



## Interview with Kajsa Dahlberg

for the exhibition *Your search "exotism or pornography" did not match any documents* curated by Marti Manen and Job Ramos

**1-Your video *20 minutes (Female Fist)* presents a lot of ideas, concepts and issues of discussion that have been going on for a while in the feminist, politic or intellectual contexts. Sometimes, talking about these issues we can take some personal distance and keep it in a world far from reality. With your video, the borders between a particular situation and the conceptualization are not clear, and it helps in the presentation of the concepts. There is a person talking about her personal situation and desires, but you decide to not present the image of this particular person, showing just her words. Why did you decided to do it?**

This was partially done with reference to groups like the Zapatistas, the writer's collective Wu Ming, the illusive identity of Luther Blissett, as well as many other collective and/or clandestine groups, who mask their faces in order to become politically visible. It was important for me that the film didn't deal with the activist movement in Copenhagen per se. The idea was rather to find a way to project this discussion back onto us looking at this film, and this would be more difficult if the viewer had to relate to a specific person with a specific history. I think she has this very nice way of talking about quite controversial matters, at the same time, making it sound, as it was complete self-evident subject matters. This shift is interesting to me. I believe, or rather, I hope that a lot of people can relate to her story in different ways, as a kind of need to relate to the world. The idea with the film was not to ensure media limelight to a marginalized activist: rather the other way around, to test the possibility of having her speaking for us. This interests me: the relationship between the specific and the universal.

**2-One of the lines of discussion that we can follow after this video is the need for the community; the closed community. Within the context of supposed democracy, it seems that everything should be public and no one should hide anything. But the person talking in your interview will love to have this closed community with people similar to each other, with no need for self-defence or definition against the "others". Is the closed community a need because we are talking about something that is still not accepted? Is the close community something that helps on efficiency?**

Yes I think it could. But this closeness could not be an end in itself, but rather, function as a way to actually open up space in public for yourself and others;

as a way to be discussing what you want for yourselves. In this sense, I was interested in how one could, both formally as well as ideologically, make a film about a group whose main objective is the desire to resist representation. What images could be produced, while struggling to avoid recognition as such? The use of Strategic Separatism, as well as the resistance to being defined by what one sees as a repressive structure, is important here, in the way it reflects a larger problem concerning the possibility to produce counter images to the normalizing narratives mediated through mainstream TV and cinema.

She speaks quite a lot about the possibilities for being different in today's society, and this is really an issue becoming increasingly urgent in light of the present xenophobic and extreme right wing government in Denmark.

**3-Pornography has been always a difficult matter. We can find pros and contras on all the spectre of thinking about this issue. There is a huge discussion within the feminist movement about it. But in your video we can see that a group that want lesbian porno decides to produce it. And they are going to be the consumers. Is this factor des-activating the possible discussion around pornography? Are the consumer and the producer deciding the ethics of a product?**

Yes, in a way I think it does de-activate it, like you say. In the sense that the project deal with the power structures in pornography, by making the idea of sexuality as a commodity impossible. In this way I think it's a very interesting experiment. It is a non-commercial project; it cannot be seen by men; and its only channel for distribution is by being passed on from one person to the next, thereby requiring participation.

But then, of course, there is the whole complicated issue of the actual content, which is not exactly present in my film. Is it possible to redefine the basis for our desires? And can this be done together, as a group? In what way are these desires connected to (and defined by) other structures (power; capital; patriarchy) in society? This is where the discussion becomes very complex.

**4-One sentence of the video is "Lesbians are invisible". What do you think about this? On the other hand, we can see how the interest on Queer theory is growing in art, media and, sometimes, in politics. Do you think that it is a trend? Is "Queer" something that is becoming politically correct? If the patriarchal structures adopt Queer as a kind of facade (after the fact that "the revolution" has been taken by the commercial market), are we loosing more and more tools to redefine society?**

I think this is a very difficult question to answer; it's many questions really. But first of all: within the context I read her quote as a fundamental need to be visible to each other; to become political subjects in a kind of real sense. I'm not so interested in a discussion of whether "queer" is political correct or not.

Hegemony has always redefined itself, just like it's opposition. I'm not sure we're losing tools necessarily, because this is something that has always had to be reinvented. But I do think it is a problem that the public sphere in which we can meet and negotiate for what we want society to be about seem to get smaller and smaller, favoring commercial spaces and legal solutions before meeting and discussing. Again, I think it will be important to make your life political in many levels in order to create a space for yourself and others. This is something feminists have stressed repeatedly since forever. It is just very few who actually listens.