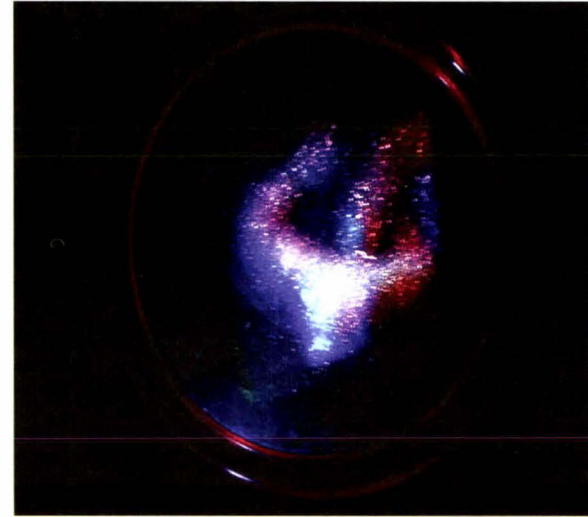


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# Trick of the Light

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## PROLOGUE

It is not yet dawn. A woman is asleep in a 60s bungalow that is surrounded by native forest. The night is cold – her bedroom windows are covered with a layer of condensation. A stalactite has forced entry to form on the inside of one of the frames.

She awakes to a pressure on her chest. An entity in the form of a past lover is having sex with her. In a state of horror and fear she struggles, trying to resist. But she can neither move nor utter a word or sound.

Then an inner voice tells her to “enjoy”. She relinquishes and begins to relax, and a transformation occurs from danger to pleasure. The experience becomes one of autoeroticism in which she submits to body-shaking explosions brought about by the ‘presence’ and her own hand.

## INTRODUCTION

*Trick of the Light* is a video installation essay that relates the story of the incubus in the form of a multiple screen and sound installation. Research into the topic of the incubus as it has been represented in art and film, both historical and contemporary, reveals that in the main these works have been from the male perspective. *Trick of the Light* endeavours to put forward a viewpoint of the incubus experience with regard to female sexuality and subjectivity.

In 'The Haunting', I will relate the connection between the incubus and the monstrous-feminine, concentrating first on three key historical paintings: *The Nightmare* (Henri Fuseli, 1781), *Danaë* (Rembrandt, 1636), *Danaë* (Gustav Klimt, 1907). I will follow an analysis of these three paintings with an examination of two cinematic works that pertain to the incubus: *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), *The Entity* (Sidney J. Furie, 1985). These works will be surveyed in the context of the monstrous-feminine.

'Crotch' will look at woman artists who have sought to counter negative attitudes towards women with regard to sexuality. The performance art of woman working in the 1960/70s – Valie Export, Hannah Wilke, Carolee Schneemann – will be examined in relation to their highlighting of the female sexual part. I will follow with a comparison of contemporary woman artists working in this subject area: Tracey Emin and Zoe Leonard.

A number of woman feature filmmakers who have also addressed women's sexuality will be studied in 'Touch'. In today's era of post-Mulveyism, in the hands of the woman director the gaze is female. While directors such as Jane Campion have eroticized sex on screen, others such as Catherine Breillat have maintained a natural aesthetic not dissimilar to pornography. Here I also introduce Laura U. Mark's notion of 'haptic cinema' and relate it to my own concept of *film-écriture feminine*.

'Body Cuts' will foreground the recent phenomena of film and video moving into the gallery space, and the resultant changed relationship of the viewer with such works. Peter Greenaway's idea of the audience performing the editing will be