

MIRADES
FOTO-VÍDEO-FILM-WEBSITES
IMPÚDIQUES

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Donigan Cumming "Pretty Ribbons", 1989-1992. A Prayer for Nettie, 1996

Cumming's work deals with reality. Coming from the world of journalism, he has always been drawn towards what is real, especially the section of reality that deals with day-to-day life but which rests outside what is considered as beautiful, as pleasant. The vulgarity of his images and of the situations shown in his videos stem from reality but are offered to us with the shamelessness of the lie. In "Pretty Ribbons", Cumming shows, during the last years of her life, Nettie Harris, actress, model and journalist, in her final decadence. The old lady becomes a witness to her own physical misery, which is shown to us with the normality of her own reality. These images may offend more than one spectator, but if we search for the cause of this aggression, we will find it in the dark area within ourselves that seeks to deny both old age and death. Furthermore, we see in ageing that our bodies and minds continue showing signs of sexuality, caring about our appearance and intelligence.

Cumming's work is of an extraordinary lucidity and simple purity. Full of irony, but not without tenderness, it distances itself from false pity. In this work we are not dealing with the shameless assault or invasion of private life, but of obscenity. Nevertheless, if for many, obscenity is showing the naked body of an old lady, for others the real obscenity is showing our inner miseries and failures publicly. In other work by Cumming we see men crying because of love, people recounting their failures and sorrows to us. Everything that makes up our existence is shown in this work in the most direct manner, and everything always has two sides: one pleasant and attractive, the other hard and terrible, obscene in its crude reality. Both are true, but Cumming offers us the least visible and does it by dramatising the setting, making the protagonists take part in the tragedies, and truly emphasising the pain and decadence in this aspect of daily life we do not wish to see.

Rosa Olivares