.

<sup>10</sup> Although the official debut of Vallejo's film was on April 10, 1974, the film was shown at private or semi-clandestine gatherings. Nevertheless, Vallejo had only begun to film the piece in 1968 and by 1971 it was almost completed. What Narcisa probably saw were Vallejo's shorts: *Las cosas ciertas* from 1964-1965 or *Ollas populares*, from 1968. I thank Mariano Mestman for these observations. See Mestman, "Los hijos del viejo Reales. La representación de lo popular en el cine político." The date that Narcisa's performance was filmed is documented in an article in *Panorama* magazine from August 22, 1968.

<http://www.magicasruinas.com.ar/revistero/esto/revdesto159.htm> (consulted 15-04-2013)

<sup>11</sup> At that time Agustina was about 19 years old. She disappeared on April 21, 1976. She was studying music and literature. See <http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/cgi-bin/memoria/wxis?IsisScript=registro.xis&base=toda&cantidad=10&format=toda&expresion=16=Mu%F1iz%20Paz,%20Agustina%20>

[bin/memoria/wxis?IsisScript=registro.xis&base=toda&cantidad=10&format=toda&expresion=16=Mu%F1iz%20Paz,%20Agustina%20](http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/cgi-bin/memoria/wxis?IsisScript=registro.xis&base=toda&cantidad=10&format=toda&expresion=16=Mu%F1iz%20Paz,%20Agustina%20) (consulted 16-04-2013). *Celebración* was edited by Daniela Muttis in 2005.

<sup>12</sup> For an analysis of Oscar Bony's films, see Giunta, "Oscar Bony. Una estética de la discontinuidad."

<sup>13</sup> For more about Claudio Caldini, see Di Tella, *Hachazos*, and his film with the same title.

<sup>14</sup> See Marín and also his reference to the concept of "parameter" according to Bordwell (281).

<sup>15</sup> See the speech by the group's president, Marta Rackier, on the occasion of their 25th anniversary on September 10, 2008. <http://www.lugardemujer.org.ar/pdf/discurso%2025%20aniversario.pdf> (consulted 23-04-2013)

<sup>16</sup> With the same title as the 2005 film, but completely different.

<sup>17</sup> Artist, writer and translator born in Poughkeepsie, NY in 1963 and based in Buenos Aires since 1995.