

PRESS RELEASE

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM COMMISSIONS SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY LOS ANGELES ARTIST JENNIFER WEST

Opening November 19, new large-scale immersive installation
incorporates manipulated celluloid film and digital video

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West's *Exploded Film Quilt* (2015), which reflects the concept to be explored in the artist's SAM commission.

SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) presents *Jennifer West: Film is Dead . . .* (November 19, 2016–May 7, 2017), a large-scale, site-specific installation by Jennifer West, a Los Angeles-based artist and former Seattle resident. Commissioned by SAM, the new multimedia installation examines the duality of film as both material and immaterial.

The installation comprises a cascading 25-foot-wide curtain of primarily 70mm filmstrips, hung from the ceiling and spanning a large part of the gallery. West manipulates the filmstrips using everyday household materials—including ink, dye, food coloring, spray paint, nail polish, dirt, salt, and bleach—and subjects them to scratches and perforations by knives, mirror shards, vegetable peelers, and more. West, along with her friends and fellow artists, mark the filmstrips with their lips and breasts. These changes, erosions, and impressions to the film emulsion create colored splotches, grid-like patterns, and chance effects.

The curtain of filmstrips curls to the floor and appears to “feed” into three flat-screen monitors placed side-by-side. On these screens plays the digitized film of the manipulated filmstrips in a continuous loop. Visitors will be able to walk around all four sides of this immersive environment for an “analog-meets-digital” experience.

The installation will be on view in one of the museum's modern and contemporary galleries on the third floor. Recent installations there dedicated to contemporary art have shown the work of Martha Rosler, Guido van der Werve, and Harun Faroki.



“West presents film at its most seductive, mining the medium’s shift from analog to digital,” says Catharina Manchanda, SAM’s Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. “In adjacent galleries to West’s installation is *Big Picture: Art After 1945*, presenting abstract works by landmark artists of the 1950s-60s; with *Film is Dead . . .*, West raises new questions on the theme of abstraction, especially in light of the transformation that occurs when the altered strips are digitized and screened.”

In addition, SAM will host the world premiere of West’s feature-length film, *Film Memory*, upon its completion in spring 2017. A “personal historical survey” of 300 films that she re-watched, it includes shots of sites connected to her memories, including theaters in Seattle and Olympia, Washington. The film considers “remembered” film and how fiction weaves itself into our lives and memories. Further details to be announced.

ABOUT JENNIFER WEST

For over ten years, Jennifer West has gained international recognition for her explorations of materialism in film. Born in Topanga, California, she received an MFA from ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California, and a BA with film and video emphasis from the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. West lives and works in Los Angeles.



Significant commissions include Tramway, Glasgow (2016); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2016); Seattle Art Museum (2016); Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) TBA Festival, Portland (2014); High Line Art, New York City (2012); Aspen Art Museum (2010); and Turbine Hall at TATE Modern, London (2009). Solo shows have been presented at S1 Artspace, Sheffield, UK; Kunstverein Nürnberg, Germany; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; and Transmission Gallery in Glasgow and White Columns, NY.

West has exhibited widely in museums and art institutions internationally including Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Künstlerhaus Graz, Austria; Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Nottingham Contemporary, UK; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Centre of Contemporary Visual Arts (CAPC), Bordeaux, France; The Drawing Center, New York; and ZKM Museum for New Media, Karlsruhe, Germany. She has been artist in residence at the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York (2015), and the MIT List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, MA (2011). For more information, visit www.jweststudio.com.

RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

November 17

Jennifer West: Explorations of Materialism in Film

Seattle Art Museum

Artist Jennifer West presents a talk on her practice. The evening also includes screenings of excerpts from past and upcoming projects.

Spring 2017 - Date TBA

World Premiere Screening: *Film Memory*

Seattle Art Museum

Film Memory is a feature-length film by Jennifer West exploring the moving image as material memory. Constructed as a “personal historical survey” of cinema, it captures and reconnects the places, spaces, languages, and memories that are born from the cinematic experience.

Image credit: *Exploded Film Quilt*, 2015, Jennifer West, American, 70mm filmstrips treated with dye, bleach, oysters, vanilla - Plexiglas, thread, 96 x 42 1/8 in., Courtesy of the artist.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.