

GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN

Eija-Liisa Ahtila

The Annunciation

4 December 2010 - 8 January 2011

Tuesday – Saturday 11am – 7pm

Opening Saturday 4th December 2010



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The Annunciation is an installation in which one of the central motifs of Christian iconography is constructed and re-enacted through the moving image. It is based on the narrative from the Gospel of Luke (1:26-38) and paintings of the Annunciation in which artists have, in various periods, depicted their visions of the gospel's events.

In this Annunciation the events are set in the present. The installation, of three projected images, consists of material made during the film's preparation and the actual reconstruction of the event. The film material was shot mainly during the frosty winter season of 2010 in the snowy Aulanko nature reserve in southern Finland and on a set depicting the artist's studio and the scene of the Annunciation. All the actors, apart from two, are non-professionals and attend the Helsinki Deaconess Institute for women's support services. Although based on an existing script, the events, roles and dialogue were adapted during filming in accordance with each actor's individual presence.

A viewpoint to the Annunciation is Jacob von Uexküll's idea that living beings' different worlds exist simultaneously. This idea provides an approach to the nature of a miracle and the possibilities of perception and knowledge.

Extract from *A Stroll through the Worlds of Animals and Men*, Jakob von Uexküll (1957):

"We are easily deluded into assuming that the relationship between a foreign subject and the objects in his world exists on the same spatial and temporal plane as our own relations with the objects in our human world.

This fallacy is fed by a belief in the existence of a single world, into which all living creatures are pigeonholed.

This gives rise to the widespread conviction that there is only one space and one time for all living things. Only recently have physicists begun to doubt the existence of a universe with a space that is valid for all beings. "

Extract from *The Annunciation*, the narrator's voice over:

"For something to get started, one must merely begin and connect with a thing that isn't yet - as far as one knows, at least. And to write more about it.

How does one know what things are, unless they're already familiar? What does one know of them at that stage? How do such things exist? How to get next to them and engage in dialogue - on what and in whose language?

One instinctively approaches such things through the familiar, the known - at times with such precision and force that one can see from a single angle only, in one direction, all things in a clear order - one thing in front, another just behind it, and so on - in perspective.

Can something already familiar fulfill the criteria for a miracle? Can one be shaken with surprise by something one knows through and through? What does one see then?

Perhaps one encounters a question, which one cannot understand. Or an image of something that begins to puzzle the mind. They are displayed somewhere, where they can be discovered, and then one waits to see who comes to look at them. And how they look at them. "

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MARIAN ILMESTYS – THE ANNUNCIATION

3-channel projected high definition installation

33 min; 35mm+HD; Dolby Digital 5.1

CAST

Virgin Mary SATU MÄKINEN, The Archangel Gabriel ELISE LAAKSONEN, Saint TARU OLLILA,
Servants ELINA HURME & ANASTASIA ILVONEN, Patron RIINA MYYRYLÄINEN, Santa Claus SEPPO
SALMINEN, Director KATI OUTINEN

CREW

Written & Directed EIJA-LIISA AHTILA, Cinematography ARTO KAIVANTO, Additional cinematography
ANTTI RUUSUVUORI, Gaffer JUKKI TUURA, Set design SATTVA-HANNA TOIVIAINEN, Costume design
MARIA SAVIO, Make-up LEILA MÄKYNEN, Editing HEIKKI KOTSALO, Sound design PETER NORDSTRÖN,
Researcher SARA SUPPLY, Production co-ordinator PIRITTA PUHTO, Production manager ANNI PÄNKÄÄLÄ,
Producer ILPPO POHJOLA

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Eija-Liisa Ahtila studied at the University of California, Los Angeles, at the London College of Printing and at the University of Helsinki. Her work was exhibited in numerous international exhibitions: the KIASMA in Helsinki (2002), Tate Modern, London (2002), Kunsthalle, Zürich (2002), Documenta XI, Kassel (2002), The Venice Biennial (2005), also in *Organising Freedom* in Moderna Museet in Stockholm (2000), *Cinema of Cinema* at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1999) and at the Nordic Pavillon at the Venice Biennale [*Consolation Service*] (1999).

More recently, *The Wind* was shown at the Museum of Modern Art of New York in 2006 as well as *Ground Control* that was exhibited as part of the Billboard Vision Project in Tokyo. In the summer of 2007 there was a large exhibition of her work at the GL Strand in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 2008 she had an important retrospective at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, which then travelled to K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf. Also that year the *The Hour of Prayer* and *Fisherman/Etudes No.1* were shown at Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art in Kagawa, Japan.

Where is Where? was exhibited at the Parasol Unit foundation for contemporary art in London in 2010. Also in 2010 her retrospective was shown at the DHC/ART Foundation, Montreal, Canada and a large exhibition of her work will open at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm between February and May 2012 and will then tour (to other venues to be confirmed).

Eija-Liisa Ahtila's work has been shown in numerous group exhibitions and her work was presented at the Biennale Cuvee 10, OK Centre for Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria in 2010

Eija-Liisa Ahtila has received a certain number of prizes; in September 2000, she was the first artist to be awarded the Vincent, the first biennial award for contemporary art in Europe at the Museum Bonnefanten in Maastricht and received the same year the Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award. She also received the Pro Finlandia and the Artes Mundi Prize in 2005, the Prince Eugen Medal for Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Sweden in 2008 and became an Academician of Arts in Finland in 2009.