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Julie Orser

Rome, Changing Role

*The good old '50s cinema lives in a fascinating project. A story built around the desires and neuroses of the vintage female, with women film heroines transformed into video while crosscutting a disturbing set and intense close-ups.*



Julie Orser - Anna Moore - 2007 - still da video su tre canali e installazione sonora - 6' loop

The mysterious name given by Julie Orser (Chicago, 1974; lives in Los Angeles) to this new female character seems to come from the dawn of cinema. Anna Moore was the protagonist of *Agony on the Ice*, a drama with strong hues of D.W. Griffith. In 1920 the director continued to give excellent evidence of technical innovation and storytelling that codified the modern language of film. From there we arrived at the psychological drama, historic epic, and sentimental comedy in a perfect mix between art and the entertainment industry. And if everything began with Griffith, perhaps it is no coincidence that the woman designed by Orser for Anna Moore is a fascinating video creature with a celluloid-spirit that recalls the extraordinary experience of a great pioneer of American cinema.

The video installation on three channels recreates themes and atmospheres of classic Hollywood films of the 40's–50's noir and melodrama, imbued with pathos where intricate human affairs unfold within specific social contexts. It is women who occupy a strategic place in these stories, often built around the emotional strength of the feminine. Anna Moore is a sharp and concentrated plethora of female-cliché.

In the video *In This Place* and *Double Bind* everything is pushed to the excess: the gestures, the set, the facial gestures, attention to detail, lights, colors, shots; the embittered aesthetic transforms the original innocent cinematic memories into an ambiguous remake flavored with obsession. Anna Moore is in her too

colorful kitchen, a cheerful home crystallized in an apparent calm bourgeois. The maniacal order betrays the shadow of tragedy, the crime, and the nightmare. Anguish, overwhelming passions, neurosis, recondite fears, sexual repression, hypocrisy and hidden perversion are the character's precipice questioning this ordinary femme fatale, put forward by Orser in some key moments of a hypothetical, symbolic script.

Beautiful in her evening dress, Anna Moore—a new Lana Turner or Grace Kelly—explodes in a desperate and hysterical scream, her hands sunk between platinum blonde hair, to interpret its most beautiful scene mother. Slipping in silence, Anna—in a black suit and spiked heels—left inside rooms with mysteries which are never revealed, secrets suspended in slow time and circumspect of the movie camera.

Victim of social codes, unhealthy complacency or a drive for recovery, the woman, at last, is finding her release in crying, while musical excerpts taken from old films merge in an evocative soundtrack.

Halfway between the b-movie disguises of Cindy Sherman and the media distortion of Candice Breitz, Orser's project brings together a strong seductive structure. Made of artificial stereotypes and controversial desire, a new heroin is trapped in the screen as human as she is theatrical.

by  
Helga Marsala

\*Translated from Italian