

Harriet Bloch's past and future: journey into the night

Henrik Frisk

Journey into the night (1921) is a silent German drama film written by Harriet Bloch (1881-1976).¹ Bloch was one of Denmark's most prolific screenwriters. According to her own notes she has written about 150 scripts. The Danish Film Institute has 55 titles, of which only fourteen on nitrate film. Merely two films have been digitized by DFI. Bloch, independent throughout her career, is not widely known, a fact commented on by German philologist Stephan Michael Schröder (Schröder, 2011). We have a rich collection of her material in our possession that includes sixteen manuscripts, Hörspiel and theatre plays along with note books, sketches, letters, contracts, and a collection of poems that we have only begun to research and that is likely to have a number of different outcomes. The particular question for this presentation, however, is concerned with how we may understand Bloch's legacy by means of artistic production. By investigating the gap where her work has been concealed we hope to also reveal aspects that may have an influence on how we explore the media landscape around us, and reassess "existing media-historical narratives that are biased because their ideological and historiographical presuppositions." (Huhtamo, 2013)

In the duo Mongrel, our artistic method is one where improvisation play a central role. It has grown out of our thinking about contemporary media and our attempts to critically examine both our own pro-technical approach, and the hypermedia landscape we act and live in. Our process is slow and meticulous and the project that we have now engaged in is likely to go on for several year. In other words, what we are proposing is a work in progress. A preliminary goal is an intermedia work that includes images from Bloch's oeuvre as well as re-enactments of her texts, not intended as drama but rather with the intention to place focus on the writing and the person that wrote. In this presentation we will discuss the process and its implications.

References

Huhtamo, E. (2013). *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles*. Leonardo (MIT Press). MIT Press.

¹*Journey into the night* was directed by F. W. Murnau.

Schröder, S.M. (2011). *Ideale Kommunikation, reale Filmproduktion: zur Interaktion von Kino und dänischer Literatur in den Erfolgsjahren des dänischen Stummfilms 1909-1918*. Berliner Beiträge zur Skandinavistik pt. 2. Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt-Universität.

Biographies

The duo Mongrel, consisting of Anders Elberling and Henrik Frisk have worked together for several years on numerous audio/visual projects. The overarching ambition with their work is to critically examine the nature of the relation between audio and video. Their works have been performed in Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Germany and Vietnam.

Henrik Frisk

Henrik Frisk (PhD) is an active performer (saxophones and laptop) of improvised and contemporary music and a composer of acoustic and computer music. With a special interest in interactivity, most of the projects he engages in explores interactivity in one way or another. Interaction was also the main topic for his artistic PhD dissertation 'Improvisation, Computers, and Interaction'. Frisk is Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, Stockholm and an affiliate of Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University. Henrik has performed in many countries in Europe, North America and Asia including performances at prestigious festivals such as the Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival, NYC and the Montreux Jazz Festival, Switzerland. As a composer he has received commissions from many institutions, ensembles and musicians. He has made numerous recordings for American, Canadian, Swedish and Danish record labels and is currently a member of the collective Kopasetic Productions, an independent label owned and run by improvising musicians.

Anders Elberling

Anders Elberling is a visual artist, photographer, innovator, instructor, and art director. Originally educated as a photographer (Paris 1985-89) Anders uses visual objects and sound objects as tools to create artistic installations. Due to dyslexia, Anders has developed an imaginative access to communication through the creation of narratives using picture and sound. An important condition for Anders' artwork is the artistic expression that evolves in the interaction between different art forms. This interaction creates new entities that are larger than those which can be generated by the individual art form alone. Therefore, Anders typically works in projects together with other artists – for

example composers, sound artists, electronic and video artists – with whom he generates micro communities for the handling and composition of digital material through artistic practice. His work is predominantly presented at exhibitions and performances, concerts and theatre productions in broadcast, publications and installations.