

THE WORK OF HANNA MATTES

ABOUT PICTURES THAT ARE FILMSCENES

TEXT BY ANNEMIEKE GERRIST

Imagine: an actor plays in a movie and at the same time this actor is the director of the movie.

What happens in that man's mind when he directs himself?

What does it say about the film he is making?

What does it say about the man who has to look at himself as if he is someone else?

Woody Allen, Clint Eastwood, I saw their films, being aware of the fact that they had directed themselves and studied them more than any other movies.

It gave me the feeling, I was watching the movie through the director's eyes - as if I could see even more clearly which decisions he had taken and why.

These films are made with a double self image, that of the maker and that of the viewer and at the same time they are made from only one point of view; a contradiction that makes these films interesting to study.

Once, I read a one-liner on self-image, which said: 'looking at yourself is like calling yourself on your own phone, it can't be done.' Can it not?

The work of Hanna Mattes is very special in this respect; her pictures contain the character Hanna Mattes that plays another character. I often wonder how this is possible.

In fact there are three characters: the directing photographer Hanna Mattes, the actress Hanna Mattes who plays in the photograph (plus, the actress Hanna Mattes is re-enacting other actors acting) and next to that all other supporting characters, normally played by different actors, are played by only one actress, Hanna Mattes.

You could say that Hanna Mattes is immensely present in her own pictures.

A scene in a movie is made up out of different shots, and these shots contain hundreds of moving images.

In her work Hanna Mattes studies a microscopic part of a movie: one still frame.

In this still all facets of the movie are being portrayed simultaneously, and all these aspects are being looked at by the same person. In this mini theatre, that the photo represents, one can see a whole film.

The still from the movie is, due to the physical appropriation by Hanna Mattes, no longer the property of the director who originally made the movie, but on every possible level it has become the vision of somebody watching the movie.

Maybe this is what film and art are above all other things: the person viewing sees the images the way only he can perceive them.

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