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# Independent Filmmaker, Carolee Schneemann, Lecture

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Audience: [howling cat] [inaudible 00:01:45]

Sally Dixon: Oh sure, put that one off and put that one on, or ...

Audience: Is this the microphone?

Sally Dixon: Is this it? It is. What is our guard's name? We can close the door so the light doesn't come in.

Audience: Sir.

Sally Dixon: Sir. Sir, would you close the doors from the outer entry and we'll feel closeted in a grotto-like atmosphere of sorts. A temple. Carolee Schneemann was born in a cave in southern France or northern Spain, I understand. There were paintings on the walls, so very early she was exposed to images and was entranced by them. She's of Russian, Armenian, Lithuanian parentage, German parentage.

As a child in these caves, of course, the images came at her from all angles so she was never accustomed to the frame, or the square room, as the rest of us were. Of course, when she got out in the rest of the world and found that people had divided things into boxes and frames and squares, she would have none of it.

Her first task as she matured was to obliterate the frame, to go out into the audience, to include them, to draw them in and to, in short, invent the kinetic theater. To do away with traditional frame lines in film, in painting, etc. In this she has made her lifelong task all in the name of freedom for whoever feels boxed within the frame of any kind. She continues to pursue it, as you can see, or will see before the evening is over. I'm going to give it right back to her now and she'll go on from here.

Carolee Schneemann: Thank you Sally. Does the silver change the voice? No, not at all. I'm just wearing the mask so that I can exchange one feminine stereotype for another stereotype. Some of the things Sally said was truth. I can't disentangle it. I would like to say, though, that the caves she's referring to are the Lascaux and Altamira caves, we had homes in both, and wintered in one and summered in the other. These were the works of our great-great-great grandmothers, as more and more of you will soon understand.

In our culture, strangely enough, they've always been attributed to our great-great grandfathers but that is a mistake. Because while he went out hunting, she made the images to protect his actions. [00:05:06]

I decided to confuse myself about the order of the program and I've done it so thoroughly I don't even know what to tell you I'm going to show. It's a little bit like the Greyhound rock star syndrome, where you're in another auditorium with another splay of seats and faces and lights and almost the same technical problem, but it's completely different.

Like here, we blew out all the fuses but we really hadn't, it's just that things were plugged in the wrong switch. Our sound system was something that was improvised a month ago, and I think it might work again this time.

The only thing I do know about where I am, that it isn't Buffalo or Atlanta or Northampton or Wisconsin or Chicago, is that it's the first place that I've ever been where they really want me to work. That's also partly why I'm not sure what I'm doing standing up here, because they've given me a room to work in with all the equipment I've never had and always needed. I've started something new, which has taken me out of making a presentation of what I've already done.

Nevertheless, I'll try and remember. To back Sally up, or myself up, I usually like to tell everyone that I started as a painter and that everything that I do do is in terms of some extended dimension of the act of painting. I take it as a physical act, and a life process, that has to do with integrating the eye and the body in an environment and in space and in time.

The first film I'm going to show you is not a film that I've made as a film. I think what I'm really going to do tonight is show different aspects of films and what they do, how I've used them. One thing is film that I approach by visual necessity for things that there's no other way to struggle with, or capture, deal with. They're visual, they're tactile, they're sensory.

Then there's film as a documentation of the theater pieces I have made. It's film that has a dual life. Either it exists as a thing in itself that's a shadow, or a mirror, of something that really occurred, or it, then, begins to engross me in terms of it's rhythms, it's structures, light and dark. I forget about the center of what it records, what it relates to as a real situation, or an event, and begin to think of it as film.

The first film that we'll have is called *Water Light / Water Needle*. It's from an aerial, a kinetic theater piece that I conceived completely on the ropes in the air in 1964. The underlying impetus to that was having been in Venice, where there was this complete interplay between above horizon, below horizon, between water and solid matter, between spire and what it penetrated as sky. All of those things.

I wanted to be able to make a unitary work that captured that sense. That was also developing an idea of total interrelatedness. Something I can say about it that you don't necessarily see in the film itself is that when you work on the

ropes, and anyone who has will know this, anyone else working on the ropes completely changes what the rope does, it's tension and your balance. There's no way that you can work in a group independently on ropes.

This piece was conceived as a group work where every individual intention would have to be adjusted and related to anyone else's action. It was originally performed indoors at St. Mark's Church because I had to rig it on steel pillars and that place had them. Then I did an outdoor version, which is the one that's in this film.

Okay, I'll just say that the people who are performing in this piece, as most all of the performers in my theater pieces through the 60s, were not, themselves, trained performers. There's a dental student and a film critic and a literary editor and a television secretary. They are people that wanted to make this venture with me. [00:10:25]

-you work this. You have to have it. Okay

Audience: Does this go on –[end of discussion 00:10:38]

Carolee Schneemann: Something different from what Sally said, that I was actually born in Pennsylvania and grew up living in a rectangular set of boxes like everybody else. One of the background things to *Water Light / Water Needle* was that how we got to do it outside, we needed a certain configuration of trees to support the ropes and sustain the structure of the movement. There was someone who came to just be helpful and hang around in the indoor performance in New York.

He said his father had some land that we could use in New Jersey. That seemed fantastic. It turned out that this piece that was based on the imagery of Venice ended up in the trees of the Havemayer estate. The Havemayers, some of you will know, are the people who first brought over the works of the impressionists. Mary Cassatt was a great friend of that family.

Here we were, back in their woods, in a decayed estate with one aged retainer there, where we found a huge electric shock machine in the mansion. It was one of the few objects that was left in this abandoned estate. The aged retainer said, "Well, yes, the last Mr. Havemayer was a bit mental, you know," while we were examining this great box and all its wires and head attachments.

Why my friend's father had the estate was that he was a Venetian prince, strangely enough, and was going to buy this with other land in New Jersey to make a homestead for displaced Venetians, or something. It had all that perfect inevitability, which is what happens when things are all working through me.

I'd like to take a couple minutes and see if there's any questions about what you've seen. Just any practical question. It was shot by an Englishman and we edited it together. Yeah?

Audience: Why did you use the sound?

Carolee Schneemann: Some of the sound, I wanted the Vivaldi echoing, and some of the sound was found on tape. The Irish football game was found on BBC tape. I liked the juxtaposition of a sport event, like the hardness, the edge against that against the sort fluidity of the Vivaldi. There was a showing at the Whitney Museum where I had this film and a janitor ran out with a broom and he said, "That was a fantastic game and I remember it. It was the Celts against Dublin."

He was the only person in the world that this tape would mean anything to in that way. It was just incredible, there he was. Yeah?

Audience: Do you remember what kind of lens used for the wide angles?

Carolee Schneemann: We were doing different things with the lenses. Some of the lenses had prisms on top of them. The shooting was kind of cooperative, with people exchanging cameras and lenses that they had brought. I don't know exactly, no, and it was quite a long time ago. Yes?

Audience: Did you have to use any reflectors for lighting?

Carolee Schneemann: On this?

Audience: Yeah, any reflectors?

Carolee Schneemann: No, no, it was absolutely natural. Yeah, there were no technical controls at all. All I did was advise the people who were shooting. Actually, I made them work out on the ropes to try and get some sense of what it really felt like because working on ropes takes weeks. You have to build up very strong calluses to carry your own weight and not to get your skin all cut up. Which was also why we always had to wear a lot of clothes, or a certain amount of clothes, in this piece. [00:15:00]

Because if we had worn less clothes, every part of your body that touches the ropes is being rubbed raw. You also have to build up what's called a muscular memory so that the ropes had to be worked out on at least three times a week for four hours to get the muscle strength and just the simple coordination to be at ease there and to balance and to develop your freedom on the ropes and trusting one another. If you missed workout on the ropes then there was a kind of a setback and you've have to, almost, begin from a position of losing some coordination and some security, and strength.

Okay, the film I'm going to show now is not really a film. It's really just for me and you're going to be voyeurs. I'm less and less interested in making performance situations in performance environments. I've been working more privately on film and writing. This summer, in Sweden, I did a performance that's based on the recipe. Do you all have a recipe?

This recipe is the score from which the theater piece was made. Think of this next 15 minutes as a puzzle opera. It's an opera made up out of scraps and pieces, which eventually I'll structure into something else. What we've got is 8 millimeter footage of the actual performance, slides from the performance, and 8 millimeter footage of an ongoing diary film that I'm doing in 8 millimeter. Which is just shooting things that occur, sort of the weaves in my life.

The film has leaving home, and then being Sweden, and then going away from Sweden, a journey out to Fire Island with the cat. Some of the slides are not of the performance but of being a tourist in Sweden, and of another kind of journey. They're all journeys actually. Then there's a few slides of a very strange journey, a trip that occurred on Fire Island. The images that are in that are puzzles that relate to the book I'm working on. Someday someone will figure it out.

Let's see, first we'll try the sound, which is going to be wrong.

Audience: Do you need the film to be backwards?

Carolee Schneemann: No.

Audience: It is.

Carolee Schneemann: Well, we'll rewind it. Okay, do you want to start that Sally? [end of lecture 00:18:30]

Does anyone have any questions about the summer scrapbook? Yeah?

Audience: Can you talk about what you were trying to do in the three images and the song-

Carolee Schneemann: He asked what I was trying to do using three images and the song. It's really like pushing around pieces of paper, or just the elements that you have. You begin to make certain decisions and they're the decisions that are very raw. They're very simple before you are really involved in the material making larger decisions about how to structure it or what it will become.

It's letting the things-I enjoyed seeing them because, against my usual aesthetic principles, they were just there as things in themselves with the

juxtaposition of their being related and having turned up from the same situation, from the same moment in time. It's almost like finding your own scraps in a back pocket and saying, "Now where was I and what was that?"

I'm trying to let that be as another kind of lesson to myself because it's not the way I've ever worked before. I'm very interested now just to, in some way, let things be, whatever they are. Without the aesthetic implication or density that I normally would go towards, or go for. It really is like very unprepossessing and saying, "Here are these bits." [00:20:28]

I don't know what anyone else could put in or out of it exactly. Whereas, with the other films that I'll show, I have very determined, developed ideas about what I put in and what is possible to get out. There's no answer, really. Yeah?

Audience: [inaudible 00:20:47]

Carolee Schneeman: I've never seen them before.

Audience: Was this the first time?

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah.

Audience: [inaudible 00:20:56]

Carolee Schneemann: Oh, I don't know. You see, that was sort of the fun of the risk. It's like having people into your house when you were away for three weeks and you say, "Oh, come over," and you don't know if there's anything left to eat or rats or mice. I had a very nice time because I thought, "What do I do now, I turn that one off, it's too dark. This is boring me, I can't see anything there. You can't hear the sound. That was funny, no one understood it." I just let it go. Yellow shirt, did you have a question?

Audience: That's a very fascinating idea. I was wondering-

Carolee Schneemann: Which idea?

Audience: [inaudible 00:21:43]

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah.

Audience: I was wondering do you recall how you came to that, or what led you to that [inaudible 00:21:53]?

Carolee Schneemann: He's asking what led me to the idea of letting the things be. Was that the idea?

Audience: [inaudible 00:21:59]

Carolee Schneemann: Yes, all right. He says I'm still imposing an aesthetic. It has to do with opening up process in some way that I'm going to be able to trust whatever makes me curious. I'm going to trust that in some realm of where I might see something. It's another kind of risk taking. I think I do it because I never did it before. I'm only interested in pushing my own boundaries. Even if it turns out that I'm doing something that seems sort of backwards, where I'm breaking all the aesthetic structures that I've fought for and screamed over and sweated into.

That interests me very much as a way of changing myself and what I'm looking at. Because what I'm really interested in is a cellular idea about particles. Particles of film, the substance of film, the substance of sound. This is what's turned up in my actual immediate life as the result of exposing certain actions to material media, my own media. Cassette tapes and 8 millimeter film, all these very humble things.

It might turn out to be something that just disappears into my own archives or it might be something that could be a huge mosaic. Next time I come there'd be 360 elements of all kinds of scraps that came from some life situation. I don't know. Yeah?

Audience: Do you feel that most of that film is underexposed or doesn't that matter to you?

Carolee Schneemann: He wants to know if most of the film is underexposed. It is underexposed but the throw is very bad for that projector. We needed an art projector. The images are much more clear. I have seen the things separately, one by one, in equipment, and they're all more clear than they were tonight. Also the tape, so you all were more at a disadvantage in terms of clarity. The mystery, I don't know about that. Yeah?

Stephanie: What kind of cat is Kitch?

Carolee Schneemann: Stephanie wants to know what kind of cat is Kitch. I'm glad you asked that Stephanie. Kitch is a 17 year old Maltese that's been with me all that time. She's the cat that appears in Brakhage's *Cat's Cradle*, that was with Stan and Jane and me and Jim Tenney, who will appear in the last film of mine that I'm showing. Kitch is also the cat in *Fuses*, which is the last film I'll show, with Jim Tenney in it. Yeah, she's a Maltese. [00:25:06]

I took her all over the world. When I left I smuggled her in every place I had to go. She's traveled in any imaginable thing that a human being ever traveled in, or that I have. Yeah?

Audience: I'm just curious, is the print original? [00:25:26].

Carolee Schneemann: Yes. Is the print an original, yes. It's an original because the expense of getting a direct copy of 8 millimeter, which is very cheap initially, is as much as printing 16 millimeter. It's really awful. Yeah?

Audience: Will you show that again?

Carolee Schneemann: Tonight?

Audience: The original footage.

Carolee Schneemann: You mean in terms of taking care of it or letting it go?

Audience: Yeah, that's kind of part of the whole thing.

Carolee Schneemann: No, I really want to hold on to it because some of that footage, I know, is part of ... I'm doing a portrait of Kitch. It's a film that's called *Kitch's Last Meal*. That's my way of having to deal with my life through the cat's life because her life has a very infinite edge on it, an obvious one now. She's 17 and although last week I heard there are Maltese that live to be 30, I don't know. I'm making a whole year or more, a whole diary, of her life until she dies, month by month so I'm very anxious to save the footage with her in it.

Audience: You won't show it again?

Carolee Schneemann: No, well I'd show it very gingerly. I'm not as gingerly about my materials as most other filmmakers, I can't afford to be. That attitude always implies that help is around the corner, that you'll finally get the print, or you'll get equipment. I've never been able to assume that.

Which gets us to the next thing, why I work so slowly on films. Films is only one of the things that I do but I don't think of it as more or less central to my work than any of the other things that I do. The film we're going to see now, *Plumb Line*, took me three years to edit it. It's made up of scrap footage that had the intention of being a larger, longer work. It's about the dissolution of relationship. In that way, the film had to be built up out of the dissolution, which meant scrap footage.

What I did in *Plumb Line* was that footage that was shot in 8 millimeter was then blown up to 16. Things that were shot in 16 were mirror printed in 8. Images that were moving were shot to be still, freeze frames. Still photographs were shot with some sense of camera animation. The sound to *Plumb Line* is a collage mixture of the cat, Kitch. It doesn't sound necessarily like a cat, but she sings to resonant frequency patterns in hallways.

There's that, and the voice on the tape is my voice, and that's not especially recognizable people say. That's central to what the film is about. I finished this

film a year ago, after three years. Some of it was hand printed at the London Co-op, on the step printer. I think that's how I finally got to get through it.

Okay for up there, and let me take the [inaudible 00:28:58]. [end of discussion [00:29:06]

Audience: [inaudible 00:29:08]

Carolee Schneemann: Oh, there it is. Okay. [inaudible 00:29:14]

The last film is *Fuses* but before we run it I'll just see if there's a question on this one.

Okay, *Fuses* was shot without any other camera person, that's important about it. It was my first film. It's with myself and James Tenney, the composer. With some sense that all the footage was made through the presence of the cat, it's the same cat. It started in 1965 and finished in 68. [00:30:04]

Also, I will say just a few things about it. The film, as a first film, it's created completely as an extension of my painting. The film itself was subjected to techniques that normally would be available to someone working in dimensional and tactile materials, such as acid baths. It's collaged and, well, we'll talk about it afterwards.

Can we do [inaudible 00:30:37]? [end of discussion 00:30:39]

It arrested everyone standing near a projection booth and arrested the films too. Are there any questions about that? Yeah?

Audience: In shooting this film, when you shoot the real love making how do you separate the process of filming and love making? Did they interfere?

Carolee Schneemann: He says when you're shooting your own love making, how do you separate the process of love making from filming, and did they interfere. I think they didn't really because we had worked with so much media and equipment individually so that we often had tape recorders going all the time to see what might turn up on them. Tape recorders sometimes under the bed.

It didn't interfere but the whole process with the filming took a long time because I didn't have any equipment of my own so I had to keep borrowing Bolexes. These were wind-up Bolexes, they weren't automatic, they had to be cranked up. We would often, the camera would often stop and we would keep going. That's probably why it took so damn long. There were things I really wanted to have as footage and the camera would run down and we wouldn't. Or the camera would get kicked out of the bed.

The camera was also hung by straps and on hangers over the bed and it was propped up on books. The camera had the sadomasochistic treatment that women usually get in sex films. I did it to the camera instead. Some of the best footage was lost because the camera fell down or was kicked.

Then I was working very consciously with seasons and seasonal changes. There might be some morning when I was just trying to do some other work and get breakfast and sweep and it started to snow and that was something I needed was some kind of love making with the snow out the window. I'd get very upset because it seemed very mechanical to say to Jim, "Look, we have to go back to bed because it's snowing and I borrowed Vanderbeek's camera and I have 100 feet of Ektachrome."

He'd say, "That's okay, all right." The film was really an homage to the relationship that made that kind of process possible because we worked together on everything for more than 10 years, since we were 18 years old.

I know there's lots of questions about this film because I've heard them. I'm going to find my shoes.

Yeah?

Audience: For a simple question, how long was the film? [crosstalk 00:34:15]

Carolee Sncheeman: How long is the film?

Audience: Yeah.

Carolee Schneemann: 18 minutes. The film changes each time people see it. They see differently when they see it because you get over the explicit sexual imagery and begin to find other levels that are working even more strongly than what the body images are doing in it. Also, the idea of time changes. Some people insist it's 15 minutes long and I've changed it, and others say it was always, always 40 minutes long.

A lot of people insist that the red part was never there before, or the blue part was put in later. Things like that. Yeah? [00:35:04]

Audience: The low key lining in the red and blue parts gave what I thought to be a classic Tijuana look to it. And is that the common connection?

Carolee Schneemann: No, I never had the Tijuana idea before. It's about 80% shot in natural lighting. I didn't want any complications or considerations of special lighting. Also, I had to approach filmmaking from a very personal stance, as someone who is un-teachable. Someone who was going into a realm that seemed to be exclusively a masculine realm and full of things that I encountered with

difficulties or blocks. Such as meters and light readings and exposure levels and quotient levels.

What I had to do is go into kind of a state where I began to feel that my eye was going to be meter and lens. To shoot and work through aperture with that sense, that I had to physically become the camera. Because there was no sort of guidance that could really give me the confidence to trust myself. There was no attitude given to me that made me trust the people who could teach me.

When it's red it's because it was just using indoor lights, like the bedside reading light.

Audience: When you say exclusively masculine, at the time, were you aware of Maya's work [inaudible 00:36:53]?

Carolee Schneemann: Yes, of course. I knew Maya, she was one of the people, when I was first in New York, that Stan Brakhage took me to meet. Maya was not helpful to me as a woman or as a filmmaker because she was presented to me as a kind of monster witch. My feelings as an artist, and as a girl, towards her were very deep and very hungry but I couldn't get through to her because she was surrounded by some kind of cultural gauze which isolated her, cut her off from me, and also cut her off from any communication that we could really make together.

She was a figuration, she was already a myth. I studied her with intense fascination. Every dish she washed and what her bed looked like and what was in the bathroom and who she lived with. To really use her, to help me, I couldn't because I didn't want to be put into her position. Men who were my friends treated her like a fantastic monster. I couldn't identify with that, I couldn't risk it at that time, that was 1956, the dark ages. Which we're still in. Yeah, Bob?

Robert Haller: At this time you were still a painter?

Carolee Schneemann: Yes, definitely. I was also doing theater pieces.

Robert Haller: When did you want to get involved in film? I noticed on this it says 64 to 67.

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah.

Robert Haller: Which indicates you might have had some false starts or you might have had films before that one.

Carolee Schneemann: No, this was absolutely the first film. I made *Fuses* because Brakhage had made *Window Water Baby Moving* and I thought that it had skipped a

step and that there was an essential life energy that was sexual that wasn't there. He wasn't going to do it. Because he was a friend and sort of the grand filmmaker. Tenney and Brakhage and I sort of divided up the world of art between us with our own-I was the painter and Stan was film and Jim was music, and then Jane came in and very, sort of defensively, insisted that she was the earth mother, which was fine.

I had great hesitation and resistance to go into his ball game there, and he sure wasn't inviting me. I felt that that was essential in-I don't know, I just had to do that film, so I started. There was no film before it. Then, in the middle of *Fuses*, I made *Viet Flakes*, which I didn't show tonight because there wasn't really time. Yeah, Sally?

Sally Dixon: Has Stan ever talked to you about his whole love making series-?

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah, well he said that it was inspired by *Fuses* but no one else will ever know that. I can say it, and he might say that he didn't mean that. That's what I think he would feel, that he would want to say it to me but not to anybody else. Yeah? [00:40:09]

Audience: I'd like to bounce a question off of you and Sally, which is, in many cases filmmakers have got to learn that it's more important to work in other medias-unless -[false start 00:40:20]-Why has it never worked in this program? Is it somewhere else in the museum?

Carolee Schneemann: Can I repeat your ... can you all hear his question up there?

Audience: No.

Carolee Schneemann: His question, and it went pretty fast, was this program brings people here who have done important work in other media, why is it that this program can't accommodate their work in the other media, is that right?

Audience: Yeah.

Carolee Schneemann: Such as Bruce Conner, yeah. Sally?

Sally Dixon: Other-

Carolee Schneemann: Other media, like why don't we do events or-

Sally Dixon: But Bruce Conner's also a filmmaker.

Carolee Schneemann: She says Bruce Conner is also a filmmaker. He says even though he is a filmmaker, couldn't we have some of the other things. Right?

Audience: Yeah, it only appears if it turns up in their film work.

Carolee Schneemann: Right. You're really asking for the actual other work.

Audience: Yeah, [inaudible 00:41:18].

Carolee Schneemann: They're smoking cigars. Oh, it's a cigarette. Oh, there you are.

Sally Dixon: How do I respond to that? John via Carolee. I don't do that, I respond to you directly. We're the film section and so we're sort of relegated to film. I've approached the museum on a couple of occasions. I'd love, for instance, to bring a retrospective of Joseph Cornell's work, films and paintings and boxes and the whole thing. I'd really like to see us break down the walls and start to use the whole field and the whole building, the whole museum in all of its aspects. It just hasn't been done yet but I don't think that it's impossible.

We're still trying to do it and I agree it's a worthwhile project and I'm pursuing it. It's a matter of time. There aren't that many filmmakers, really, whose work in other media are, is-what is it?

Audience: Nothing.

Sally Dixon: Kids, kids. In other words, there really are a few who are so creative that it permeates with sort of equal intensity all of the different media. I would like to bring them forth and to show what they do when the come so that we've got an overall thing.

Carolee Schneemann: I feel very defending about the situation here because it's really the most sort of warm and vital one I've ever been in. A lot of us who do theater events and films go around and present them. This is the only place I've ever been where you feel integral with all your different aspects. It's thought about, it's cared about. You'll probably get the rest of it, I would think.

I have a question for the audience. Has anyone thought, just had any idea, about *Fuses* as a feminist film? Yeah?

Audience: Actually, something that sort of struck me about all your films is that the reminiscence [inaudible 00:43:58] girlfriend. Just because it's a memory device, it's a bookkeeping device.

Carolee Schneemann: Bookkeeping. Aha. He said that my films put him in mind of something he might have done with his girlfriends, a kind of bookkeeping device. Did you ever bookkeep for 12 years?

Audience: -for memories.

Carolee Schneemann: For memories.

Audience: It's a sense of giving yourself a feeling that you've experienced certain kind of things.

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah, giving yourself a sense that you've experienced certain things. That's very much in those films, they are about time and perceiving things in their passage. I'm very conscious of that and I'm conscious of that with the futurity that goes for years and years. Because, in some way, I live in myself in an infinity of ages at all times so that when I was 22 I would have months when I was really 60 and thinking about time with that sense of an edge.[00:45:06]

It's also probably the first film where a woman has imaged herself and her partner equitably. There's neither subject or object. The cutting, especially in the genital sequences, is very conscious. It's done very consciously so that where I sort of see myself and begin to face what my attitude about that might be, it immediately cuts to my partner.

Anybody seeing it has to go through those same changes and what their attitudes might be. Because it's fast enough so that it sets up that reverberation. You can't establish a conventional or safe idea about yourself or your partner. Yeah?

Audience: You were saying that your interest in the film is equally divided between the male and the female genital. I didn't get that impression at all.

Carolee Schneemann: You didn't?

Audience: No, I got the impression you were much more interested in the penis than in the vagina.

Carolee Schneemann: He got the impression I was more interested in the penis than in the vagina. That might be because you didn't always recognize the vagina. If we counted frames-I mean there's a whole sequence in the beginning, I don't know if anybody knows what it is. Dare I tell. It looks like a vase or a lamp shade but it's a clitoris moving. Because the film was also edited in structures of color rhythms and gesture durations that are framed like parentheses it's difficult to make all the literal recognitions.

It flows and it shifts and the parts of the body become like parts of nature. The film was embedded with visual puns and jokes which, when I was editing it, which I did in a kind of trance of time stretched out, it was edited on lampshades. All the A and B rolling was done with paper clips and staples. There was such a submersion in the imagery building in time that there were things that I put in it that I didn't actually see, really recognize, until after many, many screenings.

Some of these are these levels of jokes and puns. There's a burning bush where it cuts from the pussy to a bush in the sunset up on a hill. I think it's very funny. Things where the Christmas balls to balls and lots of cat things.

Audience: What was the joke with the cat? I could hear that is was funny, but it was just I didn't get it.

Carolee Schneemann: The joke of the cat?

Audience: Pussy, oh.

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah, just pussy, pussy. Also there's lots of sequences of his hands on the cat and then on me.

Audience: [false start 00:48:23] I couldn't connect about him and you, or on her, and on- very distinctly when-you said that [inaudible 00:48:37]. I wasn't satisfied [inaudible 00:48:52] of her [inaudible 00:48:57] to him. Then he was so different [inaudible 00:49:03] kind of kept that up. The purpose was to see them totally individually [inaudible 00:49:12]. I [inaudible 00:49:16].

Carolee Schneemann: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's a film that's very consciously considering all the taboos that our society nourishes. They're the taboos that mean that most of us haven't even ever looked at parts of our own body. As a painter that was preposterous to me because I can lean two pears on each other, put two pears side by side, and they're really lascivious.

Why couldn't I go anywhere on my own body and why did I always have to find my own image given through masculine traditions? Why were images of the masculine body also completely determined by the masculine society? Because the erect penis is considered more taboo, well, also. It drives everything and then it's got a great mask over it. [00:50:19]

Audience: Do your principle feminine aesthetics go beyond the equal time [laughter 00:50:24]- they go beyond that?

Carolee Schneemann: Oh sure. Yeah, definitely, yeah. I'm not working on equal time anymore. No, I've changed time.

Audience: What is the time you use? [inaudible 00:50:40]

Carolee Schneemann: What I'm doing right now is a book. A book that deals with women's creative image making, the works that may have been done by women that have been destroyed, buried, falsely attributed, reattributed, or demeaned for 4,000 years. Phew, it's everywhere. That's Daveed ,the late Daveed, that's a lot of the late Hals, which is Judith van Leyster, that's the Altamira caves, it may be Stonehenge. I don't really know.

That's what I'm working on.

Audience: [inaudible 00:51:30] She is the best.

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah, yeah. Well, we don't know if she's the best. There's actually been hundreds of thousands of us and we've disappeared consistently, determinedly.

Audience: One thing that I found rather curious, we're seeing all these literal shots of genitals and then suddenly there was probably two or three frames only, I think it was looking out of a car window, a moving car window. You must have had a camera just in the last second, just grabbed it, the silos or something.

Carolee Schneemann: Yes. They're phallic structures too there.

Audience: Sure. Was this just something that you had lying around and you decided, “why not the Hell use it?’ [inaudible 00:52:17]?

Carolee Schneemann: No, that's part of the season because there's an overall sense that the genital and the bodies and fruits and berries and seasons are all enveloped in one another. In some memory process any one thing can spin out any of the other. Taking the body as a center, you spin out a fragment of a season, a moment of a contact, a bit of a very concrete focus that then fades off and is broken up by some other cycling of things.

Okay, yeah, Bob?

Robert Haller: [inaudible 00:53:05] is I'm sure you operated under an economic handicap. What kind of film would you like to make, if someone gave you a million dollars?

Carolee Schneemann: Oh, well, I want to finish-See, I'm shooting in 8 now because I did a retrospective at New York University and they said, "What are you working with now?" I said, "Nothing," and they said, "Why?" "Because I have nothing." A man came up after the class and said, "I've always hated this class. It's been a great bore. We've had all these boring artists and they're all so serious. We've had flagellants and sodomists."

He said, "I don't like this class very much but I'd like you to have my camera to use." I said, "Wonderful." Well, it's an 8 millimeter Bell and Howell so I took this thing for my own and what I'd like to be able to do is shoot in 16 with an [inaudible 00:54:03]. I'd like to get these bloody things with their sound on them so I don't have to carry them around like wounded boy scouts, or girl scouts, to let them go.

None of my films can go on their own. That's what I'd do if I had $5,000. Yeah?

Audience: Do you have a film that you would like to make but you haven't been able to start up?

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah, the film I want to make is what I'm shooting in 8 now, which is called *Kitch's Last Meal*. It's a portrait of the cat in which an autobiography is couched. Because it takes the experiences of the cat back through all the situations in time. It's a strange, massive, film that touches on [inaudible 00:54:59] and [inaudible 00:55:01] and things in Colorado, which is where Kitch comes from, because we went to see Brakhage.

It'll be a whole history of the 60s, and then, perhaps, some of the 70s, this film. That's what I'd like to be able to do with a sense of ongoing time and material. [00:55:21]

Okay, if there's no other questions, thank you very much and thanks to Sally and Bob and Bob and Jim and I forgot your name, Shen, yeah, and to the audience.

[applause , end of discussion 00:55:57]

Sally Dixon: I gave [inaudible 00:55:59].

Carolee Schneemann: [inaudible 00:56:02]

Audience: What time are we supposed to meet tomorrow, at 5:30?

Carolee Schneemann: No, 8.

Audience: 8:00?

Sally Dixon: [crosstalk 00:56:10] at 8.

Carolee Schneemann: Yeah.

Audience: I have a question.

Carolee Schneemann: Okay.

Sally Dixon: From way back from 1966. I was only a junior in high school then and I saw I saw [inaudible 00:56:19].

Carolee Schneemann: Oh. [end of recording 00:56:31]

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