



## **Ursula Mayer and Maria Fusco** **GONDA**

*Gonda*, a new book by Ursula Mayer and Maria Fusco, experiments in cinematic and linguistic registers through polyphonic monologue.

Taking the form of a *ciné-roman*, the book is based on Mayer's 16mm film of the same name, with a screenplay written by Maria Fusco and commissioned by Film London.

*Gonda* is informed by Ayn Rand's 1934 play *Ideal*. In the play's script, controversial Russian American writer and philosopher Rand lays out her philosophical system of "Objectivism" with its stubbornly anti-altruistic and individualistic position. As a critical counter to Rand, *Gonda* creates kaleidoscopic printed spaces in which image and text shift roles to affect presupposed ideals of identity and existence. Noting how the cinematic image actually gazes back on us, the book utilizes highly stylized and precisely composed full-color imagery, and features Dutch transgender model Valentijn de Hingh.

The screenplay, printed in full in this book, is developed from a series of interdisciplinary workshops where academics, curators, critics, and writers considered the possibilities of writing *through* or *by* rather than *about* Rand's play. The screenplay's key textual reference is the production structure of Félix Guattari's unrealized 1986 *Project for a Film by Kafka*, in which Guattari proposed a made-for-television mini-series inspired by episodes in Kafka's writings and life. *Gonda* cannibalizes original writing and transcribed workshop material together with five letter-based passages from *Ideal*, nudging them into alternative personal pronouns, to make *Gonda* a book of voices.

Ursula Mayer is an Austrian artist based in London. Working predominantly with film, performance, and photography, her work has been recently shown in the Baltic Triennial, Vilnius; Whitechapel Gallery, London; and Performa, New York.

Maria Fusco is a Northern Irish writer, critic, and editor based in London. She is director of art writing at Goldsmiths, University of London, and editor of the journal *The Happy Hypocrite*. Her book of short stories, *The Mechanical Copula*, was published by Sternberg Press in 2010.

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