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2016-04-13

Statement

In *Marihuana Smokes Herself*, clips extracted from film and television depict cannabis use, production, and distribution. My practice is to watch media and note any cannabis on the screen, as if I were a media censor in a time and space of total cannabis prohibition. Over time, this process has created a growing archive of clips that depict cannabis as a character in the larger war on drugs.

For every source, say the movie *9 to 5*, I watch it while:

- Excluding

- only male characters on the screen

- Including

- any female characters on the screen

- evidence of cannabis drug use

- evidence of cannabis gardening, plants, horticulture

- evidence of cannabis sale or transfer

When I find parts of the input media that meets all of these rules, I enter the media details, the start and end times for the clip, and any descriptive terms or tags into a database.

This "edit" of found footage functions as a form of media analysis. Certain similarities in plot, dialogue, or situation become apparent when watching film and television within these constraints. I first sort the clips according to the most prevalent tropes : giggling, "first time,"

stoner BFF, lists of rules, stoned sex. Then, I generate loops from the first order tropes, talk to viewers while they watch it, and ask them what's missing. This iterative process leads to a second sort: used to not now, stronger now, flirting above the waist, money and power, actual medical use, racism, numb, etc. An imagined third sort is generated, of tags asked for but not cataloged.

I enhance and sequence the set of loops created by searching via the trope tags and generate a three-channel supercut for display in the form of a video art installation. A supercut is a collection of media that has been transformed into a shorter, edited form via a pattern. An example is Christian Marclay's *The Clock*, a supercut that matches the screen time in a variety of film and television clips to the present time of the gallery or museum observer. Another is Thom Andersen's *Los Angeles Plays Itself*.

I use art as a research tool. My goal at the start of this exploration was to research the ways cannabis has been framed by the mainstream culture industry. Over nearly a century, this depiction has evolved as a part of public discourse that is co-incident with but divergent from the legal classification of cannabis as Schedule I in the Controlled Substances Act.

Consider this installation an invitation to meditate on why the culture industry finds cannabis use so compelling as a symbol, tool, and gesture. This industry fascination is itself interesting. Why is it so enthralled? Why these tropes? What new tropes will be generated in a hypothetical future where cannabis is no longer Schedule I?