

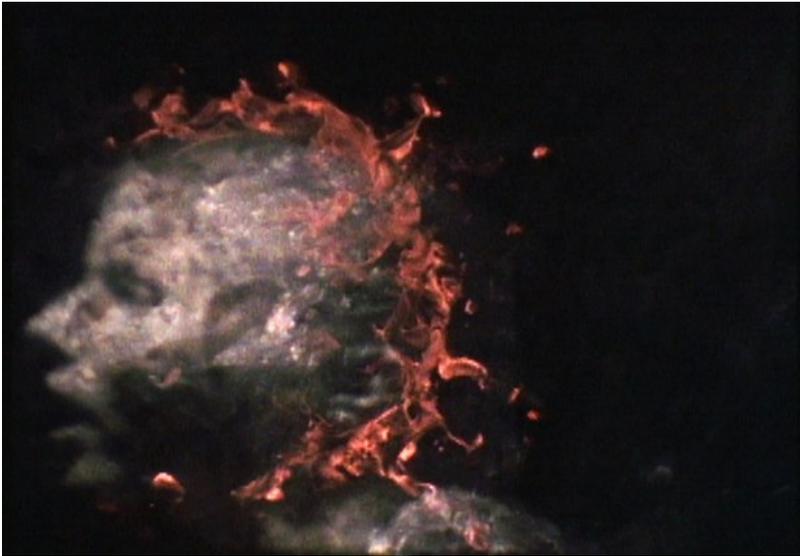
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Keep it in Motion - Classic Animation Revisited: 'Grace'

Lorelei Pepi's *Grace* (1998), a mesmerizing and mysterious poetic meditation on time, mortality, and the daily difficulty of just being.

By **Chris Robinson** | Wednesday, June 13, 2018 at 6:08am

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'Grace' by Lorelei Pepi

Lorelei Pepi's graduate film, *Grace* (1998), remains as original, cryptic and riveting as when it was first unveiled some 20 years ago (my god, that's a long time ago though it remains as fresh a memory and work as it was when it hit the festival circuit in 1999, where it won awards in Ottawa and Fantoche).

Divided into four parts, *Grace* (perhaps the name of the protagonist...or she's in the midst, as it appears, of experiencing some sort of divine regeneration) explores time, mortality, identity through visible and unseen changes in the body (and soul?) of a woman who is, perhaps, taking a candlelit (adding an additional spiritual connotation) bath (we hear the sound of water throughout and there's a sense of someone doing some playful deep sea exploration of various parts of their body. Who hasn't explored marks on their wrinkled fingers or toes or fixated on parts of their flesh while bathing) or maybe she's resting... hiding... under a bedsheet. Either way, it's clear that the protagonist is undergoing or seeking a transformation and escape as she ponders opaquely about her state of being.

A face appears and dissolves. A mouth attempts to scream. A head burns. A body twists and gyrates uncomfortably (that anticipate some haunting scenes in David Lynch's revamped *Twin Peaks* series) as though desperate to break out of itself or perhaps adjusting to the newly transformed self. There's a sense of someone trapped or stuck inside a skin that they're not entirely content with, seeking a way to break free of this particular physical and mental prison.

Pepi's nightmarish, surreal and multi-layered visuals (that carry echoes of Luis Bunuel and Maya Deren) along with a haunting soundscape add to the sense of discomfort experienced by the woman.

Pepi captures moments we've all had (and are likely having a lot right now), where the world, where daily existence, where BEING just all seems way to fucking overwhelming to grasp and manage with anything close to grace.

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Grace
from Lorelei Pepi

06:31

Grace from Lorelei Pepi on Vimeo.



A well-known figure in the world of independent animation, writer, author & curator Chris Robinson is the Artistic Director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

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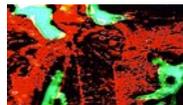
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