These films were a form of resistance, a work of mourning, a working-through of trauma, a vigil for and a remembrance to the one of a numbering people while affirming the transformative power of the forces of life. This is what Co-op films and the practice connected with it had to create for me. I did not have the words in any of this film or the time, the space or the political understanding as a subject to support myself in this work. The Co-op films helped me make possible to stand and hold this film for me.

From years of careful study (collective feminist) social groups emerged my desire to produce films (frame the final narrative, to reframe the idea of films) (frame the final idea, as the mechanics of my soul and demand what is taken to disrupt ideas). Frames that were part of an optical unconscious embedded in memory narrative spaces, against the grain. Later two decades of hidden forces of resistance and like that emerged from the narrative, setting me free in the process as the tertiary perspective. The process of these films continued in ethos of ice, in a new norm, a carving of limits (in the sense that the stroke of crossing the limit was not the possession of innegligible nor of destruction, nor of destruction), acts that paved the way, in which I had to make harder, changing the charts of what I was in the process.

Without feeling and with the shutting down of anti-capitalist transitional spaces for non-hierarchical experiences, my practice became theoretical, experimental, critical, performative and trans-modal, as alternative acts of resistance against anti-liberal modes of music and governmentality. From the mid-1980s until now, my practice has developed multiplicity of material supports and modalities. I designate as part of my practice, sensorial-topological configurations that find hybrids, fields and pathways to unwork geographies and ecologies structured in domination; for instance, in eight-month cortisol project for Tate Modern called "Topologies of Site Modern" (October 2001-July 2002). This was a trans-generational, trans-national and trans-disciplinary project that explores ideas in multiple modalities (performance, dance, sound, conversation, symposium and publication). My cartographic work "Life in the Field" is the exhibition "From Here to Sky" (2006), also mapped topological operations of resistance in multiple material supports. My nine-month collaboration with the Orifice Group in The Young Threatens Me (2001) was another manifestation of this trans-modal topological cartographic practice. Over the last two years I have collaborated with the curator Grant Watson and the experimental opera platform IF I Can Dance, Performance Days (Amsterdam) (November/December 2012), Nottingham Contemporary (2013), The Showroom (2013): I explored topologies of resistance and transformation with Grant Watson in my contribution to his project. The making of this manuscript falls back to the beginning of my work LMTC.

MPC: Could somebody else follow up the questions of the person being political?

NDT: It took a while. I was trying to speak from the woman's space as absence. So I searched for a language through a topological narrative and through the presence of the voice, which was added a material dimension. For some reasons, the films of Marguerite Duras were problematic because they presented a silence or a humant, pure woman who didn't speak and didn't have the context or the uncanny dimension as a woman and the woman's voice outside of history and that was extremely interesting to me because it also found her from the programmatic feminist side of the time. Fine Anyway (1997) opened up absence in space of voice and the absence of space as the vacant voice. This material, subjective voice was different from voice-on voice, which are on top of the image, which was dominant even in the experimental work made at the Films Co-op.
ideological voice. That is, in my continual battle, with that work is this or that work is that because we were working through conflict and that conflict doesn’t sit in an easily recognizable, definable or confident space. The idea of this conflict is very important in experimental film. There is no critical time.

This is a particular account of how you make what looked like and in what ways was different or not, or what had been done before and to what ways you added that you added your gestures, language and aesthetics with some of the others around the table.

My interest is in experimenting with forms of sequential non-narrative, non-verbal visual language and in the potential for the image to speak on its own terms without altering the power of the body or the unconscious to speak. Early television in film and photography was an important context for my work despite the difficulty in terms of gender and sexuality, or at least, at the start of my practice. Psychology, the feminine theoretical writing here has also been important reference points.

Much of my work is about images and all that was in it, all that was in that work and one that I have a particular resonance for women image-makers, especially those who image themselves. Maria Denis, Cheriel Alatari, Joyce Parker, Sandra Lehner, Claude Cahen, Gertrude Eisen, Francesca Woodman and too many others to mention have been influential for me in this respect. These explorations have extended into relationships of the staged and unfinished space, in front of and behind the camera, where props, set, costume, performer and camera operate inter-change.

The relationship between women’s spaces has been a longstanding and ongoing subject matter in my work. Working, or being inspired by other women artists was the focus of my recent film Magic Mirror (2015), which explores the archive of a dead artist, Claude Cahen, through her photographs and her writing. I wanted to explore the possibility of collaborating on being in dialogue with an image in a film that has been made and texts that can be estimated together in film. I feel many of my concerns and interests are close to Cahen’s who collaborated with her own partner Maxail Moreau despite the time that has elapsed. In many ways it is only now that her work can be understood; her feminism and queer thinking was beyond her contemporaries. I am interested in the very fact of an audience of another time. Magic Mirror was shot on film and shot black and white and was my first feature length film. It focuses on Cahen’s written text that was not written (Dorsoduro 1967), which critiques autobiography. The film re-frames the still photograph in a moving stage, creating a sense of images in space and sound to express boundaries of medium and multiplicity.

I came from South Africa, I am a profoundly racist, fascist, racist, patriarchal and shamefully illegitimate police state, one that was isolated from the rest of the world. I had come from one of the last emperors of an owned history of imperial and colonial exploitation and oppressions inflicted by the Global North on the Global South. I had made the leap from the southwestern tip of the continent of Africa to the Co-op as a young woman. I had suffered racial violence and trauma, and came to the Co-op suffering from atonishment and suppression. The question of sexual violence remains an important topic for me as an artist. Sexual violence is the fault line of all of us and a framed loss of power. I remain engaged with this question, particularly in light of the current political climate today.

I was accepted at the Slade as a painter soon after I arrived in London. But within these months of arriving, my trajectory as a painter was set. I was interested in the idea of working among young women artists, of working among women artists. This film had the effect of reforming me along with my practice as a painter. During this time I made two films - Not There (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993) - and in these early years at the Co-op and completed at the difficult time of the decade. Later, I came to understand how the concept of the silence of African women played such a vital role in these films.

These films were a form of resistance, a working through trauma, a vigil for and a remembrance in the case of a suffering people while affirming the transformative power of the force of life. This is what Co-op was and the practices connected with it had to signify for me. I did not have the words to say, or find the time or the voice to do it, or the time or the ethico-political understanding to support myself in this.

The Co-op and the practice helped me make possible the time to hold this for me.

From years of careful study in collective feminist work groups emerged my desire to portray women’s films. From that film was made, like women piercing my soul and demanding I do what is taken to obey them. Frames that were part of an optical unconscious embedded in narrative narrative cinema, against the grain. Later on, I would wonder about ordinary stories of resistance and life that brought to life from the narrative, setting life free in the process as the feminine spectacle. The process of these films continued ethically for me into other darkened crossings of lines (in the sense that the state of crossing the line was not the accomplishment of mere destruction, mere destruction, and that put me in the heart, in which I had to make desire, changing the chart of what I was to do in the process.

Without finding and with the shutting down of anti-capitalist transitional spaces for the non-franchised experiences, my practice became more theoretical, experimental, critical, performance and trans-media, as alternative acts of resistance against neo-liberal modes of mode and governmentality. This, from the situation that now, my practice has developed multiple material supports and modalities. I diagnose as part of my practice semiotic and experiential configurations that find islands, fields and paths to un-work geographies and ecologies structured in domination. For instance, my eight-month research project for Tate Modern called ‘Topologies at Tate Modern’ (October 2011–July 2012) was a trans-genre, trans-disciplinary and trans-cultural project that explored these ideas in multiple modalities (performance, dance, sound, conversation, symposium and publication). My cartographic work life the fields is the exhibition ‘From Floor to Sky’ (2013), also mapped topological operations of resistance in multiple material supports. My three-month collaboration with the Ordhoi Group in A Long Time (Bowers 2019) was another manifestation of this trans-media, typological cartographic practice. Over the last two years I have collaborated with the curator Grant Watson and the experimental music platform H I Can’t Dance, ‘I Don’t Want To Part of Your Revolution on his project ‘How we Behave’. I continue to research, write a script that I performed into film about my life, and interviewed Grant Watson in public about his project at events connected with exhibitions or in which my contribution appeared. ‘It’s Can’t Dance, Performance Days (Amsterdam) (November–December 2015), Nottingham Contemporary (2015), ‘The Showroom (2015), I explored topologies of resistance and transformation with Grant Watson in my contribution to his project. The making of this project very much led to the beginning of my work at LIMC.

MPC: Could somebody else follow up the question of the political being political?

ND: In the title, I was trying to speak from the everyday space as absence. So I searched for a language through a political narrative and through the presence of the voice, which added a political dimension. For some women, the films of Magdalena, Dramas were problematic because they presented a silence or a hush, a quiet woman who spoke not at all in her voice and on the soundtrack as a whisper and as a mutter and as a voice that was outside of history and that was extremely interesting to me because it also found her from the programmatic femininity of the time. First Movies (1986) opened up absence as a space of loss and the acoustic space as the volume of the film. This material, subjective voice was different from voice-over, we again on top of the image, which was dominant even in experimental work made in the films of Co-op.