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Chantal Akerman in the time of Covid-19

In his article of April 2020, Todd McCarthy writes: “After nearly a half-year of involuntary confinement, of one day monotonously blending into the next with precious little change, of repeating the same limited routines with no hope of breaking out of the rut anytime soon, this week I finally saw the film that speaks to this moment far more than does any other.” He is one of many writers to address Chantal Akerman’s 1975 film *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* during the pandemic. In the context of Covid-19, watching *Jeanne Dielman* is a very different experience. In an attempt to stop the spread of the virus, especially in 2020, many people around the world were confined to their places of residence for extended periods of time, with limited contact with other people. The result for many has been a profound sense of disconnect and boredom, which related to a feeling of being trapped in their lives. While in the past *Jeanne Dielman* has reflected a select group of especially women whose lives are painfully close to that of the protagonist, suddenly the predominant population of cities are living lives that reflects key qualities of Jeanne’s existence: trapped in a domestic situation, defined by tedious domestic activities that seem to have no end. In this presentation, I will discuss the experience of viewing Akerman’s *Jeanne Dielman* while living inside the Covid-19 pandemic, considering changes in the notion and experience of boredom.