

# Press Release



## Miranda Pennell

I AM / WE ARE

**1st May - 22 June 2008**

**Centre pour l'image contemporaine**

Saint-Gervais Genève

5 rue du Temple

CH-1201 Genève

T +41 22 908 20 00

[www.centreimage.ch](http://www.centreimage.ch)

Art Director: André Iten

### Press Office

Marie Villemin

[marie.villemin@sgg.ch](mailto:marie.villemin@sgg.ch)

**Tél +41 (0)22 908 20 62**

# Miranda Pennell

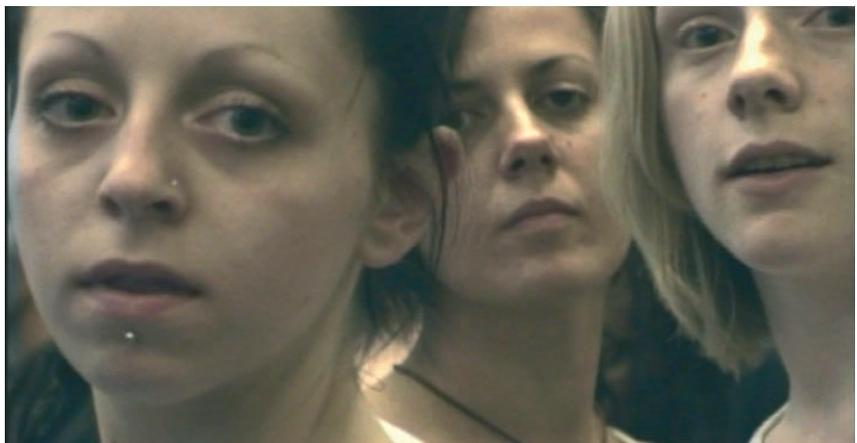
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Miranda Pennell initially studied contemporary dance in New York and Amsterdam, before going on to explore movement through the prism of cinema and the motion picture camera. While her film work has slowly led her away from contemporary dance, her interest in performance remains central to her art; space, time, the relationship between the human subject and the camera, and the observation of movement and calm are grasped by a precise and distinct choreographic sensibility.

Her films and videos question the "real" world in sometimes improbable settings and through diverse subjects, whether stuntmen, teenage skaters, or soldiers. These characters, whose actions often fit into some form of collective behavior, seem coordinated by an uncertain logic, governed by rules that are concealed from the viewer. The choreography, like the rituals, is articulated in binary configurations at least, for example the dance of the actors and that of the camera, which resonate in "counterpoint." (Miranda Pennell) Neither can be reduced to the other.

In *You Made Me Love You*, 31 male and female dancers play cat and mouse with the camera (John Smith), which moves about in an unexpected way, quickly or slowly, to the left and now to the right, gliding along on a rail. Meanwhile the troupe of ballet dancers tries to maintain visual contact with the camera. Their gaze, filling the frame, bewilders the viewer. The soundtrack carefully orchestrates moments of muted tension and the footfalls of the dancers—a sound all the more confused in that no feet are seen in the image. Like a battle for drawing attention to the dance floor, this film also recalls the mad rush to grab the media spotlight. "Losing contact can be a traumatic experience." (Miranda Pennell)



*You Made me Love You*, 2005, 4 min.

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In Pennell's films, the movement of the actors clashes with the rigid attitude of the camera. At that point of friction, filming zeroes in on details sometimes to the point of shooting out of focus, Pennell manages, with a very graphic art, to bring out the poetry and emotional force in these worlds.

Drum Room at first resembles an architectural study of a contemporary building. Magnificent shots feature great formal geometrical interiors that are strangely empty until young rock musicians appear, learning collectively to play solo. Few moving pictures have sought to film sound... Pennell lends movement and life to the venues thanks to audio and visual echoes in the musicians' movement. Movement (the drummer's drum sticks whirling against a blue background, miming the concentrated professional) is as important as the sound created by the instrument. She underscores that what is beautiful in a musical performance is also the physical presence of the musician and his or her way of occupying the space—sound as a shape that colors silence.



*Drum Room, 2007, 15 min.*

Pennell films the intimacy of human performance. In her documentary expeditions, the artist turns toward the strange and vast parallel universe of amateur dance in which the subjects are active outside the formal world of representation.

Pennell juggles the intimate and the distant. Even if the faces seem open to our eyes, thanks especially to the proximity of the close-up shot, the imagination haunting them remains beyond our grasp. The artist calls into question the relationship between the viewer and the subject. Viewers identify with the subject but can only struggle to guess at the inner world behind the face.

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Each image, chosen with a sense of perfectionism, strikes viewers as an affirmation: "You only see what I show you." We don't always hear the sound that corresponds to the movement or the rhythm; we don't see the object that is catching the dancers' eyes.

Pennell's films and videos have been screened in independent cinemas and at gallery shows. She has received funding from the Arts Council England, Film London's Artists Film and Video Award, Channel 4 British Documentary Foundation, and BBC television. She has also won numerous prizes, including awards from the Ann Arbor Film Festival (USA 2004), the Cork International Film Festival (Ireland 2003) and the Grand Prix Video Danse (France 1997). In 2005 Pennell took the DIP Young Artist's Prize at Geneva's 11th Biennial of Moving Images with *Fisticuffs* (UK, 2004).



*Fisticuffs*, 2004, 11 min.

Miranda Pennell is born in 1963, she lives and works in London

## FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS (selection)

- 2008            ***Cinema Invisible***, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Program Miranda Pennell/John Smith) [www.cccb.org/en/audiovisual?idg=17024](http://www.cccb.org/en/audiovisual?idg=17024) (Sp)  
International Contemporary Culture Centre of San Sebastian, ***TABACALERA*** (Sp) <http://www.tabacalera.eu>
- 2007            ***PLAY***, Void Gallery, Derry, personal exhibition, 10 July - 10 August (UK)  
*Retrospective program*, La Chapelle Fromentin, ***La Rochelle International Film Festival*** / 2 July / [www.festival-larochelle.com](http://www.festival-larochelle.com) (Fr)  
***Women with Vision*** at the Walker Arts Centre, (USA)  
(You made me love you)  
***Image Forum***, Tokyo (J) (Fisticuffs, You made me love you)  
***Cork International Film Festival*** (Ir) International Competition (Drum Room)
- 2006            *Profile: Miranda Pennell*, retrospective, ***52nd International Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen*** (D)  
*Experimenta Avant-Garde weekend* at the ***London International Film Festival*** (UK) (You made me love you)  
***Festival du Nouveau Cinéma***, Montreal (Ca) (You made me love you)  
*New cinema and contemporary art*, ***11èmes Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin***, Paris (Fr) (You made me love you)  
*British Focus Retrospective*, ***Clermont Ferrand Intl. Film Festival*** (Fr) (Human Radio)

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## FILMOGRAPHY

(selection)

### **Drum Room**

2007 15 min./ color

### **You Made Me Love You**

2005 / 4 min. / color

### **Fisticuffs**

2004 / 11 min. / color

### **Magnetic North**

2003 / 9 min. / color

### **Human Radio**

2002 / 9 min. / b & w

### **Tattoo**

2001 / 9 min. / b & w

### **Lounge**

1995 / 6 min. / color

More information available on the website :

[www.mirandapennell.com](http://www.mirandapennell.com)

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**Practical Information**

## **MIRANDA PENNELL**

I AM / WE ARE

**Show opening** Wednesday **30 April** starting at 6 pm

**Show runs** from **1st May to 22 June 2008**

Tuesday- Sunday, noon to 6 pm, free entry

**Contact us to schedule a time to meet or interview the artist.**

Coming to the **Centre pour l'image contemporaine:**

**31 October- 14 December :**    **Version bêta**

Biennial exhibition ART AND NEW MEDIA

### **screenings:**

27-29 May :    **New english creation** : carte blanche given to Miranda Pennell

10-12 June :    **1,2,3... Avant-Gardes**

Polish Film/Art between Experiment and Archive

.  
\*Tuesday 27 May 7 pm

«Show must go on» Free showing

Screenings of Miranda Pennell's and Alexia Walther's videos \*

**Press Office:**  
Marie Villemin  
marie.villemin@sgg.ch  
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5, rue du Temple 1201 GENEVE  
tél.: + 41 (0) 22 908 20 60  
fax: + 41 (0) 22 908 20 01

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