

# Adriana Cerne

*Sarah Pucill: Retrospective and Premiere*  
*The Book Club - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010*

This event was funded by the Arts Council of England as part of a retrospective screening of Sarah Pucill's films on 16mm. It was curated by Laura Kloss, and the screening was followed by a discussion with Dr Margherita Sprio.

*You be Mother* (1990) 7 min  
*Milk and Glass* (1993) 10 min  
*Swollen Stigma* (1998) 20 min  
*Taking my Skin* (2006) 35 min

*Backcomb* (1995) 6 min  
*Fall in Frame* (2009) 18 min  
*Cast* (1999) 17 min  
*Stages of Mourning* (2003) 17 min  
*Phantom Rhapsody* (2010) 18 min

Twenty years work by the filmmaker Sarah Pucill was celebrated by way of a retrospective of all but two of her films on 16mm, and included a premiere of her latest film, *Phantom Rhapsody* (2010). (Films not shown, *Mirrored Measure* (1996); *Blind Light* (2007)).

In her own introduction to the retrospective, the curator Laura Kloss raises a point that seems to be a key to getting close to Pucill's body of work. Closeness relies upon how to find the right distance. The continually challenging and shifting notions of proximity and distance resonate throughout much of Pucill's work but most notably in two of her films; *Stages of Mourning* and *Taking my Skin*. The first made in 2003 just two years after the death of Pucill's partner, filmmaker Sandra Lahire, brings together archival film footage and still images of the mourned-after loved one. Exquisite moments of play, work, love, and pain, are stilled, reused, and re-fused as the film itself appears to take on the metaphoric stature of mourning; a realm through which one is moved.

*Taking my Skin*, made in 2006, was the next film to be made, and interestingly manoeuvres with the question of mourning to the maternal shore. The artist returns to her mother's home and films her whilst also directing her mother to take control of the camera herself and look closely at her daughter the filmmaker. Intensely, at times uncomfortably, close, the camera there searches both surfaces of skin and mirrored reflections that draw the