

JENNIE LIVINGSTON

(917) 741-2121

jennielivingston@gmail.com

www.jennielivingston.com

FILM/VIDEO PROJECTS

Ongoing **Earth Camp One** Directing/writing/editing a feature length film about grief, loss, and a Northern California hippie summer camp in the 1970s, also a family portrait, a broad essay on how Americans understand impermanence. Editing, animating, and producing continue. Funders and fellowships include The Guggenheim Foundation, The Rosenthal Family Foundation, The French American Charitable Trust, The Newhouse Foundation, MacDowell, The New York State Council on the Arts, Jewish Film Institute, crowd-sourcing, and other grants and donors. Editors and advisors have included Niels Pagh Anderson, Brad Fuller, Mary Recine, Genine Lentine, Brian Miele, Nick Flynn, Joe Bini, and others.

2023- 2025 **I'm Your Venus** Executive producer and advisor on Kimberly Reed's documentary exploring the Pelagatti family and the House of Xtravaganza's journey to understand and process the 1988 murder of Venus Pelagatti Xtravaganza, who appeared in *Paris is Burning*. Released on Netflix in June 2025.

2015- 2019 **PoseFX** Consulting producer and director on the episodic television series set in the ballroom community, largely inspired by people and stories in *Paris is Burning*. Connected the producers with advisors and talents from the community; directed an episode, *Blow*.

2011 Video piece for The Million Dollar Piano, Elton John's stage show. A series of black and white moving-image portraits of New Yorkers, accompanying the singer's performance of "Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters" Ran 2011-2018

2005 **Through the Ice** Produced/directed/edited the digital short commissioned by WNET's Reel New York for the show's tenth anniversary special. About the death of a man who fell through the ice in the lake in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, through the eyes of the dog-walkers who tried to save his life. Broadcast on WNET; also an official selection at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

1999-2005 Who's the Top? Wrote, directed, co-produced and co-edited. A 22-minute 35mm sex comedy with musical numbers. Features Marin Hinkle (*The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*), Shelly Mars, Steve Buscemi, Brigitte Bako, and 24 dancers. Choreography by John Carrafa. Premiered in the Panorama at the Berlinale; screenings at over 100 film festivals worldwide. Extended runs at The Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the London ICA; See below for awards.

1995 – present Prenzlauer Berg dramatic script: developed, researched, and wrote. Based on original research in Berlin on a 6-month fellowship from the German Academic Exchange (DAAD). An ensemble film, set in the art worlds of East Berlin and New York in 1989.

2000 Film Fans Researched, developed, and wrote treatment. Commissioned by the AMC Channel. Explores the underlying meaning of Americans' collective obsession with fame.

1991-94 Not for Profit dramatic script, wrote and developed. Readings included actors Lili Taylor, Peter Gallagher, CCH Pounder, Liza Minelli, John Cameron Mitchell. Suspense/satire set in the worlds of finance, fundraising, and media.

1994 Stonewall Directed and designed triptych film installation for an outdoor, site-specific Off-Broadway play directed by Tina Landau and produced by EnGarde Arts.

1993 Hotheads A video short, directed/shot/edited a portrait of comedian Reno and cartoonist Diane DiMassa, including music by Smashing Pumpkins. Commissioned by and produced by the Red Hot Organization for No Alternative, an MTV special. Video released on Polygram Video, , whose work benefits AIDS research and treatment. Premiered at The Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center, and broadcast by The Living Room Festival, KQED.

1986-1991 Paris is Burning Director/producer, feature documentary film about a New York City fashion subculture. Initially distributed by Miramax in the US; currently streaming on the Criterion Channel and HBO/MAX, and on MUBI outside the US and Canada. Grants included The National Endowment for the Arts; also funded by BBC-2 show Arena. According to *Variety*, the film remains one of the most successful documentaries ever released. Grand Jury Prize winner at Sundance, on ten-best-film-of-the-year lists of The Washington Post, Time Magazine, The Los Angeles Times, National Public Radio. Please see below for further info.

TEACHING/PUBLIC SPEAKING/SEMINARS

2019 Keynote speaker at Milwaukee Film Festival; the talk addressed Agnes Varda's description of her filmmaking process as "inspiration, creation, and sharing;" how film connects the visible to the invisible; modes of seeing and listening that allow audiences to connect with others' experiences; acoustic ecologist and musician Gordon Hempton's "presence of everything that happens when there's silence;" and other ideas, films, and filmmakers.

2012 Spoke to Diversity Group and hosted screening at Fenwick & West LLP, a San Francisco law firm serving technology and life science companies, including issues around venture capital, public offerings, and intellectual property.

2010 Fran and Ray Stark Distinguished Teaching fellow, Connecticut College. Taught two classes: screenwriting, and a course on the history, theory and practice of independent films and filmmaking.

2008-9 Brooklyn College, Screenwriting I. The fundamentals of writing narrative fictional screenplays through screenings, discussion, readings, and the creation of an original short script. Taught for two semesters.

1998 Yale College, college seminar, Independent Film. Issues of representation, storytelling, commerce, and structure. Coursework included screenings, readings, discussion, and writing.

1995 University of Film and Television Munich (HFF). 2 day seminar on independent films and filmmaking, centered on screenings and discussion.

TALKS/LECTURES/PANELS (partial list)

1991-2024

Alamo Draft House (Austin, TX) • American University Center for Social Media (Washington DC) • Byrn Mawr (with Judith Butler) • Cal Arts • Columbia University Film School • DePaul University • Fordham University • The Getty Center (Los Angeles) • Hampshire College • Independent Feature Market (New York) • INTRO film festival, Kyiv Ukraine (virtual) • Jewish Film Festival, New York (at Lincoln Center) • Massachusetts Institute of Technology • Middlebury College • The New School for Social Research • New York University Film School • Princeton • Queer/Art/Film (a talk on Fellini's 8 ½) • Queer/Art/Film (a dialogue with Dee Rees) • Rutgers University English Department and Rutgers Writers House • South Africa School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance (AFDA), Johannesburg • University of California Santa Cruz • University of Hong Kong (virtual) • University of Missouri at Columbia • University of Southern

California Film School • Stephens College (Columbia, Missouri) • Vassar College • Wesleyan College • Williams College • Yale

AWARDS AND HONORS

FELLOWSHIPS/RESIDENCIES/GRANTS

2006-25 **Production grants and support for *Earth Camp One* from The Rosenthal Family Foundation, the French American Charitable Trust, the Newhouse Family Foundation, Artemis Rising, Chicken & Egg, Jewish Story Partners, New York State Council on the Arts, Jewish Film Institute, the Dobkin Family Foundation, 340 backers on Kickstarter, others.**

2023, 2010, 2008, 2002 **MacDowell fellowship(s), New Hampshire**

2000-2001 **Guggenheim Fellowship**

1995 **German Academic Exchange (DAAD) Berlin Artists Residency**

1992-93 **Visiting Scholar at the Getty Center for Arts and Humanities, Los Angeles**

1987-1989 **Production grants for *Paris is Burning* from The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York Foundation for the Arts, The Paul Robeson Fund, Art Matters, The New York State Council on the Arts, The Jerome Foundation, The AIVF Donor-Assisted Fund**

1984-85 **9 month residency at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. For work in photography.**

AWARDS AND HONORS

For WHO'S THE TOP? (partial list)

- Best Short, Cinekink Film Festival, New York City**
- Best Short, Mezipatra Film Festival, Prague, The Czech Republic**
- Best Short of the Year, Girlfriends Magazine**

For PARIS IS BURNING (partial list)

- Cinema Eye Legacy Award**
- Inclusion in the US Library of Congress Film Archive**
- Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize**
- Toronto International Film Festival Audience Award**

- The New York Film Critics' Circle Award
- The L.A. Film Critics' Award
- A Seattle International Film Festival Audience Award
- The Independent Feature Project's [first] Breakthrough Director award
- The Berlin Film Festival (Berlinale) Teddy Bear
- a Women in Film Crystal Award
- GLAAD Media Award
- International Documentary Association Award

PRAISE FOR *Paris is Burning*

Writing about the Sight and Sound poll, *NY Times* critic A.O. Scott puts *Paris is Burning* on his own list of the [10 best films](#) of all time

The Washington Post reports *Paris* as one of the [most-assigned films](#) on college syllabi, falling between *Apocalypse Now* and *Singin in the Rain*

"A politically astute, historically important document of our precarious times."

-Michelle Parkerson, *The Black Film Review*

"a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory....Everything about 'Paris is Burning' signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that our formulations – our neatly paired theses and antitheses – multiply faster than we can keep track of them, and the movie induces a semiotic daze. What's wonderful about the picture is that Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings..."

-Terrence Rafferty, *The New Yorker*

"Houses of silk and gabardine are built. Houses of dream and fantasy. Houses that bear the names of their legendary founders...Houses rise and fall. Legends come and go. To pose is to reach for power while simultaneously holding real powerlessness at bay."

-Essex Hemphill, *The Guardian*

"Zeroing in on an obscure and outré corner of a subculture, Livingston's film ends up shedding an extraordinary light on American culture as a whole."

-David Ansen, *Newsweek*

PRAISE FOR *Who's the Top?*

"witty and accomplished"

- Kevin Thomas, *The Los Angeles Times*

"production numbers are more exuberant than anything in Rent."

-Wesley Morris, *Boston Globe*

"Livingston delivers a sharp...and provoking tale about the meaning of power, the nature of reality and the elusiveness of love by posing questions seldom heard at cinemas."

-RJ Grubb, *Bay Windows* (Boston)

"the best Marie Antoinette fantasy we've ever seen"

-Sarah Harrison, *Nerve.com*

EDUCATION

2025 A 10-week seminar on Buddhism, psychotherapy, and writing poetry, co-taught by poet and former Zen monk Genine Lentine and poet/psychotherapist Erica Ehrenberg: independent online course.

2023 Avid Media Composer fundamentals I (online training course from Avid) after *Earth Camp One* was migrated from FCP 7 to Avid Media Composer

2022 A 6-week course on writing television pilots with screenwriter Francine Volpe. Co-writer Kristabelle Munson and I wrote a pilot, *Little Kings*. Independent online course.

2002 Final Cut Pro editing, The Edit Center, New York

1999-2000 Studied directing actors with Adrienne Weiss, member of NYU Film School (Tisch) faculty, acting coach, and director.

1998 Studied acting in seminars with Susan Batson, acting teacher and coach, stage and film actor (*Summer of Sam*, *Bamboozled*),

1985 New York University, film production intensive ("Sight and Sound"). (Summer)

1979-83 Yale University, B.A., cum laude, photography and painting, minor in English literature.

- Recipient of Louis Sudler Prize, given annually to one Yale College graduating senior in the visual or performing arts, for work in photography, drawing, and painting.
- Recipient of an Ellen Battel Stoeckel fellowship to the Yale-Norfolk School of Music and the Arts.

SELECT MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS FEATURING PARIS IS BURNING CLIPS

- *Destination NYC*, Museum of the City of New York, 2023-24
- *Mother*, Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark, 2021
- in the Stories of Cinema/entry gallery, Academy Museum, Los Angeles, 2021 to present

GROUP SHOWS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS

- AMP (Art Market Provincetown), photographs from *Earth Camp One* and wash drawings, 2015
- Aperture, photographs, *The Body in Question*, 1989

SELECT 21st CENTURY SCREENINGS OF PARIS IS BURNING

- Stonewall National Monument Visitor Center, NYC, in conversation with director Kimberly Reed, 2025
- UCLA Pioneers of Queer Cinema series, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, in conversation with Freddie and Sol Pendavis, *Paris* production manager Natalie Hill, and moderator Miss Peppermint, 2022
- Black Lives Matter activists in Seattle screened *Paris is Burning* on the occupied streets of the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, 2020
- Edinburgh International Film Festival, *American Woman: Female Directors in American Cinema 1980-1990*, 2018
- Celebrate Brooklyn Festival, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, mini-ball organized by Hector Xtravaganza with special guests Junior Labelija, Freddie and Sol Pendavis, and editor Jonathan Oppenheim, 2015
- Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Collection screening of restored digital print (returning the film to its original 16mm aspect ratio) co-sponsored by Sundance Institute, Outfest, and UCLA Film and Television Archive, 2015
- celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, FIERCE!, an activist organization of POC queer and trans youth planned and produced a screening on New York City's West Side piers, 2009

- Out in Africa, The 13th South African Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, screenings in Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, 2007

EARLY WORK IN FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

- Staff photographer, *Staten Island Advance*, 1984
- Intern, Laurie Anderson's *Home of the Brave*, 1985
- Art Department Assistant to production designer George Jenkins, Alan J. Pakula's *Orphans*, 1986

WRITING/PUBLICATIONS/BROADCASTS AS AUTHOR/ARTIST/SPEAKER

2024 • Jennie writes a queer-inflected essay on the film *Maestro* for the New York Times Magazine's Screenland column

• and an in-depth profile of the [durational artist Tehching Hsieh](#), in advance of his retrospective at the Dia Foundation, for the New York Times T Magazine

2020 Jennie has a photograph – a color image of a voguer at a 1986 Brooklyn ball – published in [The Encyclopedia of New York](#), by the editors of New York Magazine, Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster

2015 Jennie weighs in for a [sidebar](#) to Frank Rich's *New York Magazine* article on Todd Haynes' film *Carol*

2014 Jennie writes a piece for the 2014 Sundance Film Festival website; (“Indie Film Game-Changer Outs Herself as a Failure (Despite Evidence to the Contrary)”) for #Freefail, on the uses and meaning of failure, which included a panel with festival founder Robert Redford and director Joey Soloway.

2011 Featured speaker in CurrentTV's Morgan Spurlock-hosted series *50 Documentaries to See Before You Die*

2006 Featured speaker in the Independent Feature Channel documentary *Fabulous! The Story of Queer Cinema*.

2005 Panelist, Goethe Institut, New York: a discussion of East German cinema in conjunction with screenings at the Museum of Modern Art

2004 On-Air Host, introduced films and wrote commentary for startup cable channel, Divine HD (Rainbow Media/Viacom).

2003 Created critical commentaries for the DEFA Film Library Catalog: The Cinema of East Germany, University of Massachusetts.

2001 Meditating After 9/11, commissioned by *The New York Times Magazine*, published in *The Journal of Fire Lotus*.

1995 Selected and introduced A Program of Short Films and Videos by Independent Directors Who Usually Do Feature Length Work, The San Francisco Cinematheque.

1995 Year in Review: When Worlds Collide, *The Advocate*, (January 24)

1994 Let's Watch Something Daddy Wants to Watch, curated, wrote and co-edited clip show in association with film editor James Lyons (Poison, Far from Heaven, The Virgin Suicides). Commissioned by The New Festival and Frameline.

1993 A Conversation with John Waters, *Out Magazine* (July)

1992 The Art of the Angry Letter, *Out Magazine* (Fall)

1991 Strike the Pose, *The Off Hollywood Report* (now *Filmmaker Magazine*) (Spring)

1990 The Fairer Sex, *Aperture: The Body in Question*, ed. Melissa Harris

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Isa Farfan writes for [Hyperallergic](#) about the legacy of drag balls, the Harlem Elks Lodge, and *Paris is Burning*, June 24, 2025

Zoë Kravitz (director) and Channing Tatum (actor) [in the Criterion Closet](#). Kravitz calls *Paris is Burning* “beautiful and heartbreaking and honest,” and Tatum says: “I watched it with you guys over Christmas...this is like your *Godfather*.” 2024

Director of *All We Image as Light*, Payal Kapadia, in [her Criterion Closet video](#), calls *Paris is Burning* “one of the greatest nonfiction films ever made.” She describes how at her film school, the students’ protests found expression in a film festival they programmed, and *Paris* was part of that. 2024

In 2024, Dictionary.com calls “demure” the word of the year. The NY Times comments on the culture of “demure” on TikTok, and *Paris is Burning’s* Venus Xtravaganza as [an icon of that quality](#), August 14, 2024

Jennie interviewed about **Paris is Burning** for [BBC's Witness History](#). March 15, 2021

Esquire's [Emma Carey](#) and [Brady Langmann](#) discuss **Paris is Burning** as a documentary that will [Change Your Life](#). February 26 2021

New York Times columnist **Charles Blow** on life, death, health, and happiness, invoking the wit and [wisdom of Dorian Corey](#). April 18 2021

[Interview on](#) WNYC's All Of It with **Alison Stewart**; conversation with Jennie and **Sol Williams Pendavis**. February 25, 2020

Jennie speaks with *Interview Magazine* about why **Paris is Burning** is "The [History Lesson Americans](#) Need." June 18, 2019

The New York Times's **Cassidy George** interviewed Jennie about '**Paris is Burning**' and its influence on [today's LGBTQ media](#) landscape. June 12, 2019

Jennie was interviewed by Monica Castillo for CherryPicks on [Capturing the Spark](#) of '**Paris is Burning**'. June 4, 2019

The Verge's Noel Murray breaks down '**Paris is Burning's** influence on the FX drama series *Pose*, on which Jennie served as consulting producer, encouraging readers to "[Get ready for Pose by watching Paris is Burning.](#)" June 1, 2018

Wesley Morris includes **Paris is Burning** alongside **Princess Mononoke**, **Do the Right Thing**, and **Die Hard** in "[12 Films to See Before You Turn 13](#)," a special kids-only section of the New York Times pullout. November 19, 2017

PBS's Independent Lens' "LGBT Movies That Rocked Their World" [reflects on the legacy](#) of "**Paris is Burning**" as a touchstone of queer cinema June 10, 2017 **AV Club** published a [write up](#) about **Paris is Burning** and the other 24 films added to the National Film Registry December 14, 2016

Jennie discussed their work on **Earth Camp One**, **Paris is Burning**, and their show at **AMP Gallery** with [Provincetown Magazine](#). June 3, 2015

In an interview with **Manohla Dargis** for the New York Times, Jennie, along with **Ava DuVernay**, **Barbara Streisand**, **Joey Soloway**, **Kimberly Peirce**, and others, weighs in on the topic of [women in film](#). January 21, 2015

A [book](#) on the making of, critical response to, and influence of **Paris is Burning**: **Paris is Burning a Queer Film Classic**, **Lucas Hilderbrand**, **Arsenal Pulp Press**, 2014 (first volume in a series, *Queer Film Classics*)

8 Music Videos that Pay Homage to 'Paris is Burning,' Saeed Jones, buzzfeed.com, February 7, 2013

Steven Tyler Dresses In Drag, Calls Himself Pepper Labeija, and Now the Whole Paris is Burning Thing is Out of Control, Rich Juzwiak, gawker.com, February 1, 2013

The Greatest Documentaries of All Time, blogpoll, POV staff, PBS.org, November 8, 2012

In the Works: New Doc from "Paris is Burning" Director, Bryce J. Renninger, Indiewire.com, January 6, 2011

An Interview with Jennie Livingston by Dena Seidel, *Films for the Feminist Classroom*, volume 1, number 1, Rutgers University, 2009

Anything Goes, Jennie Livingston on her musical short Who's the Top?, Sarah Harrison, nerve.com, January 2006

Five Questions for Jennie Livingston, Director of Paris is Burning and Who's the Top?, Eugene Hernandez, indiewire.com, August 5, 2005

Second Act, Angelo Pitillo, *Paper Magazine*, October 2005

After the Burning, RJ Grubb, *Bay Windows*, May 19, 2005

How a Film Indie Shops For a Backer, Peter Nichols, *The New York Times*, Arts Section, Thursday, September 23, 1999

Dykes on Film, Lisa Sherman, *Skin Two Magazine*, Issue 29, Summer 1999

Home, Houses, Nonidentity: Paris is Burning, Chandan C. Reddy, *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*, Westview Press, 1997

'Kings' In Good Company, *Variety*, February 24-March 2, 1997

Gender is Burning, Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, Routledge, 1993

Queens of Language, Jackie Goldsby, *Queer Looks*, Routledge, 1993

Tanz der Beleidigten, Bodo Fründt, *Suddeutsche Zeitung*. Nr. 254, November 4, 1991

Crossed-Dressed for Success, David Ansen with Abigail Kuflik, *The Arts*, *Newsweek*, August 12, 1991

Paris is Burning, Illusions Were Never So Real, Essex Hemphill, The Guardian, July 3, 1991

Talent to Burn, Amruta Slee, The Australian, June 15, 1991

Paris is Burning, Michelle Parkerson, The Black Film Review, vol. 6., no. 3

Redefining “Realness” in Paris is Burning, William Jones, International Documentary, Spring 1991

Realness, The Current Cinema, Terrence Rafferty, The New Yorker Magazine, March 25, 1991

An Exotic Gay Subculture is Poignant Under Scrutiny, Jennifer Dunning, Dance Section, The New York Times, March 23, 1991

Stop Making Censors: Photo Opportunities Lost and Found, Stacey D’Erasmus, A Review of The Body in Question, Aperture No. 121, The Village Voice, January 15, 1991

Exits and Entrances, On Voguing, John Howell, Artforum, February 1989

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