

norsk shakespeare tidsskrift

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People like Us by Vicky Bennett, Black Box Theater 2021.

About time!

You can get dizzy from less. A 360-degree cinema screen extends along the walls of the Black Box Theater. With world premieres from two audiovisual video jockeys, an old trotter and a newcomer, you get an all-night experience similar to the older variety theater.



Ole Petter Ribe

"It's not like normal cinema," says Vicki Bennett, introducing the festive audience in the foyer before we go to KinoKammer. Et

KINOKAMMER

adapted, low-shouldered concept with break and unnumbered seats. Even before the first snippet, I notice a new use of the theater room as an alternative and inviting viewing platform for otherwise inaccessible audio and video art. KinoKammer may be a familiar form to some, but to me it felt like the premiere of *A Train's Arrival at La Ciotat Station* by the Limueré brothers, from 1895. A documentary film clip that allegedly made the untrained audience run out of the hall because they believed the train came driving towards them for real. We'll see how the VR generation handles it.

Post-capitalist science-fiction noise film

Lasse Marhaug was the first to publish his work *For My Abandoned Left Eye* (2021). Marhaug is known from the electronics and noise music scene, but debuted in 2019 with his first short film. This evening he presents what he calls a post-capitalist science-fiction noise film. And Lasse gives what Lasse promises. In the first repetitive sequence, the simple light board animation with ash and burnt paper, seems to go back in time or implode in itself. The sound effects also seem to be played backwards. The whole picture gives one the feeling of traveling back to the beginning, where a new genre and the subtle fiction can begin.

With abrupt sequences and clinical transitions between the images, Marhaug has put together a series that can be experienced as if the disaster is near. It is the noise music that creates the narrative and the progress. The composition is simple and rough, from choppy stop-motion to landscape images without movement. The music manipulates the way I read the still images to a great extent. One of the examples of this is ticking and intense rumbling sounds during the presentation of simple, documentary images from a metro station in Oslo. It gives the worst associations, with no more than a hint of bombs and terror. It is tactile, experimental and effectively simple. I never wonder how Marhaug has worked with the transparent effects. I rather have time to wonder what the connection in this scrapbook about doom is.

As the noise landscape increases in intensity, the potential in the chamber is also

expressed. The seats in the middle, which at first looked like a pillow room in the

nursery, allow me to move freely from position to position. Other audience members become part of the section. The surround system helps with the immersive cinema experience, at the same time as it confuses the shit out of everyone as it takes difficult neck movements to get everything. At times, it seems like sitting on a train at full speed and watching the neon-noir sets fly by at full speed. It is a nice warm-up to what is to come after the break. In that sense, Marhaug is in his right element with a concert-like form. In the theater room, it also gets a variety-inspired twist.

Paradoxical-Buddhist, neo-Gothic rock collage

Vicki Bennett is a British pioneer in audiovisual art, and can be called the highlight of the evening. Under the artist name Poeples Like Us, she has brought with her animator Peter Knight in an hour-long mashup adventure retrieved and distorted from the archives of film history. Unlike Marhaug's film, I am more fascinated by the technicalities of the collage. The hectic pace gives little peace to wonder about the context. It does not mean much either. Because since the recognition value from pop culture is great, this is enough for me to disappear completely into the illusion. Some might call it cheap assembly tricks and simple references to classics. For me, it was a generous and unpretentious viewing experience.

Gone Gone Beyond begins with quiet, lit candles. The cinema (grave) chamber gets something staged by it, as the session lingers on indefinitely, and we stare hopefully around us. When the winds in the soundscape finally blow out all the log lights on the screen, the film jumps from the catacomb and over to a long corridor with projected clips from apocalypse, crime and war films. Bennett picks up the thread from Marhaug's noise film. This is how the programming is nicely connected. The mood swings are common in *Gone, Gone Beyond* while the intermedial journey jumps from style to style and juggles between film genres.

Despite the gothic and quiet introduction, it does not take long before the filmmaker emerges from a whimsical, humorous side. The funniest collage moment is without a doubt the collision between the wild novice Maria from the film musical *The Sound of Music*, who sings unaffected through helicopter attacks on helicopter attacks with napalm from the cult classic *Apocalypse Now!*. These two vastly different dramas have through *People Like Us* found their way into each other's image universe. Furthermore, various peaceful, civic activities such as ballet, tea drinking and horse racing receive several visits from atomic bombs and post-traumatic stress disorders. The pattern is clear. Man and the monsters of society meet for a duel in a spectacle similar to the doomsday prophecies from the Cold War. There is something period-conscious and old-fashioned about Bennett's cutting and material selection. Fortunately, this will not be out of the question.

Kaleidoscope-ironic heart sutra

The mantra that appears on the screen from time to time is "It's time". In the beginning, one nods appreciatively without fully understanding what it means. Whether it is taken from the main inspiration for the film, the Buddhist text *Heart Sutra*, I'm not sure. That "form is emptiness and emptiness is form" - the phrase that Bennett himself draws from the Buddhist text - is obvious, as the collage is a grandiose showreel of different techniques and form experiments. But with the statement "It's time" - and the later addition "... that stops us", it is somewhat unclear what is meant. Is it an ironic sting to her own cutting process or does she drag us through a separate kaleidoscopic version of film history to say that we should look ahead and not backwards? Exactly that phrase is more like a motivational quote, and did not quite hit my foundations.

After such a time travel, I felt like Mads Mikkelsen's film enthusiastic character Leo, from Nicolas Winding Refn's 90s hit *Bleeder*. Leo lives and breathes for film, where film sequences and references buzz in his head non-stop. It was both uplifting and engaging to see technically good work in a different art form than I usually see, and I took these pictures with me into the evening. Together with the relaxed audience, this was an event I could have filled several evenings with. So if you are interested in movies or party-minded or just indifferent, you can get to the Black Box Theater and Cinema Chamber. It's time to dump her and move on. There is nothing stopping you.

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