Conjuring John Hughes’ *What I Have Written*

by Lesley Stern

It is not that philosophy illuminates the cinema, but that the cinema philosophizes.

The film disturbs categories – like erotica and pornography, still and moving, detection and painting, acting and being, drama and documentation – but it also invests the material with a sense of drama and intrigue (the performances are focused and slightly mysterious, even when evoking the utterly quotidian) that keeps at bay the preciousness of arthouse erotica. And it kept me there, utterly engrossed.

I was absorbed – in a way I find very rare in Australian cinema – by the thought of cinema, by the cinema philosophizes. At its most exciting, the cinema can create a new generation of filmmakers who turn upside down all our predictable ways of thinking about cinema and reality. It does this by evoking the senses, through the matter of cinema. What I Have Written does so sensitively through conjuring, out of thin air, something that matters.