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empac.rpi.edu
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QUOTE UNQUOTE

Thursday
April 12
7:30 pm

PERFORMANCE

Infinite Jest
SUE-C + AGF

CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
EMPAC

PERFORMANCE

Infinite Jest

SUE-C + AGF

Curator: Kathleen Forde

PART I

a 15 - 20 minute performative installation. . . please feel free to wander around the space, play pong or tennis

PART II

a live foley performance in which the audience is seated

Infinite Jest lives both as an installation and as a live handmade film inspired by the complex and remarkable novel of the same name by the late author David Foster Wallace. The evening begins with the audience experiencing the performance space as an installation centered around a half-size tennis court augmented by dual video projections and a text-based soundtrack. The 10 short films projected at either end of the tennis court are all inspired by (and titled from) the filmography of James Orin Incandenza—one of the novel's lead characters. The audience is invited to play tennis or a game of Pong during this time.

For the second half of the evening, the artists will present a re-creation of what is known colloquially as “the deadly entertainment.” Set in a slightly futuristic world, the film is an attempt to create and re-create what Incandenza, optics expert and filmmaker, considered his life's major work. After many unseen failures, his “film” *Infinite Jest* is eventually released, and proves to be fatally seductive—ensuring the demise of the entire United States of America if released into the wrong hands. With this as a jumping off point, long time audiovisual collaborators SUE-C and AGF explore the expression of seduction in sound and image. The film is brought to life through the lens of a live camera that follows the manipulation of photographs, textures, diskettes, and various reflective or translucent objects by visual artist and performer SUE-C, along with the live lush electronic soundtrack and vocals by AGF.

NOTES ON THE NOVEL

There are many lenses through which one can examine *Infinite Jest*, the novel. Wallace's world is vast, said to be structured like a fractal, and set in the near future where roaming packs of feral hamsters occupy most of North America; where pre-pubescent child athletes in a Bostonian tennis academy struggle with among other things, the crippling weight of the pressure to perform, obsessions, compulsions, and addictions of all shapes and sizes, a soothsaying Zen dwarf in the locker room sauna who espouses wisdom and lives off of sweat; where all North America has been forcibly allied in a desperate attempt to deal with its trash problem after attempts to fling it into space failed; where calendar years have been sponsored by and named after products like Depend® Adult Undergarment and Tucks® Medicated Pads; where militant Quebequios amputee wheelchair insurgents plot the downfall of civilization through a fatally seductive film created and never released by the eccentric James Orin Incandenza.

The book reads like a montage, flipping back and forth between story lines and characters, sometimes quickly and sometimes only after the most intricate details have been exhausted. Somewhere near the 600th

page, the stories become almost a tapestry of strung together plots, images, ideas, and lives, and by the end of the book, nearly an abstraction. Unique to this book is the idea of incompleteness. In much the same way that many of the characters struggling with addictions and compulsions are never able to find what they're looking for, and in a statement about the very nature of entertainment as addiction (books and reading being one like any other) Wallace purposefully allows the structure of his novel to dissolve and for the plots to go unresolved for the reader.

Infinite Jest, the film, is also a tapestry of moving pieces, characters made out of light, storylines lived through repeating patterns and undulations. Themes are explored, similarly to the book, sometimes quickly and sometimes in exhausting details—and much is left unresolved. Both challenge the notion of the concrete and the abstract. In the novel, characters and storylines become familiar and comfortable, only to dissolve into extreme repetition—to the point of becoming satirical and unrecognizable, and in so doing challenge our own grasp on reality. The film begins with the unrecognizable—simple patterns repeated over and over become worlds in themselves—the pulse of a light becomes like a person walking through an abstract landscape. A certain logic is created out of nothing and suddenly the familiar is discovered.

—SUE-C

BIO

SUE-C was born Sue Costabile in 1974 in Long Island, New York. For the past 10 years she has created handmade videos for both the stage and screen as a visual and performing artist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her works challenge the norms of photography, video, and technology by blending them all into an organic and improvisational live performance setting. Employing a variety of digital tools to create an experimental animation “instrument,” SUE-C synthesizes cinema from photographs, drawings, watercolors, handmade papers, fabrics, and miniature lighting effects. Dark, moody, textural, and physical, her live films draw equally from the kinetic languages of Stan Brakhage's abstract cinema and Nicolas Schöffer's lumodynamic sculptures. She employs the same techniques in her recorded work to emphasize the beauty of the banal street corner, public parking lot, forgotten winter beach, torn remnant of a found photograph, cast away Super 8 vacation footage, and other half forgotten, often unnoticed, in-between spaces in her surroundings.

AGF, aka Antye Greie, born and raised in East Germany, is a singer and digital songwriter, producer, performer, e-poet, calligrapher, and digital media artist known for her artistic exploration of digital technology through the deconstruction of language and communication. Her poetry, which she converts into electronic music, calligraphy, and digital media, has been presented on records, live performances, and sound installations in museums, auditoria, theaters, concert halls, and clubs in Europe, America, and Asia.

Some of her projects include the German electronic duo Laub, the Lappetites, AGF/ Delay (with Vladislav Delay), The Dolls (Vladislav Delay and Craig Armstrong), and Zavoloka/AGF, and collaborations with Craig Armstrong, Ellen Allien, Gudrun Gut, Eliane Radigue, and Kaffe Matthews. In 2004, she received an Award of Distinction at the ARS Electronica festival, and in 2006 she appeared on the cover of the UK's Wire magazine. AGF runs her own production company, AGF Produktion. She lives and works in Hailuoto, Finland.

Tennis players: India Lombardi-Bello and Albert Matthew Hutson; and from the Rensselaer Tennis Club: Doug Das, Pat Kenny, and David Trenk