

Ruth Sergel | Portfolio 2021

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Ruth Sergel | Bio

Inspired by rebels, visionary pedagogues and magicians, Ruth Sergel creates bold and compassionate works that bridge art and technology, memory and wonder to incite social transformation.

Ruth's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Boston Museum of Fine Art, Corcoran Gallery of Art, National Museum of Women in the Arts, New-York Historical Society, Gray Art Gallery, Anthology Film Archives and 3LD Art + Technology Center. International exhibition includes Clermont-Ferrand (France), Shift Festival (Basel) and Théâtre de la Ville (Paris) as well as broadcast on the Independent Film Channel (IFC) and PBS.

Her projects have garnered support from the Jerome Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Experimental Television Center, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and the 21st Century ILGWU Heritage Fund. Ruth was the Resident Researcher in Video at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) where she received her masters degree and a fellow in Public Humanities at Brown University. Additional residencies include Yaddo, Squeaky Wheel, CESTA (Czech Republic), Digital Performance Institute, and Here Arts Center. Her work has been widely covered in the press including the New York Times, NPR, CNN, and the Huffington Post.

In 2011, Ruth was honored to be included in the Community Leaders Briefing Series at the Obama White House.

Her first book, See You in the Streets! Art, Action + Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, won a 2017 American Book Award.

For more on her work please visit: www.streetpictures.org



:: Tikkun Olam

Interactive Installation (2020-2021)

Tikkun Olam translates roughly as ‘to heal the world,’ The Jewish philosophical concept has in recent years been revived as a call to stand for social, economic and racial justice.

Through animation, photographs and found objects, Tikkun Olam is a walking cinema experience of moving to Germany as a Jewish person, the rise of Trump in the US and AfD in Germany while facing uncomfortable questions about Israel/Palestine.

Solo Exhibition: Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim



:: Immerwährende Verwandlung

Interactive Installation (2019)

An interactive cabinet of wonders created from the collections of the University of Hamburg.

See... Panofsky's Mirror

A portrait of the renowned art historian, forced to leave the university in 1933, shares his views on art and time

Touch... Objects of Knowledge

Wax, fur, newspaper, amber. Touch each object to trigger a story from the university's past

Listen... Lunascope

Peering through the Lunascope one can view the history of women at the university.

Move... You Are Everything You Need

Standing before a projection, the viewer's physical movement triggers animated scenes and embodies objects from the university's collections.

Commissioned and on permanent exhibition at the University of Hamburg.

See You in the Streets!

Art, Action and Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire
Book (Univeristy of Iowa Press, 2016)

Winner of a 2017 American Book Award

There are moments in our lives when we are most fully ourselves. Its an electrifying feeling. Constraints that felt immutable, we step right out of them. Fully present in our bodies, its loose and sexy. We can spin on a dime to face any adversity and blaze right through. It is not that we are fearless, it is often terrifying, but the motion that is propelling us forward has so much joy, so much life force, that our demons become tiny in comparison. With crackling energy, we find ourselves whole.

See You in the Streets offers an exuberant perspective on an art practice which explodes out the boundaries of traditional mediums to create experiences of agency as an incitement to individual and social transformation.





:: Chalk

Public Intervention (2004 - present)

In 1911 the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire took the lives over one hundred immigrant garment workers and galvanized a movement for social and economic justice.

Each anniversary of the fire since 2004 activists and school children, artists and neighbors fan out across the city to inscribe in chalk the names and ages of the 146 Triangle dead in front of their former homes. An ephemeral memorial, it only exists if people do in fact remember each year and insist on making the lives of the Triangle workers visible.

Exhibition: Grey Art Gallery (NYC), 2011





:: Pandemic Postcards

Social Intervention (2020)

How to digest the news in a pandemic?

Cut it up + revise.

(more postcards coming soon!)

Make your own!

- Buy pre-stamped postcards – #SaveUSPS
- Cut out words + pictures from your local newspaper
- Use artist medium to decoupage newsprint to the postcard.
- After postcard dries, leave it under a heavy book to flatten
- Listen to the postcard to know who it should go to
- Address + drop it in the mail
- Repeat



:: Gaza Ghetto

Public Intervention (2014)

A response to Operation Protective Edge/the destruction of Gaza, summer 2014.

Every day, one hundred names of those killed in Gaza, written on the skin and shared in social media.



:: **Forbidden Words USA**

Social Intervention (2017)

“The Trump administration is prohibiting officials at the nation’s top public health agency from using a list of seven words or phrases — including “fetus” and “transgender” — in official documents being prepared for next year’s budget.”

—Washington Post (15 December 2017)



∴ **#MAGA** (Make America Great Again)
Social Intervention (2016 - 2017)

52 cards (a full deck) created between the 2016 Electoral College vote and the 2017 Inauguration of the 45th President of the United States. Each card depicts events of America's not so great past.



:: Alice in Berlin

Interactive Installation (2012)

It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards - Lewis Carroll

Alice in Berlin slyly evokes our fantasy of childhood innocence to lead the audience on a hallucinatory trip into today's global chaos. Each scene of the interactive installation builds on the audiences physical participation to question our place in history and individual accountability.

Initially the audience is passive for a short animation as Alice leaps off the page. Alice lures us into a topsy-turvy world where 19th century images collide with iconic moments of the 21st century. In front of the looking glass, fantasy and reality merge as Alice fluidly mirrors the viewer's every move. A surreal landscape leads to a contemporary world of global change. Alice disappears and we land firmly back in contemporary Berlin

Exhibition: Out of Line Gallery (Chicago) 2013
Multimedier Schlachthof (Berlin) 2012
Arcilesi-Homberg Gallery (NYC) 2013
Out of Line Gallery (Chicago) 2013
Adirondack Open Studio (2014)



:: Zhanaozen

Interactive Documentary (2012)

Commissioned by theater director Bulat Atabayev of Kazakhstan, Zhanaozen was created for the one year anniversary of the massacre of striking miners.

The viewer stands before a projection of state media on striking miners. Through physical movement the participant triggers the revelation of the violent suppression of the strike and the protests that followed.

Exhibition: Faltin-Villa (Berlin) 2012



:: Voices of 9.11

A People's Archive (2002 - 2003 | 2011)

Who gets to tell the story of September 11?

As an alternative to the state or corporate media representation of the event, Voices of 9.11 was explicitly designed to give each individual control of their own story. From 2002–2003 video testimonies were recorded in a private booth that travelled from New York City to Washington DC, Shanksville, PA and inside the Pentagon. In 2011, a website was created and the entire collection of over 500 testimonies was made available to the public.

Please see the collection: hereisnewyorkv911.org

Exhibition: Here is New York, 2002
Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2002
Théâtre de la Ville (Paris) 2011
New York Historical Society, 2011 + 2007



:: Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition

Public Intervention (2008 - present)

The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition united artists and activists, universities and unions, in all 250 partners nationwide, for the 2011 Centennial of the infamous blaze. With political actions and academic symposium, visual art, music and performance, films and spoken word, the Coalition framed the Centennial as a collective act of memory and resistance.



:: Alchemy of Light

Performance (2010)

With magic tricks, live performers and virtual encounters, Alchemy of Light guides the audience through a series of seven interactive installations to depict the life of legendary 19th century magician Torrini as a parable from a time when our lives first became mediated by machines.

Exhibition: Prelude '08 (work-in-progress), 2008
Here Art Center (work-in-progress), 2009
LMCC Swing Space, 2010



**:: \$700 Billion for the Arts...
Because We're Too Big To Fail!**

Public Intervention (2009)

In the wake of the bailout we have to ask the obvious question: Who does more for America - banks or the arts??!

Join the movement to make the case - we're too big to fail!

1. Draw ARTIST on a piece of paper
2. Take a picture of yourself
3. Post the picture on our Facebook Page

Exhibition: Squeaky Wheel Film + Media Arts Center
(Buffalo, NY)

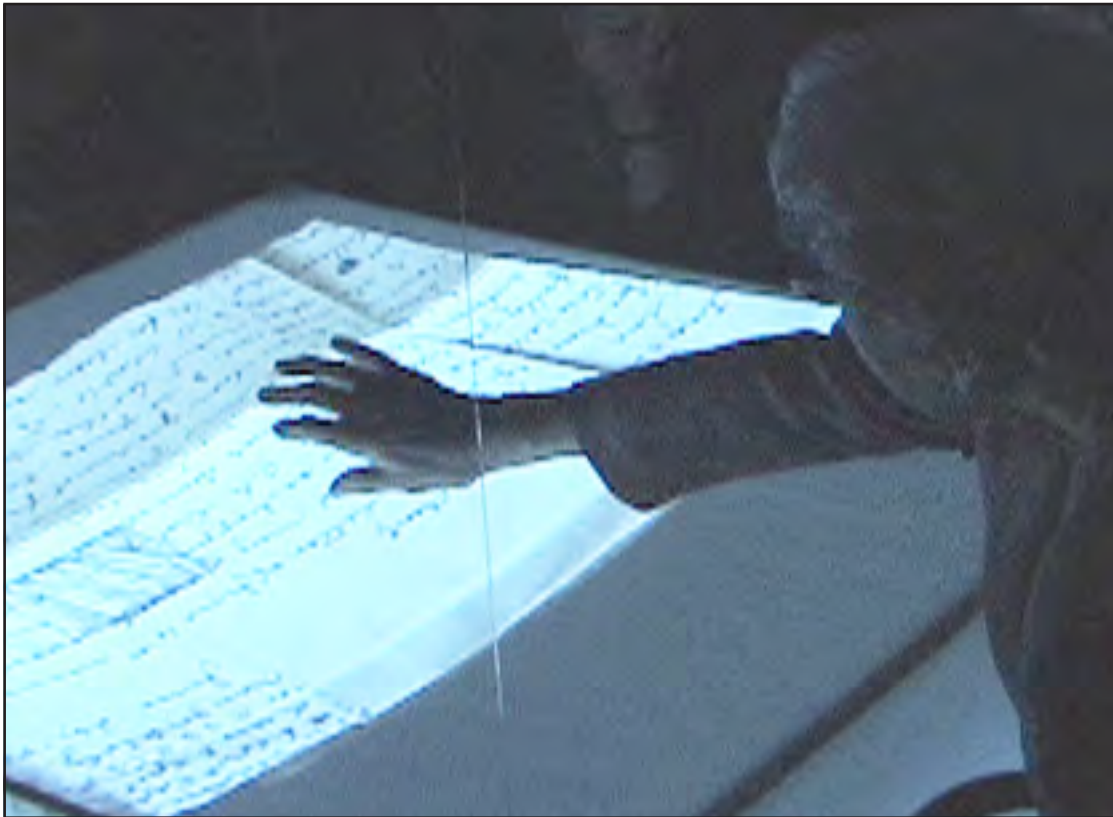
:: Magic Box

Interactive Installation (2009)

Two participants look into the Magic Box from opposite ends. Move a lever on the front of the device to select one of four films that depict 19th century excitement and terror inspired by new technologies. Each viewer can watch a film that is invisible to the other, while at the same time seeing through the box into each others' eyes.

Exhibition: ITP Spring Show + Gallery (NYC) 2009
Shift Festival (Basel) 2010
3LD Art + Technology Center (NYC) 2011
Hudson Guild Gallery (NYC) 2014





:: Ethel

Live Interactive Documentary Performance (2007)

Created with Ethel Greenbaum, 89 years old.

Viewers join Ethel at a dining table. Ethel moves her hands across the surface to transform it into a screen for a documentary about her life. Her hands trigger scenes recounting her social activism and love affair with her husband. Soon the audience is invited to join in. As the video fades, Ethel stands and for the first time directly addresses the audience, encouraging them to a radical love - for the people in their lives, ideas and the world.

Exhibition: ITP Spring Show (2008)





:: Turing Machine

Interactive Documentary (2007)

Created in collaboration with Gian Pablo Villamil.

The viewer presses the buttons of a model Turing Machine to generate scenes from a documentary on the life of Alan Turing, the father of modern computing. At the moment Turing is arrested for homosexuality, the machine 'breaks.' Images fly off the screen, until all that remains is his suicide.

Exhibition: ITP Spring Show (2007)



:: Boo!

(PIECES VORAT MAIOR MINOREM)
Site-Specific Performance (2006)

In collaboration with: Luigi Coppola (Italy),
Susan Hawkins (Australia/UK), Olivia Pisani
(Australia/UK), Paulina Velazquez Solis (Costa
Rica/Mexico)

Interactive video design for a site-specific
performance created as part of an international
collaborative artist residency.

Exhibition: CESTA (Czech Republic) 2006.

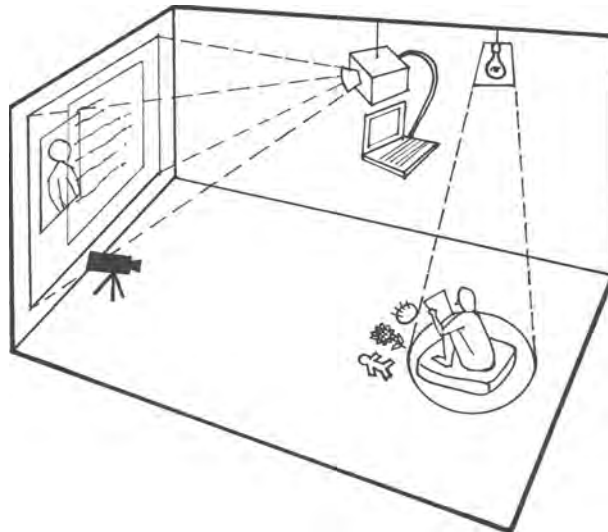


:: AI

Interactive Documentary (2005)

A portrait of homeless artist Alfred Carlo. Through a series of physical objects, the viewer can initiate and manipulate the scenes of the documentary. Move a blank piece of paper and a projection of a note written by AI mirrors the motion. A soccer figure brings up reminiscences of AI's rough childhood, while a pincushion activates scenes of AI's combative relationship with Judy, who he pays for sex.

Exhibition: 3LD Art + Technology Center (NYC) 2005





:: Belle

Fiction Film (2004) 35mm • Color • 16 Minutes

Writer/Director

Old age ain't no place for sissies

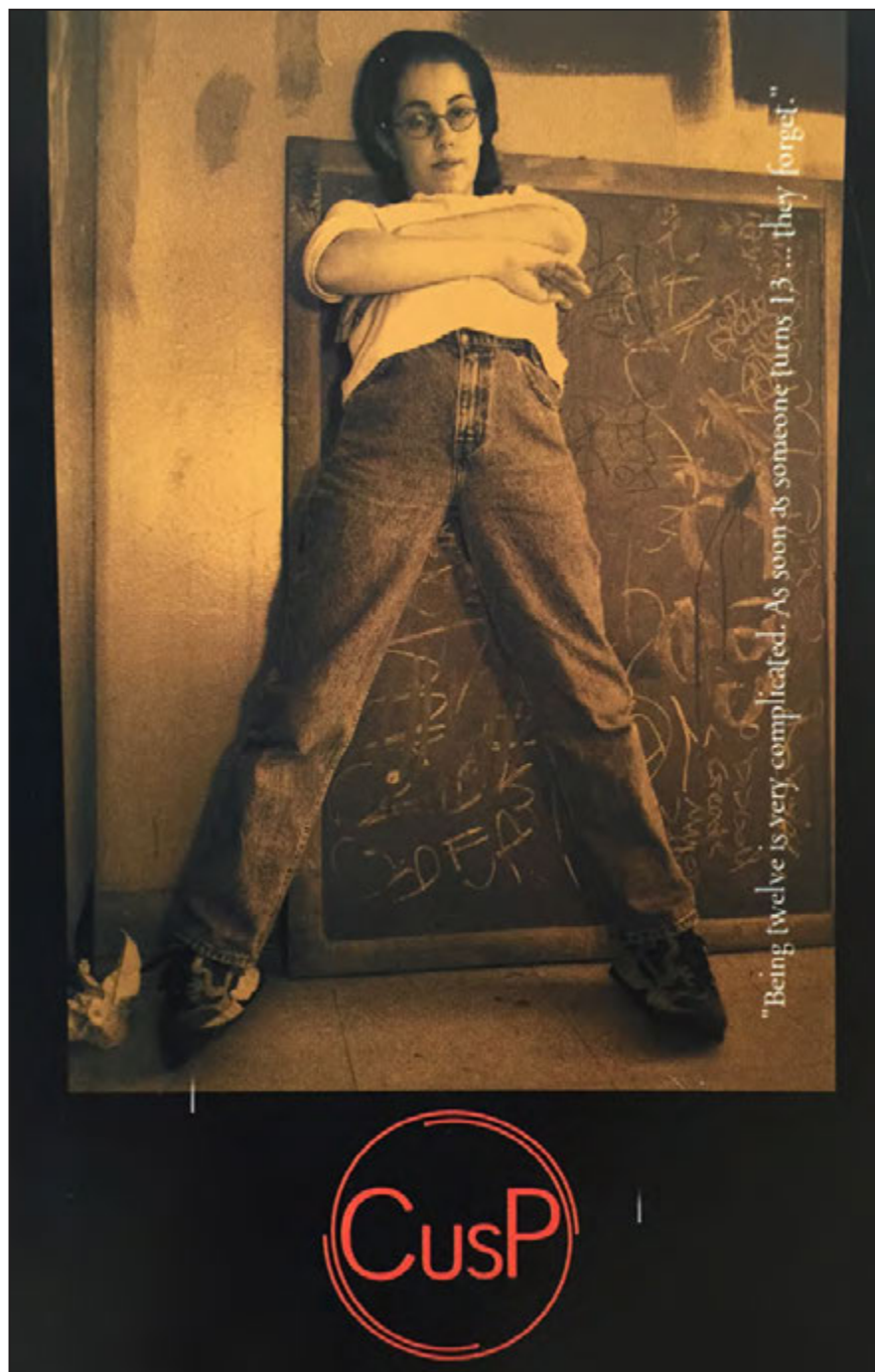
Belle is a subversive fable of old age and beauty. The film was created with a community of 80 - 93 year old women whose participation as actors and advisors shaped the heart of the work.

Premiere: Tribeca Film Festival

Broadcast: IFC

Selected Screenings: Hamptons International Film Festival, IFP Film Market, Woodstock Film Festival, Women in the Directors Chair, Rhode Island Film Festival, Lake Placid Film Festival, Coney Island Film Festival, CinéWomen, Vermont Film Festival, Tiburon Film Festival, High Falls Film Festival, Reel Venus.

Quietly shocking in its frankness - Film Threat



:: Cusp

Fiction Film (2000) 35mm • 25 Minutes • Color

Writer/Director

There is an electric moment for girls as they leave behind the bold egoism of girlhood for the shaky dislocations of adolescence. *Cusp* is a fiction film created with a group of 11-12 year old girls hitting the wall of early adolescence.

Premiere:	New Directors/New Films (Museum of Modern Art, NYC)
European Premiere:	Clermont-Ferrand
Asian Premiere:	Women Make Waves (Taiwan)
Broadcast:	IFC
Selected Screenings:	United Nations (Special Session for Children), Boston Museum of Fine Art, Anthology Film Archives, Independent Feature Project (Buzz Cuts), Black Maria Film Festival, Hamptons International Film Festival, Women in the Directors Chair, Newport Film Festival, Bumbershoot/One Reel Festival, CinéWomen, AIR Gallery, Shorts International Film Festival, Harlem Film Festival, Lower Eastside Girls' Film Festival, Lake Placid Film Forum, Cork International Film Festival (Ireland), Dingle Film Festival (Ireland), Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Stony Brook Film Festival, Portland International Film Festival.

Lays bare the growing pains of a 12 year old girl - New York Times

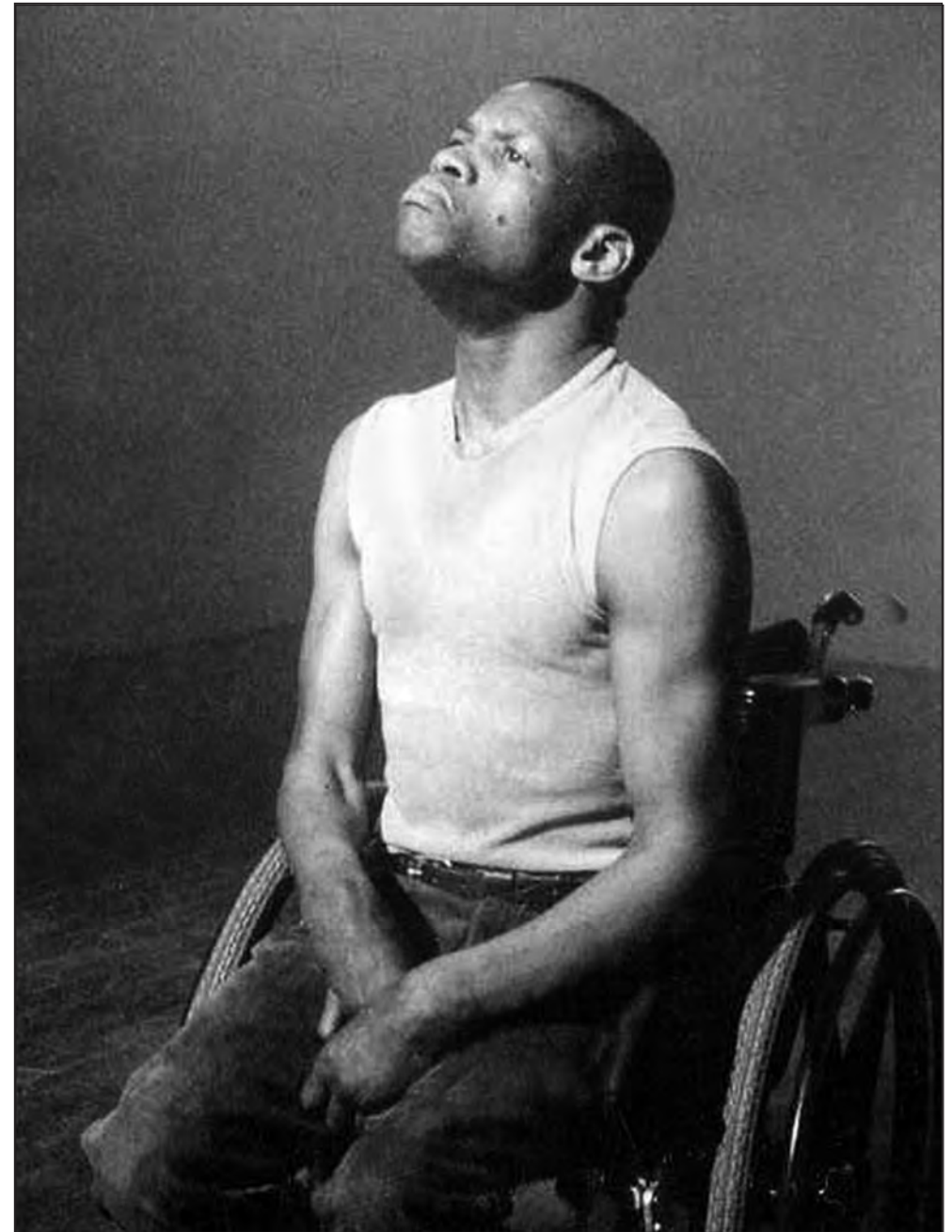
:: Bruce

Film (1998) 35mm • Black + White • 3 Minutes

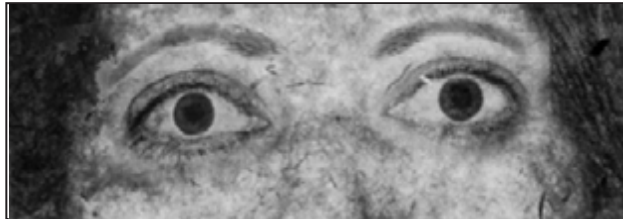
Director/Cinematographer

A duet for camera and dancer that challenges expectations of grace and disability.

Premiere: Los Angeles Independent Film Festival
Broadcast: PBS, Shorts International US/Turkey/France.
Selected Screenings: National Museum of Women in the Arts, Anthology Film Archives, The Place (London), Toronto Worldwide Film, Festival, General Roca Film Festival (Argentina), Video Passages (Milan), Projections (Toronto), Dis This...Film Festival, Brooklyn International Disability Film Festival, Sisyphus Emerging (Limelight Nightclub), American Dance Film Festival, Stony Brook Film Festival, Exploratorium, Aurora Picture Show, Alice's Three Minute Film Festival, El Infinito (Mexico), IDAT 99 (International Dance and Technology), Do Boys Dozens, Dance on Camera, CineWomen, CMJ Music Festival.



Thank you for looking



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