

JÚLIA MACHADO AND THE SEXUAL AUDIO-VISUAL ESSAY

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

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It needs only a few glimpses of Julia Machado's work to realise how fitting British academic Catherine Grant's suggestion was that we include it here: the Brazilian artist's audio-visual essays fit this issue like a glove, unsettling the boundaries of our safe viewing of sexuality, and making us question the limits of sex and sexualisation as represented by the moving image.

The words "taste" and "decency", implanted in notions of what is or is not permissible as sexual content, are here politicised and set in tension with the opposite concept of freedom to display and be seen. If censorship of sexuality still plagues the public presentation of art across the globe, with recent cases as those of Russian artist Yulia Tsvetkova (currently under house arrest and awaiting trial) or Brazilian choreographer Wagner Schwartz (accused of paedophilia for a performance involving his own nakedness at São Paulo's Museum of Modern Art and for the fact that a mother let her child touch his foot), then Julia Machado's oeuvre is a pertinent reminder of the need for a continuous discussion on this important topic. The trilogy presented in this issue touches upon a wide range of sexual themes that have commonly fallen prey of censorship, from the lust of a white woman for a black man, to masturbation, to swinging, to sex with disabled partners and menstruation.

If it is true that these films may be disturbing, then it is also certain that by taking us outside of our comfort zone they allow us to reflect on crucial issues of our biology, humanity and society. Recently, when writing about her visual work, Júlia Machado referred to it as "Undressing the Excessive Image". And it is precisely with this enquiry, this questioning, that we want to unsettle perceived boundaries.



Paradise [6 min]

<https://vimeo.com/juliamachadofilms/paradisepotfestival>



Bliss [6 min]

<https://vimeo.com/juliamachadofilms/blisslink>



Femme [5 min]

<https://vimeo.com/juliamachadofilms/femmelink>