

'What do Radical Feminist Art Films Look Like? Desire and Duration in Sam Taylor-Wood's *David* (2004)'. Paper delivered at *Radical British Screens*, University of the West of England, September 2010.

British feminist art practice has a rich heritage of radical filmmaking, which has contributed to an understanding of radical feminist practice as subversive and oppositional. Crucial as these strategies are, the grounds upon which they were founded have shifted. Opposition, reversal and subversion are not enough now that popular culture has appropriated these tactics. Furthermore, the idea that spectators are in need of transformation by 'critical' artists instils a hierarchical division between maker and spectator, which is destabilized by networked digital culture. This paper argues that women artists have found new ways to respond to the complexities of this situation and asks how we can think about radical feminist filmmaking differently.

Through a reading of Sam Taylor-Wood's film *David* (2004) I argue that the film's political significance lies beyond the reversal of the gaze in which female filmmaker objectifies male star. *David* does not treat the spectator as someone in need of agency and in place of critical distance and subversion Taylor-Wood offers sensuality, desire and proximity as ways to relate to this unusually vulnerable portrait of a British hero. This paper explores these concepts as an alternative vocabulary for radical practice, despite the apparent (but not actual) inactivity of the film.