

Jennifer West Emoji Piss Film



Jennifer West, *Emoji Piss Film* (35mm film print soaked and corroded with urine by Andrea Bowers, Symrin Chawla, Micah Espudo, Chris Hanke, Eli Joteva, Jack McGuinn, Peyton Regan, Julian Toca, Vidhi Todi, Bob Viera, Cameron Wells, Ariel West, Fleurette West, Peter West, Jwest) (still), 2018. 35mm film transferred to HD video, 2:33 minutes. Courtesy the artist.

As part of CAM's Street Views series, Los Angeles-based artist Jennifer West presents *Emoji Piss Film* on the museum's facade. West is known for experimental films in which she hand-manipulates film celluloid through various performative and conceptual processes and digitizes the resulting images. Throughout her practice, the artist has subjected film to a range of substances such as nail polish, "Teen Spirit" deodorant, wine, and hot springs water, as well as physical interventions such as skateboarding, smearing, drawing, and throwing. Acknowledging that all experiences are mediated in today's image-saturated world, West explores the translation of media from analog to digital and back, and investigates the gaps that exist in this transfer of information.

In the CAM work, West focuses on the emoji, a character or icon that is used to communicate entire thoughts, feelings, or emotions in place of words. In 2014 West performed a Google Image search for the term "emoji" on her laptop, filming the action on screen with a 35mm movie camera. The film print was then soaked in large kombucha jars filled with urine



Audio Tour

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donated by her friends, family, and other artists. A highly collaborative artist, whose artworks document performative processes, West includes the names of all the participants in the full title of the piece. The urine—a corrosive and irreverent medium—slowly ate away at and disintegrated the film’s emulsion and disrupted the imagery. The film was manipulated further at the film lab and digitized into HD video.

West considers *Emoji Piss Film* to be a “historical document,” capturing a specific moment in this evolving form of communication. The piece centers on the (mis)translation of media: a digital image search recorded on film, deconstructed through analog means, and digitized for presentation. Along the way, information is lost, much like the misreadings and misunderstandings that occur when decoding emoji. West heightens these disruptions by intervening on the film, deliberately deconstructing and counteracting the language of emoji.

Jennifer West (b. 1966, Topanga, California, lives and works in Los Angeles) has gained international recognition for her explorations of materialism in film. West recently presented four solo exhibitions internationally, *Is Film Over?* at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, China (2017); *Action Movies, Painted Films and History Collage* at the Man Museum in Nouro, Sardinia, Italy (2017); *Film is Dead...* at Seattle Art Museum (2016–17); and *Flashlight Filmstrip Projections* at Tramway, Glasgow, Scotland (2016). West completed a feature film for the Institute of Contemporary Arts London’s Art Night in 2016 and presented her work at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. In conjunction with the Yuz Museum exhibition, a catalog was produced and four films were acquired as a joint acquisition with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Other commissions include the High Line Art, New York; Aspen Art Museum; and the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London. Previous select solo shows include S1 Artspace in Sheffield, UK; Kunstverein Nuremberg, Germany; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; Transmission Gallery in Glasgow; and White Columns, New York. Her work is included in numerous public collections, including the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris and San Francisco; Saatchi Gallery, London; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Australia; Zabłudowicz Collection, London; and the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle. West’s writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Frieze*, and *Mousse Magazine*. She received her MFA from Art Center in Pasadena and her BA from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. She is Associate Professor of the Practice of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California’s Roski School of Art and Design in Los Angeles.

Street Views is generously supported by the WHITAKER FOUNDATION.

Jennifer West: Emoji Piss Film is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Misa Jeffereis, Assistant Curator.



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