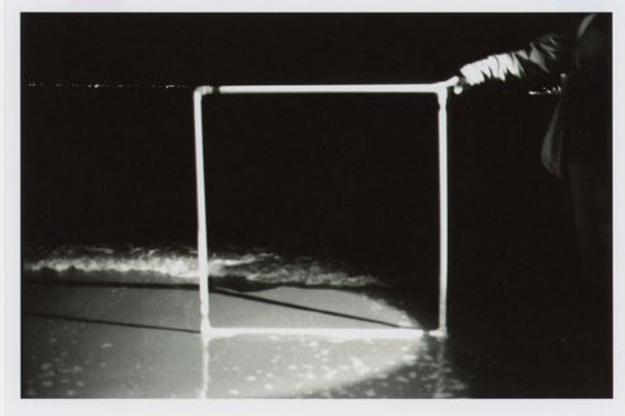


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LIST PROJECTS 20: Becca Albee

December 12, 2019 – February 9, 2020



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Using photography and the moving image, Becca Albee draws on an array of visual and printed sources, including personal archives, official repositories, and the public realm, which serve as starting points from which to develop a body of work. Critically engaging her source materials, she employs strategies of re-photography, cropping, and overlays to interweave seemingly unrelated narratives, shifting their context and content. Albee's work is cumulative; her practice loops back and returns to previous themes and builds on itself over time. Here, Albee's first institutional solo presentation, engages two distinct sites of research and production—the archive of the late artist Robert Blanchon and Brooklyn's Plumb Beach—culminating in a collection of works commissioned by the List Center that reflect on her longstanding admiration for the artist and his enduring impact.

The installation features new video Albee filmed on late-spring nights in 2019 at Plumb Beach, where she observed and documented Atlantic horseshoe crabs spawning during the full and new moons. Initially volunteering to aid in population monitoring, she returned to film and photograph the prehistoric arthropods, their surroundings, and the abstract markings they left behind. The medical industry is dependent on their blue, copper-rich blood for its ability to quickly detect bacterial endotoxins and form protective clots around them. This distinct property resonates with Albee's own experience of living with a blood clotting disorder. Between the medical industry's harvest and the effects of warming and increasingly polluted oceans, the Atlantic Horseshoe crab, is, for the first time in its 450-million-year existence, now considered a species vulnerable to extinction.

At once fleeting and recurring, the contrasting time scales of the beach find a surprising parallel in the archive, where so-called "ephemera" are conserved, at least theoretically, in perpetuity. Albee re-encountered a postcard she had sent to Robert Blanchon announcing her 1999 exhibition *Photographs on Ice* while immersing herself in his archive at New York University's Fales Library & Special Collections. The postcard, which bears her photograph of an outdoor ice rink freshly etched with the arcs of skaters' passages, marks a period when Albee corresponded regularly with Blanchon. The two met at UNC Chapel Hill in 1998, just prior to Blanchon's death a year later from AIDS-related complications at the age of 33. He had relocated from Los Angeles to North Carolina for a visiting professorship at the university, where Albee was a student. Included in her List Center exhibition is a facsimile of this postcard, reproduced 20 years later as a takeaway artwork. Through this gesture, and her limited time in his archives, Albee contemplates Blanchon's legacy, initiating a larger and unfolding consideration.

Addressing Blanchon's artwork directly, Albee has organized a screening of his video work to be shown at the List Center and followed by a conversation with conceptual artist Mary Ellen Carroll (MEC Studios), the executor of The Estate of Robert Blanchon. Blanchon's important, prolific, and sprawling conceptual work took many forms; this event will highlight his work in video.

In Albee's process and within the work itself, the material traces of memories and fleeting moments reverberate, bringing the seemingly incongruous sites of the archive and the beach into poetic proximity. Sifting through the wealth of visual and personal information

found in Blanchon's archive and the parallel activity of her nights on Plumb Beach, Albee toggles between multiple registers of time. Her photographs negotiate this spectrum—from singular, intimate moments to the concept of time on a geologic scale—confronting all that comes with it.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Becca Albee (b. Portland, Maine) lives and works in New York.

The artist would like to thank Mary Ellen Carroll, The Estate of Robert Blanchon, and New York University's Fales Library & Special Collections. Additionally, the artist would like to recognize the time and support provided by The MacDowell Colony and the invaluable assistance of Monika Uchiyama in realizing this exhibition.

List Projects 20: Becca Albee is organized by Yuri Stone, independent curator with Selby Nimrod, assistant curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Videos by Robert Blanchon and Discussion

Friday, January 24, 2020, 1:00 PM

With Becca Albee and Mary Ellen Carroll

All programs are free and open to the public. RSVPs are required.

For more information about these events and to RSVP: listart.mit.edu/events-programs.



MEMBERSHIP

Exhibitions at the List Center are made possible with the support of Fotene & Tom Coté, Audrey & James Foster, Idee German Schoenheimer, Joyce Linde, Cynthia & John Reed, and Terry & Rick Stone. In-kind media sponsorship provided by 90.9 WBUR. Additional funding for List Projects is also provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

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