

Speaking out: Split identities, politics and the ventriloquial voice in artists' film and video of the 1970s and 1980s

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Panel 'The Artist Interview: an interdisciplinary approach to its history, process and dissemination' (6 April)
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Organised by Lucia Farinati and Jennifer Thatcher

Given as part of a day-long panel of papers exploring the artist's interview, this 20-minute paper considered the 'interview' as an on-going and underlying theme in artists' moving image. It discussed how interviews are a complex and subjective method for exploring recent history; a particular kind of source material connected to artists' critical writing; and a format used in films, videos and performances. Taking the dialogic back-and-forth of interview interaction as a starting point, it considered how 'speaking-out' and 'listening-in' are active modes of engagement that are channelled by and subverted in works of moving image, particularly early video art of the 1970s. Using writings by Steven Connor (2000) and Mladen Dolar (2006), it explored how the split condition and antiphonal dynamics of the artists' recorded voice enables them to re-enter conversations from and about the past.

Taking Rosalind Krauss' 1976 essay 'Video: The aesthetics of narcissism' as an initial point of departure, the presentation posited that the interview as a very different cumulative, moving and open-ended format, which enables it to have immediacy in later contexts. Discussion referenced 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', another essay written by Krauss in 1979, used in the overall AAH conference description. By exploring 'expanded' performance-based artworks and drawing upon recent post-doc research into the intersections between experimental sound/music and artists' moving image, it considered how Kevin Atherton's *In Two Minds* (1978–2018) installations and performances alter understanding of recorded material and the archive. Framed by this potential 'performative afterlife' of recorded artworks, it asked how and in what ways the interview as a format can be used to re-engage with history – activating re-examination of queer and feminist approaches to making and disseminating artworks in seventies Britain.

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