DEVIL IN THE FLESH

WHEN OP ART LIVENS UP CINEMA

MAI 17TH > SEPT. 29TH 2019

1, PLACE KLEIN - NICE
WWW.CINEMA2019.NICE.FR
DEVIL IN THE FLESH*
In the early 1960s, kinetic art made its mark in Europe with a double credo: destabilizing perception and making art popular. Trick-of-the-light paintings, motorized lighted reliefs, and dizzying environments changed perception. Nicknamed «Op Art» in 1964, this avant-garde art was met with a momentous popular success, so much so as to know an exceptional borrowing phenomenon. Whereas advertising agents, designers, major brands and the fashion world seized its exhilarating shapes, cinema gave Op Art an unexpected angle. An art of movement and light, it was both a predecessor, able to sublimate its visual plays, and a follower, which endeavored to swallow it up through its desire for modernity.

From dramas to thrillers, filmmakers and decorators drew a language and themes out of it, producing a whole range of «re-uses» in scenery and plot – scenes of hoaxes and dread, sadistic characters or zany handymen, but also extreme experiences: scenes of hallucination, and psychosis.

This exhibition immerses visitors in this passionate story between two arts, punctuated with mockery and misunderstanding, with reciprocal sublimation, with pop or baroque deliveries, as well as collaborations and copycat. With the support of nearly 30 movies, 150 works and documents, it explores the origin and the unspoken aspects of this predatory fascination, and it considers what cinema reveals of its own nature to Op Art. So, it shows the spirit of a decade ruffled by modernity, thirsting for emancipation and haunted by the ghosts of war. This era, full of contradictions, created a completely new aesthetic culminating into the fruitful friction between visual arts and cinema.

* François TRUFFAUT, Les Quatre Cents Coups, screenplay, archives of the film library, La Cinémathèque de Paris: «Could we ever be blamed enough for overflowing with energy and having the devil in the flesh?»

LOOTING AND COLLABORATION
As of 1964, Op Art became an essential aesthetic in Paris. The movements of stealing and collaboration express its strongest intrusion on the street and in the film theatres. Its infinite source of virtuoso shapes, moiré pattern overlays, shrinking chessboards, magnifying glasses, jumping dots, were deployed in the public space and the press for all to see. Professionals simply needed a notepad and a pair of scissors to steal these patterns, derived from elementary geometric principles.

While Op Art was down in the street, it was also up in the studio: filmmakers intrigued by its success and its graphics openly expressed their interest to the artists. These contacts gave rise to paid collaborations and the film credits attributed them. Artists were hired by their names to carry out tasks which belonged to the film industry: light effects, costume creation, film sequences. As well as authentic or reinvented works, film often included a sociological analysis of Op Art: it was the “Eye of the storm”, a critical commentator of the trend and its most successful jumper on the bandwagon.

MAKING THE KINETIC REVOLUTION
Moving towards May 1968, kinetic art resonated strongly with the revolutionary demands. Initially, a politicised avant-garde, which aimed to cut out mediators (institutions, art critics) and give the spectator back all their power in interacting with the work of art. Filmmakers of the New Wave, French or foreign, rather than copying Op Art, renewed or reinterpreted on screen these acts of emancipation of a brash or even disturbing kind. In the same way Op Art rejected galleries, these directors rejected the suffocating constraints of studio production and its theatrical aesthetic.

Street film shoots were revelry and celebrated the emancipation of the body, including its nightmarish hidden face, a paradox presented in Op Art: behind every amusement park hides an alienating showbiz world. In same way the GRAV, although criticizing, was inspired by the visual fascination of advertising strategies, a film such as Pierrot le Fou drew chromatic strength from a scene with blue, red and green filters intended to condemn standardisation of the cinema by Technicolor.
The figure of the «improviser-dreamer» spread around the film world, either in the form of a tribute to the deconsecration of the artist or by the adoption of a mocking tone, reducing Op Art to a trifle. This archetype was a commonplace of the era in which the New Wave broke free to politically embody the kinetic revolution.

MOVIE PSYCHE

As an intellectual experience, if it happens to be so, cinema found in Op Art an ideal medium to excite senses and to throw taboos away. From bourgeois dramas to psychological thrillers, from playful banters to unleashed eroticism, these movies displayed a troubled sensuality and blow a spirit of transgression. The various borrowing modes range from formal classicism; graphic purity, flatness, black and white, to a baroque exploration; mannerisms, a riot of colors, invasive geometry, and blinding flashes. In an era of declining censorship, both B and art movies converged towards a standard scenario: a war of genders in which women are trapped. Her bodily sovereignty gives way to the turbulence of mind, as the camera transforms erotic fascination into a body alienation.

But this apparent duality conveys something quite different to collective mind: the demons of war. The violent unconsciousness of Op Art is used as an outlet to express - in abstract language - what people were not yet ready to see and imagine at the time. In fact, behind these intrigues of licentiousness, torture, manipulation, submission to order, paranoia and remorse come to the surface. Filmmakers change perceptual dissociation into a game of domination and psychological conditioning, out of which the ills of society ooze. A claustrophobic unease, for worse (or better) an abstract trauma language comes out of it.

OP OP TOURS!

Op op op it’s summer!
From Tuesday 2 July to Saturday 30 August, tour of the exhibition at 3 p.m. in French and 4 p.m. in English from Tuesday to Saturday. Duration: 1h
From Tuesday 9 July to Saturday 30 August, Op op op! in family int the heart of the exhibition Le diable au corps et Le bikini invisible at 10.30 a.m. from Tuesday to Saturday. Duration: 1h
From Tuesday 2 July to Saturday 30 August, One day / One work : flash tour all day. During 10 min, choose your customizable flash visit! An artist or a word of the museum will be presented.

Pricy politics on www.mamac-nice.org

THE SUMMER TALE HOURS
Tale hours with Camille Chrétien from « Les ateliers illustrés » during the summer in connection with the exhibitions.
3, 10, 17, 24, 31 July and 21 and 28 August 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. and from 4 to 5 p.m.
Single price: 6€ per child. From 3 years.
Mandatory reservation: mediationmamac@ville-nice.fr

CINEMÔM’ART workshops
Wednesday and Saturday
Enrol your child for an optical and fun workshop!
Wednesdays 22, 29 May; 5, 12, 19 and 26 June; 18 and 25 September from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
Saturdays 25 May ; 1st, 8, 15, 22 June; 28 September 3 to 4 p.m.
During the holidays:
Wednesdays 3, 17, 24 and 31 July; 14, 21 and 28 August from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
Saturdays 20 and 27 July; 3, 17, 24 and 31 August from 3 à 4.30 p.m.
Single price: 8€ per child. From 6 years.
Mandatory reservation: mediationmamac@ville-nice.fr

« THE CLASS, THE WORK » AND THE EUROPEAN NIGHT OF MUSEUMS,
Saturday 18 May 2019

RELATED EVENTS

WANDERING TOURS
One Sunday every month at 11 a.m., MAMAC invite public to take part in off-roads tours:
19 May with Hélène Guenin and Pauline Mari curators of the exhibition; 23 June with Guillaume Poulet, director of the Cinémathèque of Nice ; 29 September with the artists Jean Dupuy & Stephanie Marin, in connection with the new permanent collections around writing, and, finally, 13 October with the artists duo Hippolyte Hentgen in connection with their exhibition.
On the occasion of the event «The class, the work», presentation of the project Imagigrammes in the auditorium of the museum from 4 to 6 p.m. MAMAC and Héliotrope invited three college classes to consider cinema as an optical art. As part of the 15th edition of the European Night of Museums, MAMAC opens its doors from 7 p.m. to midnight. To offer an unforgettable night about cinema! Free admission.

Complete programme on: mamac-nice.org

SATURDAY IN FAMILY! Saturday 29 June from 2 to 6 p.m.
MAMAC invite children and families to take part in a fun and educational afternoon about cinema. Free admission.

CROSSOVER SUMMER
The festival CROSSOVER MAMAC PARTY invites CHAPIRON FAMILY Saturday 7 September from 7 p.m. to midnight, in collaboration with avec Panda Event and Héliotrope association.

PLUG evening Friday 13 September PLUG :
A Festival to discover the best of short films shot on mobile take part in a festive evening and explore the selection of short movies among the best European productions of short movies shot on mobile.

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAY 21 & 22 September
Complete programme on www.mamac-nice.org

PUBLICATIONS

On sale at the museum shop

Le Diable au corps. Quand L’Op Art électrise le cinéma.
Format of the book: 24 x 28 cm
Number of pages: 144
Number of illustrations: 160
Publication: 2019
Language: French
Cost: 28€
Publisher: In Fine éditions d’art
Authors: Dominique Païni, Arnauld Pierre, Thomas Schüessler and Bertrand Tillier

NICE MUSEUMS PASS

Open to all residents in the Métropole Nice Côte d’Azur area on presentation of a form of ID and proof of address dated within past 3 months. Pass entitles the holder to free admission to all municipal museums and galleries; valid for 3 years.

Individual ticket €10: admission to all museums.
7-day ticket €20: admission to all municipal museums and galleries for 7 days.
Group ticket €8: admission to all municipal museums and galleries for groups of 10+ people for a 24-hour period.
Free admission: see terms and conditions on the museum website.

MAMAC, 2nd floor
Exhibition running until 29 September 2019
Curated by: Hélène Guenin, Director of MAMAC, and Pauline Mari, Art Historian
Place Yves Klein - Nice
Every day from 10 am to 6 pm
+33 (0)4 97 13 42 01 - www.mamac-nice.org

With the support of