

GREAT DIRECTORS: Senses of Cinema

Friedrich, Su

by Michael Zryd and Lynn Bell, December 2002



b. 12 December 1954, USA

Su Friedrich's films achieve a unique synthesis of formal structures and human experience that solidifies her position as one of the most important contemporary experimental filmmakers in America. Her body of work articulates a complex feminist and lesbian analysis of social and cultural discourses, rituals, institutions, and power structures. Friedrich's films probe these concerns through intimate perspectives of emotional experience: dreams (*Gently Down the Stream* [1981]), sexuality and religion (*Damned If You Don't* [1987]), marriage (*First Comes Love* [1991]), break-ups (*Rules of the Road* [1993]), adolescence (*Hide and Seek* [1996]), relationships to parents and family (*The Ties That Bind* [1984] and *Sink or Swim* [1990]), and, in her most recent work, health and illness (*The Odds of Recovery* [2002]).

From her beginnings in the American feminist movement of the late 1970s, Friedrich has articulated the slogan "the personal is political" with innovative language and narrative forms. Intense and specific personal experiences sound out striking resonances with larger social, political, and sexual structures. As Friedrich puts it, "You get to something universal by being very specific [...] I think you have to start at home." But while the emotional textures of Friedrich's work are personal, they are also highly mediated, influenced by the modernist legacy of the "structural" filmmakers of the 1970s. Her work is innovative and accessible—and

beautiful (she is renowned for her expertise in black and white cinematography and optical printing).

Whenever I set out to make film, my primary motive is to create an emotionally charged, or resonant, experience—to work with stories from my own life that I feel the need to examine closely, and that I think are shared by many people. I then try to find a form which will not only make the material accessible, but which will also give the viewer a certain amount of cinematic pleasure. In that, I feel somewhat akin to the structural filmmakers, since I do like to play with the frame, the surface, the rhythm, with layering and repetition and text, and the other filmic elements.

Friedrich's ability to synthesize the stylistic and conceptual legacy of avant-garde film practice with an analytical sense of human experience makes her exemplary of the evolution of American experimental film practice from the 1980s to the present. In this era film artists freed themselves from the often doctrinaire politics of 1970s avant-garde film practice to pursue new directions of both formal and social invention.

Friedrich first attended the University of Chicago before graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Oberlin College in 1974 with a background in Art and Art History. From the mid-'70s to the early-'80s, Friedrich worked in still photography and supported herself as a graphic artist in New York while doing volunteer activist organizing in feminist organizations, programming screenings, and writing for *Downtown Review* and *Heresies: a Feminist Journal on Art and Politics*. She credits courses at Millennium Film Workshop, an important (and affordable) experimental film production and exhibition institution, for facilitating her entry into filmmaking.



Friedrich made six short films between 1978 and 1982, of which her breakthrough work, *Gently Down the Stream* is most accomplished. Although some of these films are uneven in tone and technique, they constituted an important crucible for the development of her characteristic style. All of these films feature striking black and white cinematography and sharp editing strategies that make both rhythmic and conceptual connections, often contrasting shot scale or motion direction. *Hot Water* (1978), her first film, was shot on Super-8 and was an early experiment in sound (Friedrich did not engage with sound again until *The Ties That Bind* in 1984). *Hot Water* is no longer in distribution but images from it were optically printed and incorporated into *Gently*

Down the Stream. Although Friedrich herself calls *Cool Hands*, *Warm Heart* and *Scar Tissue* (both 1979) too “obvious” and “rigid”, they are characteristic of activist feminist art of the period. *Cool Hands*, *Warm Heart* stages, in a crowded New York street, a public performance of conventionally private female grooming (shaving legs and armpits, braiding hair), and is emblematic of the politics that critiques feminine codes by bringing them, literally, to light and reversing the power polarity inscribed in their setting. *Scar Tissue*, meanwhile, is a simple but effective visual essay on gendered body language, contrasting close-up images of strained women’s feet in high heels with mid-sections of men, arms crossed in seemingly proprietary and smug comfort. As Amy Taubin says, “Juxtaposed, the two [genders] appear as if from totally different species; the film left me with a yen to see one of those heels planted splat in the middle of one of those bellies.”

Gently Down the Stream shifts to what Friedrich calls the “messy” logic of dreams. The genesis of the film involved Friedrich’s revisiting her dream journals, recorded over eight years, which uncovered a wealth of rich personal imagery, much of it negotiating conflicts between the repressions demanded by her Catholic upbringing and lesbian sexual desire. She condensed 96 dreams down to 40 in a rough cut of the film, and then down to the 14 dreams of the completed film. (These function like chapters; Friedrich also released a small press printed version of the film.) Meanwhile, she condensed image and word by scratching letters directly onto celluloid, letter by letter or word by word, making language a dynamic graphic element, and actively engaging the viewer in the process of creating syntax. The silence of the film ensures that, as Friedrich says, the viewer will “hear any voice *but* that of a recorded narrator”; the intense pull of the words’ trajectory, combined with the careful control of movement in the frame achieved through Friedrich’s optical printing, creates a remarkable rhythm seeming to float atop the water imagery which permeates the film and is echoed in the song from which the film’s title is derived (“Row, row, row your boat / Gently down the stream / Merrily, merrily, merrily / Life is but a dream”). Although hardly linear, the film gradually progresses from darkness to light, and from anger and guilt to release. The first dream starts the film indoors (“Wander through large quiet rooms”) as ghostly images of the Madonna flicker through the gate; the film concludes with hummingbirds “humming on my tongue” in a playful, anarchic, and joyful dance of words and letters scratched directly into the images of water and sparkling light. By concentrating on her most intensely personal conflicts (“I chose to work with dreams that were the most troubling to me, that expressed my deepest fears, anxieties or longings”) she also “worked through” recognizably social and political concerns with sexuality, feminism, and religion, using images both disquieting (“I make a second vagina / beside my first one / I look in surprise / Which / is the original?”) and slyly ironic (“Building a model house for / some man / Do it / without getting paid / Do it / wrong”).

The importance to Friedrich’s practice of “working through” the personal with mediating formal structures is reflected in two other (less successful) films from this period. Before making *Gently Down the Stream*, Friedrich made *I Suggest Mine* (1980, not in distribution), in which she tried “to do something very personal, entirely about me. I failed miserably.” As she notes, she needed “some sort of distance” from such personal material. *But No One* (1982), the film that Friedrich made after *Gently Down the Stream*, echoes its technique and foundation of dream imagery, but loosens the condensation so crucial to the earlier film. *But No One* uses a single dream, “one that disturbed me because of its seeming amorality and passivity,” and illustrates it with “straight-forward, vernacular images” from Friedrich’s neighborhood: fish being sorted at the fishmonger,

construction workers and prostitutes working on the street. As Friedrich's program notes indicate, the dream is dominated by guilt and resists the libidinal "working through" of *Gently Down the Stream*: "In the dream, I was unable to act according to my good conscience. When I woke up, the prostitutes were outside my window, still hard at work. On a walk, I saw men building up and tearing down the city. Meanwhile, fish were being slaughtered for my evening meal." While hardly a failure, the film lacks the thoughtful urgency that would propel Friedrich's filmmaking into the more complex and longer film projects that form the core of her oeuvre.



The Ties That Bind (1984) is an exploration of Friedrich's relationship with her mother, Lore Bucher Friedrich, who grew up in Germany during the rise of the Nazi party in the 1930s and moved to the USA at the end of World War II with her American husband, Paul Friedrich (Su's father). Lore became a single mother of three children when her husband left her in 1965. The bulk of the film consists of a series of responses by Lore to questions that relate to Lore's childhood perspectives on the political events unfolding around her. The daughter investigates her mother's vulnerability to forces that profoundly influenced her life but over which she had little or no control. As a young person with hopes of attending college to study music, Lore's dreams were curtailed when her father died and she was sent to secretarial school instead due to economic restraints. Hopeful for a brighter future upon marrying Paul Friedrich, Lore's aspirations were frustrated once again when her husband left her with three children and little money. At the conclusion of *The Ties That Bind*, we are told that "in 1980, after raising three children alone, she bought herself a piano and began to practice the scales."

A poignant testimony to the limits of agency, *The Ties That Bind* considers the genocidal atrocities of World War II from Friedrich's non-Jewish German mother's perspective. In text scratched directly onto the film stock, Friedrich ponders, "And after I blame the Germans OR WISH THAT MY MOTHER COULD HAVE DONE SOME THING ANY THING I ask myself what I would have done." The film then cuts to a shot of a letter: "My dear Friend; I need your help in combating a new wave of anti-Semitism that is sweeping Europe." The words "I got this in the mail last week" follow in scratched text. Here, Friedrich establishes a connection with her contemporary political situation, and at once establishes the persistence of racism (specifically anti-Semitism) in our culture, and provides examples of action that can be taken to mitigate its pervasiveness. Earlier in the film, the narrator says "in August 1983," and in text, one word at a time, "I went to an army depot in rural New York"—images of riot officers—"with 2500 other women"—images of protestors being dragged away—"to oppose yet again"—more images of protestors—"yet again another"—images of protestors—"war." Friedrich, then, answers the very question that she poses to herself, suggests that there are alternatives for positive action, does not

suggest that she can answer this question definitively for her mother, nor speak with authority about the possibilities of resistance that may or may not have existed in her mother's time.



Damned If You Don't was an important contribution to the inauguration of a feminist cinema of visual and sexual pleasure, a contentious issue for feminist filmmakers and theorists more than a decade after Laura Mulvey's seminal "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975). Featuring a narrative structure and the depiction of women's bodies—forms and images proscribed by Mulvey's essay—the film reclaims the pleasures of character identification and of the sensual visual field. The heart of the film's narrative follows the episodic seduction of a young nun (played by Peggy Healey) by an older woman (Ela Troyano), but Friedrich interweaves the story with both experimental cinema's use of poetic images and documentary's analytical contextualization. The film begins with a humorous deconstruction of a classical narrative, Powell and Pressburger's *Black Narcissus* (1947), as a voiceover emphasizes how, in the film's conflict between a "good nun" and a "bad nun," evil becomes associated with acting on forbidden desire. This binary of good and bad, sexual repression and sexual expression, is metaphorically expressed in the film's gorgeously optically-printed high contrast shots of seals, swans, and snakes gliding in water, their sensuous energies barely contained by the frame. Meanwhile, another voiceover text cites Judith Brown's *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy*, a text which functions, like *Black Narcissus*, as a framing device for the central narrative seduction. Uncovering the sexual energies thinly disguised in nuns' submission to Christ, *Immodest Acts* adds an historical dimension to Friedrich's story, suggesting how the prohibitions on lesbian sexual desire have been negotiated and transgressed for centuries (often precisely through the indirection and mediation of metaphorical imagery).

Sink Or Swim, Friedrich's poignant autobiographical film about her father, is perhaps her most celebrated work, synthesizing her recurrent emotional, analytical, and formal concerns. Friedrich tells the story of her relationship to her father through 26 chapters, each corresponding to a letter of the alphabet. Notably, this structure of development is presented backwards from Z to A, suggesting the rebellious nature of Friedrich's project: to 'unlearn' her upbringing, and attempt to exorcise some of the founding traumas of a childhood stamped by a sometimes abusive, but mostly absent father. Referencing his career as a linguist, Friedrich literally turns language back upon itself and moves through the alphabet from end to beginning. Friedrich also invokes the myths of Zeus and Aphrodite—another Z to A trajectory. If myths were created *a posteriori* to explain the afflictions of human existence, so Friedrich uses film to reconstruct the events of her own life in order to understand how these influences have coloured her perspective. Friedrich

reflects upon the assumptions inherent in accepting the more monolithic structures of our culture as centres of originary meaning by producing a version of history that, while it appears to chart a normalized progression, actually teases out meaning through juxtaposition and reflection rather than direct experience (notably, a self-reflection of which her father seems incapable). The social institutions that pose as centres of meaning are themselves endowed with shifting cultural valences.

The reflective capacity of the film ensures, as well, that *Sink or Swim* does not simply demonize the father; rather there remains a “tie that binds”—but now characterized by the ambivalence of both interpolation and loss. On the one hand, Friedrich captures the complexity of her personal loss and yearning to communicate with her father in the section entitled “Ghosts.” It opens with an image, in ghostly negative, of a typewritten text:

Dear Dad,

After you left us, mom used to come home from work, make us dinner, send us to our rooms, and then sit in the living room in that dark orange armchair and play an album of Schubert Lieder over and over again. There was one song I particularly loved [...] it was the one that made Mom cry the most. We would come in and tell her we loved her and we promised to be good so that you would come back again... [the song is] the one about a woman who yearns for her absent lover and feels she cannot live without him. It's so strange to have such an ecstatic melody accompany those tragic lyrics. But maybe that's what makes it so powerful. It captures perfectly the conflict between memory and the present.

Love,

P.S. I wish that I could mail you this letter.

The sound of the typewriter keys accompanies the text but fades to silence over the “conflict between memory and the present,” suggesting its ephemerality and poignancy. In spite of her desire to have him understand, the gap that has been created in their relationship as a result of her father’s departure remains unbreachable, even in the girl’s imagination; all that remains is the precarious and careful dance between ecstasy and tragic despair.

On the other hand, Friedrich’s adult sensibility gains a perspective which can contextualize and understand her father’s subjectivity. In an interview with Scott MacDonald entitled “Daddy Dearest,” Friedrich comments “that abuse is more likely because of the inhuman situations that are intrinsic to a society that divides roles along gender lines.” By linking her personal story to a pervasive cultural ethos at the level of myth, Friedrich reveals the problematics of patriarchal assumptions of authority. While she refuses to excuse her father’s abusive behaviour, Friedrich recuperates positive results from her childhood experience. Judith Mayne has observed that:

even though a cruel father emerges, there is such a strong attempt to understand him that he does not come across as an archetypal villain. He is the one who introduced his daughter to the myths that will enable her to see possibilities of female strength. And he too suffered loss. [...] Friedrich obviously shares much with her father, for she too is an anthropologist of sorts, her camera observing and recording the rituals of father-daughter relationships.



First Comes Love is one of Friedrich more underappreciated films, a wry, simmering film about the rituals of heterosexual marriage that captures the complex ambivalence felt within North American gay and lesbian communities towards the institution of marriage. The film cross-cuts images from several traditional marriages, starting with the couples arriving at church, proceeding to the altar and then departing from the church in a hail of rice and confetti. Although Friedrich's camera is distanced, Stuart Klawans describes it as "both curious and shy, as if the filmmaker were part anthropologist, part kid at the candy store window." Framing and editing analyze subtle but telling moments and gestures, from the stoic catatonia of the grooms to the dominance of wedding photographers choreographing the proceedings. But the film also captures the genuine emotion felt by these couples, and their family and friends; the ironic distance is not dismissive. The soundtrack, composed solely of pop songs, comments further on the action while reinforcing the creamy conformity of the rituals. Then, just as the couples make it to the altar, the film cuts to a simple text scroll which lists all of the nations which (in 1991) did not permit gay marriage—the list is a long one—and then at the end of the film, Friedrich lists the single nation that permits gay marriage: Denmark. This simple strategy, which contrasts the lush life of heterosexual ritual with the stark legal and constitutional realities of gay and lesbian relationships, reframes the anthropological text with political rigor.

In 1993, Friedrich released her only videotape, *The Lesbian Avengers Eat Fire Too*, an hour long documentary on the political action group The Lesbian Avengers, of which Friedrich was a member. Composed of footage documenting the group's actions, the tape is a collaboration with Janet Baus, and is, as Friedrich herself notes, an anomaly in her work, more agit-prop than art, and motivated by different intentions:

It's much more direct, more like journalism than one of my films [...] I joined the group because I wanted to do direct action with other lesbians. After doing it for many months we had built up a huge library of tapes, because people would document each action. Somebody had put together a shorter tape. It was sort of a rough cut and we thought that we should have a more polished tape to show around. I don't think of it as my work, but more as something I did for the group as an educational or activist tool. It's not art for me in the same way that my films are, which doesn't make it worse; it just makes it different.



Rules Of The Road is a deceptively simple film that, like *First Comes Love*, uses quasi-anthropological terms—here kinship groups—to trace the history of a past lesbian relationship, its dissolution and the emotional aftermath of the breakup. Friedrich structures the narrative around the purchase of a car that comes to play a symbolic role in all of these stages of the relationship. The narrator's girlfriend purchases a 1983 Oldsmobile station wagon and, with that purchase, was "initiated into a special clan [...] by sharing the car with her, I felt I had become an honorary member of that same family." The film contains no images of the women involved in the relationship, but images of similarly-styled station wagons abound. The association between cars and lovers represents the way in which cultural codes can limit perspective. "The first time I laid eyes upon the car, I was disappointed by its homeliness but consoled by the thought that it was unique...Almost overnight I went from barely noticing their existence to realizing that I lived in a world swarming with station wagons." The camera pans and tracks the street in a relentless search for such cars, while the narrator reminisces about both happy and painful times in the couple's relationship. Her initiation into the family of station wagon owners causes the narrator to feel a kinship in which she now recognizes a category of car that she had been oblivious to before. It is not until she is excluded by that "clan," through her breakup, that she comes to appreciate the individuality of those cars and looks to the license plates in order to differentiate them from each other. After she recounts the final breakup, station wagons are filmed moving in opposite directions from each other, and quick cuts highlight the narrator's fear that she will be caught off-guard by seeing her ex-lover's car. Although the car in question is associated with a painful experience, the narrator, by the end of the film, begins to search for another used car: "I've been trying to acquaint myself with the territory and I'm finding it difficult to figure out what makes one car lovable and another one a heartache." No longer joined through matches on action, the cars are now filmed less as a single body, crossing paths for brief moments but proceeding ultimately along their own paths. With the new awareness of individuality and difference, the narrator is able to see the world of choices open to her, and decides to move on and purchase her own car.



Hide And Seek, financed partially through an ITVS (Independent Television Service) grant, combines conventional codes of narrative and documentary filmmaking to examine lesbian adolescence. The narrative is told through the eyes of Lou, a twelve-year-old girl who is attempting to find her own place in what becomes for her an increasingly alienating heterosexually dominant culture. Lou's story is interwoven with documentary footage of Friedrich's interviews with twenty adult lesbians who reminisce about their own adolescent experiences. Friedrich portrays vividly the intense camaraderie of young girls and the pre-pubescent freedom that they experience in their relationships with each other. Their world is full, but begins to fracture when the subject of boys is introduced; what is missing is not so much the possibility of having sexual relationships with other girls but the ability to experience their bodies for themselves as opposed to "for boys", a completeness between mind and body that the onset of imposed sexual taboos of any sort erodes. This point is emphasized in the film when one of the adult women remembers having been sternly reprimanded, at an early age, for indulging in masturbatory practices. Friedrich examines the finer points of what is lost—a celebration of physicality, the freedom to express desire. The film articulates Natasha Walter's observation that "although things that this society sees as typically feminine have been taken by feminists as demeaning, the fault lies not in the cultural tropes, but in their valuation." *Hide and Seek* affirms the possibility of finding pleasure within a system that attempts to deny that pleasure. The respectful and celebratory representation of female bodies defuses the negativity associated with the body, but also makes obvious the destructive effect that cultural discourse can have upon a woman's relationship with her own body.

Friedrich's films, as a whole, centralize images of women's bodies and unreservedly exhibits the aesthetic seductiveness of female flesh and movement. Close-ups of body parts, even as they offer fragmented glimpses of women, are associated with moving bodies engaged in dancing, clapping, rowing, playing cards or swimming, to name but a few examples. The effects of this aesthetic treatment of women's bodies is not to "[turn] the represented figure...into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous," but simply to appreciate the beauty and strength of these women and their movements. Friedrich discusses her commitment to the creation of cinematic pleasure in her interview with Scott MacDonald: "There was a period when I thought it was important to deny myself everything, including all kinds of film pleasure, in order to be politically correct and save the world, but I think if you do that, you deplete yourself and then have nothing to offer the rest of the world."

A valuable element of Friedrich's "reappropriation of pleasure ... *for* women" derives from her reappropriation of mainstream productions that seemingly deny the existence of lesbian desire.

One interview subject in *Hide and Seek* talks about how she was able to ‘play’ with conventional media images as a child in order to make the scenarios conform to her own same-sex fantasies. While they watched the television show “The Monkees”, the woman played out the scene with her girlfriend. They pretended that one of them was Davy Jones and the other was a woman he was kissing. The two girls would then enact romantic encounters by packing suitcases and imagining that they were going to a hotel together, and then cuddling, naked, on the bed. By overlaying the dialogue with images from the television show, the film simultaneously emphasizes the tremendous power of media depictions of heterosexuality and attests to the even greater flexibility of human imagination.

Repeatedly in her films, Friedrich’s ability to balance affective and intellectual responses dramatizes the decidedly mixed reactions that marginalized spectators can have to productions that are at once appealing and alienating. Friedrich reveals, not only how political structures have the potential to oppress, but how they can be, however provisionally, overcome. Friedrich is not content to offer conclusive or facile answers. She balances mitigating circumstances, conflicted intentions, and self-reflexive hypotheses to open up the diverse and multifaceted possibilities of interpretation and growth. The agency with which it is possible to redirect one’s life is not depicted by Friedrich as capable of overcoming all obstacles; rather, small accomplishments that lead along a path of emancipation are recognized and celebrated. She does not pretend that it is not a painful process, but she encourages the indulgence of pleasures—including cinematic pleasures—that bolster and sustain well-being.



Filmography

Hot Water (1978) 12 mins, super-8, b&w, sound

Cool Hands, Warm Heart (1979) 16 mins, 16mm, b&w, silent

Scar Tissue (1979) 6 mins, 16mm, b&w, silent

I Suggest Mine (1980) 6 mins, 16mm, b&w, silent

Gently Down the Stream (1981) 14 mins, 16mm, b&w, silent, 18fps

But No One (1982) 9 mins, 16mm, b&w, silent

The Ties That Bind (1984) 55 mins, 16mm, b&w, sound

Damned If You Don't (1987) 42 mins, 16mm, b&w, sound

Sink or Swim (1990) 48 mins, 16mm, b&w, sound

First Comes Love (1991) 22 mins, 16mm, b&w, sound

Rules of the Road (1993) 31 mins, 16mm, color, sound

Lesbian Avengers Eat Fire (1994) 60 mins, video, color, sound

Hide and Seek (1996) 65 mins, 16mm, b&w, sound

The Odds of Recovery (2002) 65 mins, 16mm, color, sound

The Head of a Pin (2004) 21 mins, video, color, sound

Seeing Red (2005) 27 mins, video, color, sound

From the Ground Up (2008) 54 mins, color, sound

Gut Renovation (2013) 81 mins, video, color, sound

I Cannot Tell You How I Feel (2017) 41 mins, video, color, sound

OTHER CREDITS

Festival Awards

Hide and Seek:

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE, 1997 New York Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

OUTSTANDING DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AWARD, 1997 OutFest, Los Angeles

BEST NARRATIVE AWARD, 1997 Athens Film Festival

JUROR'S CHOICE AWARD, 1997 Charlotte Film Festival

HONORABLE MENTION, 1997 Atlanta Film Festival

Rules of the Road:

DIRECTOR'S CHOICE AWARD, 1994 Black Maria Film Festival

HONORABLE MENTION, 1994 Univ. of Oregon Queer Film Festival

SPECIAL COMMENDATION, Kino Awards, 1993 Melbourne Film Festival

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT, 1993 Cork International Film Festival

Sink or Swim:

GOLD JURORS CHOICE AWARD, 1993 Charlotte Film and Video Festival
GRAND PRIX, Kino Awards, 1991 Melbourne Film Festival
GOLDEN GATE AWARD, Best of "New Visions" Category, 1991 San Francisco Film Fest
SPECIAL JURY AWARD, 1991 Atlanta Film Festival
BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM, 1991 USA Short Film and Video Festival
JUROR'S CITATION AWARD, 1991 Black Maria Film Festival

Damned If You Don't:

BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM AWARD, 1990 Athens Film Festival
BEST EXPERIMENTAL NARRATIVE FILM AWARD, 1988 Atlanta Film Festival

Cool Hands, Warm Heart:

SPECIAL MERIT AWARD, 1983 Athens Film Festival

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Joan Boccino, "Filmmakers Series: Su Friedrich Talks About 'Queer Filmmaking'", *The Empty Closet*, December 1993-January 1994, pp. 8-9, 16-17

Lucy Fischer, *Cinematernity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996

Su Friedrich, "Does Radical Form Require Radical Content?", *Millennium Film Journal*, No. 22, Winter/Spring 1989-90

Su Friedrich, Photographs, fiction, essays, film script. *Heresies: A Feminist Journal On Art And Politics*, Vols. 1,2,3,4,6,9,16, 1977-83

Su Friedrich, Scripts for *Gently Down the Stream* and *Sink or Swim* in Scott MacDonald (ed.), *Screen Writings*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995

Lindley Hanlon, "Female Rage: The Films of Su Friedrich", *Millennium Film Journal*, Spring 1983

Chris Holmlund, "Feminist Makeovers: The Celluloid Surgery of Valie Export and Su Friedrich" in Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal (eds.), *Play It Again, Sam*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998

Chris Holmlund, "Fractured Fairytales and Experimental Identities: Looking for Lesbians in and around the Films of Su Friedrich", *Discourse* 17.1, Fall 1994

Chris Holmlund, "When Autobiography Meets Ethnography and Girl Meets Girl: The 'Dyke Docs' of Sadie Benning and Su Friedrich" in Chris Holmlund and Cynthia Fuchs (eds.), *Between The Sheets, In The Streets: Queer, Lesbian, and Gay Documentary*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 127-143

Stuart Klawans, "First Comes Love", *The Nation*, September 23, 1991

Scott MacDonald, "Daddy Dearest" [interview] *The Independent*, December 1990, pp. 28-34

Scott MacDonald, "Su Friedrich" in *Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*, Vol. 2, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992

Scott MacDonald, "Su Friedrich: *The Ties That Bind*", *Avant-Garde Film: Motion Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993

Judith Mayne, *Framed: Lesbians, Feminists, and Media Culture*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000

Catherine Russell, "Culture As Fiction: The Ethnographic Impulse in the Films of Peggy Ahwesh, Su Friedrich, and Leslie Thornton" in Jon Lewis (ed.), *The New American Cinema*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1998

Chris Straayer, *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996

Amy Taubin, "Talking Pictures", *Village Voice*, October 13, 1987, p. 74

Articles in *Senses of Cinema*

[*Sink or Swim*](#) by Michael Zryd



Endnotes

1. Friedrich here refers to figures like Hollis Frampton and Michael Snow, who were (controversially but influentially) identified as "structural filmmakers" by P. Adams Sitney in *Visionary Film* (Oxford University Press, 1974). Their films foregrounded formal patterning and

minimized direct personal expression unlike earlier films in the tradition of Maya Deren and Stan Brakhage. Scott MacDonald, "Su Friedrich" in *Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent*

Filmmakers, Vol. 2, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992, p. 309.

2. Ibid, p. 308
3. Ibid, pp. 289-290
4. Amy Taubin, "Talking Pictures", *Village Voice*, October 13, 1987, p. 74
5. MacDonald, 1992, op cit., p. 290
6. Ibid
7. Scott MacDonald, "Daddy Dearest" [interview] *The Independent*, December 1990, p. 30
8. Judith Mayne, *Framed: Lesbians, Feminists, and Media Culture*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, pp. 202-203
9. Stuart Klawans, "First Comes Love", *The Nation*, September 23, 1991
10. Joan Boccino, "Filmmakers Series: Su Friedrich Talks About 'Queer Filmmaking'", *The Empty Closet*, December 1993-January 1994, p. 9
11. Natasha Walter, *The New Feminism*, London, Little, Brown, 1998, p. 80
12. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, 4th Ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 753
13. MacDonald, 1990, op cit., p. 34

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