

# The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

CINEPROBE

An Evening with Nina Menkes (Los Angeles)

Monday, October 28 at 6:30

Screening of:

QUEEN OF DIAMONDS (1990), 77 min. With Tinka Menkes.

Filmmaker present.

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Filmmaker about the film:

"QUEEN OF DIAMONDS is my painting of the U.S.: an over-enlarged profit motivated core surrounded by mute and arid alienation. The protagonist, Firdaus, is both deeply estranged and psychically powerful. Her loner position is the backside of centuries of Western Heroes: she stands in the center as watcher and victim of a system which is starting to crack." NM

"Working intuitively, Menkes speaks authoritatively with a European sensibility. What is most striking about QUEEN OF DIAMONDS is the manner in which irrational fear is thematically aroused. It does not emanate from the film's plot, nor from the dealer's overt behavior, but is a result of an aggressive, unflinching camera pointed at the character. Extended deliberate shots on the dealer heighten the tension, because it is her impassivity, her lack of action and reaction, that is intimidating (...) Masterfully shot, this "lower-than-low" budget film is in stunning 35mm color and Dolby Stereo, a declaration of Menkes's perseverance as a totally independent filmmaker. Her strict adherence to her personal challenging filmic language endows QUEEN OF DIAMONDS with a tremendous amount of integrity and originality. This is a film that takes chances and maneuvers skillfully." Alberto Garcia, Sundance Film Festival, 1991.

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About the filmmaker:

Nina Menkes work has been described as "controversial, intense and visually stunning" (Sight and Sound), "powerful and extraordinary" (Los Angeles Reader), and as the rebirth of American underground cinema (Liberation). Menkes' films have shown widely at major film festivals, and she has received numerous honors including a Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award for MAGDALENA VIRAGA (1986), a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and three Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships. She has an MFA from the UCLA Film School and is currently a member of the faculty at the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinema-Television, and at the California Institute of the Arts.

-from material given by the filmmaker.

Filmography:

QUEEN OF DIAMONDS (1990), MAGDALENA VIRAGA: STORY OF A RED SEA CROSSING (1986), THE GREAT SADNESS OF ZOHARA (1983), A SOFT WARRIOR (1981).

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