Alexa Raisbeck works between the concerns of film, text, sculpture and installation. Her focus is on the creation of artefacts that call attention to film: its body as material, the film frame as structure and its content as language.

Like the ‘structural-materialist’ filmmakers of the 1970s she seeks to challenge the conventions of film presentation and to ask questions such as: ‘Why should film have to be projected? Why not subvert its linear format? Dispel the narrative illusion?’ To emphasize the materiality of film she discounts the use of photographic representation and instead uses other methods, such as text, to draw attention to the inherent characteristics of film as substance. In one piece hundreds of frames of the word ‘Picture’ are presented on a light box, offering a visual example of semantic satiation, where a repeated word loses meaning and it becomes difficult to discern if its letters appear in the correct sequence, or whether they are upside down or back-to-front.

In another work titled ‘I am Celluloid’ a length of 35mm film carrying textual information is threaded through a series of rollers; when powered by a hand-cranked mechanism the messages pass through the rollers and across the gallery space, spilling outwards in projections caused by ambient light levels. The film installation, ‘Visual Tension’, comprises a 16mm projector and film stock, a series of rollers, a mirror and stretched canvas. This work simultaneously explores the conceptual, optical and physical tensions of film by overlaying the projected image of light and colour with the materiality of its celluloid source.

Raisbeck still works as a professional film projectionist, one of just a handful remaining as digital formats take over in cinema. She notes: “the projectionist’s job is supposed to be invisible. One’s work is to ensure that nothing hinders the image or sound so that the storytelling can work its magic… basically to obscure the medium. My artworks using film seek to subvert this... they show the processes that are usually hidden.”