

Gerda Katharina Prantl: *Body and Script in Film or This is the Title of this Thesis*.

The theme of this thesis "*Body and Script in Film or This is the Title of this Thesis*" is closely related to my own artistic practice and my interest in "script and image", "script and painting" and "body and script". Recent exhibitions such as *Un coup de dés*, a show by the *Generali Foundation*, 2008, in Vienna or *Schriftfilme. Schrift als Bild in Bewegung*, a show by the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM), 2013 in Karlsruhe, prove that dealing with issues concerning "script and film" currently seem to be of high interest and very popular. However, an analysis of extended relations such as "body and script in experimental films" seems to be the only missing link within this field.

When speaking of the term "authorship" today we might think of Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1968) and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" (1969). Both essays criticize the fetishizing of biographical information when interpreting texts. But turning back to the author does not necessarily mean to interpret the oeuvre of an artist almost entirely in terms of autobiographical aspects. In accordance with Johanna Drucker (1994) it could be said that visual art should never be seen as the expression of a concluded self. Drucker proclaims that the underlying idea of the concept of subjectivity and the "producing subject" is that knowledge is transmitted through representation which is historically and culturally encoded. Thus, I prefer the term „subject“ to the term „self“ within my paper. Above all the term of the „subject“ is predominantly used to refer to the "subject of utterance" (artist).

All films selected for the current edition of my thesis can be categorized as so-called „scriptfilms“. "Scriptfilms" are characterized through script that urges most of the plot instead of filmic images, which are often substituted by script. Thus, script can evoke images and also transmit emotive, corporeal sentiments.

An analysis of "scriptfilms" in terms of subject representation raises the following questions: To what extent and in what ways is it possible for an artist's subject (the author as a subject?) (or more precisely: his/her body) to inscribe him- or herself into his or her (produced) work of art? – And which role can a type face play or which intermediary role in the form of a subject representation does the type face take within a work of art in the sense of an inscribing process?

For the further elaboration of the subject-matter three experimental filmmakers who incorporate the type of the "scriptfilms" ideally were used: Su Friedrich's *Gently Down the Stream* (1981), Michael Snow's *So Is This* (1982) and Hollis Frampton's films *Poetic Justice* (1972) and *Gloria!* (1976).

On the basis of these four films I would like to investigate how the subject – in its representation – can become visible contentwise as well as through the act of inscribing itself into the filmic material. All three artists pursue a different strategy concerning these subjects, however, there are filmic aspects and approaches that are similar as well.

Su Friedrich applies the genre of a “dream-diary” in her work and by using “direct animation” (or “Scratching”) she scratches words directly into the film-emulsion of her filmic material. The words are – spatially seen – arranged at different parts on the film-screen and can often be overwritten or crossed out, which leaves a seemingly corporeal impression with the “receiving subject” or the viewer. Michael Snow's text in *So Is This* (1982) refers to an essayistic-critical tradition. Every single filmed word is typewritten and arranged linearly in order to suppress emotive and personal influences at least on a typographic level to a certain extent. In its logic and formal structure Snow's approach is similar to Hollis Frampton's experimental film *Poetic Justice*. Both – Snow and Frampton – tend to incorporate autobiographical aspects in their films, but Frampton uses filmed handwritten block letters for his “scriptfilm” *Poetic Justice*. Through this handwriting the script comes close to the body, so that on an emotive scale Frampton's text ranks before Snow's filmed typewritten words. The metadiegetic narrative structure and the oscillation between the pronouns “I” and “You” induce an elusive narrator. Hollis Frampton's *Gloria!* draws onto autobiographical content, too; the work could be categorized as a treatise of logic and as a homage to Frampton's grandmother. At the beginning of the film Frampton uses footage from an *Early Cinema*-film (“Finnegan's Wake”); as media or type face he deploys computer-script and contrasts emotional references with a rather restrained emotive typography.

To sum up, resumed gestures of authorship can be expressed through means of enactment of writing or script in different implementations and represent a body that, apart from a narrative or autobiographical approach, could be read as a significant for bodily expression through handwriting.