

*Alla Ricerca di Fratelli (In Search for Brothers)* (2008) and *Una Forza che viene dal Passato (A Force from the Past)* (2008) are two individual works that are shown together in an installation and which situate Italian cinema tropes within a contemporary context. Cytter's uncanny references to Pasolini's film *La Ricotta* create a multi-faceted storyline in which a social drama becomes the focal point.

*Les Ruissellements du Diable (The Devil's Whispers)* (2008) is based on Argentine filmmaker Julio Cortázar's 1958 short film *Las babes des Diablo* (1958) – the same piece on which Michelangelo Antonioni's seminal 1967 film *Blow-Up* is based. Although shot separately, the lead characters are intertwined through the editing of the films.

*Keren Cytter was born in Tel Aviv in 1977. She studied at The Avni Institute in Tel Aviv and received her degree from de Ateliers in Amsterdam. Cytter's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Tate Modern, London; Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and Kunsthalle Zürich. Her work was included in the 53rd Venice Biennial; Found in Translation, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; 8th Gwangju Biennale; Manifesta 7, Trentino; and Talking Pictures, K21 Kunstmuseum Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. In addition to creating films and works on paper, Cytter has authored several novels, plays, and an opera libretto. She is the co-founder of D.I.E. NOW (Dance International Europe Now), a dance and theater company. Cytter was the recipient of the 2006 Baloise Art Prize, Art Basel, Switzerland, the Absolut Art Award in 2009, and short listed for the Victor Pinchuk Foundation's 2010 Future Generation Art Prize. Cytter currently lives and works in New York City.*

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# DiverseWorks

ART  
SPACE

## ***Keren Cytter: Video Art Manual***

**September 8 – October 20, 2012**

Artist Talk: Saturday, September 8, 2 pm

### ***Show Real Drama***

a multimedia play written and directed by Keren Cytter

**October 10 - 13, 7:30 pm**

DiverseWorks Theatre

Tickets and Information [www.DiverseWorks.org](http://www.DiverseWorks.org)

From drawings to videos, poems to novels, and dance performances to theatre productions, Keren Cytter's prodigious output fluidly operates within and across the intersections of medium, genre, and discipline to form a unified body of work. Central to Cytter's interdisciplinary practice is a thematic emphasis on the complexities of human emotion that arise from failed relationships and which she expresses through convoluted and fractured narratives. Cytter pulls from a vast repository of cinematic, theatrical, and literary devices and includes overt as well as veiled references to classic works in her dramatic works, while simultaneously employing contemporary media strategies. This juxtaposition, like her narrative storylines, causes a ruptured linearity which she further confuses, deconstructs, and exploits by casting professional actors alongside amateurs, mixing multiple languages with mismatched subtitles, and inserting repetitive dialogue and action. What results are purposefully confusing, yet beguiling and often humorous, explorations of physical desire and emotional pain.

Although initially puzzling or even daunting, Cytter's complicated format ultimately provides the key to understanding her process of thinking through significant social, cultural, and political issues. In *Video Art Manual*, her first major survey in the United States, Cytter

takes this idea to its logical conclusion by treating the presentation method itself as a work of art—the physical layout of the exhibition reflects the inherent contradictions and uncertainty within Cytter’s individual works. To achieve this, Cytter has created a mirrored layout in which the front and back of the exhibition space appear to be architecturally identical. Once inside the exhibition, the viewer is caught in a bewildering limbo, thus demonstrating how Cytter’s practice suggests clues for interpreting her intentions without dismantling the operations embedded in the individual works themselves.

Cytter’s keen understanding of the moving image establishes a language that bridges multiple historical time periods within film. Drawing on early experimental filmmakers such as Maya Deren and Robert Bresson, to Modern and New Wave filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Jean-Luc Godard, to the stark realism of more recent filmmakers such as Hal Hartley and Mike Leigh, Cytter’s works captivate and confuse. While the array of cinematic references can be one point of entry into Cytter’s work, another set of references are contained within the language of contemporary video and conceptual art that utilizes fiction and narrative to interrogate our notion of reality. Her work oscillates between the two frameworks offering a montage that points to the role digital technology and media play in sculpting our understanding of images while revealing a heightened political and performance-driven reality.

Cytter argues for digital cinema as a tool to explore historical tropes of filmmaking while remaining in the present moment where so much of our understanding of the world is driven by fantasy images posing as reality. It is through the interdependent relationship between the moving image as a representation of reality and the subsequent blurring of that reality where Cytter’s circular narratives exist. Cytter creates a pictorial abstraction based on an incomplete—and ultimately unknowable—reality.

In her essay “Temporality, Storage, Memory: Freud, Marey, and the Cinema,” Mary Ann Doane asks, “whether time is located inside or outside the apparatus - whether time is an effect of the operation of the apparatus or the neutral object of its representation?” Cytter’s moving images ask a similar question. Her use of blank stares and radical fragmentation between images conjure up lush movement and texture,

while her emphasis on background sound as sub-plot provokes a back and forth movement, creating a bridge between the visual and sonic realm. Ideas of fragmentation, becoming, or being lead astray through the filmic image relate to Cytter’s way of thinking about how to construct and deconstruct an overarching narrative and subplots. Cytter plays on both the desire for the illusionist and representational image by ushering her characters through various points in time and disrupting our sense of what the moving image typically does; preserve time.

***Vengeance*** (2012) features three episodes from an as-yet unfinished multi-part series. In this new work, Cytter co-opts the strategies of the television soap opera to explore the classic themes of melodrama – love, envy, betrayal, and vengeance. *Vengeance* is Cytter’s first work created in the United States (she recently relocated to New York City), and these episodes reflect a much more elaborate production than most of her earlier works. Utilizing the rich settings of Staten Island and New Jersey and employing a total of 50 actors, the scenes were filmed at a variety of locations including restaurants, hotels, parks, apartments, and the street.

***Video Art Manual*** (2011) is ostensibly about the history and development of video and performance art. The 14-minute film features Cytter’s strategy of creating fractured narrative by splicing original scripted footage with appropriated and manipulated clips from the internet and cable news networks. References to iconic pieces by artists such as Marina Abramović and Bruce Nauman are fused together with the appropriated images to create a script, which one can use to decode the rest of Cytter’s work.

***Four Seasons*** (2009) plays on the trope of a Hitchcock thriller utilizing a humorous and psychological approach. Cytter mixes and melds the two worlds in an eerie, but playful fashion. Bloody scenes are paired with images of a Christmas tree and Lucy, the main character, becomes mistaken for Tennessee William’s femme fatale Stella.

***Konstruktion*** (2010) appears to be documentation of a part-play part-performance based in Berlin, but is actually a scripted video. Each interaction, whether between people or objects, has an aesthetically staged structure, which creates a voyeuristic sensation.