**Dulac, Germaine (**17 November 1882 – 20 July 1942**)**

Germaine Dulac (born Charlotte Elisabeth Germaine Saisset-Schneider) directed more than thirty films bearing the traces of Impressionism, Cinéma Pur,Surrealism and Abstraction. She is known today for her development of early feminist film theory, and her central involvement with the French avant-garde cinema movements of the 1920s. Starting her career as a feminist and radical labour journalist and activist, Dulac by 1919 had begun to explore in Impressionism and Cinéma Pur the aesthetic possibilities of cinema beyond the influence of either theatre or literature. Dulac sought a new cinematic language to express female desire through the cinematic depiction of an ‘other’ mode of subjectivity and expression beyond male-dominated cinema. Dulac also saw the possibility of cinema to advance feminist issues and politics, as evidenced by her Impressionist film, *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (*The Smiling Madame Beaudet*, 1922/23). Focusing on the psychological and emotional toll that confinement and domesticity has on an unhappily married woman, *La Souriante Madame Beudet* is often cited as one of the first truly feminist films. Dulac is, however, best known for her collaboration with Antonin Artaud who wrote the scenario for the Surrealist-inspired film, *La Coquille et le Clergyman* (*The Seashell and the Clergyman*, 1928). The film’s scenario—the erotic Oedipal hallucinations of a repressed priest pursuing the wife of an authoritarian military man—certainly influenced subsequent Surrealist cinema, but Artaud and the Surrealists disowned the film due to Dulac’s aesthetic choices and the softening of Surrealism’s radical tone. By 1930, Dulac had returned to commercial filmmaking and the production of newsreels for Pathé and Gaumont.

**Further Reading:**

Flitterman-Lewis, S. (1990) *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema*.

Urbana, University of Illinois Press.

Maule, R. (2002) “The Importance of Being a Film Author: Germaine Dulac and Female

Authorship.” http://sensesofcinema.com/2002/feature-articles/dulac/

**List of Works:**

*La Souriante Madame Beudet* (The Smiling Madame Beaudet, 1922/23)

*Âme d'artiste* (Heart of an Actress, 1924)

*L'invitation au Voyage* (Invitation to a Journey, 1927)

*La Coquille et le Clergyman* (The Seashell and the Clergyman, 1928)

**Paratextual Material:**

Attached:

1. Portrait of Germaine Dulac.

*La Coquille et le Clergyman* (film) – out of copyright

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYAo-dwZSrs

*La Souriante Madame Beudet* (film) – out of copyright

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wJLQN4uajE

*L'invitation au Voyage* (film) – out of copyright

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKzlYMkpxvI

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