SCREEN TEST

OPENING
6–8pm
10 MAY
CONTINUES
11–26 MAY
12–6pm
WED–SAT

CHRISTOPHER KÖLLER
ELIZABETH PRESARA

TEST 508

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Image: Matthew Stanton
Inasmuch as Antonioni’s representation of a screen test keeps alerting the spectator to the fact that art is something produced, brought about by an artist, two sequences in his film must be considered that try to elicit an immediate participation on the spectators’ side. On the one hand, Soraya’s preparation for her screen test is interrupted by a phone conversation she has with her mother. Speaking in German, she asks her to rush from Munich to Rome on the next available flight, as if she couldn’t cope with her life any longer; or as if she no longer wanted to play a role, the role of a princess driven into exile or the role of a budding actress. It seems unlikely that this scene elicits immediate participation. On the other hand, the actual screen test ends with a series of close-ups and long shots that show Soraya wearing an elegant evening gown, a princess who is playing the role of a princess. A spiral staircase has been built on the brightly illuminated set, which resembles a small sunny island in the middle of nowhere. Although there is no upper floor, Soraya comes down this staircase and walks into a large room filled with plants, pieces of furniture, jessica-hacks, a chandelier and a Persian rug. Wallpaper with a floral pattern covers thin wooden walls. The princess expresses herself to an unexpectedly strong draught that penetrates into the room through the French windows and makes the net curtains flutters. The draught is produced by the large tubes of a wind machine. Romantic piano music is playing but does not succeed in drowning out the noise. Though Antonioni never allows the spectator to forget that this is a screen test in a film studio, and though the artificiality of the situation is underlined by the stark contrast between the false English-style living room and the functional space that surrounds it, it is as if the simulated mood communicated itself to the spectator. This mood is the abstract remainder of melodrama, of an exaggeration of emotions that prompts the two aspects of participation in art to diverge in opposite directions, in the direction of an internal view and in the direction of an external view that cannot be reconciled any more. The mood here signals the beginning and the end of immediate participation.


“A shabby and mysterious mood”

Elizabeth Presa, in participation -

PRODUCTION CREDITS

KITTY GREEN
Director of photography, camera operator & co-director

MATTHEW STANION - gaffer, grip & still photographs
MARK EDWARDS - sound
ROD MCMICHEL - voice coach
LACHLAN SMITH - editor & sound design
REBECCA JEFFREY - poster, catalogue & invitation design

Shot at Bankly Street Studio
Christopher Keller is represented by Feltly Contemporary
www.feltlycontemporary.com.au