

# TALK & FILMSCREENING

## ROSE ENGLISH & STINE HEBERT IN KINO KULTUR RINGSTED



- 13.00-14.00h** Finissage on 'The Surface That Has To Be There For The Shadow To Reveal Itself' at Ringsted Galleriet  
**14.00-14.30h** Break  
**14.30-15.00h** Talk with Stine Hebert and Rose English at KINO Kultur Ringsted  
**15.00-15.15h** Short Break with drinks and snacks  
**15.15-16.45h** Screening of 'The Gold Diggers'  
**16.45-17.00h** Questions

### THE GOLD DIGGERS (1983 35mm B&W 87 minutes)

Screenplay by Lindsay Cooper, Rose English and Sally Potter; directed by Sally Potter; art direction by Rose English; music composed by Lindsay Cooper; director of photography Babette Mangolte; edited by Sally Potter; produced by the British Film Institute. With Julie Christie, Colette Laffont, Jacky Lansley, David Gale, Phil Minton, Thom Osborn, Trevor Stuart, Hilary Westlake and George Yiasoumi.

First screened at the London Film Festival, 28 November 1983. Subsequently at the National Film Theatre, London; Berlin Film Festival (Zitty Prize); Florence Women's Film Festival (Best Experimental Film); Melbourne Film Festival; Toronto Festival of Festivals and Channel 4 television. BFI DVD released 2009.

'The Gold Diggers' is a key film of early Eighties feminist cinema. Made with an all-woman crew, featuring stunning photography by Babette Mangolte and a score by Lindsay Cooper it embraces a radical and experimental narrative structure. Celeste (Colette Laffont) is a computer clerk in a bank who becomes fascinated by the relationship between gold and power. Ruby (Julie Christie) is an enigmatic film star in quest of her childhood, her memories and the truth about her own identity. As their paths cross they come to sense that there could be a link between the male struggle for economic supremacy and the female ideal of mysterious but impotent beauty.

From 1974 to 1983, English collaborated closely with filmmaker Sally Potter. English and Potter shared a home for a number of years in various London squats. With English' background in performance art and Potter in dance, they operated in the 1970s underground art scene of London and together they were able to push the boundaries of what was possible and to challenge the hierarchies. They used their home as an activist space for working and performing in resistance to the era's property speculation and unaffordable housing conditions. The UK's political climate in the mid-1970s was marked by soaring inflation, Margaret Thatcher's appointment as leader of the Conservative Party, and the growing popularity of the National Front evidencing the rise of fascism.

**FACTS: Rose English (b. 1950 in Hereford, GB)** emerged from the conceptual art, dance and feminist scenes of 1970's Britain to become one of the most influential performance artists working today. Her uniquely interdisciplinary work combines elements of theatre, circus, opera and poetry to explore themes of gender politics, the identity of the performer and the metaphysics of presence. English has mounted performances in ice-rinks; at the Royal Court Theatre and Tate Britain, London and Lincoln Center, New York; and collaborated with horses, magicians and acrobats to create legendary site-specific performances and large-scale spectacles. Her work ranges from her site-specific performances and collaborations of the 1970s including Quadrille, Berlin and Mounting, her acclaimed solo performances of the 1980s including Plato's Chair and The Beloved to her large scale spectacles of the 1990s including Walks on Water, The Double Wedding and Tantamount Esperance. English also works in other media such as film and installation and currently has a solo survey exhibition at Museum der Moderne Salzburg. She co-wrote and designed the feature film The Gold Diggers, 1983, directed by Sally Potter. Her works are in collections including Tate, UK and Sammlung Verbund, Austria.

**Stine Hebert** is a curator, researcher and art historian based in Copenhagen. She is co-director of HEIRLOOM center for art and archives and associate professor at PASS - Center for Practice-based Art Studies at University of Copenhagen. Previously, she has functioned as dean of the Academy of Fine Art in Oslo, rector of Funen Art Academy and acting director of BAC - Baltic Art Center. Hebert has also held curatorial positions at Kunsthall Charlottenborg and Malmö Art Museum and has practiced as a freelance curator for a number of years focusing on the conditions of artistic production.

**The exhibition program 'X'** consists of four solo exhibitions by Mogens Jacobsen, Miriam Kongstad, Filip Vest and Rose English at Ringsted Galleriet including an eventsprogram at KINO Kultur Ringsted - one of Denmark's oldest cinemas. For more information about KINO Kultur Ringsted and its filmprogram, contact: KINO Kultur Ringsted, Tinggade 9, 4100 Ringsted / kinokultur.dk

The exhibition 'The Surface That Has To Be There For The Shadow To Reveal Itself' and the program 'X' is kindly supported by:



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In 2023, for the first time since the making of 'The Gold Diggers' in 1983, Rose English and Sally Potter revisited their collaborative practice at HEIRLOOM center for art and archives with the exhibition 'Berlin: Remembering the Spectacle'. In relation to that, 'The Gold Diggers' was screened at Cinemateket and they did a joint performance\* at HEIRLOOM. Afterwards, they met up with the author and journalist, Linea Maja Ernst. That resulted in the following review (excerpt):

**THEIR MAIN WORK** is the feature film *The Gold Diggers* from 1983. It is an absolutely fabulous, impossible film. Just the terms of production. The entire film crew was women. Everyone was paid the exact same salary. It is a black-and-white, experimental film, but the main role was played by the great lady Julie Christie. In a way, she plays herself, or she plays the female icon herself, the beautiful, silent heroine of film history, who has amnesia and must try to understand who she is.

The other female lead, Colette Laffont, is a black, unknown actor, but she is deliberately positioned as equal to the big star, in her way freer. In a fantastic scene, she rides into the middle of a ball, helps Julie Christie onto the back of the horse and runs off with her. Triumph.

There is no such thing as a linear structure, the narrative is a spiral. We return to the same tableaux with small shifts. Like music, first a theme, then a variation on it, a verse, chorus, AB-AB, the figures mirror and repeat each other with offsets. Towards the end, Colette Laffont again fetches Julie Christie on the horse in an identical scene. They gallop off together. Again triumphant. But how far will they go this time? How many times do you have to repeat your release, how many times will the amnesia subside?

The film is about everything we are talking about now: criticism of capitalism, anti-racism, the male gaze. From 1983. We've been talking about it for 40 years, we've been talking about it even longer. Do you remember it?

*The Gold Diggers* is difficult, but definitely a masterpiece. Beautiful, cheeky, unique. How were the reactions from contemporary reviewers? Almost hateful. The film was hailed down. It was pretentious. Boring. Torture, indeed.

The violent reactions to *The Gold Diggers* made Sally Potter doubt the film, if not her entire film career. She and Rose English did no more projects together. When she recounts it, she sounds like someone who still can't fathom how misogynistic the criticism was. "I wandered ten years in the desert, exiled from the film industry. I could not get any support for projects. Then I finally made *Orlando*," says Sally Potter. The rest is history. Her 1992 film adaptation of Virginia Woolf's novel was her breakthrough. And the world was introduced to Tilda Swinton, who played the young nobleman who lives for 400 hundred years and changes gender as he, or she, looks for love.

Meanwhile, Rose English has become an established, recognized artist. They became who they are together. But it has been 40 years since they were a partnership. Now they have found each other again on a March day in Copenhagen. They just had the audience go into meltdown with their reenacted performance. Now they each sit with a cup of tea and explain to a sky-fallen journalist that women's struggle, that history itself, is a spiral, we return to the same insights, the same conflicts. Like in *The Gold Diggers*, where the same images return as two women try to remember and understand what has gone before.

»Systems of power depend on amnesia« says Rose English gravely. »Of not knowing your own history. So you can't do anything about your own oppression.«

'Get back on the horse' by Linea Maja Ernst, Weekendavisen, March 24th 2023

\* Sally Potter and Rose English reenacted a profound moment of their performance 'Berlin' (1976), where English stares into a lightbulb until her eyes waters.