



## THE SHELLEY & DONALD RUBIN FOUNDATION PRESENTS

### *support structures*



Zoey Hart, *The Kindness of Strangers (Rerendered)*, 2019-2020, New media painting, glitched still from *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Warner Bros, 1951).

**New York, New York, November 23, 2020** – The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation is pleased to present *support structures*, a virtual group exhibition curated by Danilo Machado featuring artists from Art Beyond Sight's Art and Disability Residency (ADR). The artists in the exhibition – **Lizzy De Vita, Michael DiFeo, Zoey Hart, Terry Huber, Alex Dolores Salerno, michelle miles, e.e. miller, and Sandra Wazaz** – consider the presence, absence, and maintenance of support structures as a catalyst for each of their practices across a range of media and disciplines. Originally conceived as an in-person exhibition at The 8th Floor gallery earlier this year, due to Covid-19 the artists have adapted and created new work, restructuring the physical exhibition into a virtual one.

Envisioning sustainable lives involves many kinds of support structures, whether physical and architectural, or social and emotional. These bolster the foundations upon which we build, nourish, and grow in our lives. Interdependency can become a site of creation, while also enabling individuals to support themselves and each other with responsibility and care. These gestures, often political, are central to Disability Justice, aesthetics, and community. Throughout this exhibition, the artists consider the many meanings of support and structure, centering on embodiment, language, and materiality.

Entry points to the theme of *support structures* are varied, with several artists utilizing film, video, and digital media in their practice. Film is the initial reference for Zoey Hart, whose project *Kindness of Strangers (Rerendered)*, 2019-2020, appropriates and manipulates the final scene from the 1951 adaptation of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where Blanche DuBois – played by Vivien Leigh – addresses a doctor with the line “Whoever you are... I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.” Hart recombines and slowly glitches the 24-second clip to create a triptych of altered stills, interrogating what it means to depend, who is identified as a stranger, and the role of kindness in the context of support(s).

Like Hart, michelle miles experiments with video in her work, often considering the ways blueprints create guidelines for constructing physical spaces and accessibility. In a new video, miles utilizes an animation light board as the set and draws from the blueprints of her parent’s home, where the artist has stayed during the pandemic.

Sandra Wazaz constructs their videos like a painting, believing in time-based media’s ability to hold space. For *support structures*, Wazaz’s video *What’s the word for worse than depression?*, 2018, combines found footage, slowed-down music, and the text style of karaoke lyrics. Wazaz’s broader practice draws aesthetics from the “bedroom pop” musical genre and childhood imagery, constructing worlds where scale and sound are distorted through collaged allusions to the bodily and the cosmic.

For Mike DiFeo, his digital calendar and reminders are an integral part of his support structures and include his personal digital calendar and reminders. The exhibition will include an interactive calendar titled *Remembering How to Live*, 2020, adapted from its original hybrid digital-physical form into a purely digital format. While his previous work has utilized data from declassified government documents, this new project marks the first time the artist is using his own data. Also culling from personal to-dos and reminders, Zoey Hart’s ongoing project *How We Spend Our Days*, 2019-2020, uses etchings on marble tile to reflect how different bodies experience time and permanence. For this exhibition, Hart has created and photographed a “group portrait” of the cohort’s ephemera.

In [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tg\\_mKnRyQIq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tg_mKnRyQIq), 2020, Lizzy De Vita inhabits another digital space, that of the web-based newsletter. Visitors that sign up using a form on the exhibition site will receive a daily message from an invisible third party. This

project considers digital consent and the “interdependency elicited by a textual relationship.”

While some artists will present work imbued with digital technology, others work in traditional media. Terry Huber considers his painting practice as one of spiritual healing. His abstractions – large-scale acrylics on canvases and smaller works on paper – are created in what he describes as a trance or hallucination. For Huber, this process is one of purpose and calm, one that supports him in the face of challenges. States of consciousness also influence the work of e.e. miller, who will present a collection of paintings, writing, photographs, a sculpture and archival video titled *going slow in the fast lane*, 2020. The artist considers the piece a kind of travelogue, mapping constellations and frameworks of psychology, family, astrology, and health insurance.

Interrogating sculpture in their practice, multimedia artist Alex Dolores Salerno’s *At Work (Grounding Tactics)*, 2020, is composed of diamond plate flooring atop a bed frame. Within the bedframe cubbies, Salerno has arranged a series of objects, tools, and texts referencing grounding practices and experiential knowledge. Salerno, along with DiFeo, is also presenting photography as part of this virtual exhibition.

*support structures* maps many connections between the inter/personal and the technological, the textual and the embodied, the architectural and the imagined. It rejects any singular definition of “support structure” and instead presents a multitude of entry points framed as a layered conversation. While adapted for a new reality, the artists and the exhibition assert the importance and precarity of structures of support as existing beyond the confines and duration of the pandemic.

The exhibition is organized by danilo machado, a Brooklyn-based independent curator selected by the cohort of artists participating in the Art and Disability Residency (ADR). machado is a Producer of Public Programs at the Brooklyn Museum, as well as a poet and art critic whose work has been featured in *Hyperallergic*, *Brooklyn Rail*, and *TAYO Literary Magazine*, among others. His most recent exhibition, *Otherwise Obscured: Erasure in Body and Text*, was presented at Franklin Street Works in Stamford, CT.

Information on a program of virtual events in conjunction with the exhibition can be found [here](#).

For more information on this exhibition, please click [here](#).

### **About The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation**

The Rubin Foundation believes in art as a cornerstone of cohesive, sustainable communities and greater participation in civic life. In its mission to make art available to the broader public, in particular to underserved communities, the Foundation provides direct support to, and facilitates partnerships between, cultural organizations and advocates of social justice across the public and private sectors. Through grantmaking, the Foundation supports cross-disciplinary work connecting art with social justice via

experimental collaborations, as well as extending cultural resources to organizations and areas of New York City in need. [sdrubin.org](http://sdrubin.org)

### **About The 8th Floor**

The 8th Floor is an exhibition and events space established in 2010 by Shelley and Donald Rubin, dedicated to promoting cultural and philanthropic initiatives, and to expanding artistic and cultural accessibility in New York City. [the8thfloor.org](http://the8thfloor.org)

### **About Art Beyond Sight**

Art Beyond Sight (ABS) empowers disabled people to be active, creative, and powerful participants and contributors in the arts and society at large. As a catalyst for equitable change, ABS fosters collaboration and exploration of innovative, effective, and impactful solutions to realize full inclusion. [artbeyondsight.wordpress.com](http://artbeyondsight.wordpress.com)

### **About Art and Disability Residency**

ABS's Art and Disability Residency strives to give artists and arts professionals choice and intentionality about what role, if any, disability plays in their work and its place in the critical conversation of contemporary art. This exhibition was supported with funds from the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation through its art and social justice initiative.

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### **Contacts**

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### **General Information**

The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation

The 8th Floor

17 West 17th Street, 8th Floor

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The 8th Floor is open Wednesday-Friday, 11am-6pm by appointment and Saturday, 11am-6pm for drop-in visitors. Please click [the8thfloor.org](http://the8thfloor.org) to learn more or email [info@the8thfloor.org](mailto:info@the8thfloor.org) with any inquiries.

The 8th Floor will offer gallery admission from 11am-1pm each Thursday exclusively for seniors and high-risk visitors.

[Image Description Top: A black and white still-frame is rotated and replicated three times. In the image, a young white woman with blond hair, wide eyes, and a disoriented expression stares towards a figure outside the frame. Her arm is tightly held by a man who is mostly out of frame below to her left. Each repetition of the image is further distorted by glitched-segments that send vertical sections of each frame further outside the bounds of the image.]

*support structures* logo: Samantha Benvissuto

