

Ventriloquial bodies: Re-framing ephemerality in artists' film & video

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Presented as part of the annual research networking day at CTM Festival, this short paper considered feminist performance and artists' moving image in the UK during the late-1970s and early-1980s, discussing research into the intersections between experimental sound/music and artists' film/video in London. In response to the theme of CTM festival (liminality), the paper explored the liminal (transformational, destabilising) dynamics of the sounded voice, aiming to start to shift canonised perception of the 'disembodied voice' in film/media studies texts (Chion, 1999; Silvermann, 1984).

Taking-up Rebecca Schneider's questioning of ephemerality and the archive in 'Performance Remains' (2001), discussion unpacked the 'ventriloquial' (Connor, 2000) dynamics of the voice, to consider the dual situation through which it both detaches from and reconnects to/with other subjects and objects. By unpacking the 'defamiliar' (Hayles, 2002) and the 'intermedial' (Higgins, 1966), the nature of live and recorded voices was considered, with a focus upon the act of speaking. This paper connects with wider research seeking alternative positionings for the language associated with archives: re-situating ephemerality as a state of liminal transformation as opposed to dematerialised disappearance.

Link to CTM documentation [YouTube] –

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoGeGJxGADg&list=PLYPfuZP_o3SwaPAbl_ZN1wVDAjOMK3-yET&index=2&t=0s

Link to audio –

<https://soundcloud.com/ctm-festival/sets/ctm-2020liminal>