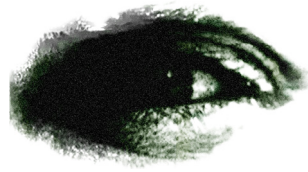


I'M HERE IT'S ME CAN YOU SEE



A FILM BY RUTH PEYSER ruthpeyserfilm@gmail.com

Technical Specifications

I'm Here It's Me Can You See

A film by Ruth Peyser

©2013

HD 1920 x 1080

Color

Stereo

Runtime: 24:59

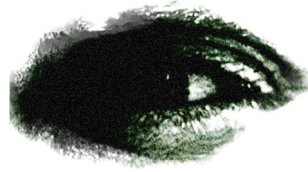
Formats available: HDCAM, Blu-Ray, Quicktime MOV, Prores 422 HQ 1080p, DVD NTSC
(Can convert to other Quicktime formats if required)

Aspect ratio: 1.78:1

Country of Production: USA

The film was made in Adobe After Effects, with some editing in Final Cut Pro

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Synopsis

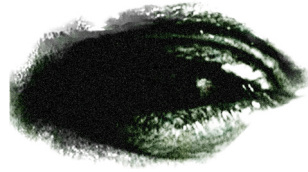
I'm Here It's Me Can You See explores the effects of chronic illness on people's lives through the stories of two women with Parkinson's Disease.

As a child, Ruth Peyser spent a lot of time with her Aunt Clara. It was the 1960s. Clara had Parkinson's Disease and was visibly disabled. Ruth was terrified of her. In 1996 Ruth's close friend Pamela Quinn, a dancer and performance artist, was diagnosed with Parkinson's. Pam has two sons. They have only known her with the disease. In the years preceding her diagnosis, Pam and her husband, Michael O'Connor, made a series of performance pieces that had themes of illness, damage and isolation.

The film tells the stories of Pam and Clara from multiple perspectives, weaving them together using hand drawn animation, manipulated live action footage and archival performance videos. The carefully placed juxtapositions are sometimes startling and uncomfortable, at other times humorous and heartwarming, reflecting the conflicted feelings we have toward disease and our mortality.

I'm Here It's Me Can You See is a deep and thought-provoking journey, exposing in a touching and compassionate way the qualities that make us human.

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Bio

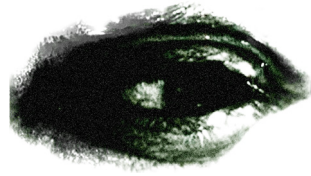
Ruth Peyser has been making animated films since her arrival in New York from Australia in 1978. Her strong body of work explores social and political themes, with a focus on women's issues. She made her earliest films in collaboration with Jo Bonney. *Another Great Day* tells the story of a woman who mechanically follows the expected societal norms, which causes her a despair she doesn't understand. *Random Positions* depicts the acceptable but often destructive roles people play in sexual relationships.

Ruth continued to make films – *One Nation Under TV*, *Covered in Fleas* and *Go to Hell* – until she had her second daughter in 1993. During this period she moved from hand colored, manipulated sequential photographs to using her drawings for her films. These films have an edgy, underground comics feel. A grant from the Independent Television Service (ITVS) made it possible for Ruth to make *Go to Hell*. The film examines how fear can be an irrational, but determining factor in how we navigate our lives. In 1993 ITVS funded Side-Kicks Productions to create *Animated Women*, a four part series for public television. *Mood*, the third episode of the series was devoted to Ruth and her work. The series aired on PBS stations throughout the United States.

When her daughters were young, Ruth took a hiatus from filmmaking. Instead she wrote short stories about her past. Some of these stories became *There was a Little Girl*, an autobiographical film spanning fifty years. Ruth tells six stories from her life set ten years apart, each on a backdrop of political and social events of that year. It explores her personal growth and the relationships of three generations of women in her family. The film uses animation, manipulated found footage and stills to tell the stories.

In March 2013 Ruth completed *I'm Here It's Me Can You See*, which was funded in part by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and the Jerome Foundation.

Ruth's award-winning films have been screened on public television and at hundreds of festivals in the United States and throughout the world, including the Black Maria Film Festival (1st Prize), Atlanta Film Festival (Grand Jury Award and Best Animated Film), Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Films, Big Muddy Film Festival, Ann Arbor Film Festival, ASIFA, Anthology Film Archives, Film Forum, Toronto International Film Festival, London Film Festival, WNET-13 Independent Focus, PS122 Field Trips National Tour and the Jerusalem Film Festival.



Director's Statement

One of the most disturbing and lingering memories of my childhood is the time I spent with my Aunt Clara. My mother was divorced and worked, so she frequently left me in the care of my aunt despite my protests. My aunt was a stern woman. I don't remember her ever being playful or laughing. She also had Parkinson's Disease and was visibly disabled, which frightened me.

I grew up in Australia, left after college and landed in New York in 1978. I worked as a graphic designer, made short animated films and played guitar in a band. I met Pamela Quinn and her husband Michael O'Connor in the late 1980s and we have remained close friends ever since. Pam was a dancer, Michael, an actor. They were making performance pieces together that combined dance and theater. Their work was beautifully constructed with powerful themes and they were always imbued with humor.

When Pam first told me she had been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, the memories of my aunt came flooding back. I held myself together on the phone and broke down afterwards. Pam was an incredible dancer. Her happiness and sense of self were closely tied to her physical movement. I couldn't imagine how she would cope with a life-changing disease.

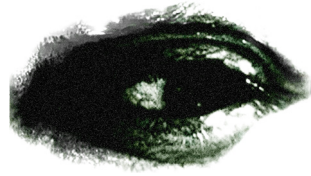
As with everything Pam does, she confronted the disease with courage, wisdom and grace. Since her diagnosis she had her second child and has continued earning a living doing various forms of bodywork, and teaching movement to other Parkinson's patients. As her disease progressed, she has devised ways to circumvent the physical symptoms through her incredible perceptiveness of the interplay between body and mind. Despite her extraordinary ability to allay the symptoms, the emotional toll is undeniable. Yet she remains cheerful and uses the illness to explore herself and aspects of life she would never have been able to do otherwise.

Being close to two people with the disease and having such different experiences led me to examine how a chronic disease can affect the person who has it, as well as how the world perceives the visibly disabled. I started formulating a concept for the film and was delighted that Pam was interested. I taped many interviews with her. Her honesty and openness were remarkable; her insights and outlook inspiring. As the story of my aunt was told from a child's perspective, I asked permission to interview Pam's sons. They were also very forthcoming.

I asked Pam and Michael if they had any tapes of their performances as I thought I could use some footage of Pam dancing before her diagnosis. They gave me piles of old VHS tapes. They hadn't thought about them in years and hadn't considered what I may discover. In addition to finding fantastic footage of Pam dancing, I realized that a number of their pieces had themes of disability and loss. They allowed me to excerpt these.

All these fragments – the interviews, my recounting of times I spent with my aunt, the performance videos, footage I shot of Pam, drawings I made about my aunt and animated – became the dancers that I carefully choreographed to become *I'm Here It's Me Can You See*.

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Logline

A deep and thought-provoking film exploring the effects of chronic illness on people's lives through the stories of two women with Parkinson's Disease.

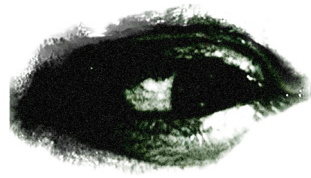
Short Synopsis

I'm Here It's Me Can You See explores the effects of chronic illness on people's lives through the stories of two women with Parkinson's Disease. As a child, Ruth Peyser spent a lot of time with her Aunt Clara who had Parkinson's Disease. Seventeen years ago Ruth's friend, Pamela Quinn was diagnosed with Parkinson's. In the years preceding her diagnosis, Pam and her husband, Michael O'Connor, made a series of dance and performance pieces that had themes of illness, damage and isolation. Their sons have only known Pam with the disease. The film tells the stories of Pam and Clara from these different perspectives, weaving them together using hand drawn animation, manipulated live action footage and archival performance videos. The carefully placed juxtapositions are sometimes startling and uncomfortable, at other times humorous and heartwarming, reflecting the conflicted feelings we have toward disease and our mortality.

Short Bio

Ruth Peyser arrived in New York from Australia in 1978 and has been making animated films since 1980. Her award-winning films have been screened on public television and at hundreds of festivals in the United States and throughout the world. A half hour segment of the PBS series *Animated Women* was devoted to Ruth and her work. Her films include *Another Great Day*, *Random Positions*, *One Nation under TV*, *Covered in Fleas*, *Go to Hell*, *There was a Little Girl* and *I'm Here It's me Can You See*.

I'M HERE IT'S ME CAN YOU SEE

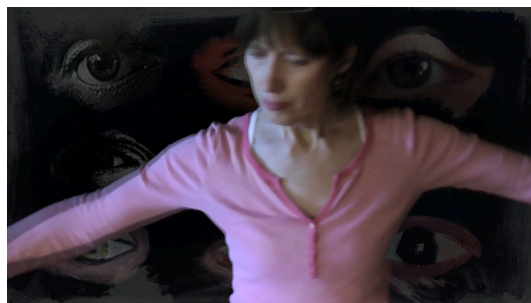
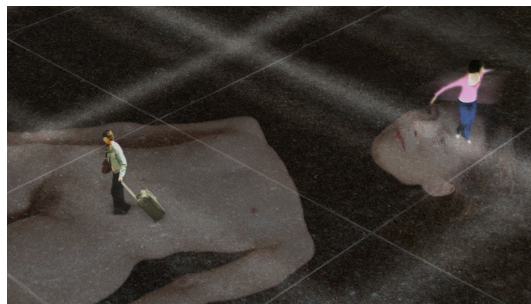


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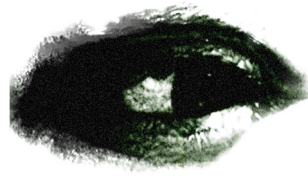
Stills

Email ruthpeyserfilm@gmail.com to request the following stills. A director photo is also available.

Please indicate file format, resolution and dimensions.



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Screenings

**32nd Uppsala International
Short Film Festival**

Uppsala, Sweden
October 21-27, 2013

3rd World Parkinson Congress

Montreal, Canada
October 1-4, 2013

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the New York State Legislature

The Jerome Foundation



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