



Utah Biennial: The Present as Influenced by the Past

Performance and Process

Jennifer West's Salt Crystals Spiral Jetty Dead Sea Five Year Film

Summary:

Students will create their own process-based artwork by repeating a performative action over time.

Curriculum Ties:

Fine Arts- Dance- 3rd-6th

Fine Arts- Theater- 3rd-6th

Fine Arts- Visual Arts- 3rd-6th

Secondary Fine Arts- Theater Foundations 1-4

Secondary Fine Arts- Visual Arts Foundations 1 and 2

Materials:

- Object brought from home (must be able to be permanently altered)

Background for Teachers:

Jennifer West creates concept-driven 16mm, 35mm and 70mm films that explore the idea of documentation and are often influenced by urban mythology, folklore, and popular culture. After shooting footage, West manipulates the film itself using materials related to the film's subject matter, often physically altering the film surface to the point of obscuring the original moving image completely. She often includes others in the making of her work. In this way, the process of filmmaking is turned into a kind of performance.

Process art is an artistic movement in which the actions involved in creation itself are seen as the work of art as opposed to the final product. Stemming in the mid-1960's from performance art, the Dada movement and Abstract Expressionism, process art emphasizes the ideas of change and transience and often explores qualities of the material itself. Artists involved in the

movement such as Lynda Benglis, Eva Hesse and Robert Morris have worked through cutting, dripping, stacking, piling, hanging, and dropping.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Explore art-making as performance and process and understand that an artwork can be more than the end result
- Understand how materials or actions chosen to create a work of art relate to the artwork's meaning

Instructional Procedures:

Have a discussion about performance and process. *What does the word 'process' mean? In what life situations might someone value the process over the end result (taking a walk, eating cake...)? What makes something a performance? What are some examples of performance? Does performance always happen on a stage or in front of a camera? What is the difference between performance and sculpture, or performance and real life?*

Explain to the students that they are going to create a work of art based on manipulating their object over time. Each student will choose a specific action, whether it is folding, tearing, stomping or marking in some way. Each day over a period of days, students will repeatedly "perform" the same action on their object. Encourage students to be gestural and expressive as they perform their action. They should think about the process of change that the object goes through instead of what it will look like at the very end, and think of each action they do as a performance.

Include documentation of each student's process as an integral part of the project, and have students compile an animation of the process if grade level and resources allow.

Extensions:

This lesson may be adapted by restricting the type of starting object that can be used, perhaps as a tie-in to another topic being discussed in class or to create personal connection to the object.

Resources:

www.jweststudio.com

www.utahmoca.org/portfolio/utah-biennial-mondo-utah

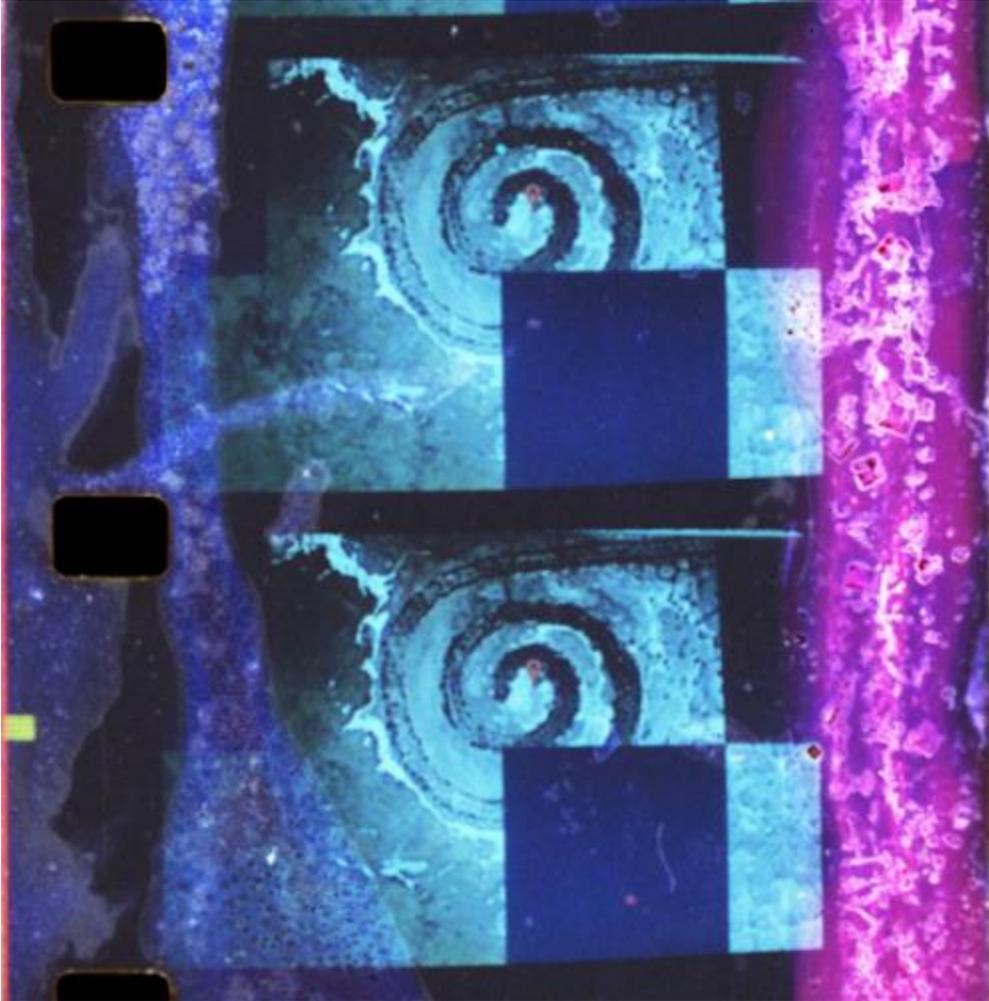


Salt Crystals Spiral Jetty Dead Sea Five Year Film (70mm film negative floated in the Dead Sea and given a healing clay bath in extreme heat in 2008 - stuffed in a suitcase, placed in studio buckets, covered in clay and salt for five years - dragged along the salt encrusted rocks of the Spiral Jetty and thrown in the pink waters in 2013 in below 10 degree weather - Dead Sea floating and mud baths by Mark Titchner, Karen Russo and Jwest - Spiral Jetty dragging and rolling by Aaron Moulton, Ignacio Uriarte and Jwest - DIY telecine frame by frame of salt covered film by Chris Hanke - Spiral of Time Film #1 for Chris Marker)

2013, 54 seconds

70mm film negative transferred to high-definition

Commissioned by the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art



Spiral of Time Documentary Film (16mm negative strobe-light double and triple exposed - painted with brine shrimp - dripped, splattered and sprayed with salted liquids: balsamic and red wine vinegar, lemon and lime juice, temporary fluorescent hair dyes - photos from friends Mark Titchner, Karen Russo, Aaron Moulton and Ignacio Uriarte and some google maps- texts by Jwest and Chris Markers' Sans Soleil script -shot by Peter West, strobed by Jwest, hands by Ariel West, telecine by Tom Sartori)

9 minutes, 1 second, 2013

16mm negative transferred to high-definition

Commissioned by the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art