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Michelle Handelman

*The Spectre of Musidora: Reading of New Translations*

Tuesday, November 3, 7pm

Admission free

Featuring Marti Domination (*CREMASTER 1*), Cy Gavin, Michelle Handelman, (*IRMA VEP*, *THE LAST BREATH*), Katherine Hubbard, Nicola Tyson, Jack Doroshow AKA Flawless Sabrina (*THE QUEEN*), Everett Quinton (*THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP*), and Jack Waters (*JASON AND SHIRLEY*).

A reading to place the work of Musidora within a queer feminist history, combining Handelman's research at the Cinematheque Francaise with texts from Kathy Acker, William Burroughs, Flawless Sabrina, and the lost love letters between Musidora and the writer Colette, translated into English for the first time for this evening. Also featuring an excerpt of Everett Quinton and Charles Ludlam's *The Mystery of Irma Vep*. Workshopped in collaboration with the Henry Art Gallery & University of Washington graduate students Annie Fee, Tracy Gregory, Coley Mixan, and John Boucher.

With a limited edition print by PARTICIPANT PRESS.

Irma Vep, the first femme fatale or "vamp" of cinema history which set the tone for dozens of archetypal successors such as Catwoman and La Femme Nikita, turns 100 this year. The character first emerged in *Les Vampires*, a seven-hour serial film - one of the longest ever made - in 1915 by director Louis Feuillade. In honor of the 100th anniversary of the legendary film, Michelle Handelman, filmmaker, artist and professor in the Fashion Institute of Technology's new Film, Media and Performing Arts department, will present the first series of programming in New York to examine the cultural impact of *Les Vampires* and illuminate the vast body of work of Musidora, the prolific silent film icon that starred as Irma Vep.

Events include a screening of the newly restored film at Anthology Film Archives in addition to lectures, performances, and readings:

### *100 Years of Irma Vep*

Celebration of the 100th anniversary of the silent film *Les Vampires*

Directed by Louis Feuillade, 1915

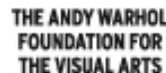
Oct 22-26 Anthology Film Archives, 5-Day *Les Vampires* Film Tribute.  
Oct 27 Fashion Institute of Technology, Lecture/Screening on Musidora's work.  
Nov 03 Participant Inc, Live Reading Performance + Limited Edition prints  
Nov 06 Microscope Gallery, Musician MV Carbon + Live film mix by Michelle Handelman

*Les Vampires* premiered across Europe from November 1915 through July 1916. It is one of a trilogy of serials Feuillade made for Gaumont Studios, alongside the films *Fantômas* (1913) and *Judes* (1916). Shot during World War 1, it follows the exploits of a brazen Apache gang “Les Vampires” who rob the elite of Parisian society. Its subtext of the working class versus the ruling class is cloaked in a macabre and ritualistic plot with episodic titles such as *The Severed Head*, *The Thunder Master* and *The Terrible Wedding*.

It was Musidora as Irma Vep who became the irresistible icon of French cinema through her various escapades in seven episodes of *Les Vampires*. Sometimes seductively garbed in a black catsuit and other times disguised as a boy, Musidora embodied a new type of liberated woman, a cinematic anti-heroine with intelligence and power. She used her stardom to become one of the first female feature film directors as well as a writer, painter, novelist, and playwright. She often collaborated with the writer Colette with whom she formed an artistic commune in Paris during the 1920s, and in her later years she worked closely with renowned film archivist Henri Langlois at the Cinémathèque Française.

Handelman has been researching the life and work of Musidora for five years. The research resulted in one of her latest projects *IRMA VEP, THE LAST BREATH*, a 40-minute video installation that imagines an encounter between Irma Vep and her therapist, which led to a Guggenheim Fellowship and debut at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in 2013. Presenting a distinct program that examines the cultural impact of *Les Vampires* and illuminates Musidora’s vast body of work helps to preserve a long lost piece of feminist film history.

**Michelle Handelman** is a filmmaker and interdisciplinary artist who makes work that explores the relationship between the forbidden and the sublime from a queer feminist perspective. She is a Guggenheim Fellow and recipient of several grants including Art Matters, Creative Capital MAP fund, and New York Foundation of The Arts. Her work has shown internationally including Centre Pompidou, Paris; ICA, London; PARTICIPANT, INC; MIT List Visual Arts Center; PERFORMA 05; Exit Art; Guangzhou 53 Art Museum, China; Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum; SF MOMA; The Henry Art Gallery and The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art. She currently is developing a brand new undergraduate Film and Media program for the Fashion Institute of Technology, NYC. [www.michellehandelman.com](http://www.michellehandelman.com)



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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES, ground floor, wheelchair accessible. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit; or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. [participantinc.org](http://participantinc.org)

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