

The Parallel Worlds of Monique Moumblow - Nicole Gingras

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The secrets of Monique Moumblow are the pleasure of telling stories. Where do images go after we have watched them? Sounds after we have heard them? Do they remain in the room waiting to be apprehended once more by a diligent and sensitive observer? Certain artists, just like inspired scientists, attempt to 'show how invisible the invisibility of the visible is', to cite Michel Foucault.

Plug was produced in 1997. This short video (four minutes) is in two parts, both silent. The silence that envelopes Plug privileges listening like a string linking two spaces, two individuals, and two worlds. Everything centers around two actions and a text we are invited to read.

A room in an apartment, a varnished floor with narrow boards, and a child sitting on the floor surrounded by doll's clothes, crayons and bits of paper. She is playing. She is perhaps four years old and wears glasses. On one wall, an electric socket evokes a schematic face. The child has seen the face and creates her characters around the eyes and mouth that speak to her. She busily puts together different costumes and as many friend-presences that come to life once fixed to the electric socket. With excitement, the child gives form to the invisible: she dresses the invisible not unlike the main character in *The Invisible Man* by H.G. Wells. She gets more involved in the game and even whispers a few words (a secret?) to one of her image- spirits, an imaginary doll. For her, every doll has a body.

The next scene shows a woman sitting on the floor. Is it the same apartment? She stares at the electric socket and places her ear to it: she is eavesdropping on neighbors (invisible). This time, the socket transmits not image but sound. It links two adjacent apartments, neither of them sound insulated, and becomes the listening spot for a conversation between a woman and a man. There is a revelation. In fact, there are two. Their exchange is presented as a text that takes up several cards (as in silent films). The plug – the main character – receives and transmits secrets: it is literally the medium in a work on the idea of the non- corporeal. In a short synopsis, we read: 'Are plugs the portals to another world?' [GIV catalogue]

Plug contains a few keys (there are many) to approach Monique Moumblow's work. First, the title, a simple, descriptive word stripped of affect; a story that keeps to anecdotal description; a tenuous plot that permits an opening towards an unsuspected imaginary; a slightly awkward appearance (though committed) by the artist in a kind of non-acting; a secret buried deep; clues to decode later on; signs and behaviors that are inexplicable; games, childhood or adult rituals; tiny shared things; stories on a quotidian scale and about the domestic; an intimate relationship with the video camera often in closed circuit; the exposition of a form of deception and powerlessness; ghostly presences; a terse fantasy; parallel worlds.

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