

## Block Cinema

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### The Anna Biller Show

Date	Film	Time
11/5	<a href="#">The Short Films of Anna Biller</a>	7 pm
11/6	<a href="#">Viva</a>	7 pm

Using well-worn movie genres such as the 1970s sexploitation and the 1930s melodrama as templates, Anna Biller creates and stars in incredibly detailed worlds that engage with the politics of fantasy. While her acting style is wry and detached, her movies are more earnest than ironic. And despite images of sublimely ridiculous role-playing, her films are not commonplace dreams of wish fulfillment. As Lane Relyea observed there is more than a hint of sadness in her work, as if the feminine fantasy roles that Biller performs are cultural designations that have been handed down "as if a bad debt." Over two nights, Block Cinema presents a retrospective of Biller's fabulous, surreal, and very funny short films and her first feature, [Viva](#), with Biller in attendance. Don't be surprised if you recall *The Thief of Baghdad* or *Rancho Notorious*. With her glamorous sets and costumes soaked in period detail, Biller's films are feasts for the eyes. They revel in pleasure, while engaging with sexuality and capitalist consumption.



**Thursday, November 5, 7 pm FREE!**

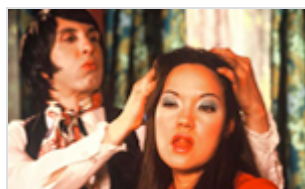
**Anna Biller in person!**

**The Short Films of Anna Biller and Work by Morgan Fisher and Paul McCarthy**

(150 minutes, various formats)

Tonight's program juxtaposes Anna Biller's short films with the work of two of her teachers, the prominent Los Angeles-based artists, Morgan Fisher and Paul McCarthy. All of the films share an interest in politics and the body. Fisher's work *Standard Gauge* (1984) investigates film as a perceptual and mechanical phenomenon. Paul McCarthy's *WGG Test* (2003) takes one of the popular movie genres of recent years, the slasher film, to even more outrageous extremes. Biller's first film, *Three Examples of Myself as Queen* (1994) is a triptych of expressions of female power, in which Biller plays a depressed monarch, a queen bee, and a teenager who takes revenge against a naughty group of partiers. *Fairy Ballet* (2001) is an adaptation of a French fairy tale, and *The Hypnotist* (2001) is an homage to the hypnosis-obsessed dramas of Hollywood's golden age. The crowning achievement may be *A Visit from the Incubus* (2001), a horror western musical. Biller plays Lucy, a woman tormented by nocturnal visits from a demon. Lucy escapes and becomes a saloon singer, only to face her nemesis in a sing-off.

**With Anna Biller in person.**



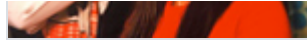
**Friday, November 6, 7 pm FREE!**

**Anna Biller in person!**

**Viva**

(Anna Biller, 2007, U.S., 120 minutes, 35mm)

Inspired as much by 1970s advertisements and Playboy photo spreads as it is by sexploitation classics such as *Camille 2000*



and *Suburban Roulette*, filmmaker Anna Biller plays Barbi, a naïve housewife, who joins the sexual revolution. Encouraged by her gleefully superficial neighbor Sheila (Bridget Brno), they discover a world of nudist hippies and debauched orgies. Yet despite all of their raucous escapades, Barbi learns that a woman's role in the swinging 70s may not be so new. *Viva* is a triumph of design, saturated with deep reds and aqua blues of precise period detail, with a carefully coordinated soundtrack, that echoes the sloppy sound design of low-budget exploitation films. The film also features dead-on casting, where everyone from the playboy artist to a sensitive nude guitarist looks absolutely of the time. Biller has mentioned that her character is a figure reminiscent of Voltaire's *Candide*, and as Barbi shimmies further down the rabbit hole, it becomes apparent that *Viva* is both a loving ode to and a sly satire of the mores of various subcultures. **With Anna Biller in person. *Viva* is shown as part of a double feature with the film [Cool It Carol!](#) at 10 pm.**

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