



SAWTOOTH

160 Cimitiere St, Launceston
Po Box 1614 Launceston TAS 7250
(03) 6331 2777
sawtoothari@gmail.com
www.sawtooth.org.au

Self Portrait

Nancy Mauro-Flude (TAS)

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Self Portrait (2013) digital video - sound | colour | continuous

The video is shot at Tessellated Pavements, an extremely uncanny location, for me, a mysterious labyrinth, a platform to the underworld whose entrance I am yet to find. Standing behind a mirror, holding it, I am attempting to use it as a cypher, a key to pick the lock to a backdoor. The mirror, in this case is a type of threshold, or door. A back door is often a clandestine entrance, deliberately left in place by engineers or technicians for ease of access.

Historically mirrors have formed part of systems and machinery used for channelling messages from one entity or dimension to another; for instance to reflect and transmit signals over a distance to a remote presence, including the stars and other worlds.

Performing with the mirror I have to make sure I am continuously present, that is, I am just and solely concerned with the things I am doing in the moment. Yet simultaneously I am absent because my whole being is taken up by holding the mirror. I do not perceive myself as somebody. Meanwhile I am there. I am where I am supposed to be. I am only with what I do.

The power of the mirror lies in the absence of its looker, the absence of its own. But the mirror is intelligent; the mirror doesn't want to reveal its secret too easily. The mirror is beautiful and all one has to do is to admire its fascinating beauty of reflection. Because of its beauty one tends to forget that the true fascination of the mirror lies beyond all matter, all beauty and all action. Jean Cocteau's (1950) film 'Orphée', also uses mirrors as the doors to the underworld. On arrival Orphée asks; "Where are we? Do all mirrors lead to this zone?" A gatekeeper elicits a response, "Life takes long to die. It's the zone...made of memories and the ruins of human habit."

In 'Self Portrait' I wish to pass over the individual. How much can the 'I' disappear behind the actions and the endless number of noises that want to bring to life all that is not me?