

videoactivism by **carole roussopoulos**

& colleagues

at **alphanova 9+10 march 2013**

> PROGRAM <

saturday 9 march 2013

17h

DAS IST NUR DER ANFANG... DER KAMPF GEHT WEITER / it's just the beginning... the struggle continues

F/D 1968/69 45' french with german overdub

d : Claudia von Alemann

The first steps of video-activism filmed with the Sony Camera AVC 2100, during the student protests in May 68. With Claudia von Alemann and Jean-Luc Godard.

BILDERBOGEN: VOM MEDIENLADEN ZU BILDWECHSEL / a sequence of images: from 'medienladen' to bildwechsel

D 1979 30' german

d : bildwechsel

A sequence of images and sounds which recall, from a rather subjective perspective, the development of the 'mixed-gender' project, 'medienladen' to the 'women's media center', 'bildwechsel'.

guests: Claudia von Alemann, film director + *durbahn, bildwechsel Hamburg.

bonus: EINFÜHRUNG IN DEN PORTAPAK / introduction to the portapak

D 1976 fragment 15' in german

> at the video viewing station <

Documentation of video-history/video-herstory: technical self-help diy aspects from a women's perspective.

19h

GENET PARLE D'ANGELA DAVIS / Angela Davis is at your mercy

F 1970 8' french + english subtitles

d : Carole Roussopoulos

Shortly after the African-American activist Angela Davis was arrested in October 1970, poet Jean Genet repeats a manifesto three times for a TV-recording, opposing the racist policy of the USA and in support of the Black Panther Party and Angela Davis. The TV broadcast was eventually censored. One of Carole Roussopoulos' first videos.

S.C.U.M. MANIFESTO

F 1976 27' french + english subtitles

d : Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig > Les Insoumuses

A brilliantly enacted reading of Valerie Solanas' text from 1967 which was at the time out of print: the utopian/dystopian reversal of the gender-power-relations and an excessive parody on patriarchal

universalism. Delphine Seyrig dictates and Carole Roussopoulos types frenetically on a mechanical typewriter. Between them, on the table, a TV-set, on which the camera zooms in occasionally; or the sound is turned up, broadcasting a continuous series of (men's) wars.

LA MORT N'A PAS VOULU DE MOI : PORTRAIT DE LOTTE EISNER / death didn't want me : portrait of Lotte Eisner

F 1984 14'30 french + english subtitles

d: Michel Celemenski, Carole Roussopoulos, Carine Varène, Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir

Lotte Eisner (1896-1983) German film critic and co-founder, with Henri Langlois and Georges Franju, of the 'Cinémathèque Française', fled to France in 1933 (in 1940 Eisner was interned in the Gurs concentration camp in the South of France). She speaks about her work, her life, and cinema colleagues such as actress Louise Brooks, and her support of the young German cinema of the seventies, as well as her connection to the filmmaker Werner Herzog.

guests: Hélène Fleckinger, Association Carole Roussopoulos.

21h

PAPER TIGER TELEVISION: HELPING TO CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE MAIN STREAM MEDIA FOR OVER 30 YEARS

ca 20'

Presentation by Adrienne Silverman, paper tiger TV

TV TURN ON: STEPPING UP TO THE ELECTRONIC SOAPBOX

- a look back at the origins of the Manhattan Neighborhood Network USA 1990 28'

d : paper tiger TV

A show made by: May Ying Welsh, Mary Feaster, Martha Wallner, Simone Farkhondeh, Linda Lannacone, Joel Katz, Shue Lea Cheang and many many others and dedicated to the public access visionaries DeeDee Halleck and George Stoney.

In the early 1990's Paper Tiger TV, and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), organized community groups all over Manhattan to form an organisation entitled NYCIRM-- New York Citizens for Responsible Media, to pressure the city to implement public access. This Paper Tiger program shows the activism that enabled MNN to exist.

guests: Adrienne Silverman, paper tiger TV + Nicole Fernandez Ferrer, Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir, + *durbahn, bildwechsel Hamburg.

bonus: UTV : "You are the user, You are the advertiser, you are the producer" (<http://www.societyofcontrol.com/utv/>)

- at the video viewing station in the gallery.

sunday 10 march 2013:

17h

WALPURGISNACHT / Witches Night

D 1980 21' german

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d : bildwechsel
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Berlin at night, burning torches, women disguised and painted in colours: gathering on the 30 April 1980, in large numbers, for the women's demonstration against rape. A small witch hand puppet recalls the story of the witches (and witch-hunt) and the meaning of that special night. There was a new video technology available which allowed for the first time to film at night.

Y A QU'A PAS BAISER ! / just don't have sex !

F 1973 17' french + english subtitles

d : Carole Roussopoulos, Vidéo Out

A militant documentation advocating free and legal contraceptives and abortion. The video changes between the first major feminist demonstration in Paris in November 1971, women's statements about sexuality and contraception, and a scene using the 'methode Karman' which use the vacuum aspiration technique. This is practised as a less harmful method in the early stages of pregnancy and in the video is practiced in a caring environment.

guests: *durbahn, bildwechsel Hamburg + Nicole Fernandez Ferrer, Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir + H  l  ne Fleckinger, Association Carole Roussopoulos.

18h30

DAS ENTDECKERINNENPRINZIP / the principle of discovering

A/D 1985 30' german, audio

Audio recording of a lecture by *durbahn about the media-specificity of video, given at the First International Video-Biennial in Vienna, co-organised by Medienwerkstatt Wien.

bonus:

extract of **WOMEN'S CAMERA**

D 1970 (20') german

d : Gardi Deppe, Ingrid Oppermann, Barbara Kasper, Brigitte Krause,
Tamara Wyss.

A tutorial film about 16mm camera technique planned and enacted by the women's group from a basic film class at DFFB filmschool.

LEHREN UND LERNEN - VIDEO AN DIE DFFB / teaching and learning - video of the DFFB

D 1980 in german

d : bildwechsel/medienladen

At that time, only celluloid film technique was taught at the Berlin film school DFFB - the first video courses and video machines were provided by medienladen Hamburg.

19h30

WERBEWELTEN FRAUENABTEILUNG / the world of advertising - women's department

D 1986 15' german

d : bildwechsel

A compilation of 46 publicity-spots depicting women from Great Britain, Austria, Switzerland and Germany, separated by inserts of TV white-noise.

MASO ET MISO VONT EN BATEAU / maso and miso go boating

F 1976 55' french + english subtitles

d : Nadja Ringart, Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig, Ioana Wieder > Les Muses s'amuse / Muses amusing themselves

When the (UN-declared) 'year of the woman' ended, the 'secretary of state for women's issues', Françoise Giroud was invited to a TV-talk show and confronted with a lot of misogynist statements and positions and reacted by playing the 'nice girl'. Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig, Ioana Wieder and Nadja Ringart produced a 'détournement', an hilarious statement of media-criticism, by subverting this with inserts, comments, songs.

guests: Nicole Fernandez Ferrer, Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir, Paris + *durbahn, bildwechsel Hamburg + Hélène Fleckinger, Association Carole Roussopoulos.

21h

LES HOMMES INVISIBLES / invisible men

F 1993 33' french + english subtitles

d : Carole Roussopoulos

p : La Fondation de France, Le Centre d'Accueil et de Soins Hospitaliers de Nanterre, La Fondation Crédit Local de France.

Documentation of homeless men and their medical treatment at the Nanterre Hospital, which considers both their social and medical precariousness. The video contributed to the foundation of the SAMU Sociale, a municipal humanitarian emergency service in several cities in France and worldwide.

PRAMONT : UNE DEUXIÈME CHANCE ! / Pramont : a second chance!

CH 2009 35' french + english subtitles

d : Carole Roussopoulos in collaboration with Canal 9 at Sierre, le Centre de Pramont et l'Institut International des Droits de l'Enfant (IDE) Sion Suisse

Inmates of the Valais Youth detention center Pramont, use the video camera and self-written scenarios, to interview the staff and themselves, to depict their lives and the repressive system of the center and of society.

guests: Hélène Fleckinger, Association Carole Roussopoulos + others.

Video viewing-stations

with further material by bildwechsel Hamburg, Carole Roussopoulos, UTV.

and... the documentary

CAROLE ROUSSOPOULOS, UNE FEMME À LA CAMÉRA

CH 2011 76' french + english subtitles

d: Emmanuelle de Riedmatten

A portrait of Carole Roussopoulos (1945 - 2009), who pioneered portable video in France in the early 1970s. Through extracts from her films, archival images, and interviews with family and friends, the itinerary of a fighter who filmed the women's liberation movement, factory occupations, and early gay rights demands, and who, throughout her life, gave voice to the unknown, to the "voiceless", participants in social struggles and movements for emancipation.

hein?
quoi?
plait-il?

..qui baise
aime
les femmes

MASO ET MISO VONT EN BATEAU / maso and miso go boating - F 1976

by Nadja Ringart, Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig, Ioana Wieder/ Les Muses s'amuse

UNE SEULE FEMME
A
LA PAROLE...

Femme-objet
connais pas!
SIGNÉ
Françoise Giroud

MASO
COUCHE TOI LÀ
!

CONDITION
EROTIQUE

INDIGESTE?
pas pour
MASO!

Une ou Deux
Femmes
Espèrent encore

“La Femme est l’avenir de l’homme “

Le poète a toujours raison
[Le poète était encore rond]

*The poet is always right
[The poet was still drunk]*

Qui voit plus haut que l’horizon
[Il s’était gouré d’horizon]

*He sees above the horizon
[He mistook the horizon]*

Et le futur est son royaume.
[Il avait surement du vague à l’âme]

*And the future is his kingdom
[He was probably melancholic]*

Face à notre génération
[Il peut donner sa démission]

*Facing our generation
[He may resign]*

Je déclare avec Aragon
[Depuis qu’elle rit de ses chansons]

*I said with Aragon
[Since she laughs of her songs]*

La femme est l’avenir de l’homme
[Les femmes ont retrouvé les femmes]

*Woman is the future of man
[Women have found women]*

Entre l’ancien et le nouveau
[Avec leur perceuses électriques]

*Between the old and the new
[With their electric drills]*

Votre lutte à tous les niveaux
[Et leurs bombes très atomiques]

*You struggle on all levels
[And their very atomic bombs]*

De la nôtre est indivisible
[Avec leur tiercé du dimanche]

*From what is indivisible
[And their horse race gambling]*

Dans les hommes qui font les lois
[Et leurs tondeuses à gazon]

*In men who make laws
[and their lawnmowers]*

Si les uns chantent par ma voix
[Ils croient à la castration]

*If each sing through me
[They believe in castration]*

D’autres décrètent par la Bible
[C’est le patriarcat qui flanche]

*Other regrets in life
[This is typical patriarchy]*

Le poète a toujours raison [Ils pensent qu'ils nous récupèrent]	<i>The poet is always right [They thought they would have us]</i>
Qui détruit l'ancienne oraison [Parce qu'il nous flanque une Secrétaire]	<i>That which destroyed old prayer [Because we have been given a Secretary]</i>
... et de l'affront ? L'image d'Eve et de la pomme [A la condition féminine]	<i>...And the insult? Eva and the apple [the female condition]</i>
Face aux vieilles malédictions [Ils pensent qu'ils nous rémunèrent]	<i>Faced with ancient evils [They think they reward us]</i>
Je déclare avec Aragon [En nous collant le nom du père]	<i>That report as gossip [By giving us the father's name]</i>
La femme est l'avenir de l'homme [On marchera pas dans leurs combines]	<i>Woman is the future of man [We will not march in their lines]</i>
Pour accoucher sans la souffrance [Ils ont baisés dans la violence]	<i>To give birth without pain [They fuck in violence]</i>
Pour le contrôle des naissances [En contrôlant nos jouissances]	<i>For control of birth [by controlling our pleasures]</i>
Il a fallut des millénaires [Pendant des temps, des millénaires]	<i>It took millennia [during that time, thousands of years]</i>
Si nous sortons du Moyen-Age [Ils sont encore au Moyen-Age]	<i>If you go out of the Middle Ages [They are still in the Middle Ages]</i>
Vos siècles d'infini servage [Au siècle d'infinis pelotages]	<i>Century of infinite serfdom [A century of endless petting]</i>
Présent encore lourd sur la terre [N'arriverons nous plus à nous faire taire] ... raison [La raison n'est plus de saison]	<i>... On earth [they can't silence us more] ... Truth [Truth is no longer in season]</i>

Qui annonce la floraison
[Qu'ils prennent garde à leurs arpions]

... en son royaume
[Et qu'ils remballent leur belle âme]

... endroit la chanson
[Depuis qu'elles ne sont plus leurs pions]

Ils déclarent avec Aragon?
[Qu'elles ne sont plus leur paillasson]

La femme est l'avenir de l'homme
[Les femmes ont retrouvé les femmes]

*That announces the flowering
[Let them beware of their
aircraft]*

*... In his kingdom
[and they pack up their most handsome
men]*

*...the place of this song
[since they are no longer their stones]*

*They declare with gossip?
[That women are no longer their
doormat]*

*Woman is the future of man
[Women have found women]*

C'est donc le
CAMARADE FERRAT
qui aurait...
LE
DERNIER MOT
!



Les Insoumuses Version of the song “La Femme est l'avenir de l'homme”
performed by Jean Ferrat in the closing scene of “MASO ET MISO VONT EN
BATEAU ”



Jean-Luc Godard + Claudia von Alemann

DAS IST NUR DER ANFANG... DER KAMPF GEHT WEITER F/D 1968/69
by Claudia von Alemann



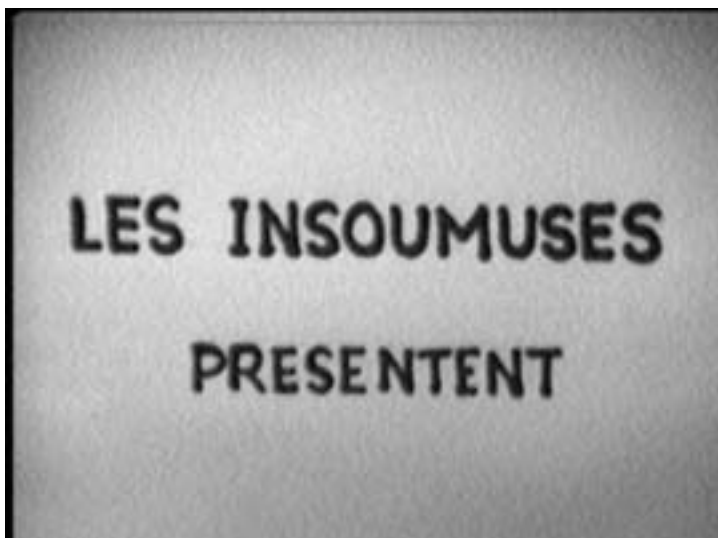
Students + Sony Camera AVC 2100, Sony Recorder CV 2100



Students + Sony Camera AVC 2100



Students + Sony Camera AVC 2100



S.C.U.M. MANIFESTO F 1967

by Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig / Les Insoumuses



Texte de
Valerie Solanas

“Walk with One’s Nose to the Wind”^a

Interview with Carole Roussopoulos
video-maker and feminist¹

Hélène Fleckinger

Translation: Emma Williams, Flora Whiteley, Madeleine Bernstorff

HF – Why did you decide to leave Valais for Paris and how did you start making video?

CR – Our story starts at the foot of some beautiful mountains in the Valais. I was born there in 1945. My father was from the Valais and he lived in Sion. My mother was French, and during the war she became more or less a refugee (in an economic, not a political sense) in Crans-Montana. She met my father on a train between Lausanne and Sion. They got married and were together long enough to have two children. My mother finally left as soon as the frontiers were re-opened after 1945. I left for Paris in 1967, at the age of twenty-two, with a transfer to the Sorbonne, and under the pretext of continuing my literature studies which I had started in Lausanne. I left during the night in a 2CV with some books, some records and three items of clothing in a suitcase. My father cut off all financial support. I found myself a bed-sit and started off by getting a cleaning job. Eventually a friend of my father’s found me an internship for three months with Vogue magazine. After that I had to return to Switzerland to take my exams. But after three months, Bettina, one of the editors, had a very bad car accident and next day they asked me to stay on to replace her. I stayed there for several years. Content aside it was a magazine with high quality photography and printing. I learned a lot there. There were nine female editors and everything was done in-house. It was the first time that I had known women who were independent, who needed to work, who enjoyed it and who had interesting lives. For someone like myself, who came from a well-to-do Valais family - my father was a banker - and where women never worked, it was a great discovery. I rubbed shoulders with the greatest photographers in the world, the biggest stars, the most beautiful models. I observed the suffering of these ‘dream’ women, who, even back then, were lumbered daily with terrible problems of insecurity, just because they had a wrinkle or weighed a kilo too much. I found this horrifying and that enabled me to demystify the whole scene. I often went to visit Bettina in the hospital. When she came out of the coma, I said to her: “Fight! When eventually you’re well enough, I’ll resign and you can take up your job again.” Three years later when she was much better I started to meet

with the board and to talk to different editors and said: "Let's agree that we all pull together and we re-instate Bettina! I've learnt what I needed to learn and I am going to get another job. The director found out and it was terrible. I was called in, I continued to argue and was given the sack the following day on some false pretext. Bettina was never reinstated. But this injustice helped me in the end. The day that I was given the sack, Paul Roussopoulos was having lunch with Jean Genet. I was in complete despair from getting thrown out like rubbish, in despair that I had never even taken my exams and I had not been ready to leave! So, I arrived in tears and when he saw me Genet said: "It is really not worth getting yourself into such a state! Did you at least remember to ask for redundancy pay?" I had indeed held out for three months salary. He took the cheque out of my hands: "That is exactly what you need to be a free woman. From now on you won't need to bother with a director or an editor-in-chief! There is a radical machine which has just come out." A man called Patrick Prado had shown him the famous "Sony Portapak", a totally new portable video camera. The three of us went off together, Paul, Genet and I to 1 Boulevard Sébastopol. We cashed the cheque directly in the shop (you could do that back then) and left with the camera and video recorder over our shoulders. It was the second one of its type sold in France. When we got home we didn't know how it worked! I remember going out onto the streets with Genet to try it out, following cats and people who passed by. I really had no idea how to film and I had never thought about making video! Even though I loved photography, I was more interested in journalistic writing; not journalism as it is understood today but rather allowing people to speak for themselves, and travel, to discover all sorts of things that I had known nothing about before. It seemed a way to meet people, to get to know countries and conditions. After my experience at Vogue I did some piecework for Jeune Afrique. There was a strike, and I made a film about the movement; of course I got the sack just afterwards... At the time Libération did not exist and the future of journalism was at a standstill. I don't know which profession I would have continued with had it not been for this meeting with Genet. Video was an extraordinary opportunity for me.

HF – Once you bought the camera, what did you do with it? What did you first shoot? ²

CR – In Paris I produced the video about Jeune Afrique, another about Vogue and the ridiculousness of that world, and then another with Brigitte Fontaine and Areski. Then one day Genet suggested that Paul and I go to the Palestinian

camps with him and with Mahmoud Al Hamchari, the first representative of the PLO in Paris. It was at the time that King Hussein of Jordan napalm-bombed the Palestinians. He had decided to eliminate them, to neutralise them. The four of us left in September, and this was the famous “Black September”. It was really painful to discover the lives of the Palestinians. Faced with the confusion and the poverty I felt gripped by a spirit of revolution. It was a situation which I wasn’t at all familiar with. Hussein got a delivery of American napalm, the same used on the Vietnamese. The children and the women were completely covered in this honey-like substance, sticky, that you could not get off, which caused second and third degree burns. It was horrendous. When we got back to France we showed the film, *Hussein, le Néron d’Amman* [Hussein The Nero of Amman], and from then on, everything happened very quickly. One day, an official Black Panther, who had heard about this video, contacted us because they had kept a NTSC machine from a team of American journalists who had come to interview them and they didn’t know how to use it. We went to Algiers for one month to give video-making courses to the Black Panthers, but also gave courses to many other people from liberation movements: the Angolans, the Vietnamese, etc. The portable video camera had the ability to give a voice directly to the people concerned, who then didn’t have to go through the journalistic and media mill, and who could produce their own information. After this, all our time was filled with a succession of meetings as people wanted to learn how to make video. They contacted us to help them, either to show footage they had shot themselves, or to learn how to use the machines. In the beginning, it was mostly activists who used this medium to back-up the struggles they were involved in. The revolutionary movements felt the power of the image as a weapon. It was possible to use this power, to serve and give credibility to the struggle from our own point of view. That is why these people had no problems with contacting us. All the first independent portable video groups, whether American, Quebecer, French, Italian or German, used video in the same way that we had used it. It wasn’t at all for making art. The groups of activists making video had nothing at all to do with the world of cinema. It was really to raise consciousness, to be able to discuss social problems.

HF – Can you tell me a bit about Paul Roussopoulos’s influence on your own development both as activist... and practitioner?

CR – Paul was a Greek political refugee. He had been in prison in Greece and his brother had been tortured because they had painted graffiti opposing the Germans in Thessaloniki at the height of the occupation, during the war.



"screening-room" at flutgraben⁽¹⁾



watching "Ya qu'à pas baiser" CR F 1973⁽³⁾



viewing stations for bildwechsel material⁽³⁾



screening crowd audience⁽²⁾



alphanova gallery-space with PaperTigermaterial⁽²⁾



*durbahn, madeleine, claudia von alemann⁽⁴⁾



viewing stations for UTV videos⁽⁵⁾



madeleine + manuela⁽²⁾

Finally he was released from prison, and was able to leave for France, where he studied. He had been given a death sentence and metaphorically he was still paying it off when I met him. But Paul wasn't at all involved with the Greek community in Paris, he had nothing to do with that closed clique, who always met up at Saint-Claude, who only talked about Greece, who cried, caught up in nostalgia, and whom I would have had a hard time integrating with. We got involved with each other immediately, in France, in the French activist context. This does not mean that we didn't slip two or three little things past the Colonels* to help others. We moved in together after Christmas in 1967, and in May 68 we lived on rue Mabillon, in the middle of the Quartier Latin. Paul had a parrot who said "*pin-pon pin-pon*", to imitate cop cars. We were together for May 68, which was a very beautiful start to a life together! Contrary to everything that you read in the press today, for me, May 68 was firstly about free speech, and people being in the streets. Everybody was talking, laughing together... I found these great moments of freedom absolutely marvellous! The huge marches, the parties, the occupations, the art, everyone was painting, making posters, the Odeon... it was extraordinary. So, I participated in happenings, but without taking a stand, without having an active role, wandering around, listening. It was a "full-time education". I learnt, I started to catch up a bit. And then I had my own teacher, Paul, who explained the key-issues in life to me! We made many friends and very quickly occupied the Beaux-Arts crèche. It was a time of living life to the full. Paul was a high-level physicist and mathematician. Subsequently he played a very important role for me and for the other video groups at that time. At the very start of video, as with every time a new product comes onto the market, there were no maintenance services and we didn't know how to repair the machines, it was terrible! We were pretty short of money and we had asked Thompson to sponsor us but they answered: "We don't believe portable video has a future". It was incredible! Jean-Marie Serreau, the father of Coline Serreau, had a video studio with large 2 inch quad videotape machines, a bit like the ones for television. The idea of video was already accepted at the ORTF [French broadcasting service], but portable video had just arrived in France. The device was composed of a camera with a portable recorder, which was connected by a cable, and carried by a shoulder strap. The camera was pretty light, but the portable recorder was downright heavy! Paul Roussopoulos was very supportive of our work, and very interested in the topics we worked on and importantly, although it wasn't his job, he knew how to read the instruction manuals! He wasn't overwhelmed or fazed by technology and he helped us a lot. At that time, you could open the machines up and you could clean the heads

and even change them yourself. This was the sort of thing that Paul did for me and for the other groups who came to ask for his help. Repairing these machines was very complex. There was one guy who repaired them and you never knew if he was ripping you off, therefore you needed to know how to tinker with the things yourself, otherwise you were completely dependent on the good-will of a technician. Then Paul came up with a way of editing which wasn't anything at all like using an editing unit. He had brought silver sticky paper from his laboratory, a roll of stuff which didn't damage the heads. It was the first generation of portable devices, before JVC. The video image was laid out diagonally on 16cm and with a ruler and a knife we located the end of a shot, we took the tape out of the machine, cut it with the knife, chose another shot and sellotaped them together. It was implausible, but it worked! We effectively made our first edits like this, and what's more, that's how we got to know Godard. He called us up to ask us how we were editing. I think Paul simply gave him a role of sellotape!

HF - How did you chose the name for the group "Video-Out", a "signature" which dates in fact from 1971 and not from 1969, two years after the purchase of your Sony "Portapak"?

CR - We called ourselves "Video-Out" by pure coincidence. We were invited in 1971 by Pierre Schaeffer to show our first videos at the ORTF, as they were starting to worry about these independent DIY-filmmakers. We went along with Ned Burgess, an American pioneer of the portable camera, and a Black Panther. In front of the door of the ORTF, were posters on which were written "Video" and the titles of our tapes: *Y a qu'à pas baiser*³, and the film about the Palestinians, *Le F.H.A.R.*⁴, topics which were very provocative for the time, and someone had graffitied "out" next to our titles. We arrived, Pierre Schaeffer thanked us and presented us as the group "Video-Out". We looked at each other, we didn't understand, but no one dared to express the least bit of surprise. As we left, we went for a drink and agreed amongst ourselves that the name suited us well. We definitely didn't want to be "in". As a technical term it had a certain modesty. We were always in the process of connecting cables, video "in", video "out", audio "in", audio "out". In short, it suited us very well and we kept the name! But it wasn't an institutionalised or organised group. People came and went, made a few things that they wanted on our machines. In this way too, Hélène Châtelain, Marielle Burkhalter, and in particular Ned Burgess were a part. We didn't have board meetings, we didn't care about that sort of thing – we were totally "Out"! The activist video groups were completely set apart from any film scene. It was the young ones who, in my opinion, had not tried to get into film

school or didn't even think about doing this, who simply wanted give a voice. It was mostly activists who used this medium, to back-up the struggles in which they were involved in, at least at the beginning. Later, amongst them, many of them came to dream of having an audience, audience ratings, and therefore of working in television. They didn't want to remain small, independent filmmakers. In the USA something happened which really struck me and taught me a lesson. To buy the machines you had to have a lot of money and the activist groups had asked for grants. In the beginning there were four groups in New York. The Rockefeller Foundation allocated a large sum to them, I forget whether it was one, two or three million dollars at that time, and said: "Split it between you all". And that, was the end of any agreement between the groups! That made me very vigilant. I told myself that they were very cunning, these Americans; it was of course a method to neutralise them and it led to fights and divisions. A group of six wanted more money than the group of three, etc. It was the end of the "social" work carried out by video. Personally, television never interested me, luckily. What was amazing was to be really independent. There was no one to tell us to edit sequences because they were too strong or too subversive. What interested us was to be free, to say or to report what we wanted And I always knew that it was antagonistic. It's true that it was disappointing to not be able to show your work to more people, but I also knew the price to pay for audience ratings. It wasn't possible to achieve what we sincerely wanted to and still hope to attract the interest of the media and their distribution structures. This is still true today. My only problem, like with everyone working independently, musicians, painters, are the distributors, the galleries...

HF - How did you get to meet the women of the new women's liberation movement?

CR - It was purely by chance, and thanks to video. Someone called Alian Jacquier looked after a section at the Beaux-Arts, on the UP6*, where there was a video facility and in particular he had a huge 1 inch JVC editing desk, very hi-tech for the time, on which Jean-Luc Godard edited his first films. We knew each other, as there were only a few of us working in video, and he had told me that I could work at night on the machines, which of course I did. It was there that I met the women who tried to edit the first feminist video tape in France, *Grève de femmes à Troyes*⁵,v about the first (female) workers strike, and the occupation of a hosiery factory. They asked me to help them. We first talked about video, and then they told me that they met every Wednesday evening. They asked me to come along

and I never left. This meeting was decisive for me. I wasn't one of the pioneers of the women's liberation movement. I arrived maybe six months after the first meetings in this famous Wednesday amphitheatre. In the beginning, I was paralysed, I listened from the back, discretely. I found these women brilliant. Everyone talked at the same time. It was an incredible chaos, but very jolly. I was able to formalise my feelings. We had intuitions, we didn't feel good in certain situations, but without knowing why. We thought we were the only ones and all of a sudden we discovered that what we read, what women were saying, matched exactly what we felt. This therefore, gave us terrific self-confidence, it reconciled us with ourselves and that us like ourselves. In *Debout!*¹⁴, a Swiss woman, Marie-Jo Glardon, says this very beautiful thing about relationships between homosexuals and heterosexuals in the movement: "In loving women, we have learnt to love ourselves". The meetings, the meals in restaurants, the demonstrations were all about solidarity and about having fun together. The women were so hilarious! It was a continuous party and the creativity was completely wild. I was very happy. One of the actions which I found the most brilliant, and which still makes me laugh today, was the placing of a wreath of flowers in memory of the wife of the unknown soldier. I didn't take part in it at the time as I didn't know the women at all, and I had not even read about it in the press. But the whole movement was summed up in the humour and rightness of this act. The women's liberation movement, which in my opinion didn't last very long, was really linked to this subversion and this humour. This is how we can win struggles, it's not by engaging in boring activism where we sacrifice ourselves to meetings. And it's true that as soon as it was no longer funny that was the end of the movement, it became something else.

HF - When you were a child, did you already have a feminist conscience, even if you did not know the word? Were there elements of your personal or family life which encouraged it?

CR - My parents were the second couple to get divorced in the Valais, my mother lost custody of my brother and me so we were brought up by our father. It was an unusual situation. We were stigmatised. At this time, in the religious schools, it was said that divorced parents went to hell. As a child, I didn't miss out on anything, except for the affection of a mother, no small thing, and culture. At home, there were no interesting conversations, no books, Maurice Druon at best, not even music. When I arrived in Paris, I thought being left was to drive on the left. That explains the size of the disaster to you. Incredible! My family

subscribed to the local newspaper which was right-wing, if not extreme right. I don't regret having an atypical family, on the contrary, I think that it was exactly that which gave me my punch. But unfortunately I didn't receive an interesting or intelligent upbringing, in any case, it was not open to the world. Therefore, I was well behind in comparison with many young French boys and girls. When I arrived in Paris, I felt as if I was practically 22 years behind. I don't know if you could say that I already had a feminist conscience, but I was very struck by the injustices to women. The women in my family were pretty strong, my father's sisters were not repressed and in private had a lot of strength of character. But I understood pretty quickly that the women who were vulnerable, were the servants, those they called "*les bonnes*". We could exploit them at will and they lived in rooms which were not heated, unlike ours. I also understood early on that marriages were arranged, admittedly not a situation of forced marriages, but it was a reason why I left. I found it totally hateful, all that energy deployed by families to organise marriages, what was called a good match. The families from my background thought that young women didn't need to study. Women of my generation studied at best literature or nursing. Many things probably contributed to my awareness: we probably shouldn't go overboard. People who knew me at that time tell me that I was already completely atypical as a small girl and an adolescent. I didn't have this impression at all. I no longer remember the life that I dreamed of, but it was probably not to stay closed up in this boring universe. I had no interest in any particular job, I didn't know what I was going to do with my life, neither where, nor what, nor with whom.

HF – Which women in particular marked your path in life? Did any reading influence you, for instance the work of Simone de Beauvoir?

CR – When I was young, I was completely out of the loop, I didn't have any points of reference. I can't say that I had read Simone de Beauvoir at fifteen or eighteen years old, I'm not going to tell you that it was Andrée Michel nor the English or American suffragettes. Reading did of course have an effect on me; I even made a film in 1975 with prostitutes ⁶ because a fortnight earlier I had read a pamphlet by Kate Millet ⁷. But it was primarily the contact with people which interested and influenced me. It is people who give me energy. I learnt more in talking with women themselves, in watching them, in making films with them, in carrying out joint actions, than from reading books. I had read *The Second Sex*, I liked *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* a lot, but it wasn't the most important thing for me. Looking at the life that Simone de Beauvoir had,

her modesty with regard to the feminists, that influenced my growth. Delphine Seyrig also influenced me enormously. She was totally irreverent. Just because someone is well known or important is no reason for one to shut up, to get down on your knees and be thankful. On the contrary, you always needed to first keep your head high and push through your convictions. Delphine had humour, an imagination, an incredible energy and was always ready to make an event, a happening, a video. She was completely bilingual and often brought us books from the USA, which were not yet translated, like Susan Brownmiller's book about rape. I discovered so many things from listening to Delphine. We held talks together, she translated chapters for us and we talked about what she had read the day before. My role models were in fact the pioneers of the women's liberation movement in France and in Switzerland, where I lived, and these are my friends! I am really moved and happy to have had the chance, having come from the backwaters, to have met all these exceptional women. I found what they said amazing, so I put the camera to their service, to serve the causes which they had initiated. As simple as that. It really is extraordinary to live around people who make history, to be able to learn from them as they are buttering their morning toast or out for a drink or taking a walk. It is a real symbiosis of reflection and life's pleasures.

HF – In the sixties, you made numerous feminist video tapes with Delphine Seyrig and Ioana Wieder. How did you meet them? Why did you use the name “*Insoumuses*”⁸?

CR – In order to make a living, on the weekend, I organised courses in video making for women as there was no one teaching this. One day, Delphine Seyrig rang at my door, with one of her friends, Ioana. She registered for the course. Uncultured as I was, I didn't know who Delphine was, I had never heard anything about her and I had not seen any of her films. In those days, you could not go to the cinema in Switzerland if you were under eighteen. Thereafter, we became very good friends. When I worked with Delphine and Ioana it was more consistent to sign with another name than “Video-Out”, as they were not part of it. They didn't discuss with the group what we should or shouldn't do. It was fairer that we should have our own identity as three friends making exclusively feminist short films, whereas “Video-Out” could cover different topics. The dynamics were different. Together we were very creative and we notably made *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*⁹ a production of a text by Valerie Solanas, which I really liked the radicalism of, and *Maso et Miso vont en bateau*¹⁰ which always makes people fall

about laughing. Delphine recorded the famous broadcast of Bernard Pivot with Françoise Giroud, at the end of 1975, which was decreed international year of “the” woman by the UN. We decided to respond to this as we were so shocked and scandalised! The film came out in the l’Olympic-Entrepôt cinema. It was the first time in Paris that a theatre was equipped properly for video. Paul had made a clever calculation so that everyone in the theatre could watch one or two screens. We took out the seats, built some small metal structures, and put the screens on top. The video was projected for several weeks and we had a long article in *Nouvel Observateur*. The director of the cabinet of Françoise Giroud came to see me to tell me that she was devastated by the video and ready to enter into negotiations to stop the screenings. That was the one thing that one should not ask of someone like Delphine, who said: “Since she threatens us, we will keep the film running for twice as long!” The film was the ultimate proof that there was a need to be radical and that it does not serve any purpose to be seductive. Françoise Giroud was very competent, she was a great journalist, but she wasn’t a feminist. There you go, again a woman who didn’t have confidence in herself, who was too dependent, even emotionally, on men, and who wasn’t in solidarity with women.

HF- How do you see the 70s today and how did you experience the decline of the women’s liberation movement in the 80s?

CR – I think it was the happiest decade in my life. Everything was amazing. The world belonged to us and we changed it. We were full of hope about the changes in society. Things seemed possible, they were the “glorious years”. Everything went well, unemployment wasn’t a problem, HIV didn’t yet exist, contraception, we used it and some abused it. There were wars, but we shared a great collective hope. Afterwards we had to continue living our daily lives, in a more banal manner and it wasn’t always easy. I found the 80s terrible: the lack of humour, the institutionalisation, the “*bureaux de l’égalité*”^B. This term ‘equality’ between men and women, we never made use of it. Why try to be equal to someone that you are challenging? It’s obvious that to anchor our ideas, we needed to use rather boring structures. Social change also needed to be instigated through these. I still had my good friends, of course I continued to do my work, but it wasn’t a party anymore, or fun, or about sisterhood. It wasn’t a dream anymore, it was something else. Right at the beginning of the 80s, we founded the Centre Audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir with Delphine and Ioana, with the help of Simone Iff and financial support of Yvette Roudy’s ministry.

The project connected archiving and production. It seemed appropriate to me to combine the two, to be in the present and not only in the past, it wasn't only about enriching the archives. It was a beautiful project. We collected documents written by men or by women about women. And I worked on the production: preparing budgets, managing orders and taking initiative, doing what we wanted to do. It was also in the 80s that I started to get paid for what I was doing, making money, to put on productions, and then producing new ideas, "chop-chop", because we had to eat. Seeing as I no longer had these collaborations with the funny and subversive feminists, I worked on more conventional topics. The films that we made are not as funny as the ones of the 70s. We did at least try to find interesting topics. We shot a portrait of Flo Kennedy¹¹, a wonderful woman. We talked for the first time about agriculture, shellfish farmers and other sea workers¹², none of these women's activities were defined, they didn't have any status, nevertheless the women worked ten hours a day. In the end they finally received professional recognition, which was the most important thing. In those years, I also started to work on incest¹³, which was the taboo of all taboos. I had great moments of nostalgia for the 70s, back then we created for ourselves the universe, our own imaginary world. Either we give up, because collectively there isn't a lot going on, or on the other hand we tell ourselves that we need to continue and to try to find other people willing to take small steps at a time. I was driven by this. Every day I had the urge to stir things up!

HF – You came back to live in Switzerland in 1994. What motivated you to return?

CR – I left France for various reasons. The experience of being the boss at "*Entrepôt*", which I took over from Frédéric Mitterrand, was trying. I also spent hours and hours at the editing desk, and in a way I wanted to go back to my native land, to rediscover the landscape, which is so attractive but also to see if I could come to terms with issues from my childhood which were neither very happy nor easy. I therefore decided to confront the situation and to see if I could reconcile myself with this country. That is what I tried to do, and it was a success, now I am in my element! I am very happy now, a happiness I never knew before my twenties. It's incredible to work with my machines in the middle of the mountains! It's important for me because I handle difficult topics and I am confronted by the sorrow of others. I need a life which is pretty organised, calm, light and sunny. I have not changed my life at all, my way of doing things and my interests are the same, my fury is unscathed. But, I've made new networks. I kept in close contact with all my friends in Paris, but at present

I live here. In 1999, I filmed *Debout!*¹⁴, and that was a decisive moment for me. I knew French women well, but the Swiss not at all. At the beginning, it wasn't easy. I think they couldn't sympathise with me, they thought I was a loudmouth. Our interactions were pretty tense up until the day when I showed them the draft of the film. That is where I won them over. Now they are my best friends in Switzerland, it's as simple as that! This is what is wonderful about my work.

HF – How do you define your video practice? In a presentation of the group “Video-Out”, Paul Roussopoulos gave a very illuminating explanation of your concept of militantism via the image, which appears to me to still be appropriate to your work today: it's a question of “attacking society from the rooftops”, that is at the level of ideology “rather than from the foundations”.

CR – We were not going to set ourselves in a factory. We could have done that. It was very fashionable for the “Maoists”: children of the bourgeoisie that we were, to go and work in a factory for a year or two. This made all the workers laugh, they said: “It's easy to come and work at the factory when you can leave and go back to being a doctor, a lawyer, or be supported by your father or mother”. I have no aspirations to work with the workers. But nevertheless we admired their position, their courage, their analyses. Our means of involvement was therefore to give them a voice, to bring them to people's attention. It's important to be very modest. I think that shifts and changes in society happen because people with conviction, in every walk of life, did what they had to. This is what feminism has taught us. In the movement there were women who wrote songs, lawyers, judges, politicians, activists. I tried to make videos with others. Everyone did what she knew how to do, all together and at the same time. The intellectuals wrote and formulated theories. I was never capable of formulating an avant-garde idea and documenting it intellectually. I don't think that we should mystify the role of images in social progress at all. They form an integral part of the struggle, full stop. My driving force, and therefore the driving force behind the energy which I expend to this day, unmasking injustice, is simply that I cannot stand the lack of respect for others. One morning I'll get up and I'll want to address an issue, by learning about an unprecedented situation or meeting with people; men or women... I could speak for example about my film about sexual mutilation, *Femmes mutilées plus jamais!*¹⁶ I didn't realise that it still existed in Egypt and here, I thought the situation had improved. A conference was held and I learnt that it was very well attended. Some women had given first hand accounts, I was told what had been said, and that they would be very

happy to meet me. I then went to have a drink with them and discovered the horror of the situation, still very real, on a global scale but also in their daily lives with their physical and psychological damage. I already knew about this but I had never paid much attention to it. How was it possible that in 2007 such things still existed? I asked them if they would like to use the camera to make a project about these issues and to push them forward. They replied: “Yes”. It was as simple as that. This is how I create a link between my feminism and aesthetics, through video! The images which come closest to describe what I feel, are of someone passing in a game of volley ball, - you take the ball and you pass it on- or like a public letter writer. I don’t have any theoretical discourse about my work. These are things that I live out without needing to formulate them. The greatest feminist breakthrough, is to not cut our lives up into little slices: our personal lives, our political lives, our emotional lives, our professional lives, everything is linked. All these things come together. It’s the same thing with my interests, my relationships with people. I wake up in the morning and I tell myself: “this has to be stopped”. What I’m concerned with is exerting a bit of leverage on reality, in all modesty, as I never thought that a video tape could change the world. These are the situations, meeting people at a given moment, that make things happen. And then the image and my energy can effectively intervene. It’s a question of energy, more than aesthetics. And a question of fury, a word I like a lot. I find that fury is something extremely positive. It’s what keeps you awake while sitting on a chair watching television. The problem is not watching television, but accepting everything that you are told, the accumulation of all this misinformation. People have a tendency to accept everything because they don’t dare to protest. We are surrounded by technocrats who decide about the lives of others. And we feminists, humanists, we will not have them take over and take the winnings! I stopped accusing others and I started to have the same discourse regarding women. Women need to wake up, they cannot always accuse men of being the root of all evil. Women who have liposuction and Botox, hundreds, thousands of them, they don’t do it for their men! It’s a woman’s choice in relation to themselves... and to other women.

HF – How can you explain that women were particularly eager to take up video?

CR – It’s true that in the video groups in the 70s, women occupied an important place. But it’s not at all because the cameras were light and portable that women were captivated by video, on the contrary. Nurith Aviv, who is one of the first feminist camera women and who made magnificent films, is small, but she carried enormous 16 and 35 mm cameras! I don’t think that it’s related to the



*durbahn + madeleine ⁽¹⁾



audience watching S.C.U.M. Manifesto ⁽³⁾



viewing stations ⁽⁵⁾



nicole fernandez ferrer,
hélène fleckinger, madeleine, manuela ⁽⁴⁾



poster⁽²⁾



two different soups everyday prepared by Emma + Hanna⁽³⁾



audience⁽³⁾

weight of the camera, but because of the fact that it's a blank medium. There was no schooling for it; it didn't have a past or history. Men had not yet seized on it. When women discovered this machine, like me, they told themselves that it was enough to try: we delete, we start again, we learn on the go. The cameras were not very expensive. Even if though it required a significant investment in the beginning, the tape was relatively cheap, like mini-DV tapes today. We could therefore take our time over any mistakes. Starting again wasn't a big deal. In the video groups, even in the mixed ones, I didn't experience any sexism, it was extremely satisfying. Women were on an equal footing with the men. In comparison to film, women were not only editors, they were also directors. We were actually hands-on workers, rather than directors and editors. We did everything and everyone knew how to do everything. The women took up all the various jobs. There was no division between intellectual work and manual/technical work, and therefore no hierarchy, including between the genders. I would never have done film, even if I were a millionaire. It's not something that's ever tempted me. I wouldn't have been able to establish a level of trust with people. It's great to be able to show them what has been shot and to delete things that they are not happy with. We did this systematically and we still do it today. I still work exactly in the same way.

HF – Can you tell me more about your video-making ethics? You often say that the images belong to the people filmed and not to those who film them.

CR – Yes, in my films I ask people to be as sincere as possible, to get to the truth, without being exhibitionists. My films are built up of little moments of concentration, a few minutes with the camera. I realised immediately that it's important to be close to people with my camera, so that they can also be close to the audience. I understood very quickly that when I was asking questions people were looking at me, and therefore looking at the lens, and in this way they were also looking out at the audience, and there is something very powerful about this. After all, it is pretty rare that the person behind the camera also asks questions. I consider that these images and these sounds, these moments of concentration and truth belong to the people interviewed more than to me. I really want to make films together, with them, I am in some ways the conductor of an orchestra; it's true that the tapes would not exist if I had not created a situation for them to be created in, but it's the people who are filmed who make them. It's their life, and the topics I'm dealing with are often sensitive. It takes great courage to give firsthand accounts about sexual mutilations as Fatxiya,

Sahra and Halima did recently, and even at the time of *F.H.A.R.*, to call yourself homosexual, when everyone was still in the closet. The woman who agreed to film her abortion in *Y'a qu'à pas baiser*³, despite the practice being illegal in France, also showed great courage! So the least I can do is to show their images and their interviews and to give them a right to be visible to the end. As editing is nothing but a huge act of manipulation, you can completely change the meaning of something. Most of the people I filmed had been through hard times. These are people who suffered enormously, whether it was incest, rape, marital rape, sexual mutilations, what ever. It's especially important that the work which we do together does not put the participant at any risk of losing their sense of identity. I think that really often the people whom I filmed felt better after, than before. I do not do therapy with them, I am not a psychologist, but these are people who have accepted to be filmed in front of the camera, to help others in the same situation as themselves. If the film is respectful of what they wanted to say, it gives them credit, it puts them in relation to the audience, and they become the pioneers of the causes which they defend. As they defend them well, I say that in a modest way they become heroines. These are the anonymous ones who make history. Denouncing on the screen what is happening is worth years of struggle. This was the case for incest. The lawyers, politicians, and especially the street and activist feminists are there, too, but video, through the spoken testimony of the women, allows a more direct identification than writing. The film about the sexual mutilations was last shown in a small town near here. An African woman was there with her friends. Political refugees for more than 10 to 15 years, she knew her group of friends very well, but she never told them that she had been mutilated. That evening after seeing the film, she stood up suddenly and she was able to use the words of Fatxya, Sahra and Halima to talk for herself. This is a possibility which video offers and that is why it's important to have debates alongside the films.

HF – Your approach seems to be entirely based upon consciousness raising, of the people being filmed but also the public, who are not reduced to a passive position. A common point in your films seems to be that you don't present the women as victims and you encourage our active reflection.

CR – The key to all my work is to film people who are not in a void or in an awful period of identity crisis, but who understand what has happened to them. In my films, all the women, all the victims of sexual violence, have analysed the mechanisms which have put them where they are and which will help others to come out. They have in common a form of awareness of their situation,

and the conviction that the audiovisual is a means to raise public awareness to the horrors which they experienced. I could not film a person who does not understand what has happened to them, I find this indecent, and I think it's more useful that they make a personal effort to understand what has happened to them. The priority is not to make a film and to address it to others. By denouncing what has happened you leave the situation of victimisation, in which we are often trapped. You become an engine for your own life. In the documentaries which we see on television these days, it seems as if the most important position is that of the journalist. It is they who propose the topic, write the script and then illustrate it. My approach is completely the opposite. I know where I want to go when I chose a topic or when I have a commission, but when you ask me to write a presentation text, I am incapable of doing it. Very often the people interviewed take me in a direction which I never would have thought of and these themes are developed in my films. Why then try to fix situations when we could remain open? For me, video is not a domain of precision, or of emotions, I hate showing people who cry, and I do not do sentimentality. I try to show images which are neither very violent nor too hard, as I think that these don't allow people to think. For example, the film about the sexual mutilations, I had to state on the cover that there were no images of mutilation. It was important to show them twenty or thirty years ago, just as it was necessary to film an abortion in its actual length to dramatise the act. But today we know what sexual mutilation is, and we should let people think about it and understand why it's extremely humiliating and painful for women. It's not by showing terrible images that we get people on our side, that we raise consciousness about the system of oppression in which these mutilations exist. In television they do not like it at all that I don't show images of violence and, especially, that my documentaries do not present the topic in the beginning, with all the questions which people ask, with the "solutions" given. It's true that I do not facilitate the work of the audience. I never put in commentaries in voice "off" in my films. I do not think that audiences are complete fools!

HF – How were your films circulated in the 1970s? How are they distributed today?

CR – My films are not screened on television between adverts and they have always been subject to different, parallel forms of distribution. In the 70s, every now and then, we said to ourselves: "We should get out and about more, try to bring the correct line to different kinds of people." So, on the weekends, we

often went to markets, protests, and we would ask a shopkeeper of a bistro if they would let us use their electricity. We had these long cables. We would open the bonnet of our falling-apart Fiat, install a type of black cardboard screen for a television and screen our videos. First of all Brigitte Fontaine sang and Julie Dassin played the accordion. They drew the crowd and then afterwards we showed our videos, we passed a hat around and then we went to eat! We did this for quite a long time and we had a lot of fun! We even came to Switzerland. I wanted to return to all the places where people pissed me off and that is how we ended up in Lausanne, in front of the faculty, and how we met Francis Reusser and Anne-Marie Miéville, who were very intrigued by the video posters. In Paris we had many video groups: Vidéa (Catherine Lahourcade, Syn Guérin, Anne-Marie Faure), Jean-Paul Fargier and his partner, Danielle Jaeggi (who were Swiss like me), Vidéo 00 with the Lefebvres. Guy Hennebelle theorised and wrote. He was a great support to the first groups, he introduced us and defended us, by offering a political analysis of our work. Delphine and Ioana too quickly threw themselves into video. The problem of distribution was really tedious and complex because there was no VHS at the time, no recorders. We had to always move around with the heavy dark red Sony machine. I remember its colour and especially the weight! We had to do the projections ourselves and at one moment, we got fed-up. We couldn't shoot, project films and look after our children all at the same time. So we had the idea of getting

together to make a small group. I met a very nice retired couple who loved our work and who worked with the Palestinians: Marcque and Marcel Moiroud. We asked them if they wanted to take over the distribution of our work, which they immediately accepted. They would pay themselves out of a percentage of the rental income and Delphine found a name for this small distribution network: *"Mon œil"*.

HF – What did feminism change in your personal life? And how would you define it?

CR – Feminism firstly helped me to reconcile with my mother, who left when I was very young. I have no memories of my mother at home. She never boiled an egg, she always had servants. She never kissed us because that would then ruin her make-up. We had a very strange relationship and I certainly really suffered from not being raised and loved in a traditional sense by my mother. I understood, with the help of feminists, that the maternal instinct is not innate. I thought that I was an isolated case. We always think that we are the only ones that experience certain situations. In the famous Wednesday meetings I heard

women talk about their experiences, and of those who wanted to have or not to have children. I then understood that my mother wasn't at all atypical, that many women didn't have a maternal instinct and above all, that they have the right to be like this. I would also say that feminism taught me to raise my head and to "*walk with one's nose to the wind*"^a, which is what the desert Bedouin say, so nicely. I became confident in myself and I acquired the conviction that we can have egalitarian relationships with men and that we should fight for this. I understood that we should never give up, that we have everything to gain in our personal lives, in our relationships with others, but that we should not get caught up in seduction nor the need to be loved all the time. Now, I don't let anything go. Nothing at all. Feminism gave me a global perspective on the world. The French feminists, and the Swiss feminists, who I got to know subsequently, had a real political understanding of society. In the 70s we never labelled our tapes "tapes by women", there was no risk of differentiation. We refused to attach ourselves, thankfully, to extreme leftist groups or to political parties, in order to retain autonomy over our own convictions. We were nevertheless all very politicised. We had a vision of the world which included analysis of class struggle, social injustices, things that are absolutely essential for me. Feminists have always been internationalists. Feminism has been reduced to a quarrel about power relations between men and women, about issues of the right to vote and abortion, but this is completely wrong. Feminism implies a variety of concerns. Kate Millet, in *Des fleurs pour Simone de Beauvoir*¹⁷, explains very well that feminists have always been against wars, they have always denounced conditions of detention in prison, they were always concerned with the working class and social injustices. They defended children and education. Perhaps they spoke less about sex, lesbianism, and homosexuality. But they analysed all the problems of society. Feminism is therefore the greatest humanism as Franceline Dupenloup says in *Debout!* I agree with this definition.

HF – You were always conscious of the importance of preserving the memory of women's history and feminist struggles. Do you think there has been a transmission of the crucial experience of the 70s?

CR – No, probably not. Women, friends, they did what they had to do, to the best of their abilities. They say it themselves with a lot of humour, when they started to write texts in 1969-70, they thought they had invented new concepts, and later, when feminist historians wrote about the suffragettes, when they found letters, texts, pamphlets, they realised that everything had already

been said, that in fact they had not invented a line, a word or a concept. The transmission at this point, did not take place and it's terrible to have to reinvent the wheel all the time. Photos, writing, pamphlets, archives, books, really need to be saved, I believe they facilitate the transmission. In the 70s in France and America women put emphasis on writing and it does not surprise me that this is denied, once more, erased, forgotten. There are not a lot of television programmes about these women who made history, the press hasn't published articles. These women are absolutely not honoured and brought to the fore as they should be. But isn't this a classic phenomenon? In the end, do people want to thank the people who bother them for bothering them? Do we often honour people, for the most part dead, for the things they have done for us? Unfortunately, I think not. We were ridiculed, treated like idiots, hysterics, like flies, and that didn't allow people to want to identify with us. Feminism has been so strongly caricatured that women who were deeply feminist effectively reject it. How many women start off by saying: "I am not a feminist, but..."! This is terrible. Still, if we approach the problems calmly with them, they generally realise that if things have improved, it's thanks to us, and that this term has been so disparaged that they are scared of using it to describe themselves. They are not all under the spell of men, but they didn't want to be identified as one of these caricatured women whom they didn't know, whom they'd never met, whose humour and gaiety they had never known. This is very evident in the debates which followed the screenings of *Debout!* It's the first thing that people say: "I didn't know that feminists were like this!" It is striking to see the young discover that these women had a lot of humour, were beautiful and not dogmatic! The videos show a glimmer in one's eyes which still shines today, thirty years later. The role of images in transmission was therefore decisive; it allowed clichés to be broken down. The women's liberation movement has unfortunately too few archives. For this reason I recently cleaned and edited all the interviews from *Debout!* It represented more than twenty hours of archives with pioneers of the movement in France and in Switzerland! If young women were a bit more informed, they would be able to follow our example. What is important is effectively to make them understand that it's a great pleasure and a lot of fun to fight! We have all to win by raising our heads, everyone, all the oppressed in the world.

HF – In *Debout!*, you ask the women interviewed what they would like to say to the young women of today. I would like to ask you this question in turn.

CR – It is important to agree on what feminism is. We have never handed

out stars. All the women who are active, who are aware, who want to make things change, are feminists. All women who decide not to be a doormat are, for me, feminists. I don't have any lessons to give the young women of today. I won't judge them for not taking the same route as us, for not going out into the streets in numbers. It's also the financial, economic, and current political situation which ensures that there is not a movement in the sense that we are aware of it. The women's liberation movement would probably not have existed if we had not been in a favourable economic situation. Large social movements are able to happen when things are going well. If we stopped working for one year, we would find work again without a problem. I think that many young women today put their energy into renegotiating their relationships with their partners. This as well as a job, where there is competition, is already a lot. They fight from their current position and in my opinion; they are making history, differently, but perhaps in a more significant way than us. They are bringing about a revolution in their relationships, in their everyday lives. We, we did it in the streets, we did the ground work, we changed the laws. In a certain way, we did the theory in the 70s and now they are putting it into practice, and perhaps it's this work, deep down, which is getting done. You could say that women of today are the product of our dreams and utopias. Today young women... or fathers don't constantly tell their sons that they are the greatest geniuses of humanity, and on the other hand, they are not thrown into total despair when a girl is born. There is not the same weight on the shoulders of boys as before. This has moved on a lot. More and more men look after their children and enjoy it. If you see a school at home-time, it's obvious. They are not yet quite so good at doing chores, but they do them. The change-over is perhaps not via the media, we don't talk about it every day in the newspapers, it's perhaps underground, but essential. I am ready to think this, without getting on to a soap-box. There should be no bitterness towards young women of today. They can wake up all together one day; I have a lot of hope. In any case I think we can only go forward, women will not return to the home. I believe that the era of being a doormat is over.

1. This text brings together a series of interviews which took place in August 2007. First published in French in the journal *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* (vol. 28, n°1, 2009, p. 98-118) under the title “Une révolution du regard. Entretien avec Carole Roussopoulos, réalisatrice féministe”. It has been reworked and added to for subsequent publication.

2. The earliest remaining footage shot by Carole Roussopoulos is *Genet parle d'Angela Davis* (1970, 7 min). The day following Angela Davis's arrest in October 1970 Genet reads, in three takes, a text denouncing the racist politics of the US, and supportive of the Black Panthers and Angela Davis. Made for television, this broadcast was ultimately censored.

3. *Y a qu'à pas baiser* (1971-1973, 17 min). A militant documentary calling for the provision of abortion and freely available contraception. The film weaves together images of the first major feminist mass demonstration which took place in Paris on the 20th of November 1971 with images from an illegal abortion using the ‘Karmen’ vacuum aspiration technique.

4. *The F.H.A.R. (Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire)* (1971, 26 min). Paris, 1971: this film uses footage from the first demonstration for Gay rights which took place during the traditional Mayday parade, and the discussion which took place, some weeks later at the University of Vincennes within the framework of a philosophy seminar. Among the militant members of the newly established F.H.A.R. are Anne-Marie Fauret and Guy Hocquenghem.

5. *Grève de femmes à Troyes* (1971, 60 min) was directed by Cathy Bernheim, Ned Burgess, Catherine Deudon, Suzanne Fenn and Annette Lévy-Willard. Factory workers relate their experiences of the strike at Troyes, and how it changed their lives, to women from the liberation movement.

6. *Les Prostituées de Lyon Parlent* (1975, 40 min). In the spring of 1975, two hundred female prostitutes occupied the church of Saint-Nizier in Lyon. Direct to camera, at times awkwardly concealed, they bear witness as “women and mothers” and demand the cessation of police harassment and the fiscal and social harassment that they fall prey to. Outside of the church video monitors retransmit their words to passers-by.

7. Kate Millett, *La Prostitution. Quatuor pour voix féminine's* [The Prostitution Papers: “A Quartet For Female Voice”] translated from the American, Paris, Denoël-Gonthier, 1972. For Kate Millet prostitution is a “Loch Ness Monster” that threatens all women at every moment. Notably marriage is also considered from this point of view.

8. This neologism brings together the French terms ‘insoumises’ or ‘unsubmissive’ and ‘muses’ which carries the same meaning as ‘the muse’ in English. For these militant directors word play was an ironic way to refute the stereotyped image of women as passive inspiration, silent icons emanating from the male perspective. It is also a way of affirming themselves as revolutionary women, rebellious, unsubmitive to the patriarchal order, taking the stand and taking a hold of their own representation, just as they took hold of the camera.

9. *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* (1976, 27 min) directed by Carole Roussopoulos and Delphine Seyrig. This film consists of a scene reading of extracts from S.C.U.M. Manifesto (Society for Cutting Up Men) by Valerie Solanas, edited in 1967 and out of print in French. Delphine Seyrig translated passages and read them aloud to Carole Roussopoulos who typed them up. In the background a television screen broadcasts a live news programme. As in the book the film is a pamphlet against a society dominated by the “male” image and the “virile” action.

10. *Maso et Miso vont en bateau* (1976, 55 min) directed by Nadja Ringart, Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig et Ioana Wieder. On the 30th of December 1975, the directors saw Bernard Pivot's television broadcast “Encore un jour et l'année de la femme, ouf! c'est fini” [One day left, ‘phew’ the year of the woman is at an end] on ‘Antenne 2’ where Franciose Giroud [journalist, writer and ‘Secrétaire d'État à la Condition féminine’] was invited as a guest. The three directors decided to put together a comic and tongue in cheek video-clip showing that “secretary of state for the female condition” is a slight-of-hand.

11. *Flo Kennedy: Portrait d'une féministe américaine* (1982, 60 min) directed by Carole Roussopoulos and Ioana Wieder. Margo Jefferson, professor of journalism at New York University, and Ti-Grace Atkinson, feminist writer and theoretician, interview Flo Kennedy, a Black American lawyer; they discuss racism, minority rights

and the E.R.A. (Equal Rights Amendment, a proposed amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women).

12. This is how Carole Roussopoulos came to direct *Profession: agricultrice* (1982, 40 min), *Profession: conchylicultrice* (1984, 34 min) with Claude Vaclare and *Les Travailleuses de la mer* (1985, 26 min) [the sea-workers].

13. *L'Inceste, la conspiration des oreilles bouchées* (1988, 30 min) This is the first film in a series dedicated to incest. Claudine, Monique, Emmanuelle and Anne met one another through the telephone help-line "Viols Femmes Informations", [Women's Rape Information] all three bear witness to their experiences of incestuous rape during their childhood. They remembered their despair and their attempts to put an end to the advances being made by their fathers or grandfathers. They recall signs made and words spoken in an attempt to find help from those around them.

14. *Debout! Une histoire du mouvement de libération des femmes (1970-1980)* (1999, 90 min): Crossing over a range of archival material (audio, photographic and audio-visual) this film pays homage to the Women of the Liberation Front in Switzerland and in France, to their intelligence, their bravery and their good humour. This film serves to bridge the gap between the early pioneers and the younger generation.

15. "What motivated Carole and myself to make use of the medium of video was the idea that as intellectuals we had to fight our battles in the domain of super-structures [...] Our brand of video-militancy was established in the current of cultural protest following May '68. Our idea was, and remains to a large extent, that we can attack bourgeois society from the rooftops rather than from the foundations. In a rather muddled fashion we thought that there was no hope of exploding the system through the class struggle. The immediate solution for us then was to blow it up from above, by threatening the rooftops; by which I mean the ideological super-structures." (Paul Roussopoulos, from "Problèmes et perspectives de la vidéo militante", *Écran 75*, n° 41, novembre 1975, p. 37)

16. *Femmes mutilées, plus jamais!* (2007, 35 min) directed by Fatxiya Ali Aden et Sahra Osman in collaboration with Carole Roussopoulos. Fatxiya and Sarah, two young women of Somalian origin living in Switzerland, were both circumcised and infibulated while still children. As adults, alongside Halima, they condemn this mutilation and meet with other pioneers working in the Swiss movement to condemn these practices, whose primary purpose is to undermine women's dignity.

17. *Des fleurs pour Simone de Beauvoir* (2007, 22 min) directed by Carole Roussopoulos and Arlène Shale. This film intersperses archive footage with interviews from three major international feminists; the Americans, Ti-Grace Atkinson and Kate Millett, and Christine Delphy, from France. They underline the importance and philosophical and feminist legacy of Simone de Beauvoir.

18. Out of this project, initiated by Carole Roussopoulos, and realised with the help of Hélène Fleckinger and Françoise Flamant, was born "Témoigner pour le féminisme" [Bear Witness to Feminism] which responds to the urgent need to safeguard the memory of the feminist struggle past and present. This project was established by the Association Archives du Féminisme (France) in partnership with LIEGE (Laboratoire Interuniversitaire en Études Genre - Université de Lausanne) and Espace Femmes International (Geneva). The objective of this project was to create an audio-visual foundation focusing on feminist history and the preservation of documents, the creation of new archives and the distribution of source-material. The safe-guarding of audio-visual archives was achieved with the support of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France [National French Library].

Translation Notes

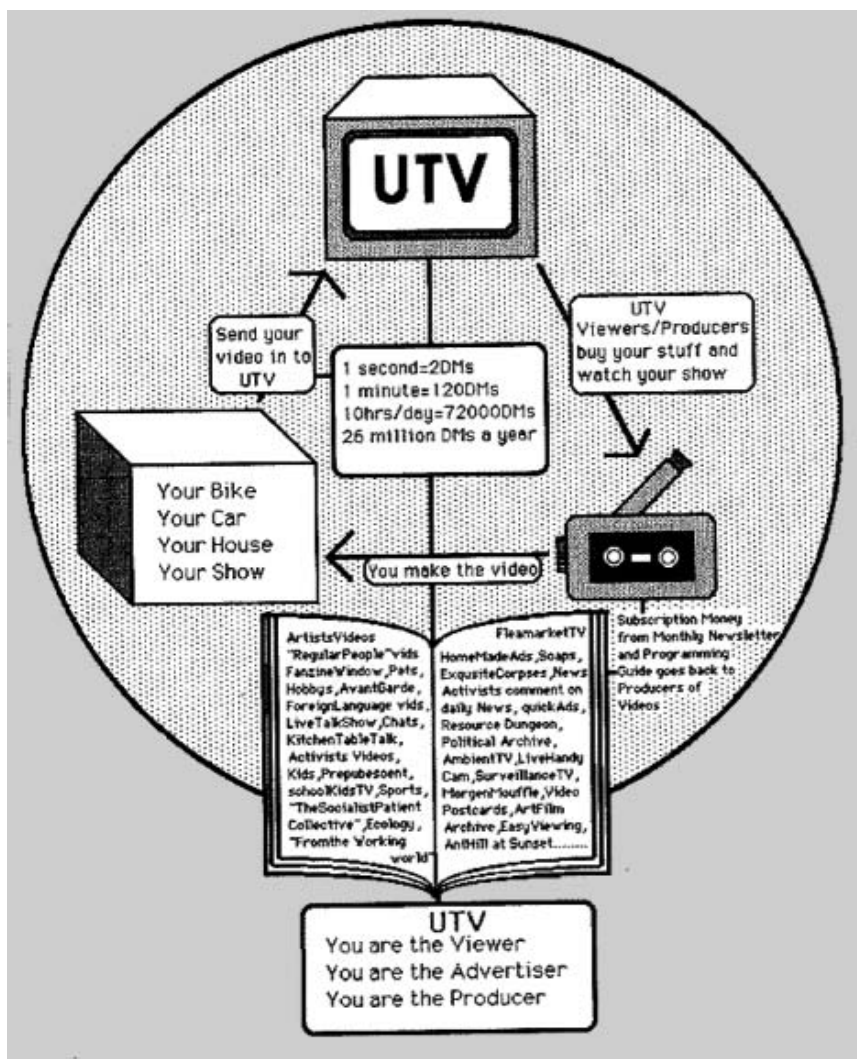
¹ "Walk with one's nose to the wind" - translated direct from Bedouin idiom.

² "The Regime of the Colonels", 1967- 1974 - referring to Greek military dictatorship at the time , we understand here that she is implying that they were still involved in some way in the Greek struggle.

³ "UP6" - the radical architecture school at the Beaux Arts in Paris, at the time.

⁴ "Bureaux de l'égalité" - specific french organisation for equal gender rights, "Equality Office".

cvOriginal French interview published as a booklet with the DVD "Caméra militante. Luttés de libération des années 1970. Carole Roussopoulos", edited by MetisPresses, Geneva Switzerland in 2010.



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CENTRE AUDIOVISUEL
SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

WHO ARE WE ?
Subtitles of the second issue go to the 3rd issue

Founded in 1982 by Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig and Irena Wieder, the mission of the Centre audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir is to gather all audiovisual documents on women's rights, fights, art and creation, and to publicize/promote and distribute them.

Background and History

Rising from the enthusiasm of May 68 and the Estates General of the cinema, interventionist cinema also rises from its ashes, with the desire to film reality as it happens and to act on the protest movements. In this effervescent and activist context, women directors seized on the cinema's new resources such as video, using Sony's Portapak movie cameras. These directors accompanied their history and battles and took charge of their own representation. Like Virginia Woolf who demanded "a room of her own", feminists demanded "a camera of their own", and made this an act of revolt.

More or less everywhere in France, video collectives — un-incorporated, fluctuating and innovative — grew. The directors never referred to what was being said on the outside, in voice-over: Don't out. Don't censor/comment. Nothing must interrupt or alter what is being said. The films, videos, sound recordings, and rushes from the Centre audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir collection come from the activist cinema of the 1960s to the 1980s, video art of the 1980s, and social and political movements of the 1980s.

<http://www.centre-simone-de-beauvoir.com>



Nicole Fernandez Ferrer + Carole Roussopoulos
 - Catherine Deudon

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Association

Carole Roussopoulos

Pionnière de la vidéo féministe

Accueil

L'association Carde Roussapoulos a pour objectif de valoriser le patrimoine cinématographique de Carde Roussapoulos, pionnière de la vidéo française.



Caméra
au poing !

Grèves ouvrières, luttes anti-impérialistes, mouvements révolutionnaires et féministes, le vidéaste Carol Roussopoulos a capté tout au long de sa vie une mémoire en images des résistances à l'oppression.

Pionnière de la vidéo, elle a réalisé et monté près de 150 documentaires, toujours dans une perspective féministe et humaniste. Son œuvre considérable qui couvre quarante ans de luttes est conservée à la Médiathèque Valais en Suisse et à la Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Carole Roussopoulos présidait la double nationalité française et suisse. Chevalière de la Légion d'honneur, elle est partie en 2009, après avoir reçu le prestigieux Prix culturel du Valais pour l'ensemble de son œuvre.

"Mes images vous appartiennent...".
L'Association Carole Rousseau organise et soutient des événements pour que la mémoire des « sans-voix » filme tout au long des 40 dernières années se transmette de génération en génération.

Commander/diffuser
un documentaire

Vous souhaitez diffuser un film, demander conseil pour organiser un événement ? L'association Carole Roussopoulos est à votre disposition, n'hésitez pas à nous contacter.



Coffret DVD

L'association Caryl Chessman a édité un magnifique DVD en hommage à cette grande vedette. Le coffret contient des films et des vidéos.

A faire circular sans modération.

Soirée d'hommage à Carole
ROUSSOPOULOS

12 November 2010

Fête musicale « Pour Cécile ».
Avec : Nicole Brenez, Jackie Buet, Christine
Delpy, Nicole Fernandez Ferret, Hélène
Fiedinger, Brigitte Fontaine, et beaucoup
d'autres !

with

*durbahn (bildwechsel Hamburg), Claudia von Alemann, Hélène Fleckinger (Association Carole Roussopoulos), Nicole Fernandez Ferrer (Centre audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir), UTV (Stephan Dillemuth + Hans-Christian Dany + Joseph Zehrer).

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design postcard: Manuela Schininá

design pamphlet: Emma Williams, Manuela Schininá

Fotos of the event by:

(1) Yam, (2) Bildwechsel, (3) Tina, (4) Emma, (5) Alphanova



<http://www.alpha-nova-kulturwerkstatt.de>

