

patricia l. boyd operator

september 23 –
november 11. 2017

New York-based British artist Patricia L. Boyd will exhibit *Operator* (2017), a single-channel video produced through a moving image commission from EMPAC/Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

Positioned in a space not much wider than a corridor, the video—which Boyd refers to as an ‘exhaustion engine’—is structured according to a rule-based scheme whereby the duration of each section is determined by the mathematical calculations of a specific loan repayment plan. Both debt and interest are payable quarterly over a period of three years and three months, which is the interval of time since she started preliminary research towards the commission. Sections of footage are carved up according to one parameter, namely the amount of debt (including interest) that has been paid at whatever moment the ‘payment’ appears in the duration of the video (12 min 56 seconds, looped).

Operator was shot using a custom-built system of four video cameras fixed into motorized rigs to produce up-down and right-left tracking shots. The cameras were designed to run in constant motion and to repeatedly scan the room they were situated in. Within the context of a commission from a highly resourced media arts production facility, one way of looking at this setup would be as an expenditure of resource without any apparent object.

The system somewhat exhaustively makes a record of itself. As it moves through space, the frame of each camera captures its counterparts and the elements working in their support (stabilization devices, static lighting, other technical equipment). The edits between cameras provide a shift in point of view that only serves to emphasize how restricted each one particular perspective is. There is a sense of totality that is again and again evaded, even as the limit of the system as a whole—the extremities of the room—is extended.

In cinema, PoV shots are used to get inside the

subjective space of a character, to represent what they are ‘seeing’. The cameras in Boyd’s video appear to operate themselves, moving in an often gestural fashion over and towards a scratched floor. However, at moments, there is a distinct sense that something or someone is driving the cameras at a distance and that there is some kind of intention behind the movement.

These hyper-vigilant cameras, their footage seen through crosshairs, suggest all sorts of anxieties about production and productivity, the saturation of time and space with sensory overload, and our being monitored by ever-present surveillance. The structure of the loan repayment plan to which the footage is put in service suggests a broader economic context to these questions and our entrapment within a constant accumulation of debt.

Patricia L. Boyd would like to thank Vic Brooks, everyone she worked with at EMPAC, Nour Mobarak, David Cunningham, Jeff Preiss, Robert Snowden, Rachal Bradley, Jason Hirata and Jamie Stevens.

Patricia L. Boyd (1980) was born in London, UK and currently lives and works in New York, USA. She has had solo exhibitions at 3236RLS, London (2017); Kiria Koula, San Francisco (2015); TG, Nottingham (2015); Jan Kaps, Cologne (2015); Modern Art Oxford, Oxford (2014); and Cubitt, London (2013). Earlier in 2017, she curated an exhibition, AEROSOL, at the 500 Capp Street Foundation, San Francisco. Her work has been featured in group exhibitions such as Steirischer Herbst, Graz (2015); Gasworks, London (2014); and the 12th Biennale de Lyon (2013). Boyd holds a BA from Oxford University, and an MFA from Chelsea College of Art, London. She has received moving-image commissions from EMPAC, Troy and Frieze Film, London. Later this year she will participate in a group show, *Mechanisms*, at the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco, and has upcoming solo exhibitions at Potts, Los Angeles, and 1856, Victorian Trades Hall, Melbourne.

Operator is curated by Nicola Lees, director and curator of 80wse with assistance from Jessica Barker, Ben Hatcher and Hugh O’Rourke. This film was commissioned by Victoria Brooks, EMPAC.

80wse in Washington Square is part of NYU’s Steinhardt School. The art gallery is a space for dialogue, experimental and cross-disciplinary projects by noted artists and curators, often produced in collaboration with the faculty and students from the department of arts and arts professions.

A series of events organized by
Patricia L. Boyd

“These events are part of the outward-facing output of an institution—its display of productivity. They consider questions that relate to what I call exhaustion: a break with productive, redemptive, accountable time.”

Saturday, September 23, 6 pm

Anne Boyer will read from her forthcoming book, *The Undying*, which contains a number of her writings on care, illness, pain and cancer.

Wednesday, October 25, 7 pm

A screening program of artists' film and video organized by Lucas Quigley and Patricia L. Boyd.

Wednesday, November 1, 7 pm

A talk by Elena Gorfinkel that examines cinema as an apparatus of exhaustion.

Wednesday, November 8, 7 pm

Jason Hirata will present a new performance.

Anne Boyer is a poet and essayist whose books include *The Romance of Happy Workers*, *My Common Heart*, and *Garments Against Women*. Boyer is a professor at the Kansas City Art Institute, where she teaches writing, literature, and theory. In 2014, Boyer was diagnosed with highly aggressive triple negative breast cancer which led to her work on the politics of care in the age of precarity. Her essays about illness have appeared in *Guernica*, *The New Inquiry*, and *Fullstop*.

Elena Gorfinkel is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at King's College London. She is the author of *Lewd Looks: American Sexploitation Cinema in the 1960s* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), and co-editor of *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image* (Minnesota, 2011) and *Global Cinema Networks* (Rutgers, 2018). Her current book project considers duration, decomposition and states of exhaustion in contemporary film art practices.

Jason Hirata's recent work investigates the reproduction of power through food and culture under global capital through research, sculpture and drawing. He has shown at the Henry Art Gallery, 67 Gallery, American Medium, among others, and was the recipient of the 2015 Brink Award from the Henry Art Gallery.

Lucas Quigley occasionally organizes film and video programs which describe the production and distribution of objects and goods, and the parameters that make these descriptions possible.

