

AMY STAATS

With comedic filmmaking skills previously shown in the LA Comedy shorts festival in 2010 and 2011, Actor/ Filmmaker Amy Staats is bringing her seven minute short, "Here's What I Like: Fashion and Flowers. And Now I'll Tell You Why" to the Fourth Annual chashama Film Festival this year. In it, character Helen Pellet discusses fashion and flowers, and how we can use nature to help us make our fashion choices. In A Brief History of Good Taste, Green: the Blue Jean of Nature, and The Origin of Tackiness, we look at flowers and fashion with Staats and her collaborators.

While many of the films in chashama's Fourth Annual Film Festival address chaos in terms of poverty, ecology, or violence, Staat's film looks at chaos that is internal. Recently, at a café in Soho, Staats explained, "I feel that my character is always on the edge of falling apart a bit. And I also feel that I like the complexity of very mundane things, just challenging something that is so superficial speaks for larger things as well. Challenging even the way that we're taught, such as stupid, silly trivial things like fashion. You don't know why you think certain things...like the way that you're not supposed to wear white after Labor Day is so ridiculous."

When seeing these kind of failures, whether they are in fashion or elsewhere, Staats thinks that communication is the only way to avert disaster. She also thinks that paying attention to the small details makes for breathing room later. "I think social change is a slow and difficult beast, and I feel like the wheels of that are creaky and hard... real change takes a monumental force, a monumental push, and you see it in our nation now. People say that they want this and that, but when you get down to the nuts and the bolts and the difficulty of wanting progress. And it takes an enormous amount of energy...I think that the most radical thing that you could be able to do would be to be kind to each other and that that global change starts at home and with self- acceptance and with simple kindness. "

In Staat's short films, she takes on a number of topics. "Here's What I Like" covers Russian literature, our forefathers, salad, music, and rainy days. She's glad to regard the topics as a visual artist and as an actor while exploring the subject matter. "Emotions are so complex. There are so many shades of sorrow and laughter and so many things combined," Staats said.

Staat's projects are inspired by a consistent team of seasoned NYC artists. Director Abigail Zealey Bess, having worked in the NY theater community for over 10 years, is one of the many people who inspire and collaborate with Staats. "I loved working with Abigail, but I also knew that she had some successful short films that went all over the place. Ryan Gould, the DP is amazing. We had a great guy, Michael Morgan, who put it together. Ruthie is the one who is the script supervisor. Kay Chang who does the hair and make-up is the best. It's a fun set," Staats said.

Most of the costumes in film were bought second hand near Beacon's closet and Buffalo exchange in Brooklyn. When thinking about the costumes, Staats is glad to share her opinions on art and fashion. She said, "I have just always been fascinated by the emotional qualities of color. I like the juxtaposition of the almost clashing brightness

juxtaposed with the white. It's almost something out of a crayon box. It's tacky but it's wonderful. I like it."

Staats is glad to have the opportunity to have an international discussion at chashama, one of the 'belly buttons of the world', in her opinion. While chatting in her film about something whimsical, she is glad to reference a Godard film and appreciate that human beings are incredibly complex and 'great sorrow is so intermixed with laughter'.

"Here's What I Like: Fashion and Flowers. And Now I'll Tell You Why" will be shown on Friday, November 11th at 5:30PM. To reserve seats, please send a message to topr@chafilmfest.com.

