

***Do Not Go Gentle* – Devin Glenn**

Artist's Statement:

Derrida prophesied of a world of vibrating symbols where individuals watch their own mirrored eyes shift into an accumulation of paper labels. At best, these smokey reflections afford us a sense of self, but at worst, they isolate and suffocate with their reductive instability. Time itself may be one such classifier we Saran-wrap over the globe to keep it from spoiling. This hauntingly meditative, experimental film draws inspiration from “Sister Ting,” an ancient Chinese folktale, to highlight modern society and its willingness to tolerate a type of cannibalistic consumerism—the objectification of others.

Originally part of *In Search of the Supernatural*, compiled by Gan Bao in 350 AD, “Sister Ting” is a cautionary tale against that which haunts from within; violence against our fellow human beings. The story revolves around Ting, a sixteen-year-old girl, who is worked to the bone by an abusive family member. Unable to live under their brutality any longer, Ting takes her own life—the only thing still left in her control. Later, Ting’s spirit is spotted on several occasions, exacting justice upon men who seek to harm women. From then on, the women of that region referred to this spirit as Sister Ting, a title of endearment, because she was their protector—an avenging angel to those (like herself in her mortal life) who had been cheaply commodified.

Do Not Go Gentle embraces this transformation from wronged victim to supernatural savior, but revises its narrative’s instigating factor from domestic violence to the parasitic practice of slut shaming. Betrayed via technology and then ostracized through it disseminating power, the movie’s protagonist (Everygirl) ostensibly surrenders, but much like the rumors spread about her, her spirit transcends her death, living on within the very technology used to bring her low; fusing her pulse to the floating, three-dotted texting bubble we know so well.

Scattered throughout *Do Not Go Gentle*’s primary narrative are sporadic samples from Hideo Nakata’s *Ringu* (1998) and a smattering of vintage television ads. These abrupt, black-and-white hindrances to the story act as visual manifestations of transgenerational trauma brought on by violence against the female body and rabid commercialism. As the film progresses, the samples destabilize, seeping into the narrative both thematically and auditorily, until their meaning is eventually appropriated by the plot. After Everygirl’s death, one particular audio clip is duplicated—or mass produced—and layered in messy succession under a montage from *Ringu* before it is then played backwards. Immediately after, an extreme close-up of an eye is shown with the Traditional Chinese character 貞 (virtue) inverted and superimposed onto it. These upended audiovisuals are meant to suggest a subversion of purity culture and a reclaiming of the female narrative. An eye from an earlier segment then reappears, in reverse motion, accompanied by the sounds of 17 rapid heartbeats. This number represents the 17.7 million American women reported to have experienced sexual assault according to a landmark study completed in 1998—the same year as *Ringu*’s release.

Utilizing the recycled remnants of a bygone era which may very well still be with us, a staple of the paranoid horror genre, screen recordings, and indie filmmaking techniques, *Do Not*

Go Gentle continues an urgent discourse on misogyny, invasive technology, and human exploitation. With a title that pays homage to Dylan Thomas' renowned poem, *Do Not Go Gentle* embodies the rage against the dying light of equality generations of women have fought for and raises a battle cry in the name of overturning patriarchal oppression.

Link: <https://youtu.be/GanasYv6n1k>