The Invisible Woman

Mónica Nuñez

Synopsis
Moving from one country to another is a complex process, especially because often we cannot stop to think about it: when we make the decision to leave our place of birth it is because we are forced to, because it is impossible to stay. This decision is not normally made in a rational moment; instead, it is pure survival, primal and emotional. We realise the magnitude of the impact of this decision later when we are trying to settle in the new place, far away from danger, when our minds, bodies and souls are trying to forget the fear that we left behind. We have landed in a foreign soil, often with a foreign language and foreign customs, and we need to learn to communicate with new kinds of people. The Invisible Woman is a performative monologue accompanied by background music and images, which is based on my experience as a mental health worker in Perth, Western Australia, during the past 4 years. During this period I have come across many life stories that express the traumas left by torture, migration and displacement. One woman said: “I have forgotten who I am, I am trying to belong, to develop new roots, but I get lost in my attempts. It seems that my accent, my appearance overtake any aspect of my self.” The Invisible Woman aims to touch the consequences of this ongoing journey through lack of identity and recognition, and displacement and trauma, which for many people is transformed into mental health issues that carry further the (im)possibility of finding a safe place to exist.

Bio
MÓNICA NUÑEZ works as a mental health therapist at the Alma Street Centre, Fremantle Hospital, Fremantle, Western Australia. In her mental health work Nuñez pays special attention to issues of culture and language. She has been involved in community work for 30 years, firstly, as a community activist in her country of birth, Chile, and after 1987 as a community worker in Perth, Australia. Nuñez is also an emerging visual and performance artist, who explores through words, music and images the stories of migrant people who suffer from mental illness due to trauma, displacement and loss of identity.
The Outer Limits of Readability

Dirk de Bruyn

Synopsis
This is a 20-minute presentation that involves 3 simultaneous 16mm film projections and live performance of sound poetry, which addresses issues of traumatic effect and affect. The Outer Limits of Readability extends the concerns of my earlier film, entitled Traum A Dream (Australia, 2003), into the immediacy of the performance situation. Traum A Dream has been described as “a representation of traumatised space, depicting a person who is consumed by a body of pain in which slowly something is remembered.” The Outer Limits of Readability enlists the strategies of experimental film, direct cinema, and punk, while invoking Artaud's notions of “cruel performance” (i). The Outer Limits of Readability extends a series of presentations spanning the last 12 months, which include: Audiopollen, Brisbane, July 2007; Undue Noise, Bendigo, October 2007; Intermission at GreySpace, Melbourne, November 2007; OtherFilm Festival, Brisbane, November 2007; and Horse Bazaar, Melbourne, February 2008. Further thoughts on the placement of my performance work is available in: Dirk de Bruyn (2008) ‘Fractured Urban Memories’ in T. Mehigan, ed. (2008) Frameworks, Artworks, Place: The Space of Perception in the Modern World, Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi.


Bio
DIRK DE BRUYN is a lecturer at the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia