

For this exhibition, her first solo at an American gallery in twenty years, Diamond turns her focus to the subject of cinema. The show consists of five works, wall paintings that use written language to examine the metaphysics of movie magic: pairing wordplay and rhyme with visual innuendo, the artist engages with aspects of film theory – in particular, the relationship between the viewer and the projected image – and in the process touches upon diverse moments from the history of cinema.

In the house, two wall paintings work in tandem to draw parallels between the dematerialized nature of both cinema and language. *Words At Play: Cinema* consists of a metallic gold-painted rectangle (a sly visual reference to the Golden Age of Cinema), over which Diamond has inscribed a rhyming poetical text, which alludes to a slew of famous films: using double-entendre and homonym, the text permits both the movies and written and spoken language to dissolve into one another's artifice. The other work, titled *Motion Pictures* – which is visually linked to *Words At Play: Cinema* by a metallic silver-painted background (another pun: a literal "silver screen") – is a pithy manifesto on the metaphysics of film projection, beginning with "THE SPEED OF LIGHT PROJECTED/UPON/THE RECTANGLE OF ALL RECTANGLES," and containing sections titled "QUANTUM MECHANICS", "PHYSICS", and "BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS". By pointing to the ephemerality of movies, of the projected image, Diamond relates the medium directly to her own primary practice of wall painting.

Another work, titled *Light Bending Time (Movie Time)*, consists of the words "light bending time" askewly written, just barely legible; the stylization of the text reflects its referent language. This apparent allusion to the theory of relativity also has implications about cinema, the unique power of film (which consists of projected light) to distort our perception of time, to create its own, alternate "narrative time." The final piece in the house is comprised, simply, of the word "OZ," written in sinuous emerald green letters. In this context, the famed titular city from *The Wizard of Oz* serves as a metonym for the whole of movies: an elaborately constructed artifice that serves both to evoke feeling and camouflage reality – a necessarily unattainable ideal.

The garage contains just a single line of black hand-written text on a white wall: "NORMA DESMOND IS 50." The work refers to Gloria Swanson's role in *Sunset Boulevard*; the movie portrays Norma Desmond as a post-prime and monstrous figure, her still-active sexuality an abomination. In simply pointing out the character's intended age – nine years younger than the artist herself – Diamond poignantly evokes cinema's historic tendency to dehumanize its woman subjects: Hollywood has treated desirability to men as a necessary pre-requisite to female sexuality, declaring the latter without the former an anathema. Furthermore, Norma Desmond is described by the movie as a failure: at age fifty, she is a woman whose successes can only exist in the past, her future

devoid of potential.

Throughout her career, Jessica Diamond has been the subject of monographic shows at museums including The Birmingham Museum of Art, El Centro Andalaz de Arte Contemporaneo in Seville, Le Consortium in Dijon, The Montreal Museum of Fine Art, and Stedelijk Museum Het Domein in the Netherlands. In 1991, she was featured in the Whitney Biennial. The current revival of interest in Diamond's work was triggered by her inclusion in the 2013 New Museum exhibition NYC *1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star*. Over the years, she has consistently received significant fellowships and accolades, including an award from the National Endowment of the Arts in 1989 and a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2000.

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