

MARGARET SALMON: PYRAMID

26 May – 22 June 2013

'It is quite true that man lives by bread alone – when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is plenty of bread and when his belly is chronically filled?' A.Maslow

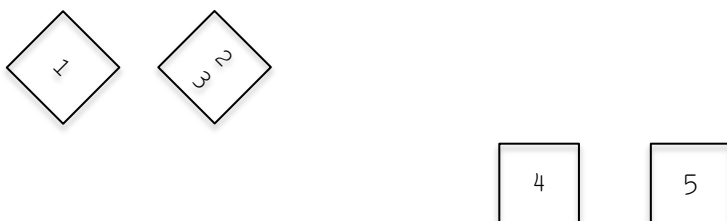
Considering the work of Abraham Maslow and his theory of the hierarchy of needs, as well as the avant-garde documentaries of Hans Richter, *Pyramid*, looks at the rhythms and choreography of middle class South England.

Using Richter's 1929 film *Every Day* as a point of departure, Salmon works with a family from the Kent region who represent model lifestyle. What values are apparent through their everyday rhythms and interactions? How do their family and work roles influence their happiness and ability to cope with repetitions and alterations in their daily lives? The image of Maslow's pyramid and his pragmatic dissection of human needs and possible motivations provide a system of organization for the family and a visual template to incorporate into the work. Can the actuality footage reflect the various refined levels of needs – the physiological, personal and familial safety, love/belonging, esteem and finally self-actualization? How do race, income and personal history make humans both different and the same within their fundamental motivations, and how can this be read through the veil of middle class decorum and gesture? Richter observed that "pure cinema" has three characteristics that determine its place in twentieth-century society: the freedom of the artist; the moral responsibility of film content; and the value of the obscure. As we follow the various patterns of the family, intercut and organized to loosely correspond to Maslow's theory, the relationship between content and abstraction provides another central theme and internal dialogs emerge between forms, colors, movements and emotions.

Filmed in color and b&w on 16mm film, *Pyramid* continues Salmon's interest in the performance of the artist/cinematographer within both spontaneous and constructed situations and incorporates methods developed by various movements within documentary and avant-garde history. Salmon constructs an abstract documentary which both develops and challenges the themes presented in Maslow's theory as well as her own interest in human iconography, stereotype and domestic rhythm.

Born in 1975 in Suffern, New York, Margaret Salmon lives and works between Kent, London, and New York. She won the first Max Mara Art Prize for Women in 2006. Her work was shown at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and the Berlin Biennale in 2010 and was featured in individual exhibitions at ICA, London (2011); Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis (2011); Witte de With, Rotterdam (2007) and Whitechapel Gallery, London (2007) among others.

Floor plan



Pyramid, 2013
5-channel video installation

- 1) Physiology
colour and b&w 16mm film on digital, silent, 11.13 minutes
- 2) Safety
colour and b&w 16mm film on digital, silent, 4.40 minutes
- 3) Love/Belonging
colour and b&w 16mm film on digital, silent, 15.30 minutes
- 4) Esteem
colour and b&w 16mm film on digital, silent, 4.10 minutes
- 5) Self-Actualization
colour 16mm film on digital, silent, 3.10

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