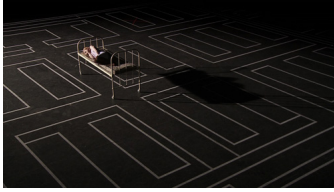


## Anna Baumgart: Fresh Cherries

Written by Per Formo

Sunday, 06 June 2010 19:24 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 June 2010 10:54

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Anna Baumgart lives in Warzaw and she works mainly with video, film, performance and sculpture.

During the last 15 years she has had exhibitions of her work in many countries in Europe, and this is the first time she shows her work in Norway.

For Falstad Kunst 2010, Anna Baumgart has made the film "Fresh Cherries" - which maybe can be characterized as a mixture between dramatized documentary and improvised psychodrama.

The starting impulse for the film is the Polish university student Joanna Ostrowska, and her research on the history of prostitution in the German concentration camps in Poland - and on the way this history has been treated - or rather, not treated at all - in the written war history.

Near the end of the film we can see Joanna in a short interview.

In the first part of the film we witness a therapeutical situation - a kind of improvised psychodrama. We can also see reconstructions of authentic interviews with two victims of sexual abuse in the war - a Polish woman who was raped by Russian soldiers and a German woman who was forced to be a prostitute in Auschwitz. The film photographer, who is planning to make a film himself about prostitution in Auschwitz, also becomes an actor in the film.

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This film is definitely not a TV documentary giving us bits of information. And it is not a dramatic movie production about World War Two.

"Fresh Cherries" seems to be a very careful, thoughtful and respectful attempt to approach traumatic experiences that have been classified by society as taboo - and to identify with real persons who are war victims but who have been excluded from recognition because of this taboo. And in this way, they have become victims again.

The film is an attempt to shed light on a part of the war history that has been hidden away. The film also involves freedom of expression by dealing with how controversial it is to approach these issues. The student Joanna has met a lot of resistance and closed doors as she has been doing her research.

Sexual abuse in war: forced prostitution, rape as a strategy of war, the female body as battlefield. These things happen also today in conflicts around the world. These are things that it is very difficult to speak about and to deal with because there is still so much shame, taboo and pain connected to it.

Anna Baumgart says that her film is "about how taboo, stigma and hierarchy have affected these victims of the Second World War, and that these phenomena influence the younger generation's perceptions of the war."

Joanna Ostrowska writes: «In Poland, the issue of brothels in concentration camps is taboo even today. Polish women, former prisoners and former prostitutes remain silent because our culture excludes them from the victim discourse and often even sees them as collaborators. This phenomenon has in general been 'forgotten' and removed from the discourse after Holocaust.»

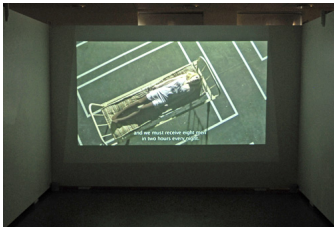


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