

THE FAIRY TALE: POLITICS, DESIRE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Video Program at Artists Space

Free Admission

October 30 through November 26, 1986

Opening: October 30, 1986 6-8 pm

Dan Walworth, video curator
Artists Space, NYC, 1986



The complete program will be shown twice each day, at 11:00 am and again at 2:30 pm, Tuesdays through Saturdays.

- Curlylocks and the Three Brothers, 25 minutes, 1985, by Jacqueline Frazier.
- So Where's My Prince Already, 25 minutes, 1973-76, by Ardele Lister.
- Lying in State, 5 minutes, 1986, by Norman Cowie.
- Fractured Fairy Tales, 16 minutes, by Jay Ward Productions.
- Kappa, 28 minutes, 1986, by Bruce and Norman Yonemoto.
- Upside Down and Backwards, 28 minutes, 1979, by Joan Jonas.
- Columbus Discovers America, 8 minutes, 1986, by Sarah Drury.

Artists Space is pleased to present a three hour video program in the Lower gallery as a complement to the exhibition in the Main gallery and the two evenings of film at The Collective for Living Cinema. The Fairy Tale: Politics, Desire and Everyday Life invites the viewer to take a closer look at the form of the fairy tale and its effects on the process of socialization. The tapes in the show include a wide range of budget and format, from the commercially produced Rocky and Bullwinkle to the home video productions of Drury and Cowie. With this variety of appropriations of classical tales, the problem of the relation between text and context is thrown into relief. The traditional anchors for meaning and understanding are pulled in, setting adrift the act of listening and viewing.

The video program also emphasizes the diversity of strategy behind the appropriation of a specific fairy tale or the fairy tale form generally. Curlylocks and the Three Brothers and So Where's My Prince Already leave the basic structure of the tale intact, substituting setting and character with contemporary institutions. Aside from the humorous anachronisms and misplaced allegories, these appropriations function didactically in much the same manner as the Grimm or Andersen re-writes. The difference being, in Lister's tape for example, that the Prince is never more than a frog, no matter how many times you kiss him, clean house for him or iron his shirts.

At the other end of the spectrum, Joan Jonas' Upside Down and Backwards plays havoc with the linear form of the fairy tale, calling attention to its synchronic structure. In this tape, both The Frog Prince and The Boy Who Went Out to Learn Fear are read, one backwards and the other forwards, each interrupting the other. The insistent, yet ironic use of symbolism on the image track inverts the tales once again, playing out the 'deep' semantic structure on the surface, so that Death is nothing more than a skeleton.

Between these two approaches, but certainly not in the center, the work of Drury and Cowie uses allegory while at the same time deconstructing its mechanisms. The meanings of the stories become a process, always tentative and equivocal.

Of the seven tapes in the program, three are hot off the master; two of which, Columbus Discovers America and Lying in State will premiere with this program. The screening of Curlylocks and the Three Brothers will be its New York Premiere.