

## **BORIS + NATASCHA: Is modern life full of fear?**

BORIS + NATASCHA's *Meditations #1-5* presents us with a series of dramatised scenes that depict modern life whilst teasing out the shifting relationships between the viewer and the films' characters. The disparity between screen event and the expression of the characters' own inner anxieties, allows the viewer a portal into a complex world, less shiny than the gentrified image initially apparent.

The urban and suburban locations chosen as the backdrops for these works, present stages for a string of experiments in interaction: those between the character's internal dialogue, and us - distant and dysfunctional relationships, which perhaps have become our norm.

Unlike the author of literature who can choose whatever voice and nuance needed, writers for the moving image have always wrestled with finding new forms to express multiple viewpoints. Filmmakers have to actually show what is happening - the lens does not allow the nuances of the pen - whereas literature can get right inside your head placing the reader in the mind of the writer. Fyodor Dostoevsky excellently demonstrated this in *Notes from the Underground*, which extends and shifts the internal monologue to its most complex level. His character, self-questioning through multiple layers in the first person, depicts humans as irrational, uncontrollable and uncooperative, possibly for the first time and is considered to be the first existential text.

The cinematic image has often had to rely on recordings of a narrator's voice, to speak of what is happening off screen or inside the characters' mind and then laying it on top. Similarly, the tradition of converting texts into scripts is a large part of narrative cinema's history and is often reliant on the voice over; a crude technique. Raymond Chandler's iconic protagonist, Philip Marlowe, originally existed in text in the first person before becoming translated into the drawling voice over of Humphrey Bogart in the film of the same name. Similar to the curiosity of the private eye, BORIS + NATASCHA have a fixation with the personal imagination and fear. They also share a fascination with language and the discrepancy of diverse perspectives, which when applied to the personalities they choose to feature, might have come straight from a Chandler novel.

'I'm a romantic, Bernie. I hear voices crying in the night and I go to see what's the matter.

You don't make a dime that way... No percentage in it at all.'

Philip Marlowe, private eye and voice of the contemporary video artist?

### **Mike Stubbs**

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