

‘Tell me to what you pay attention, and I will tell you who you are’, wrote the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset in his 1962 book *Man and Crisis*. There is a microcosmic version of this truth to be found in *Don't Work, 1968–2018 (Ne Travaille Pas, 1968–2018)*, which offers such an unrelenting torrent of content that selective attention from viewers is inevitable.

Unfolding like a feature-length version of the 1 Second Everyday app, Vayssié follows two fine arts students in Paris – Elsa Michaud and Gabriel Gauthier – over the span of a year (March 2017–18). The film splices together split-second extracts of everyday life, global news, political speeches, advertisements and social media; adding absurdity with intense close-ups on emoticons, and gravitas with the use of anti-establishment slogans sourced from 1968 graffiti.

The May 1968 uprisings in France and the state of the nation 50 years later provide the loose framework for the film, which begins and ends in the University of Nanterre (a key site for student meetings and protests in ‘68). An opening title card warns of graphic violence, before audio of Parkland shooting survivor, Emma González, giving her famous speech naming her murdered classmates is followed by visuals of Elsa and Gabriel in the Nanterre gardens. The couple kiss as González’s raw eulogy continues, underscored by tense electronic music by Avia x Orly that provides a consistent musical spine to the stream of largely dialogue-free footage.

The impact of this opening media mash-up is both confusing and rousing, posing questions like, ‘Is it respectful to sample such a loaded speech?’. Tragedy is ubiquitous after zooming out far enough, and surely it is more courageous to live your small life than to despair before the bigger picture.

There is humour in some of the edits, such as a cut from a famous majestic building to a cartoonish Facebook page capitalising on the building’s name to sell fast-food. At a reach, you could say that Vayssié skewers the commercial hellscape we now reside in; however, the point of the film is more open-ended, and its grace notes arrive in the occasional moments where the music fades down, and spoken words are allowed to resonate. ‘My god, my god, here is

life, simple and placid,' reads an orator, quoting the French poet Paul Verlaine. The speech is from 1968, but it is used over footage from a contemporary Emmanuel Macron rally. This free approach to looting the past is touching. We don't have to draw our focus and inspiration from what is most obnoxiously present. We are not beholden to the images forced in front of our eyes. We can choose which values to channel guided by a desire to save our souls.

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