



PRESS RELEASE

Barbara Hammer

Women I Love

Franz Josefs Kai 3, A-1010 Vienna

<http://www.franzjosefskai3.com>

Opening: 04. 03. 2021, 6 p.m.

Exhibition: 05.03 - 15.04. 2021

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Curator: Fiona Liewehr

Exhibition design & graphics: Toledo i Dertschei

Barbara Jean Hammer (*1939 in Hollywood, Los Angeles † 2019 in Manhattan, New York City) is considered a pioneer of queer and feminist cinema and was one of the first filmmakers explicitly dedicated to making lesbian realities visible. In experimental as well as documentary films, photographs, drawings, collages and performances, the artist dealt with the breaking up of prevailing gender roles, lesbian identity and sexuality. Hammer's work illuminated taboo subjects such as aging, illness, and death. The artist confronted challenges to personal and political identities and deconstructed narratives and structures that repress images of women. She formally pushed the medium of film to its limits in the spirit of the Expanded Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, seeking a fusion of film, painting, sound, and text in optically printed films and the direct involvement of the audience in performances.

With experimental films such as *Sisters!* (1973), *Dyketactics* (1974), *Multiple Orgasms* (1976), *Sappho* (1978), and *Double Strength* (1978), she established a queer feminist cinema at a time when the subject matter had largely been left to the pornographic imagination of male artists and filmmakers. Traveling throughout the United States, Africa, and Europe, she collected ideas of women and homosexual experiences through photographs and films. The mostly black and white photographs show shared moments on film sets, private and public situations, and interpersonal atmospheres of friends. Hammer's photographic gaze is never voyeuristic but conveys a self-determined, tender closeness that reinforces the protagonists' intimate naturalness.

In her feature-length documentaries *Nitrate Kisses* (1992), *Tender Fictions* (1995) and *History Lessons* (2000), Barbara Hammer posed questions about the cultural and socio-political historical construction of queerness and its community. She processed autobiographical aging and health issues, such as her diagnosis of ovarian cancer, in *A Horse is not a Methaphor* (2008). By approaching fundamental feelings such as love and death and trying to involve her audience directly, she also wanted to motivate them to think and act critically and socio-politically.

This retrospective exhibition, the first of its kind in Austria, focuses on the content and significance of her visual interweaving of films, photographs, drawings, collages and performances. The exhibition develops an image of Hammer as a committed activist for the equality of all genders and an advocate for human rights. In films, photographs as well as interviews, the exhibition combines autobiographical material and artistic work that is groundbreaking for many contemporary artists.

Women I Love is produced in collaboration and with the help of the estate of Barbara Hammer and her widow, human rights lawyer Florrie R. Burke. The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication from Salon für Kunstbuch, Vienna.

Barbara Jean Hammer (* May 15, 1939 in Los Angeles - † March 16, 2019 in New York).

Feminist filmmaker and pioneer of queer cinema, **Barbara Hammer** made over 90 moving image works as well as performances, installations, photographs, collages and drawings. She has had film retrospectives at Jeu de Palme (Paris), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Tate Modern (London), National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), Kunsthall (Oslo, Norway), Toronto Film Festival, and Pink Life Queer Festival (Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey). Her work has been included in the 1985, 1989, and 1993 Whitney Biennials and is in the permanent collections of the Australian Center for the Moving Image, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Centre Georges Pompidou, and other institutions. She is the author of *Hammer! Making Movies Out of Sex and Life* (2010). The artistbook *Truant: Photographs, 1970 – 1979* was published by Capricious Publishing in 2017.

Estate Barbara Hammer

<https://companygallery.us/artists/estate-of-barbara-hammer/>
<https://kow-berlin.com/artists/barbara-hammer>

Website of the artist

<https://barbarahammer.com/>

Foto Wien

<https://www.fotowien.at/>

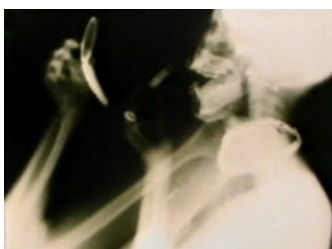
Salon für Kunstbuch

<http://www.salon-fuer-kunstbuch.at>

Barbara Hammer, *Put a Lesbian in The White House*, performance postcard (January 1980)
Oakland, California, Photo: Fran Tonelli.

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Barbara Hammer created a world that did not exist.



1 Barbara Hammer, *dykedactics*, 1974

2 Barbara Hammer, *X*, 1975

3 Barbara Hammer, *Double Strength*, 1978

4 Barbara Hammer, *Sanctus*, 1990

5 Barbara Hammer, *Nitrate Kisses*, 1992