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Jane Arden

Jane Arden (1927-82) is a major and baffling omission from most histories of Post-War British culture. She was a radical artist in film, television and theatre and, far from moving towards more mainstream, conventional material in her later years, her work becomes increasingly experimental and challenging. Arden's embracing of feminism and the anti-psychiatry movement of the mid-sixties is noticeable from the TV play *The Logic Game* (1965) onwards, culminating, in 1969, with her Arts Lab hit *Vagina Rex* and the *Gas Oven*, in 1970 with her radical theatre group *Holocaust*, and then in the film *The Other Side of the Underneath* (1972), the latter being described by David Will of the BBC as a major breakthrough in British cinema. Will also states that Arden's work shows that the struggles of women's liberation will be reflected in a rejection of the traditional modes of cinematic expression. After this Arden's work, often made in collaboration with Jack Bond, experiments further with form, her last film *Anti-Clock* (1979) being an early blend of film and video. Her book *You Don't Know What You Want, Do You?*, although referred to as poetry, is really a radical social manifesto against the tyranny of rationalism. Arden's work ticks many of the boxes for the Portsmouth research project and conference; we urgently need to restore her fully to the culture and this seems to be an appropriate and timely arena in which to do so.