



University Art Gallery
712 Arts Plaza
Claire Trevor School of the Arts
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697-2775
(949) 824 9854
gallery@uci.edu
uag.arts.uci.edu

Tuesday – Saturday, 12:00 – 6:00 pm

PRESS PREVIEW KIT

JESSICA CHASTAIN

By Maura Brewer

Curated by Juli Carson

On View: October 1 - December 10, 2016

Opening Reception: October 1, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm



IRVINE, Calif. (September 1, 2016) -- The University Art Galleries (UAG) at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts is proud to present *Jessica Chastain* by MFA alum Maura Brewer and curated by UAG Director Juli Carson. The exhibition will be presented in the University Art Gallery opening Saturday, October 1 with a reception open to the public from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm and will exhibit through Saturday, December 10, 2016.

The latest in the UAG's *Emerging Artist Series*, the exhibition includes three filmic works by Maura Brewer, produced between 2014 and 2016. Each work takes as its site a recent film by the actress Jessica Chastain, starting with *Zero Dark Thirty* in 2012, followed by *Interstellar* in 2014 and the ending with the 2015 film *The Martian*. In all three films, Chastain plays a similar character: a high-achieving career woman who is dedicated to the pursuit of a non-romantic male counterpart, from Osama Bin Laden to Mark Watney (Matt Damon). In each case, Chastain's role speaks the language of popular feminism; her talent and work ethic have propelled her into a successful career in a largely male realm. She makes choices that drive forward the action of the plot. But Chastain's agency within the film is at once undermined by the institutions and structures within which she purports to operate, be it the state – the CIA or NASA – or her own father. As such, Jessica Chastain is always *acting* but never under her own *power*.

As in all Brewer's work, this installation presents Hollywood film as a site for analysis and deconstruction. Accordingly, Chastain's characters are presented within metaphorical landscapes that speak to the contradictory nature of her cinematic position: alternately a drone or a satellite, Chastain is always "triangulated" by an alien agent. Such that, if she is the product of a feminist rhetoric – one that prizes agency within a field of constraint – her demand for action is simultaneously mitigated by the reality of *inaction*. In this way, one could say that "Jessica Chastain" – a placeholder for the feminine subject in this moment in time – is *depressed*.

"In our 'post-civil rights' moment of a female presidential nominee, same-sex marriage and transgender rights, Maura Brewer's film trilogy, *Jessica Chastain*, addresses something that lingers in our collective unconscious: an Oedipal orthodoxy – characterized by gender norms of the post-war era – that simply *insists*." - Juli Carson

Media Contacts: Jaime DeJong, Director of Marketing and Communications, (949) 824-2189 / jdejong@uci.edu
Allyson Unzicker, UAG Associate Director, (949) 824-9854 / aunzicke@uci.edu



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About the Artist

Maura Brewer works in many forms, including video, performance and experimental fashion design. Drawing on science fiction narratives and Hollywood film, Brewer's work asks questions about the ways that cinematic identification constructs female subjects. Brewer was a Whitney Independent Study Program fellow from 2014-2015, and received her MFA from the University of California, Irvine in 2011. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at Human Resources in Los Angeles, the Elizabeth Arts Foundation in New York and the Dome of Visions in Copenhagen. She is a recipient of the 2016 Creative Economic Development Fund Grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation. Her work in fashion design has received press coverage in *The Guardian*, the *New York Times* and *Surface Magazine*. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

About the Curator

Juli Carson received her PhD from M.I.T. in the History, Theory and Criticism of Art Program in the Department of Architecture. Currently, she is Professor of Art History in the Art Department at UC Irvine, where she directs the Critical and Curatorial MFA Program and the University Art Galleries. She is author of *Exile of the Imaginary: Politics, Aesthetics, Love* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2007) and curator of the archival exhibition accompanying Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 1998). Her essays on conceptual art and psychoanalysis have been published in *Art Journal*, *Documents*, *October*, *Texte Zur Kunst* and *X-Tra*, as well as in numerous international anthologies and catalogues. Her most recent book is *The Limits of Representation: Psychoanalysis and Critical Aesthetics* (Buenos Aires: Letra Viva Press, 2011). Her forthcoming book, *The Conceptual Unconscious: A Poetics of Critique* will be published by PoLYpen, a subsidiary of b_books.



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Jessica Chastain Fact Sheet

Exhibition:

Exhibition Dates: October 1 - December 10, 2016

By Maura Brewer

Curated by Juli Carson

Event:

Opening Reception: October 1, 2016, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Location:

University Art Gallery

712 Arts Plaza, Claire Trevor School of the Arts

Description:

The UAG's *Emerging Artist Series* presents three filmic works by Maura Brewer each taking as its site a recent film by the actress Jessica Chastain: *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), *Interstellar* (2014) and *The Martian* (2015). In all three films, Chastain plays a similar character: a high-achieving career woman dedicated to the non-romantic pursuit of a male counterpart. Brewer's installation presents Hollywood film as a site for analysis and deconstruction.

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday - Saturday from 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Free Admission. Public is Welcome

Parking:

UC Irvine [Mesa Parking Structure](#), 4000 Mesa Rd., Irvine, CA 92617

More Info:

www.arts.uci.edu

<http://www.arts.uci.edu/event/jessica-chastain-maura-brewer>

Note to editors:

Selected high-resolution images for publicity only may be downloaded from

[Google Drive](#)

(Key to images attached)



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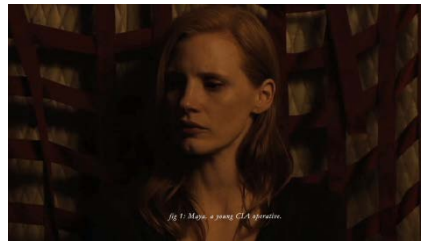
University Art Gallery, Claire Trevor School of the Arts
Jessica Chastain by Maura Brewer

Curated by Juli Carson

Press Images:



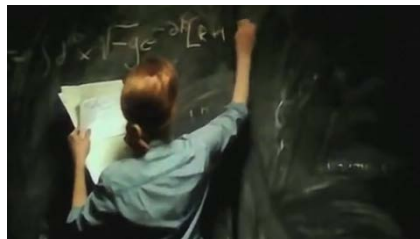
(1)



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(5)

1. Maura Brewer, *Zero Dark Birthday*, 2014, video still (Courtesy of the artist)
2. Maura Brewer, *Zero Dark Birthday*, 2014, video still (Courtesy of the artist)
3. Maura Brewer, *:nterstellar*, 2015, video still (Courtesy of the artist)
4. Maura Brewer, *:nterstellar*, 2015, video still (Courtesy of the artist)
5. Maura Brewer, *The Surface of Mars*, 2016, video still (Courtesy of the artist)

The images are approved only for publication in conjunction with promotion of the exhibition

Jessica Chastain. Reproductions must include the full caption information, and images may not be cropped or altered in any way or superimposed with any printing.



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About the UAG

The University Art Galleries are committed to promoting an inter-generational dialogue between 60s/70s neo-avant-garde art and contemporary visual culture. Accordingly, the curatorial mission is to keep an eye on the modernist past while promoting the most innovative aesthetic and political debates of the post-modern present. From this vantage, the projects commissioned provoke intelligent debate on the subject of art in its most expansive poetic definition. What distinguishes the program is its unwavering commitment to publishing scholarly texts in catalogue/book form in order to disseminate research-based information into the community, providing a venue for the promotion of innovative discourse surrounding mixed media production today. The UAG program provides several exhibition platforms for inter-generational and interdisciplinary dialogue. The Major Works of Art Series commissions original projects by canonical artists working today. The Emerging Artist Series features solo projects by a set of younger artists informed by the legacies showcased in the Major Works series. The Critical Aesthetics Program commissions new work by internationally renowned mid-career artists. Augmenting this inter-generational dialogue, UAG also produces larger thematic group exhibitions alternately showcasing historical and contemporary art and film projects. UAG further promotes an active dialogue between UCI residents and the local and international art communities through colloquia, conferences, visiting artist lectures and theme-based films series, all of which are open to the public. As the galleries continue to mature, they stand committed to being an experimental exhibition space different from the current - but largely traditional - art biennial and film festival platforms.

About UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts

As UCI's creative laboratory, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts explores and presents the arts as the essence of human experience and expression, through art forms ranging from the most traditional to the radically new. The international faculty works across a wide variety of disciplines, partnering with others across the campus. National-ranked programs in art, dance, drama, and music begin with training but end in original invention. Students come to UCI to learn to be citizen-artists, to sharpen their skills and talents, and to become the molders and leaders of world culture. For more information, please visit www.arts.uci.edu.