

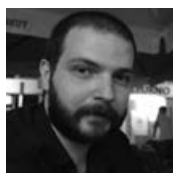
JODIE MACK

Blistavo onostranstvo apstraktnog sanjarenja

JODIE MACK

Glistening Otherworldliness of Abstract Daydreaming

razgovarao
interviewed by



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Što bi zajedničko mogli imati posteri, animirana rock-opera, Pink Floyd i filmska posveta jednoj majci? U svijetu Jodie Mack, mlade američke autorice eksperimentalnoga filma, ovakve kombinacije nisu neuobičajene. Gostujući na uglednim festivalima, kakvi su London Film Festival i New York Film Festival, Jodie je s programom koji su Njujorčani već vidjeli u sekciji Views From The Avant-Garde stigla i do Zagreba, naravno, na rujanski 25 FPS – Međunarodni festival eksperimentalnog filma i videa. Svojevrсни cine-performance, odnosno kino-nastup Mackove, naslovljen *Let Your Light Shine*, u

Interviewed in Zagreb on 28 September 2014

What could posters, an animated rock-opera, Pink Floyd, and a film tribute to a mother have in common? In the world of Jodie Mack, a young American author of experimental films, such combinations are not out of ordinary. Her guest appearances on respectable festivals, like for example the London Film Festival and New York Film Festival, brought Jodie to Zagreb where she was a guest on, of course, the September's 25FPS – the International Festival of Experimental Film and Video. She presented her programme that had already been seen by the New Yorkers in the section Views





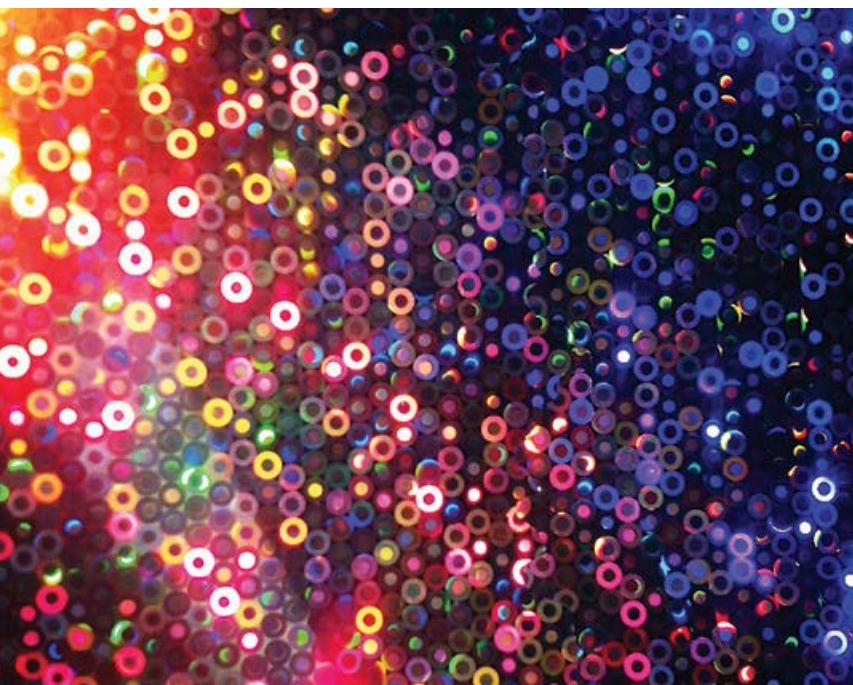
svojoj je osnovi kolekcija njezinih kratkih filmova koji istražuju formalne principe apstraktnog filma. No, tu priča ne staje. ¶ Mlada umjetnica i edukatorica nije se zadovoljila pukim kustoskim putovanjem kroz svoj opus, nego se aktivno uključila u prezentaciju tih radova zauzimajući ulogu performerera koji vodi kroz taj rad, ali i pjeva dijelove zvučnog zapisa. Ovaj eksperimentalni filmsko-glazbeni nastup nije standard nego osobitost Jodie Mack koja je svoje umjetničke opsesije i izgradila nad pažljivo složenim kolažima, apstrakcijama i psihodeličnim, stroboskopskim montažnim zahvatima u materijal efemerije, napuštenim formatima popularne kulture i samoponavljajućim uzorcima, od onih na tkaninama i odjeći, pa sve do dekoracija okružujućeg prostora. Što je od svega toga visoka umjetnost ili ona niža, koja je razlika i ima li je uopće? Možemo li je uopće rangirati? ¶ U nekoliko godina djelovanja, inzistirajući na ručnom radu i analognoj tehnici, Jodie Mack izgradila je i brojčano velik opus te zaslužila pažnju i nagrade eksperimentalne filmske scene. U dekonstrukciji apstrakcije otišla je toliko daleko da je nazivaju i antianimatoricom, što nikako nije doživljaj koji odaje u susretima uživo. Na 25 FPS-u,

From The Avant-Garde (of the New York Film Festival). A kind of cine-performance or a cinema-stage appearance by Mack, titled *Let Your Light Shine*, is in fact a collection of her short films that investigate formal principles of abstract film. Nevertheless, this is not where the story ends. ¶ The young artist and educator was not content with mere curatorial journey through her own opus, but she has actively been involved in the presentation of these works. She has assumed the role of performer who is not only a guide through the works, but also singer of parts of the audio recording. This experimental film-music performance is not the standard, but is peculiarity of Jodie Mack, who has built her artistic obsessions exactly on carefully composed collages, abstractions, and psychedelic, stroboscopic, editing interventions into the material of ephemera, outdated formats of popular culture and self-repeating samples, from those of textiles and clothes, all the way to decorations of the surrounding space. Among all these, what is high art or low art, what is the difference and, is there any at all? Are we able at all to place it into categories? ¶ In the several years of her activities and insisting on hand

festivalu kojem se divi i čiju žensku energiju svakako primjećuje, Jodie Mack izrazito je pričljiva i zanimljiva sugovornica koju se u gradu moglo sresti kao uvijek veselo, susretljivo i optimistično lice. Status edukatorice i profesorice animacije na koledžu Dartmouth također joj omogućuje da neke fenomene eksperimentalnog stvaranja sagleda objektivno i s potrebne udaljenosti i što je najvažnije, da u sve to uputi svoje studente. ¶ U sklopu posjećenog i od publike dobro primljenog performansa, izvedenog u programu Expanded Cinema, prikazani su filmovi: *New Fancy Foils*, *Undertone Overture*, *Dusty Stacks of Mom: The Poster Project*, *Glistening Thrills* i *Let Your Light Shine*.

ORIS — Jučer ste ovdje nastupali – kako je bilo? Jeste li bili zadovoljni publikom? ¶ JODIE MACK — Mislím da je prošlo sasvim dobro. Projekcija se održala u ogromnoj prostoriji, rekla bih najvećoj u kojoj sam dosad nastupila. Publika je jako toplo reagirala, što je bilo lijepo. Prezentirati ovakav sadržaj bilo

craft and analog animation, Mack has built a large opus, in terms of number of works, as well as she has rightfully drawn the attention of and has been awarded by the experimental film scene. She has gone so far in deconstruction of abstraction that she is also called an anti-animator, which is certainly not the impression when meeting her in person. While being a guest at the 25FSP – she admires the festival and certainly notices its female energy – Jodie Mack was extremely talkative and interesting interlocutor. Also, she was always cheerful, cordial, and optimistic when met in the streets of the city. Her status of educator and professor of animation at the Dartmouth College has also enabled her to observe some phenomena of experimental creation objectively and from a necessary distance and, what is most important, to instruct her students about these issues. ¶ As part of the quite visited performance, which was well accepted by the audience and presented within the programme Expanded Cinema, the films *New Fancy Foils*, *Undertone Overture*, *Dusty Stacks of Mom: The Poster Project*, *Glistening Thrills*, and *Let Your Light Shine* were presented.



Glistening Thrills, 2013., prizor iz filma

Glistening Thrills, 2013., scene from the film

(JM)

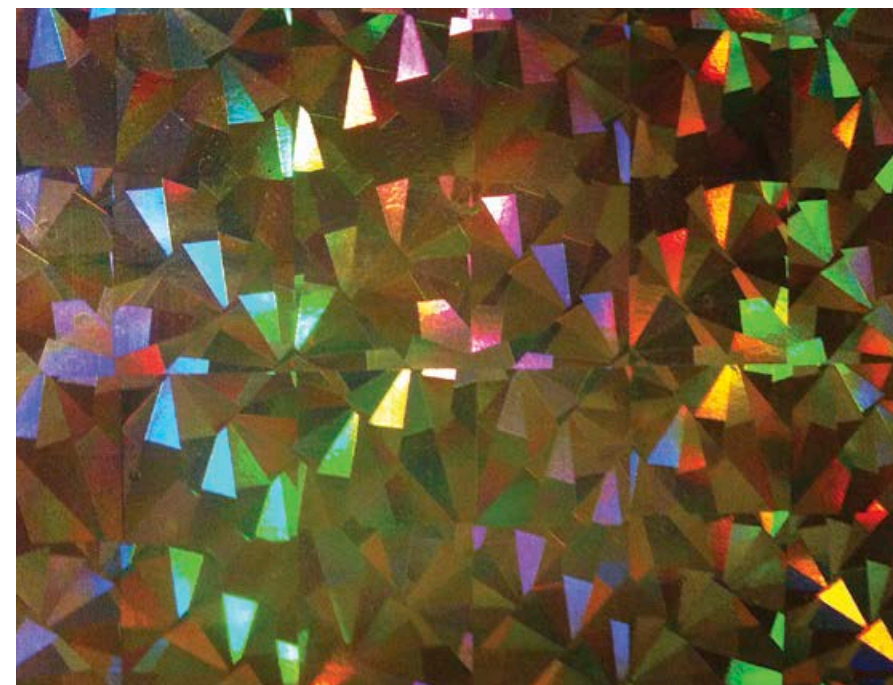
kojoj publici uvijek je riskantno, nikad ne znate kako bi mogli reagirati. Iako, nisam čula smijeh tijekom smiješnih dijelova.

ORIS — Jeste li ga očekivali? JODIE MACK — Nisam; to ovisi o kulturi, znate na što mislim.

ORIS — To je zapravo moje sljedeće pitanje. Možete li nam nešto reći o razlikama između europske i američke publike?

JODIE MACK — Dobar primjer američke publike možda je festival dokumentarnog filma True/False u Columbij (Missouri). Na Festivalu se prikazuju eksperimentalni dokumentarni filmovi koji eksperimentiraju s načinima pripovijedanja i mogućnostima prikazivanja istine. Tamo sam imala dvije predstave; publika je doslovno vrištala od smijeha tijekom smiješnih dijelova. U Parizu su pojedinci izlazili usred prikazivanja zapaliti cigaretu pa su se vraćali. U Berlinu su pak ljudi bili tihi dok nisu čuli solo na kazou koji je imitirao Lisu Stansfield, onda su se nasmijali pa potom opet bili tihi. Dio filma sa solom na kazou zapravo je zabavan jer je velik dio programa koji je prikazan u ovom filmu iz razdoblja do moje osme godine, kada sam živjela u Engleskoj. Pjesme koje su citirane bile su jako popularne u Europi, ali ne i Americi. Američka publika stoga zapravo ne razumije te zvučne citate, ali europska publika razumije. Zanimljivo je bilo vidjeti kako reaguju na različite načine.

ORIS — Jeste li imali problema s autorskim pravima korištenih pjesama? JODIE MACK — Nisam imala nikakvih problema s autorskim pravima, jer ja ne prodajem film; nikad se neće distribuirati. Kao što znate, pripadam akademskoj zajednici,



ORIS — Yesterday you had your performance here, what was it like? Were you satisfied with the crowd? JODIE MACK — I think it went pretty well. It was a huge room, the biggest room I have ever performed in, I would say. And, the audience seemed to respond quite warmly, which was nice. It is always a gamble to play this sort of thing for any audience, to think how they might react to certain things. I did not hear any audible laughter during the funny parts, though...

ORIS — Did you expect one? JODIE MACK — I did not; it depends on the culture, you know what I mean.

ORIS — That was actually my next question. Can you draw some differences between European and American audiences? JODIE MACK — A good example of an American audience is, perhaps, the True False Film Fest in Columbia, Missouri, which is a documentary festival. They show experimental documentaries, documentaries that experiment with storytelling and the possibilities of representing truth. I had two shows there; audiences were literally screaming and roaring with laughter during the funny parts. When I went to Paris, people started leaving in the middle of the screening, smoking cigarettes, and then coming back in. In Berlin, people were quiet until they heard the kazoo solo citing Lisa Stansfield, then they laughed, and then they went quiet again. The kazoo solo part of that movie is actually very funny; I lived in England until I was eight, and a lot of those programs that are shown in the movie are from that period. Thus the songs cited were

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podučavateljica sam pa filmu pristupam kao istraživanju — ne kao komercijalnom pothvatu. Tijekom snimanja ovog filma naučila sam mnogo o zakonu poštene uporabe i vjerujem da sam unutar tih granica.

ORIS — Kako se pravne prakse, poput autorskih prava, upliću u osnovnu eksperimentalnu prirodu? Kod found footage filma, na primjer. Ako nađene snimke stavite na YouTube kanal, dobijete obavijest o kršenju autorskih prava. To čini found footage film ilegalnim. JODIE MACK — Postoje različite vrste nađenih snimaka. U analognom svijetu mnogo nađenih found footage snimki dolazi iz obrazovnih filmova, tako da je malo vjerojatno da ćete imati problema. Ne dolaze iz velikih tvrtki koje imaju algoritme koji traže vizualne ili zvučne uzorke. Ali mnogo toga što se koristi jest ili tako izmanipulirano da ne možete utvrditi koji mu je izvorni oblik ili nije prisutno na internetu. Zapravo bih rekla da je s pojavom digitalnog autorsko pravo sasvim izbačeno, kao da je sve dopušteno. Ništa nije sveto — čak ni stvari koje ne biste trebali skidati s interneta; možete skidati, bez obzira na to.

ORIS — Srećom, nema zakona koji zabranjuju korištenje nađenih materijala koje koristite u svojim filmovima. Zbog čega koristite tekstilne uzorke i koja je veza s psihodeličnim kičem sedamdesetih? JODIE MACK — Kad sam počela raditi, radila sam bez kamere — crtala sam i slikala izravno po filmskoj vrpici čiji je svaki okvir veličine nokta. Prilično ste ograničeni u pogledu toga što možete nacrtati; ovi motivi i grafički simboli

JODIE MACK, Interview

very popular in Europe, but not in America. So, the American audiences do not really understand those aural citations, but the European audiences really do. Therefore, it has been interesting to see them react in different ways.

ORIS — Did you have any copyright problems with the songs? JODIE MACK — I have not experienced any copyright problems, but I am also not selling the film. It will never be distributed. I am an academic, an educator, so I really treat film as research — and not really a commercial endeavour. I learned a lot about the Fair Use Act through making this movie, and believe that I am safe within fair use.

ORIS — How do the legal practices, such as the Copyright Act, interfere with basic experimental nature? For example, found footage cinema. If you put it on YouTube, you get copyright infringement notice. It makes found footage cinema illegal. JODIE MACK — Well, there are different types of found footage. In the analogue world, many of the found footage films come from educational films, so it is unlikely to run into problems. Namely, they do not come from big companies which have algorithms searching for visual or aural patterns. But, a lot of the stuff that people use is either so manipulated that you could not even tell where the original came from, or is not really happening online. And I would actually say that with the rise of the digital, I almost feel as if the Copyright Act has been left out completely, as if everything is fair game. Nothing is sacred, really — even things that you are not supposed to download, you can just download anyway.

ORIS — Luckily, there are no laws for found materials you use in your films. Why the textile patterns, and what is the connection with the psychedelic kitsch from the seventies?

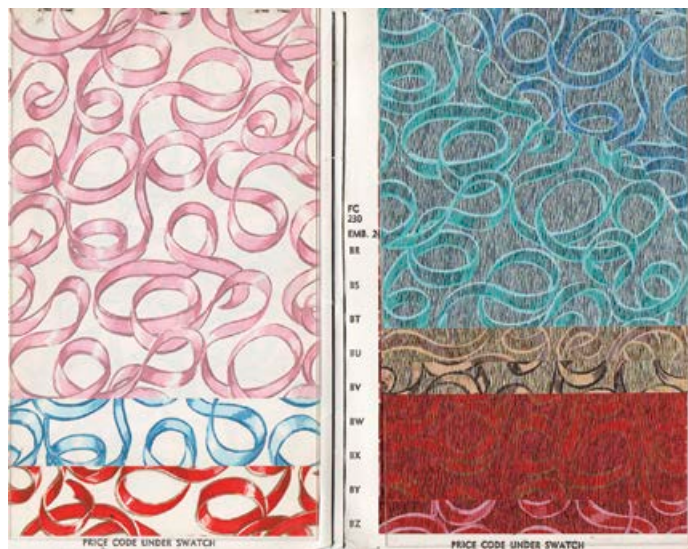
JODIE MACK — When I started making films I worked cameralessly — drawing and painting directly on the film strip where each frame is the size of your fingernail. So, you are very limited as to what you can draw in there, and these motifs and graphic symbols were something that were the first go-to images because that is all that could fit! And then, through getting into that, I became really interested in symbols and the root of semiotics, the root of visual communication, in a way: for example, how a plus sign can refer to addition, or Switzerland, or a pharmacy, or something like that. Then, later on, I was moving... And, as I was packing up, I decided that I would take inventory of all my belongings under the camera and organize them. These are all my flower fabrics, these are all my striped fabrics, and I am going to make a film with these now. And, after doing that I realized that I might be onto something here, because this was all the stuff I made with simply my own clothes. It is an attempt to bring abstract

JODIE MACK, Interview

◀ Snimanje filma Glistening Thrills, 2013.

◀ The making of Glistening Thrills movie, 2013

(JM)



▲ New Fancy Foils, 2013., prizor iz filma

▲ New Fancy Foils, 2013., scene from the film

(JM)

bili su prve prikladne slike jer su jedino oni mogli stati! Tada sam se jako zainteresirala za simbole i korijene semiotike i, donekle, korijene vizualne komunikacije; poput toga kako znak plus može predstavljati zbrajanje, Švicarsku, ljekarnu ili sl. Jednom, kasnije, selila sam se i dok sam se pakirala, odlučila sam da ću sve svoje stvari fotografirati i organizirati. Htjela sam od svih tih cvjetnih i prugastih uzoraka, koji su bili moji, napraviti film. Nakon što sam to napravila, pomislila sam kako bih mogla biti na tragu nečeg posebnog jer sam sve napravila samo sa svojom odjećom, od svojih stvari. Cilj je apstraktnu animaciju odvesti jedan korak dalje, jer apstraktna animacija uglavnom ne komunicira sa stvarnim fizičkim objektima.

ORIS — Radi se o figurativnoj apstrakciji. JODIE MACK — Figurativnoj apstrakciji, upravo tako. Ili, donekle, kritičkoj apstrakciji.

ORIS — Zapravo se bavite propitivanjem prirode apstrakcije.

JODIE MACK — Upravo tako. Također, propitivanjem kako apstrakcija može premašiti puku dekoraciju. Jer apstrakcija je zapravo nastala u modernizmu; tu su njezini korijeni. No, kako možemo pristupiti apstrakciji sada kad smo već prošli postmodernizam, u eksperimentalnom ili u čemu što je danas popularno? Bilo je to kao da skretanjem pozornosti na ove materijale i upozoravanjem na njihovu stvarnu prisutnost u svijetu možemo postavljati ova pitanja o načinu na koji doživljavamo umjetnost, jer to je ista stvar. Ako ne volite suvremenu umjetnost, ali volite grafički dizajn ili dizajnirane predmete u svom domu, u čemu je stvarna razlika? Mislim da to puno govori o tome koliko želimo proširiti publiku. Jer ljudi zadiru od eksperimentalnog filma bez prave potrebe. Osobito u pogledu apstrakcije, nečega slobodnog od jezika, slobodnog

▶ Blanket Statement 1 – Home is Where the Heart is, 2013., prizor iz filma

▶ Blanket Statement 1 – Home is Where the Heart is, 2013., scene from the film

(JM)

animation one step further, because abstract animation does not generally communicate with real physical objects.

ORIS — It is figuratively abstract. JODIE MACK — It is figurative abstraction, exactly. Or, well yes, critical abstraction in some ways, as well.

ORIS — So you are actually questioning the nature of the abstraction. JODIE MACK — Exactly. And exploring how abstraction can move beyond pure decoration. Because really it all began in abstraction, it has a root in modernism. But how do we approach abstraction now that we are already past postmodernism, already in the experimental or whatever is hot these days? So it seemed as if by foregrounding these materials and calling upon their real presence within the world, that we can ask these questions about the way in which we experience art, because it is the same thing. If you do not like contemporary art, but you do like graphic design or designy things within your home, what is the real difference? And, I think that speaks a lot to how we expect to expand our audiences. Because people do feel intimidated by experimental cinema, when there, really, is no need. Especially with abstraction, which is something free of language, free of storytelling. But, that challenges our cinematic expectations. It should be something that is pure, but people still have a problem with it, because by merely existing in this world, by merely growing up in this world, we are imbued with these expectations, really, regarding representation in painting, and storytelling in cinema. For soooo long, a good artist was someone who could paint everything, or someone who could make something look as if it were real. But we already have realism, why would we want to make art that is just realistic? It seems like abstraction and animation in general present real ways to capitalize upon the imagination. But not everyone is willing to go there.

ORIS — Do you think that experimental cinema is by definition free in its structure? Is it, in the words of those who ask



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▲ Persian Pickles, 2012., prizor iz filma

▲ Persian Pickles, 2012., scene from the film

(JM)

od pripovijedanja. Ali upravo je to izazov našim očekivanjima od filma. Trebalo bi biti nešto čisto, ali ljudi ipak zbog nečega imaju problema s time, jer samo zbog toga što postojimo u svijetu ili zbog toga što smo u njemu odrasli, imamo očekivanja od prikaza u slikarstvu i pripovijedanju u filmu. Jako je dugo dobar umjetnik bio onaj tko je mogao sve naslikati ili netko tko je znao oblikovati nešto tako da izgleda stvarnim. Ali već imamo realizam, zašto bismo htjeli stvarati umjetnost koja je samo realistična? Čini se kao da apstrakcija i animacija općenito predstavljaju stvarne načine pomoću kojih se može kapitalizirati imaginacija. Ali nije svatko voljan ići tim putem. ORIS — Mislite li da je eksperimentalni film po svojoj definiciji slobodne strukture? Ide li, po riječima onih koji od apstraktnog traže da bude nematerijalno, u nekom smjeru gdje je sve predodređeno? JODIE MACK — Mislim da eksperimentalni film tu i tamo završi u slijepoj ulici pa se zatim ponovno transformira kako bi izrazio ili unaprijedio žanrove koji su se razvili

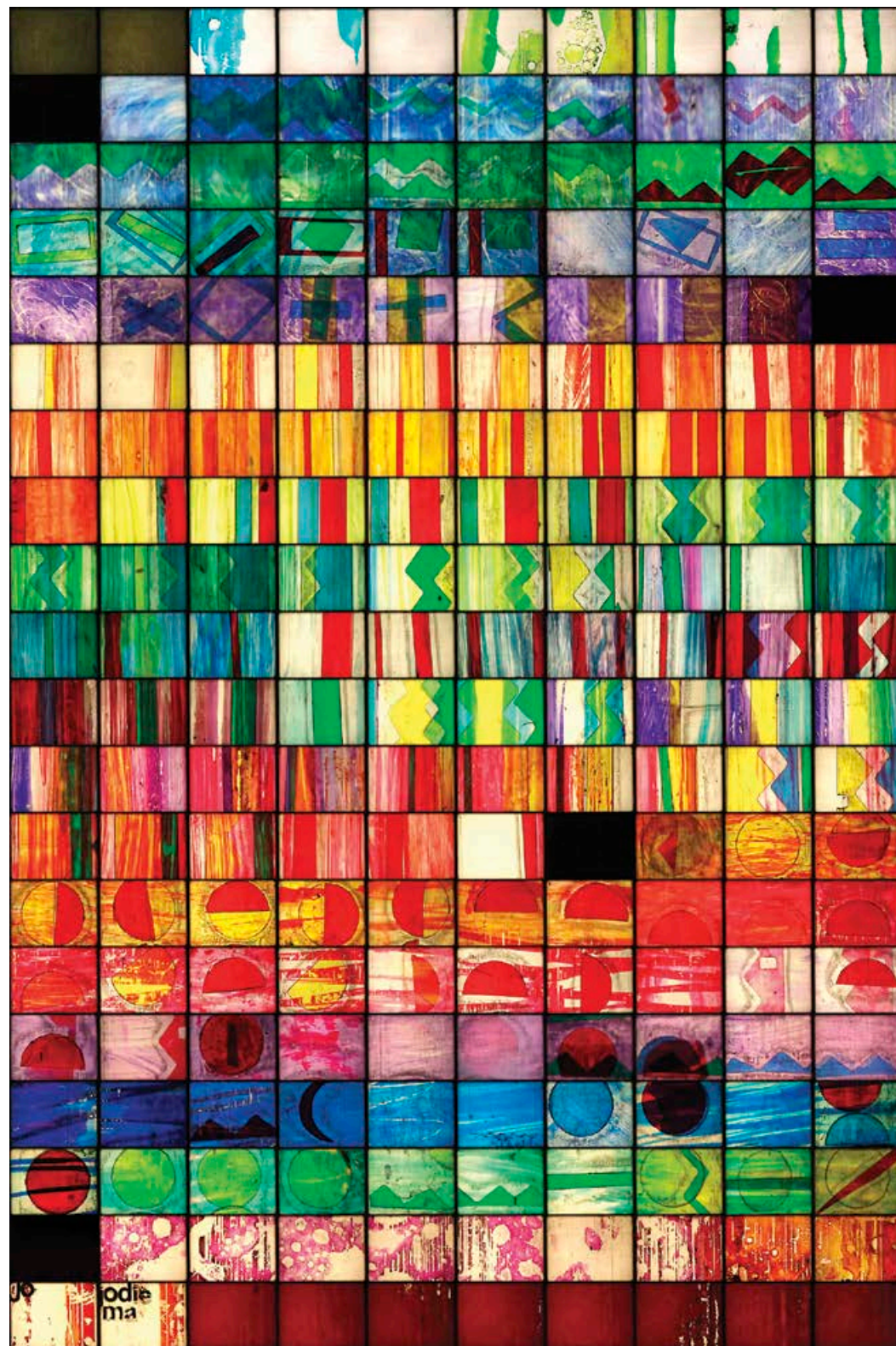
abstract to be immaterial, actually going to a place where everything is predefined? JODIE MACK — I think that experimental film seems to be hitting dead ends here and there, and then re-transforms itself to break through or elevate genres that develop over time... How do we transform the pre-existing codes for the found footage film, the essay film, the cameraless film, etc.?

ORIS — Is it contrary to the medium itself for experimental film to have a genre? JODIE MACK — Yes! Absolutely, and that is the problem. We hit the ceiling and then cyclically break through the ceiling. Experimental and genre is an oxymoron, it is a contradictory notion. But it is really? I go to a lot of festivals, and I see many of these films, and many people are comfortable operating within these notions. There are also many new forms emerging, ones that we cannot quite describe yet. ORIS — Are we still at a place of constant proving that experimental cinema is an art form? JODIE MACK — That is a

Two-Hundred Feet, ▶
2003., prizor iz
filma

Two-Hundred Feet, ▶
2003., scene from
the film

(JM)



tijekom vremena. Kako transformirati postojeće kodekse za *found footage* film, film-esej, film bez kamere itd.?

ORIS — Nije li u suprotnosti sa samim medijem da eksperimentalni film ima žanr? JODIE MACK — Da! Naravno, i u tome je problem. Sve kulminira pa opet periodično dođe do iskoraka. Eksperimentalno i žanr su oksimoroni, kontradiktorni pojmovi, ali zapravo posjećujem puno festivala i gledam jako puno ovakvih filmova; puno ljudi nema nikakvih problema raditi unutar ovih pojmova. Također, nastaje jako puno novih formi, koje se još uvijek ne mogu opisati.

ORIS — Jesmo li još uvijek u fazi neprestanog dokazivanja da je eksperimentalni film umjetnost? JODIE MACK — To je stvarno dobro pitanje. Mislim da ćemo stalno morati dokazivati da je umjetnost, jer je film bio industrija prije nego umjetnički izraz. Kako bismo napravili kamere, trebali smo novac od industrije. A oni su trebali svoj novac natrag — i to odmah, što je podrazumijevalo da se radi ono što je ljudima već bilo poznato. Sve dok postoji filmska industrija, mislim da ćemo uvijek biti marginalizirani i uvijek ćemo se morati dokazivati, jer ljudi odrastaju s tim pričama i kako ćemo ih naučiti ičemu drugačijem? To je zapravo prilično čudnovato jer se puno eksperimentalnih praksi koristi u oglašavanju. Znaite, to je zapravo kao da kažete da ne volite apstraktnu animaciju, ali da bi vas mogla natjerati da kupite par cipela ili nešto sasvim drugo. Dakle, prizor može uspjeti u ovom reklamnom bloku od trideset sekundi. No, uglavnom nemamo koncentracije, a ni konteksta. Ljudi jednostavno reaguju: Što je ovo? Nema ljubavne priče, nema akcijskih scena, nema negativca. I to je prilično nesretno jer se opet slijede vrlo ograničeni sklopovi parametara, a toliko je toga što bi film mogao napraviti.

ORIS — Što je sa samim terminom? Mnogo teoretičara tvrdi da eksperimentalni film zapravo ne postoji i da ima pogrešan naziv. Koji je Vaš stav o tome i što mislite o terminima koji se odnedavno koriste za eksperimentalni film, poput *inovativnog filma*? Postoji li razlika između *inovativnog, avangardnog i eksperimentalnog*? JODIE MACK — Svi su termini, čini se, sinonimi. Ne vjerujem da avangardu možemo odrediti tijekom života. Ljude možemo proglasiti avangardnima tek nakon smrti. Ne možete za sebe reći da ste avangardni. Nikako! Morate umrijeti i onda netko za vas može reći da ste bili ispred svog vremena. U određenom smislu, sva bi kinematografija trebala biti inovativna i eksperimentalna. I šteta je da se moramo uvijek iznova dokazivati, ali istina je da ovi termini opisuju različite filozofije, u biti, o istoj stvari. Ove razlike sigurno pomažu dešifrirati brojne pokretne dijelove eksperimentalnog snimanja, ali ne mislim da se termini mnogo razlikuju.

really good question. I think we will constantly have to prove that it is an art form, because cinema was an industry before it was an art form. To build the cameras, we needed money from the industry. And they needed to make their money back, instantly, which meant doing what people already knew. So I think, as long as the film industry exists we will always be marginalized, and we will always have to prove it. Because people continue to grow up with all these stories. And, how are we supposed to teach them any different? So, yes, it is really unfortunate. But then it is also strange, because a lot of experimental practices are used within advertising. Even if one does not like abstract animation, it could really work to sell this pair of shoes, or something completely unrelated. So the spectacle can work in this thirty second block of an advertisement. But, generally we have no attention span, and no context. So people just wonder *what is this?* There is no love story, there is no chase scene, there is no villain. And that is unfortunate because that, again, allows for a very limited set of parameters when there is really so much more that a film could do.

ORIS — What about the term itself? There are lots of theoreticians claiming that experimental film actually does not exist, and that it is a completely wrong term. What is your stand on it, and what do you think about the terms recently used to refer to experimental cinema such as *innovative cinema*? Is there a difference between *innovative, avant-garde and experimental*? JODIE MACK — They all seem quite synonymous. And the way I understand avant-garde is that you would not really be able to identify what is avant-garde during your lifetime. You need people to die, and then you can decide whether they were avant-garde or not. You cannot say — I am avant-garde. You cannot do that! You need to die, and then someone can say you were ahead of your time. In a sense, all cinemas should innovate; all cinemas should experiment. And, it is a shame that we have to prove ourselves over and over again, but yes, they basically describe varying philosophies on essentially, the same thing. These types of distinctions certainly help to decipher the multiple moving parts of experimental filmmaking, but essentially I do not think that those terms are really that different.

ORIS — Some of the filmmakers really hate the term *experimental cinema*. They wonder why it cannot be just called *cinema*? It is actually one of famous Kubelka's definitions that there is no experimental cinema, that everything is actually *cinema — normal cinema*. JODIE MACK — Well, the thing is, if you just define it as normal cinema, then you are not really admitting that you are marginalized, which is nice. I really like the term micro cinema, because it speaks to the small

Dusty Stacks
Of Mom: The
Poster Project,
2013., prizori
iz filma

Dusty Stacks
Of Mom: The
Poster Project,
2013., scenes
from the film

(JM)



collectives of people that work together to have screenings. Or you can work on your film as just a single person, and not have a big crew. It describes a different type of production model, but one could also misunderstand it as, again, the small cinema, small guy, little guy, marginalized guy. So, I can see why people who are career artists have problems with this term, because it does marginalize you.

ORIS — Oftentimes there are comments saying that everybody can do it, everybody can shoot a performance and put it on screen — so what differentiates you from others doing the same thing? What do you think? JODIE MACK — So much comes into it, especially when one is a teacher. Your students bring a piece of poop to their critique and say — *this is conceptual, it is an experiment*. And there really is a sort of a go-to answer for this type of thing, but it is not true, I think. It is the same as music, when uninformed people listen to John Cage or someone similar, they say that he does not have any talent. But, the thing with someone like John Cage is that he is a trained musician. You need to learn how to do it, and then you can deconstruct it. But people do not always understand that.

ORIS — For example, it is the same as saying that anybody can do four minutes and thirty three seconds of silence.

JODIE MACK — Exactly! Anybody can do that. And, everyone should do that! Or anyone can paint these stripes on a canvas, or something of the sort. And you know, that is the crux of contemporary art, a shift from images, to ideas, to images and ideas. Something that I am always grappling with my students about, when they hate abstraction I say then we will begin with Dada. Then I say, listen, do you hate war? And they say yes. Then you do not hate Dada, because it was created as a reaction to war. Those people said — if painting, if landscapes and portraits are the art form of a culture which accepts this type of behavior, then we do not want to do that. I am teaching people to think about conceptual art as something that had the potential to dematerialize the art object but did not. Ideally, it could serve as a way to move beyond, to think about art being part of the aristocracy, and art being part of a huge market, something for rich people to consume. But art is more than that now, of course, but it still supports a grossly inflated market at this point, as well. To me, the fact that, the idea that you can make a living of selling *art* is antithetical to certain definitions of *art*. It is as if you need make the work die, and then you will be worth something. I have been doing it for ten years now, and I have got thirty films which are all taken frame by frame by frame by frame. But, I still have many, many, many frames to shoot.

ORIS — Neki redatelji mrže naziv eksperimentalni film. Pitaju zašto se ne bi zvao samo film. Jedna od najpoznatijih Kubelkinih definicija jest da nema eksperimentalnog filma, da je sve samo film — normalni film. JODIE MACK — Zapravo se radi o tome da ako to nazivaš normalnim filmom, ne priznaješ da si marginaliziran, što je lijepo. Sviđa mi se naziv *mikro film* jer govori o malim zajednicama koje zajedno rade kako bi održale prikazivanja, ili da radite na svom filmu sami, ne kao dio velike ekipe. Opisuje različitu vrstu modela proizvodnje, ali može se krivo razumjeti u smislu malog filma, malog čovjeka, marginaliziranog čovjeka. Razumijem zašto ljudi koji grade karijeru u umjetnosti zaziru od ovog naziva — jer ih marginalizira.

ORIS — Mogu se čuti komentari poput: Oh, svatko to može! Svatko može snimiti neki performans i prikazati ga baš tu. Što mislite da Vas razlikuje od svih ostalih koji se time bave?

JODIE MACK — Da, takav je stav jako izražen i naročito se s njime susrećete kao profesor. Studenti donesu komad izmeta na ocjenu i kažu: *Oh, pa ovo je konceptualno, eksperiment*. I to je odgovor koji najbolje prolazi, ali mislim da nije točan. Isto je s glazbom; kada neupućeni ljudi slušaju Johna Cagea ili nekog sličnog glazbenika, kažu kako za takvu glazbu ne treba imati talenta. Ali John Cage je bio obrazovani glazbenik. Morate naučiti kako, da biste mogli dekonstruirati. Ljudi to baš uvijek ne razumiju.

ORIS — Svatko može izvesti četiri minute i trideset sekundi šutnje, na primjer. JODIE MACK — Upravo tako! Svatko to može. I svatko to treba napraviti! Ili svatko može naslikati ove trake na platnu ili slično. No, ovo je pak srž suvremene umjetnosti; prijelaz sa slika na ideje, na slike i ideje. Uvijek se borim sa studentima kada kažu da mrže apstrakciju; kažem da ćemo onda početi s dadaizmom ili sl. Pitam ih tada mrže li rat, na što odgovore potvrdno. Kažem im da onda ne mogu mrziti dadaizam budući da je nastao kao reakcija na rat; tadašnji su umjetnici rekli da ako su slikarstvo, krajolici i portreti umjetnički oblik kulture koja prihvaća ovakav tip ponašanja, ne žele biti njezin dio. Učim ljude da razmišljaju o konceptualnoj umjetnosti kao o nečemu što je imalo potencijala dematerijalizirati predmet umjetnosti, ali nije. Idealno, mogla bi poslužiti kao način nadilaženja činjenice da umjetnost pripada samo aristokraciji i ogromnom tržištu, samo bogatima. Umjetnost je danas, naravno, više od toga, ali i dalje podupire uvelike napuhano tržište. Meni je činjenica, odnosno ideja da se može živjeti od prodavanja *umjetnosti* u određenoj mjeri suprotna određenim definicijama *umjetnosti*. Opet slično ranije rečenom — treba pustiti da djelo umre da bi nešto vrijedilo. Ovim se bavim deset godina i imam trideset filmova koje sam napravila kadar po kadar. Međutim, još je puno filmova koje moram snimiti.

Na početku sam radila bez kamere — crtala sam i slikala izravno po filmskoj vrpici čiji je svaki okvir veličine nokta

Initially I worked cameralessly — drawing and painting directly on the film strip where each frame is the size of your fingernail

ORIS — The difference is actually your labour? JODIE MACK — The labour-intensive aspects of my films do help me bypass much criticism of the type. But to say that anyone can do that, means that one is really missing the point, it means that there is a difference between representation and abstraction, and that there is a way to make art and talk about art now, which is much different than it was when we were just making portraits of kings. Even though the art market is nowadays simply disgusting, and no one should ever be making this much money off of art. What would it be like if one did not have to strive for these things? What would it be like if we did not have to question our persons everyday based on how much money we could make? Or how successful we could be. If we could just exist. What would that be like? We would have a lot of different art. Because I feel as if art in the twentieth century was reacting to social injustice, and the people suffering from these injustices are still warped by these ideals of art. So, again, it is complicated.

ORIS — You said your students do not like abstract art. What is it about abstract that does not agree with them? JODIE MACK — It is not that they hate it; it is just not feeding their expectations that art should represent realism, and that time-based art should represent a story. In the end they do not hate it, I think. And, it was very cool because my school bought this huge Ellsworth Kelly installation, which is right outside my office and our animation classroom. It is quite controversial in my rural town. These five blocks of color. The students were saying — *I could have made these five blocks of color*. And then the museum director gave this great speech and said: *Think about this more, think about how these colors are travelling*.

ORIS — Razlika je zapravo u Vašem radu? JODIE MACK — Intenzivni rad kao princip mog djelovanja pomaže da me mimoide taj tip kritika, da. Ali sasvim je promašeno reći kako to svatko može napraviti. Postoji razlika između reprezentacije i apstrakcije, načina na koji se može stvarati umjetnost i o njoj govoriti, koji je puno različiti od vremena kada smo samo radili portrete kraljeva ili sl. Iako, tržište umjetninama danas je odvratno; nitko nikad ne bi trebao toliko zarađivati na umjetnosti. Kako bi izgledao život kad ne bismo trebali težiti ovim stvarima? Kako bi bilo kad se ne bismo morali svakog dana prosuđivati na temelju toga koliko novca možemo zaraditi ili koliko uspješni možemo biti? Kad bismo mogli samo postojati. Kako bi to bilo? Imali bismo mnogo različitih vrsta umjetnosti kad bi bilo baš tako. Mislim, zapravo, da je umjetnost 20. stoljeća nastala kao reakcija na socijalne nepravde i da su ljudi koji i danas pate od tih nepravdi još uvijek pod utjecajem tih iskrivljenih ideala umjetnosti. Opet, prilično komplicirano.

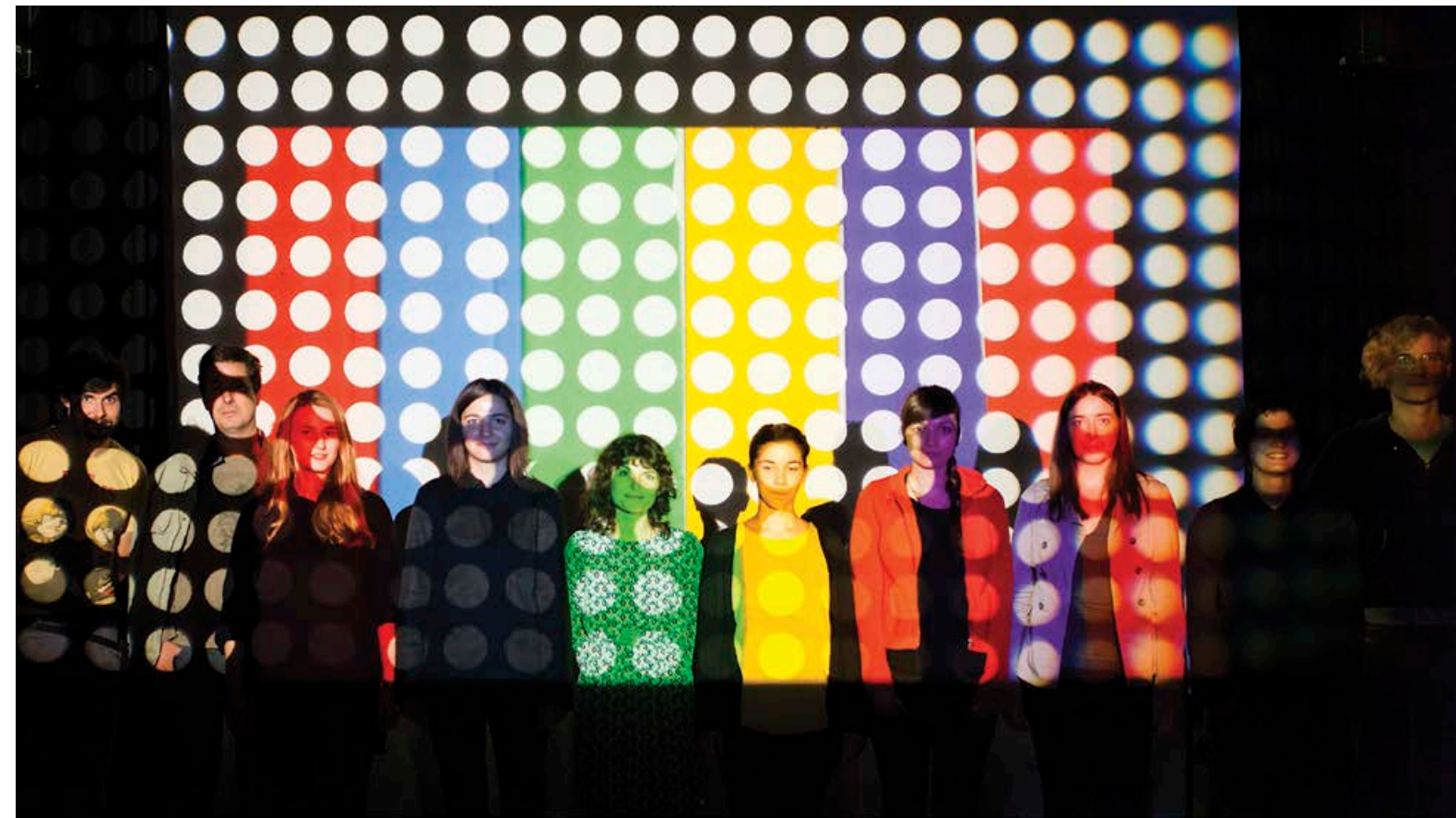
ORIS — Rekli ste da Vaši studenti ne vole apstraktnu umjetnost. Što im se u apstraktnoj umjetnosti ne sviđa? JODIE MACK — Nije da je mrze; ona jednostavno ne odgovara njihovim očekivanjima da umjetnost treba predstavljati stvarnost i da umjetnost koja se temelji na vremenu treba prenijeti priču. Na kraju, ne mislim da je mrze. Bilo je jako zgodno kad je moja škola kupila ogromnu instalaciju Ellswortha Kellyja, koja se nalazi baš pored mog ureda i učionice za animaciju. Bilo je to prilično konzervativno za moj ruralni grad, tih pet obojenih blokova. Studenti su govorili da su ih oni mogli napraviti. Ravnatelj muzeja održao je tada sjajan govor u kojem je rekao: *Ne, kada o ovome dublje razmišljate, razmišljate o tome kako ove boje putuju. Razmišljate o mjerilu ovih blokova i kako odgovaraju zgradi u kojoj se nalaze te kako surađuju s prostorom u koji su smješteni. U tome ima puno više nego što mislite.* Studenti se zatim trude napraviti projekte i vi kažete: *Vidjeli smo remek-djela ovog žanra o kojem smo učili na nastavi i zatim vaša. Čija su bolja? Očito, ona majstorska, je li tako? Uglavnom.* Velika je lekcija učiti iz neuspjeha a ne uspjehu. Oni su jednostavno odrasli s istim očekivanjima, kao i svi ostali.

ORIS — Vaša uloga kao profesora je, dakle, dekonstruirati ova očekivanja? JODIE MACK — Vjerujem da je tako. Mislim da svatko tko danas podučava o filmu i medijima treba uvesti i sadržaje medijske pismenosti, čak i ako je kolegij drugačije usmjeren. Jer, iako studenti ne postanu umjetnici, ipak nauče više cijeniti stvari te nadiđu epidemiju stava *svatko je kritičar*. Osobito s ovim *sviđa mi se / ne sviđa mi se / odbijam* stavom, koji je nametnula tehnologija. Mislim da je puno važnije biti otvoren i moći sve upiti; dopustiti da vas obuzme i dirne.

Think about the scale of these blocks, and how they adhere to the building they are on, and how they work with the space they are in. There is actually a lot more in it than you think. And then they made their own projects, and I said We saw the masterworks of the genre which we showed in class, and now we shall have a look at yours. Who wore it better? Obviously the master, right? Most of the time. And so there is a big lesson there, learning more from failure than success. They have simply grown up with the same expectations as everybody else.

ORIS — So, your role as a teacher is to deconstruct those expectations? JODIE MACK — I think so. I think anyone teaching within film and the media at this point needs to navigate quite a bit of media literacy, even when the course focuses elsewhere. Because even if the students do not become artists, they can still appreciate things a little more, and move past this *everyone's a critic* plague. Especially with this like/dislike, dismissive attitude enforced by technology. I think it is much more important to be open-minded, and to be able to absorb everything, to let it consume you and touch you. I have seen hundreds of cameraless films, but the other day I was in a critique with this graduate student who made a cameraless film with his father's ashes. I was just sobbing, because it was such an amazing gesture. I do not think I was crying because it was sad; I was crying because I did not know how other people in the film world would take his piece. They could look at it and say — ah, just another cameraless film. But, the gesture is so powerful, and I sensed this awful possibility that it would be lost on somebody. And, I felt for him, because he was really putting himself out there, being vulnerable and taking a risk. And, I am not sure how the world will react to that. Because of the same notions. Even the people that are really invested in culture are also hard to please. And, they see the same old thing over and over again and are very quick to dismiss.

ORIS — Why is it that there are not so many women in experimental cinema? JODIE MACK — There are no that many women in any type of cinema. And it goes back to the fact that there is no women in anything. There is this great article titled *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists* by Linda Nochlin. She describes the possibilities of making art as a woman. There is an inherently feminine art, art that is obviously produced by a woman with the essential qualities that are feminine. And then there is also feminist art. You could make it, but once. Nochlin claims that as soon as you claim on to the feminist art, you have killed it. Again it is marginalizing. I think that a lot of experimental cinema is quite cold and soulless, because it is so rooted in the formal understanding,



Vidjela sam na stotine filmova snimljenih bez kamere. Neki sam dan pregledavala film jednog absolventa koji je radio bez kamere, s pepelom svog oca. Jecala sam jer je to tako nevjerojatna gesta. Nisam plakala jer je to bilo tužno; plakala sam jer nisam znala kako će ostali u filmskom svijetu prihvatiti njegovo djelo. Mogli bi ga pogledati i reći kako je to još jedan film snimljen bez kamere. Gesta je tako snažna, a ja sam osjetila tu veliku mogućnost da je neće svi shvatiti. I bilo mi ga je žao jer se zaista izložio, stavio u ranjiv položaj i riskirao, a nisam bila sigurna kako će na to reagirati svijet — zbog istih stavova. Čak je i ljude koji su zaista posvećeni kulturi teško zadovoljiti. Stalno gledaju iste stvari i vrlo lako nešto odbace.

ORIS — Zbog čega nema baš mnogo žena u eksperimentalnom filmu? JODIE MACK — Nema mnogo žena ni u jednoj vrsti filma. Može se ići tako daleko i reći da nema žena ni u čemu. Ima jedan sjajan članak Linde Nochlin, naziva *Zašto nema velikih žena umjetnika*. Ona opisuje mogućnosti stvaranja umjetnosti ako ste žena. Postoji prirodno ženska umjetnost, umjetnost koju je stvorila žena osnovnim ženskim kvalitetama. Postoji i feministička umjetnost, koju možete

often avoiding truth. But, there are actually many women in experimental cinema. And, one could argue that women serve a far stronger component of the experimental film canon than that of Hollywood — at least of the new canon!

ORIS — You were mentioning the female touch in the cinema. When somebody tells you — I think your films have a feminine touch — do you appreciate it? JODIE MACK — They are girly, right? A lot of people tell me that they are girly and frilly. And I think, in some ways, a lot of the more abstract films deal with a material construction of femininity. Based on the things that are available to women. The films made out of my clothes, are made with items that I bought in the girls' section. I never made something with boys' clothes. Maybe there will be something different. And then, of course, there is something like *Dusty Stacks of Mom*. Which guy would make such a movie about his mom? Not one, most likely. Right now, I am actually working on new pieces which deal with the construction of glamour. But I am working with costume jewelry and similar things — how those relate to female desire for love and marriage, and how jewels function as something that a

▲ *Let Your Light shine*, radionica, Zagreb, Hrvatska, 2014.

▲ *Let Your Light shine*, workshop, Zagreb, Croatia, 2014

(LB)

Let your light shine, ▶
2013., prizor iz
filma

Let your light shine, ▶
2013., scene from
the film

(JM)



stvarati, ali koju, jednom kad je proglasite feminističkom umjetnosti, ubijate. Opet marginaliziranje. Mislim da je dosta eksperimentalnog filma prilično hladno i bezdušno jer je tako ukorijenjeno u formalnom razumijevanju koje često izbjegava istinu. Zapravo je velik broj žena u eksperimentalnom filmu. Moglo bi se reći da su žene osjetno jača komponenta kanona eksperimentalnog filma, nego holivudskog kanona – barem novog kanona!

ORIS — Spominjali ste žensku kvalitetu u filmu. Kada Vam netko kaže da Vaši filmovi imaju žensku kvalitetu, smatrate li to komplimentom? JODIE MACK — Ženskasti su, je li tako? Dosta mi je ljudi reklo da su ženskasti i nakičeni. Mislim da se na neki način više apstraktnih filmova bavi materijalnom strukturom ženskog, odnosno temeljem onoga što je dostupno ženama – filmovi koje sam napravila od svoje odjeće, od onoga što sam kupila na ženskom odjelu. Nikad nisam ništa napravila od muške odjeće. Možda ću stvoriti i nešto drugačije. To je nešto poput filma *Dusty Stacks of Mom* – koji će muškarac napraviti takav film o svojoj majci? Vjerojatno nijedan. Trenutačno radim na novim djelima koja se bave izgradnjom glamura. Radim s nakitom i sličnim materijalima – bavim se

guy should give to a girl. Diamonds are a girl's best friend, razzle dazzle, you know. I started working with the crystals I was getting out of the Sari stores in London, which are full of cheap decadence. So, it is yet another discrepancy, this sort of cheap chintzy glamour, plastic diamonds.

ORIS — Regarding your performance, you made it resemble a rock show. What was the intention behind it? Did you want to steer the line between high art and low art? Experimental cinema and the rock show? JODIE MACK — It started out dealing with merchandise culture, the thing around the posters. And where were the posters sold? At concerts. What did I choose to do? Take on this *Dark Side of the Moon* element, which is, as you know, culturally loaded in itself. Thus the structuring principle of the rock show was more based on energy and a build of energy. There were two opening acts slowly starting off. They get you ready, and then you have the headliner, and then you have the encores. So, there is this sequencing of energy, and then there is also the relationship between abstraction and concerts. In America, we have a very popular tradition of the laser light show. You may go to your planetarium and see Led Zeppelin with a laser light show, or

time kako se oni odnose na žensku čežnju za ljubavlju i brakom te kako nakit funkcionira kao nešto što bi muškarac trebao dati ženi. Dijamanti su ženini najbolji prijatelji, bliješteći ukras. Kad sam se počela baviti ovim kristalima, išla sam po *Sari* dućanima u Londonu, koji ovakvog jeftinog i dekadentnog nakita imaju u izobilju. To je druga vrsta nesklada, ova vrsta jeftinog i lošeg glamura, plastičnih dijamana.

ORIS — Vaše su izvedbe poput rock-predstava. Koja je Vaša namjera? Želite li manipulirati granicom između visoke i niske umjetnosti, eksperimentalnog kina i rock-predstava? JODIE MACK — Počelo je kao bavljenje komercijalizacijom kulture, aspektom postera. Gdje se prodaju poster? Na koncertima. Što sam ja odlučila napraviti? Uzeti element albuma *Dark Side of the Moon*, koji je sam po sebi zasićen kulturnim referencama. Strukturni princip rock-predstava više se temeljio na energiji i izgradnji energije. Imate dva uvodna čina koji polako počinju; oni vas pripreme, zatim slijedi glavna točka (*headliner*) te bisevi. Postoji stupnjevanje energije te veza između apstrakcije i koncerata. U SAD-u je jako popularna tradicija laserskih svjetlosnih predstava – možete otići u planetarij te gledati Led Zeppelin ili album Pink Floyda uz laserske svjetlosni show. I to je jedini način na koji javnost može doživjeti apstraktnu umjetnost, ali na jedan uopćeni populistički način. Ove popularne tradicije pak posuđuju elemente iz lijepe umjetnosti i povijesnih načina apstrakcije. Igra svjetlosti umjetnost je iz razdoblja prije kina i strojeva te je, naravno (i najprije), prirodni fenomen. Htjela sam ukazati na poveznicu između kinematografskog iskustva i načina na koji javnost doživljava apstrakciju. To je također razlog zbog kojeg sam odlučila napraviti i uključiti film *Undertone Overture* – jer se poklonio javnom iskustvu gledanja zalaska sunca, u isto vrijeme stvarajući vizualnu jeku pomoću amorfnih slikarskih tehnika te zatim načinu na koji je psihodelična industrija preuzela iste formalne oblike u proizvodnji majica.

ORIS — Ako sam u pravu, usredotočujete njihovu pažnju na masovne medije, poput lasera, samo da bi ih naveli da pogledaju i ostale stvari? JODIE MACK — Pokušavam povući paralelu između onoga kako ove stvari funkcioniraju, bilo u zatvorenijim umjetničkim oblicima ili u umjetničkim oblicima koji su više *mainstream* te pokazati kao zapravo koriste istu svjetlost. Svjetlo korišteno u planetariju ili predstavama tzv. proširenog kina četvrtkom ista su. Majice obojene *tie-dye* tehnikom, mnogo slika na platnu ili ručno obojeni filmovi – svi su isti. Razlika je samo u njihovoj percepciji ili načinu predstavljanja na tržištu.

ORIS — Kad pogledamo postere, primijetio sam da jako volite odbačene materijale stare škole, zastarjele stvari...



◀ *Undertone Overture*, 2013., prizor iz filma

◀ *Undertone Overture*, 2013., scene from the film

(JM)



◀ Snimanje filma

◀ *Undertone Overture*, 2013.

◀ The making of *Undertone Overture* movie, 2013

(JM)



Mislim da ćemo stalno morati dokazivati da je eksperimentalni film umjetnost, jer je film bio industrija prije nego umjetnički izraz

I think we will constantly have to prove that experimental cinema is an art form, because cinema was an industry before it was an art form

Što vas kod njih privlači? ♣ JODIE MACK — Pa uglavnom to da ih mogu naći u izobilju. Sve što mogu naći bez problema i u velikim količinama, koristit ću. Ono što je zanimljivo kod filmskih postera – svi su materijali koji se nisu prodali, kao npr. razglednice s likom Catherine Zeta-Jones. Zašto smo ih ikad kupovali? Zašto je itko mislio da će se prodavati? Zašto nam trebaju tri verzije postera s tri naslova Catherine Zeta-Jones? Jako me zanimaju materijali koji su pokušali služiti kulturi, jer su materijali potrošni. Na jedan način, osjećam se kao da im pružam trajanje ili održim nešto poput pogreba ili pogrebnog govora jer će se samo baciti u smeće i pasti u zaborav.

see Pink Floyd album with laser light show. And that is one of the few ways in which the public might experience abstract art, in this generalized, populist way. But these popular traditions borrow from fine art and historical modes of abstraction. Light play is a pre-cinematic art form involving machines and, of course, also (and firstly so) a natural phenomenon. I wanted to draw a thread between this cinematic experience and the way the public experiences abstraction. That is also why I chose to make and include the film *Undertone Overture*: because it nodded its head to the experience of the public viewing of a sunset, while also creating this visual echo with amorphous painting techniques, and then how the *psychedelic industry* adopted the same formal tropes for T-shirts.

ORIS — So, let me see if I got this right. You are guiding their attention with the mass media, such as lasers, just to get them to see the other parts? ♣ JODIE MACK — I am trying to draw a parallel between how these things function in more obscure art forms, and in the mainstream art forms – they actually use the same lights. The same lights of the planetarium at the Expanded Cinema performance on Thursday, they are the same. The tie-dyed T-shirt is the same as a lot of paintings on the canvas, or a lot of hand painted films, they are the same. It is all about how you perceive and market them, really.

ORIS — Regarding posters, I noticed you really like discarded old-school materials, obsolete stuff. What is it about them that attracts you? ♣ JODIE MACK — Well mostly it is that I am able to find them in multiples. Anything that I can find in multiple, I will use. In a poster movie, the thing that is interesting about it, it is all the stuff that did not sell. For example, all those Catherine Zeta-Jones postcards that did not sell, why did we buy them? Ever? Why did anyone think they would sell? Why do we need three titles of Catherine Zeta-Jones posters, you know? So, I am really interested in the material that tried to serve a culture, because materials are going away. In some ways I feel as if it gives such things their last life. It is something resembling a funeral or a eulogy for these materials, because they will just be thrown into the waste basket and forgotten.



(DK)