



## LINDSAY SEERS

LONDON

For the past ten years, Lindsay Seers has been playing with reflection and role reversal, making photographs using her mouth as a camera obscura, assembling ventriloquist's dummies to trade places with and, most recently, turning herself into a projector.

For her first solo show in London, *I Saw The Light* [Gasworks Gallery; September 23—October 30, 2005], though, she has incorporated these motifs into three documentary-style films, contextualising her obsessions as part of a life story marked by trauma. Documentation of her previous projects forms a backdrop to the testimonials of experts who explain that Seers, born and raised on the island of Mauritius, did not speak until the age of eight, became fixated on the idea of turning herself into a camera, and abruptly shifted her focus to ventriloquism following a clairvoyant's dream.

In *The World of Jule Eisenbud*, a son tells the story of his father, a fellow human-camera obsessive, and of his fascination with Seers. *Intermission* documents Seers' transition to working with dummies and subsequent abandonment of this practice when a psychic instructed her to cease all ventriloquism. Meanwhile *Extramission*, shot on a recent residency that took her back to Mauritius, recalls Seers' silent childhood and the moment of self-recognition when, seeing her own image photographed, she broke her silence.

Combining stills with film and video clips, these works are convincingly styled after archival BBC footage, with enough mysterious avant-garde documentation to make you feel like you've discovered some long lost art movement. Against the strangeness of the facts presented in the films and the hallucinatory images that accompany them, the authoritative voices that tell these stories lose their ground. By the time the disclaimer arrives, assuring us that any relation to persons living or dead is purely coincidental, it is hard to know how much of what we have seen is true.

Beyond the obvious blurring of truth and fiction, however, Seers' films deal with the way artmaking has become, to a certain degree, synonymous with the creation of the artist. While many have followed Beuys' example in constructing autobiographical narratives to underpin their practice, Seers adds a further level of reflexivity to her work by calling on others to narrate her story.

Shown in three separate dark rooms, the three pseudo-documentaries place the viewer in an infinite hall of mirrors, where the artist becomes a twisted, shattered image of the figure refracted in the work. The result is an endlessly recursive self-generating myth. As fragments of the narrative seep from one video into the next, the artist's story proves to be integral to the process rather than an external explanation, producing the artist as well as the art. If, in Beuys' case, myth precedes the materiality of the work, myth is here just another lens—or screen—ventriloquising the artist who becomes a kind of video document herself, like the necro-videtised televangelist in David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*.

More than a comment on documentary's failure to represent truth, Seers' work uses documentary to expose its mechanisms: the mock doc format fabricates meaning while revealing the inherent emptiness of facts, much like strings prop up the dummy.

In a sense, the questions posed by the films already dictate the answers. The search for trauma overwhelmingly defines and shapes the work. Ultimately unknowable within this abyss, the artist emerges as the force that holds together a succession of disparate practices that, united through exploration, only become cogent in this hyper-mediated reproductive machine made of doubles, mirrors, and cloning devices.

—Pil and Galia Kollektiv