

Hannah Black *Intensive Care*
4 September – 6 October 2013

Legion TV is delighted to present Hannah Black's first solo show 'Intensive Care', the culmination of her month-long residency at the gallery.

About halfway through Dreyer's film 'The Passion of Joan of Arc' (1928), the judges take Joan to a torture chamber and show her the instruments. She faints, and they're worried she will die right away instead of waiting to be killed at the right moment (they already know they will execute her). In the next scene, a doctor bleeds a vein in her arm; the medical procedure replaces the torture that didn't happen and makes possible the execution still to come. The film mostly consists of close-ups of the suffering face of Renée Falconetti, who played Joan; at some point her face starts to look like nothing at all, just the grain of her skin and the light of her eyes. Her body disintegrates and disperses.

She only acted in this one film; besides that, she was a theatre actor and producer and a refugee during the war. She killed herself in 1946 but that probably wasn't Dreyer's fault. He really made her suffer during the filming: one story tells how he made her kneel on a concrete floor for hours (stress position) and then instructed her to act like she felt nothing, so what showed in her face was suppressed pain.

Images of suffering women circulate, a universal mediator inviting you to feel or cause their pain, either way – as images they are indifferent. These seductive symbols or symbols standing for seduction float on the surface of all images, a hierarchy of images that goes down and down till it comes full circle again through varying degrees of blackness, becoming again a suffering body: palatable, bleached images of pain; pure glamour. They promise a contaminated redemption, in which an injury or a bombed city or a broken heart might become an ornament. Or: if you turn the ornament on its back, dirt swarms from underneath, triumphantly.

(Many many thanks to Jesse Darling, Mend Mariwany, Laura Morrison and Takeshi Shiomitsu for their advice and support.)

Hannah Black graduated from the MFA in Art Writing at Goldsmiths in 2013. Recent projects include All Your Relations In This System of Alienations, Whitechapel Gallery, London, Revolutionizing Desire with Arcadia Missa at Banner Repeater, London, and So1EO1 at the Goldsmiths MFA show.

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