

## The Body in Question(s): Being-in-common

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(...) The inclusion of *Delicate Issue* (1979), a video by the late **Kate Craig** (1947– 2002), is not only a very poignant homage to her important contribution to the development of performance and video art in Canada, but moreover it reinforces admirably the idea of making the past matter in the present for the future, as theorized by Christine Ross. For 12.5 minutes, Craig guided the camera, held by her husband, Hank Bull, to scrutinize her body. The extreme magnification renders her skin pores, almost abstract, and her orifices indistinguishable from one another. In an intimate tone, the artist poses questions about personal boundaries and seeing, such as: "What is the developing line between the public and the private?," "At what distance does the subject read?," "How close do you want to be?," "How far apart do you want to be?," "Who is in the frame, who is willing to be in the frame, who is willing to watch the frame?". This early video work is understood as epoch-making in its rendering of the evasive subject of female identity from a feminist standpoint. It makes visible the viewer's ambiguous relationship to the female body. It questions when such close-up observation becomes a delicate issue, and signals a lack of distance. Fittingly, Craig's questions still apply today, and in the context of the pervasiveness of today's electronic and social media, they take on an amazing foreseeing dimension. *Delicate Issue* functions as a temporal *mise en abyme* for *The Body in Question(s)*. As theorized by Christine Ross in her brilliant analysis of other contemporary media works, it performs "a forward movement that makes the past endure in the present". It speaks to a reality that persists unresolved and is experienced by the viewers/participants in a way that is still dynamic in contemporaneity.<sup>12</sup> *The Body in Question(s)* expands the viewer/participant's apprehending of a plural body by enunciating contemporaneity as *being-in-common*.

<sup>12</sup>Ross, Christine, *The Past is Present*, p.281.