A PRAYER FOR NETTIE

DIRECTOR
Donigan Cumming

DURATION
33:00

YEAR
1995

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE
English

CATEGORY
Video Art



DESCRIPTION
Truth and lies. Documentary and fiction. Distance and obscenity. Tenderness and cruelty. Donigan Cumming moves tirelessly to and fro across the thin dividing lines between these concepts. He likes to provoke us, to keep us uncomfortable. *A Prayer for Nettie*, the first of his films, marks the transition from photography to video. In fact, Nettie has long been his favourite model; here he devotes an elegy to her. She was still alive when he began to film her in 1993. An ordinary still image suspends her life, making her look like a recumbent figure on a tomb. At this point the mourners, captured in their home but associated with Nettie through the editing, can come in. One of them stands out especially -Albert, who hardly knew her. In the midst of his declamations Cumming gets him to perform a parody of a detective film. Are we watching a tragedy or a comedy? The film-maker does not choose. Although the protagonists are in an ongoing performance, a strong sense of emotion is felt throughout the film. While there is no explicit link between these figures, the deed of record staged by Cumming nonetheless brings them together in a virtual community. From now on it is to the latter that he will be devoting himself, from film to film.

Bertrand Bacqué, Visions du réel, 2002

(translation: Kevin Whiteley)

SOUND
Stereo

KEYWORDS
Photographer, Process, Creation, Model, Intimacy

THEMES
Art and culture
Health
Private life