

Index

Kevin Jerome Everson:

TONSLER PARK

15 December 2017–3 March 2018

Opening: 14 December, 17:30–20:00



Index presents *Tonsler Park*, a new film by American artist and filmmaker Kevin Jerome Everson. Shot on 16mm black-and-white film over the course of the recent American election day, 8 November 2016, in Charlottesville, Virginia, the film follows the poll workers throughout their day as they carry out the practical tasks that allow citizens to cast a ballot and vote.

The film's focus is not documentary or narrative in a traditional sense, but relies on the conditions and gestures that make up the rituals of democracy. It opens with the oath of allegiance, "to prevent fraud, deceit and abuse", and the mainly Black American workers go through actions that repeat, as people come in and out of view. Through Everson's lens, the audience takes part in that election day and the way in which the characters of the film conscientiously perform the labor of the voting model that shed new light on the current political situation. Since we now all know the outcome of this election, the scenes that *Tonsler Park* depicts come to emphasize the contradictions and struggles that continue to exist throughout Western democracies, and the deep-set socio-political divides that shape the contemporary commons.

Everson is one of the most prolific filmmakers of his generation. His subject matters are always, as he describes it, "the gestures or tasks caused by certain conditions in the lives of working class

The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation
Kungsbros Strand 19, 112 26 Stockholm, Sweden
T. +46 8 502 198 38

www.indexfoundation.se

Organisationsnummer: 802407-2434

Index

African Americans and other people of African descent.” He says further: “I’m considering a process, the way conditions affect people.”

Characteristic of Everson’s films is the way they combine scripted and documentary elements with the traditions of experimental film. His work grew out of an interest in street photography, and his films have a sense of being with the subject, rather than looking from a distance. His film *8903 Empire* (2016) observes the inhabitants of a house on Empire Street in Cleveland, Ohio. *Park Lanes* (2015) was filmed in a factory that produces bowling alley supplies. His portraits of people and places are, in all their intimacy, also experiments with different formalist elements of staging and representation.

When I look through the viewfinder, I’m looking at different histories. During Q&As, I’m still asked, why do I only film black people? First I answer: “Why is it that Steven Spielberg’s E.T. (1982) is only white people?” There’s usually no answer. Then I say when I’m looking through the viewfinder of the camera, either film or digital, that I’m looking at black folks and seeing a history of a relationship to a place – whether it’s St Louis, Missouri or Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. I’m responding to a history of people and a place. (Kevin Jerome Everson, Liquid Blackness Symposium, Georgia State University, 2014)

Kevin Jerome Everson was born in 1965 in Mansfield, Ohio and lives and works in Charlottesville, Virginia. Everson’s work includes nine feature length films and over 100 short-form works to date. Recent screenings and exhibitions of Everson’s work include Tate Modern, London (2017), Whitney Biennial, New York (2017), MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA (2017) and Viennale, Vienna (2014). In 2011, the Whitney Museum of American Art presented *More Than That*, an exhibition of his short films. He is Professor of Art at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. In February 2018 his work will be the subject of a retrospective at the Harvard Film Archive, Cambridge, MA.

Opening hours

Wednesday–Friday 12am–6pm, Saturday - Sunday 12am–4pm
Monday, Tuesday and Public Holidays (Red Days) closed

Winter holidays: Index will be closed 22 December 2017–7 January 2018.

Social Media: @indexstockholm #kevinjeromeeverson

Index is supported by Kulturrådet, Stockholm Stad and Stockholms Läns Landsting.

Image credit: Kevin Jerome Everson, *Tonsler Park*, 2017. Courtesy the artist, Trilobite-Arts DAC, Picture Palace Pictures

About Index

Index is based in the center of Stockholm and offers an ambitious program of exhibitions, events and learning activities for a wide range of audiences. The program includes emerging artists with specifically produced new work, alongside presentations by artists from previous generations shown

Index

in a new perspective. Larger projects are accompanied by an extensive public program, often produced in collaboration with other organizations in Stockholm and abroad, with talks and film screenings, music, dance and poetry events. Index takes risks and opens up various ways to encounter contemporary culture and debate. Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2015, Index is today one of the most important and longest-standing spaces for contemporary art in Scandinavia.