TYPOFILM #6
Film Title Poem

Mercredi 15 juin 2022
Centre Pompidou, Cinéma 2

For this screening, I have paired two of my early text-based films that feature a single word repeated for the duration of the film with my 2016 feature, *Film Title Poem*. The early word text-based films used materials such as coffee, turmeric, sweat, metallic eyeliner, Visine and tanning lotion to inscribe, paint and stamp filmstrips in order to infuse the text with meaning using humor and absurdity. They were made without a camera in the long lineage of direct filmmaking that my work belongs.

My 67 minute and 40 second feature *Film Title Poem* is composed entirely of explorations of title cards. The finished film consists of shots of individual movie titles and isolated words from the titles, creating a rhythmic viewing game for the viewer as they attempt to decipher recognizable fragments. Shot on 35mm film, 8,000 feet of prints were inscribed by hand using a host of unconventional tools such as forks, vegetable peelers, shards of mirror, hole punchers and food coloring. Created frame by frame, etched patterns, outlines, tracings, punctures, tinting and marks emphasize the materiality of the film. When placed in sequence, the title cards seen in my film highlight various details: calendar dates, numbers of people, locations, and so forth, but they also provide an ABC of a movie viewing lifetime.

The project started as a list of my 100 most significant movie memories, and it developed as I began re-watching all of these films. As the re-watching process triggered other film-viewing memories and as I created new ones, my list expanded to 300, and then 500, films. I began taking screenshots, focusing often on title sequences. This added a new layer to my film: it became a meditation, a reflection, a study, a mashup of the history of film title credits. Though it was my computer that sorted my list in alphabetical order, it's intentional that Hollis Frampton's *Zorns Lemma* (1970) is the last movie title card that appears at the end of my feature. The inclusion and its placement is a direct link to the film's alphabetical order, a structuring device that Frampton so brilliantly uses in his film which, through repetition, transitions from words to images.

[Jennifer West, May 2022]

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Jennifer West, *The Possessed Spectator Film (permanent marker on 70mm clear film leader)*, 2016–2022, 70 mm transféré en HD, coul., son, 19 min 37 s

Jennifer West, *Whatever Film (16mm film leader soaked in lots of coffee, espresso & turmeric, taken on power walk, rubbed with sweat and inscribed with the word, "whatever" written in purple metallic eyeliner)*, 2007, coul., sil., 16 mm, 4 min 11 s

Jennifer West, *Seriously Film (70mm Film Leader soaked in MSG and boiling water – inscribed & stamped with the word seriously – with Viagra, Visine and Fake tanning lotion)*, 2008, coul., sil., 70 mm > 35 mm, 1 min 1 s

Jennifer West, *Film Title Poem (35mm print and negative hand-etched and painted, transferred to high-definition)* [1], 2016, coul., son., 35 mm numérisé, 67 min 40 s

[1] CREDITS:

Artist /director /animator/ editor: Jennifer West

Cinematography: Peter West
Hand-animation: Kelsey Boncato, Sadie Marchese-Moore, Jennifer West

Audio mix: Daniel Oldham

Film processing, printing, and digitizing: Fotokem Lab, Burbank, CA

Premiered Art Night London, 2016, presented by ICA London, St. Mary Le Strand Church, July 2, 2016

Commissioned by ICA London's Art Night, curated by Kathy Noble
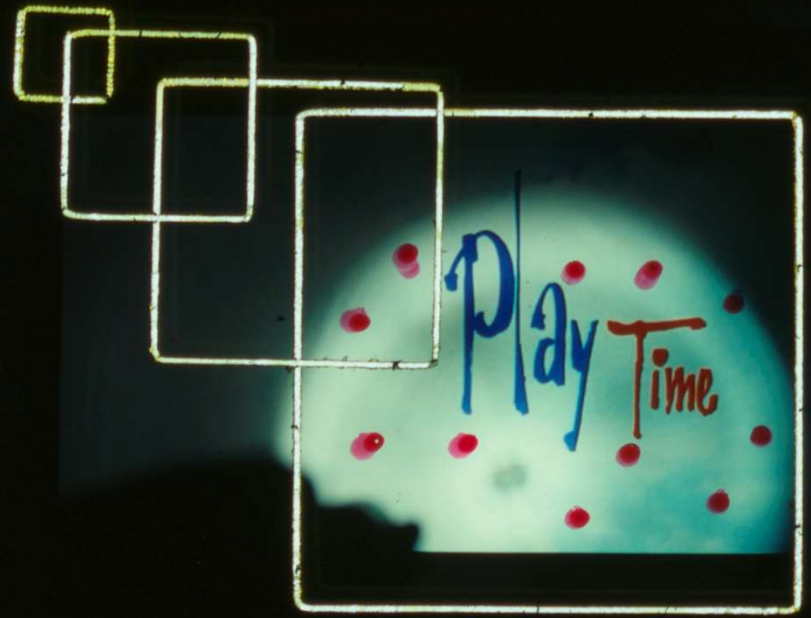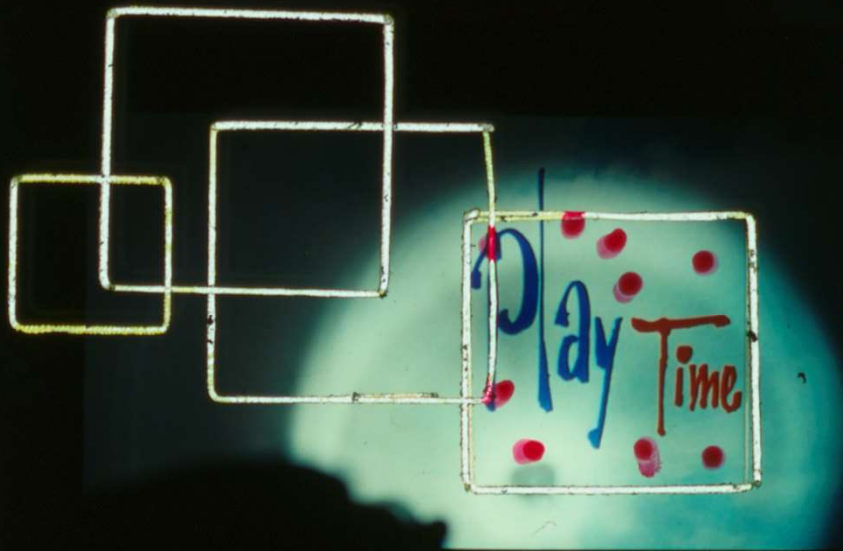
Pour cette projection, j'ai choisi de montrer deux de mes premiers films composés de texte, qui présentent un seul mot répété pendant toute la durée du film, avec mon long métrage de 2016, *Film Title Poem*. Dans mes premiers films basés sur des mots j'utilisais des matériaux tels que le café, le curcuma, la sueur, l'eyeliner métallique, les gouttes de Visine et la lotion bronzante pour inscrire, peindre et tamponner des bandes de film afin d'insuffler du sens au texte en utilisant l'humour et le sens de l'absurde. Ils ont été réalisés sans caméra, dans la longue lignée de l'intervention directe sur la pellicule auquel mon travail appartient.

Mon long métrage de 67 minutes et 40 secondes, *Film Title Poem*, est entièrement composé d'explorations de cartons titres. Le film terminé est constitué de plans de titres de films individuels et de mots isolés de ces titres, créant un jeu visuel rythmé pour le spectateur qui tente de déchiffrer des fragments reconnaissables. Réalisé en 35 mm, 2,5 km de copies ont été inscrites à la main à l'aide d'un ensemble d'outils non conventionnels tels que des fourchettes et des pinces, des épluche-légumes, des éclats de miroir, des perforateurs et du colorant alimentaire. Réalisés image par image, les motifs gravés, les contours, les tracés, les perforations, les teintes et les marques soulignent la matérialité du film. Lorsqu'ils sont montés en séquence, les génériques que l'on voit dans mon film mettent en évidence divers détails : dates et horaires,

du nombre de personnes, des lieux, etc. mais ils fournissent aussi l'ABC d'une vie de spectateur de cinéma.

Le projet a commencé comme une liste de mes 100 souvenirs de cinéma les plus marquants et s'est développé au fur et à mesure que je regardais à nouveau tous ces films. Puisque le processus de re-visionnement a déclenché d'autres souvenirs de cinéma et que j'en ai créé de nouveaux, ma liste s'est étendue à 300, puis à 500 films. J'ai commencé à faire des captures d'écran, en me concentrant souvent sur les séquences de titres. Cela a ajouté une nouvelle couche à mon film : il est devenu une méditation, une réflexion, une étude, un mélange de l'histoire des titres de films. Bien que ce soit mon ordinateur qui ait classé ma liste par ordre alphabétique, c'est intentionnellement que *Zorns Lemma* (1970) de Hollis Frampton est le dernier titre qui apparaît. Cette inclusion et son emplacement sont en lien direct avec l'ordre alphabétique, un dispositif structurant que Frampton utilise si brillamment dans son film qui, par le biais la répétition, passe des mots aux images.

[Jennifer West, mai 2022]

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Crédit photo, p. 2 : *Film Title Poem* © Jennifer West 2016 ; p. 3 : outils de travail de l'artiste

Quatrième de couverture : Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film*, Londres, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2004, p. 147

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pensive spectator.[5] Bernard Stiegler warns that the fragment that haunts me may come to usurp me. To the 'possessive spectator' and the 'pensive spectator' we must add the category of the *possessed spectator*. Renewing Deleuze's vision of a 'society of control',[6] Stiegler's prospectus is bleak.

I believe Stiegler is both right and wrong in presenting the audio-visual industry as a totalizing and potentially totalitarian machine for the production of uniform consciousness. We must distinguish the political from the ideological. Stiegler is right in emphasising the extent to which industrially produced commodities have occupied not only real space but psychical space. At least one aspect of this – the issue of copyright – is political. As Colin MacCabe observes: 'in a world in which we are entertained from cradle to grave whether we like it or not, the ability to rework image and dialogue . . . may be the key to both psychic and political health'.[7] The same technology that has constructed the audio-visual machine has put the means of configuring its products into the hands of the audience. But when two-thirds of global copyrights are in the hands of six corporations,[8] the capacity to rework one's memories into the material symbolic form of individual testament and testimony is severely constrained. We rarely own the memories we are sold. Stiegler is wrong, however, to ignore the fact that whatever the audio-visual machine produces is destined to be broken up by associative processes that are only minimally conscious.[9] Although he makes liberal use of psychoanalytic terms, Stiegler uses neither the word 'preconscious' nor 'unconscious', speaking only of consciousness and 'consciousnesses' (a sort of 'collective conscious'). But the question of ideology is at least as much one of unconscious processes as it is of consciousness. Consciousnesses may be synchronized in a shared moment of viewing, but the film *we* saw is never the film *I* remember.