

William E. Jones
It Only Looks As If It Hurts
The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane
7th November 2025 – 14th January 2026
Preview: Thursday 6th November, 5.30 – 7.30pm

During the first Trump administration and the Covid lockdown, I was unable to pursue filmmaking, the medium I was trained to practice. I spent those years writing fiction, which had the advantages of being free and private – a field of pure invention. I eventually published three novels between 2019 and 2023. Over the course of the trilogy, the narrator becomes a painter. I followed the path of my fictional character and started painting seriously in 2022, almost immediately after the writing was finished. As a friend of mine put it, I wrote a future for myself, and it came true.

To make the *No Product* series (2010), I scratched and painted 16mm advertising films from the 1960s by hand, frame by frame. This defacement obliterated the objects being sold. Before the digital era, multiple film prints of commercials used to be shipped to television stations for broadcast. Consequently, a large number of copies of these films are still in existence, often in a state of considerable deterioration. At the time of their production these advertisements were seen by millions of spectators. Now they are obsolete, without commercial value, and shadows of their former selves, virtual garbage that is available to be transformed into something else.

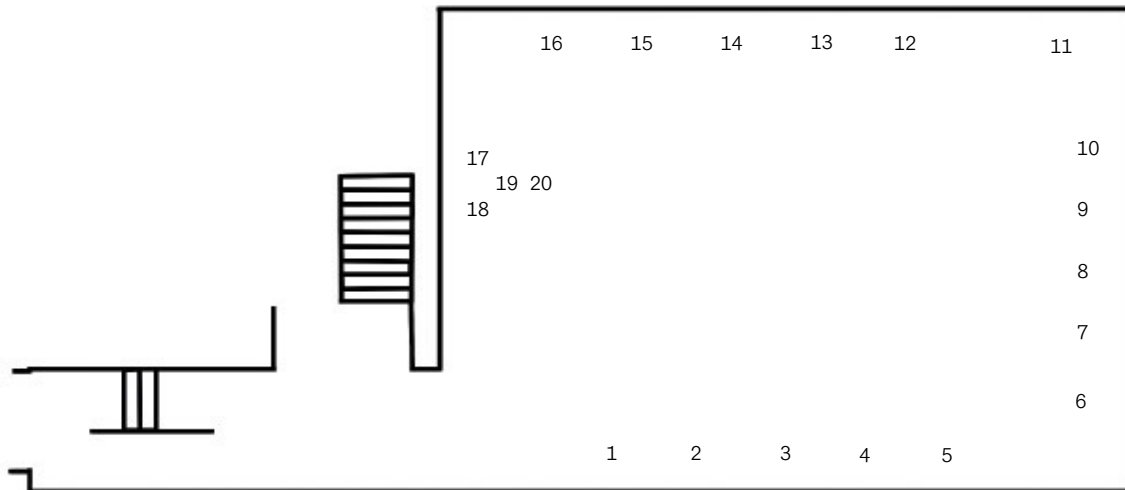
The original inspiration for the *No Product* series was *Traité de bave et d'éternité* (Treatise of Slobber and Eternity), the only film made by Romanian/French writer Isidore Isou, completed in 1951. The film's narration includes a manifesto of what Isou called *cinéma discrepant*, or discrepant cinema. The images of discrepant cinema (usually appropriated from historical sources) are 'chiselled,' to use Isou's word – scratched, distressed, dirtied, splattered with ink, and altered beyond recognition. Isou argued that he did violence to images in order to renew the film medium. In a sense, the *No Product* films, and by extension *Treatise of Slobber and Eternity*, are the precursors of my current painting practice. I make use of appropriated material and distress it through blurring.

-William E. Jones

William E. Jones (b.1962, Canton, Ohio) lives and works in Los Angeles. He is an artist, filmmaker, and writer. His work has been featured in international solo screenings and exhibitions, including: 'Fall Into Ruin and Villa Iolas', The Gund at Kenyon College, Ohio (2023); The Modern Institute, Osborne Street, Glasgow (2017); 'The Long Take - Mariah Garnett and William E. Jones', LACA, Los Angeles (2016); 'Midcentury', Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio (2014); The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2013); 'Artists Film Club: William E. Jones', ICA, London (2012); '"Killed" and Resurrected', Austrian Film Museum, Vienna (2011); 'Modern Monday', Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010); 'Retrospective', Anthology Film Archives, New York (2010); ar/ge kunst, Bolzano (2009); 'Extracted: Recent Films by William E. Jones', Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2007); 'Retrospective', Tate Modern, London (2005). He has participated in international film festivals and numerous group exhibitions, including at: Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego (2022); Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit (2013); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012); Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt (2011); MOCA, Los Angeles (2010); Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh (2010). Jones exhibited at the 12th Istanbul Biennale (2011); the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); and the Whitney Biennale, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008, 1993).

Jones is the author of the novels *I Didn't See It Coming* (2023), *I Should Have Known Better* (2021) and *I'm Open to Anything* (2019). He has also published the following non-fiction books: *True Homosexual Experiences: Boyd McDonald and 'Straight to Hell'* (2016); *Flesh and the Cosmos* (2014); *Between Artists: Thom Andersen and William E. Jones* (2013); *Halsted Plays Himself* (2011); *Killed: Rejected Images of the Farm Security Administration* (2010); *Tearoom* (2008); *Is It Really So Strange?* (2006).

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|--|--|--|
| 1 <i>Jackson Pollock</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
66.3 x 41.1 x 3.4 cm
26 1/8 x 16 1/8 x 1 3/8 in | 2 <i>Contortionist</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
53.7 x 53.9 x 3.4 cm
21 1/8 x 21 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 3 <i>Blessed Boy Getting Fucked</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
66.3 x 41.1 x 3.4 cm
26 1/8 x 16 1/8 x 1 3/8 in |
| 4 <i>Jean-Michel Basquiat Napping</i> , 2024
Oil on canvas
43.4 x 53.9 x 3.4 cm
17 1/8 x 21 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 5 <i>Male Nudes</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
43.6 x 33.5 x 3.4 cm
17 1/8 x 13 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 6 <i>Foot Worship</i> , 2024
Oil on canvas
43.6 x 33.4 x 3.4 cm
17 1/8 x 13 1/8 x 1 3/8 in |
| 7 <i>After Warhol (Man Bound with Duct Tape)</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
33.5 x 43.6 x 3.4 cm
13 1/4 x 17 1/8 x 1 3/8 in | 8 <i>Smoke Break</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
64.4 x 64.4 x 5.6 cm
25 3/8 x 25 3/8 x 2 1/4 in | 9 <i>Man Shouting</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
28.3 x 23.2 x 3.4 cm
11 1/8 x 9 1/8 x 1 3/8 in |
| 10 <i>Collar and Duct Tape</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
43.5 x 33.5 x 3.4 cm
17 1/8 x 13 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 11 <i>Judy Blame</i> , 2024
Oil on canvas
28.3 x 23.2 x 3.4 cm
11 1/8 x 9 1/8 x 1 3/8 in | 12 <i>Manacled Man</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
53.8 x 53.8 x 3.4 cm
21 1/8 x 21 1/8 x 1 3/8 in |
| 13 <i>Two Nude Men</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
74 x 58.9 x 3.4 cm
29 1/8 x 23 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 14 <i>Piet Mondrian</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
43.5 x 53.8 x 3.4 cm
17 1/8 x 21 1/8 x 1 3/8 in | 15 <i>After Sorolla (Seated Youth)</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
64.5 x 48.7 x 3.4 cm
25 3/8 x 19 1/8 x 1 3/8 in |
| 16 <i>Lucian Freud</i> , 2025
Oil on canvas
63.9 x 43.7 x 3.4 cm
25 1/8 x 17 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 17 <i>No Product, #5 (Steam Room)</i> , 2010
Sequence of digital files, colour, silent
Duration: 1:27 mins, looped | 18 <i>No Product, #3 (Dogs)</i> , 2010
Sequence of digital files, colour, silent
Duration: 2:14 mins, looped |
| 19 <i>No Product, #7 (Dentures)</i> , 2010
Sequence of digital files, colour, silent
Duration: 1:11 mins, looped | 20 <i>No Product, #2 (Shower)</i> , 2010
Sequence of digital files, colour, silent
Duration: 1:12 mins, looped | |