

Kerry Downey: This is a reenactment but this time it will be different
Opens February 28th at New Media Artspace,
Baruch College, CUNY



Image: Photo by Joanna Seitz
Image courtesy of the artist.

NEW YORK, NY - February 23, 2023 – The New Media Artspace is proud to present *Kerry Downey: This is a reenactment but this time it will be different*, a solo exhibition by this interdisciplinary New York-based artist. The exhibition is curated by Katherine Behar, Associate Professor of New Media Arts, and is generously sponsored by the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center.

The exhibition *Kerry Downey: This is a reenactment but this time it will be different* will be on view from February 28 through April 27, 2023 at the New Media Artspace website, bit.ly/nma_kerrydowney, and at the New Media Artspace gallery in Baruch's Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street.

The Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center and the New Media Artspace will host Kerry Downey for a public artist lecture on Tuesday, March 21, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. at the Baruch Performing Arts Center's Engelman Recital Hall. The event is free and open to the public. Please visit the gallery website to reserve a ticket: www.newmediartspace.info. The New Media Artspace will host casual discussions with the artist for Baruch students from 1:15–2:15 p.m. on March 22 and 10-11 a.m. on March 23 in the New Media Artspace and room 415 in the Library and Information Building. Members of the public who wish to attend may RSVP to newmediartspace@gmail.com.

Focusing on reenactment alludes to how performance undergirds Downey's manifold practice, as well as to the genre of historical reenactment by which seemingly fixed hegemonic narratives can be resuscitated and reimagined in the present. Reenactment opens spaces for infiltrating received histories, both personal and political, and for torquing them toward alternate horizons of inclusion and justice. Downey's reenactments veer again and again toward the possibility of something "different." *This is a reenactment but this time it will be different* brings together videos (in-person and online), prints (online only), and artifacts of their research-intensive practice (in-person only). Across these works, Downey's reenactments inhabit, mimic, and shape the forms and materials of their surround, and their position in relation to them. Immersing themselves in abandoned spaces and materials, they queer the relation of form to history and of person to place in matters of political positioning. Their moving images move us between the fictional, the possible, and the true.

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The exhibition begins with *What we came to see*. A voice narrates a pilgrimage to visit a collection of *Spomenik*, now-dilapidated monuments constructed during Tito's era and commissioned by local towns throughout the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The video presents Downey's computer screen intensely zoomed in, obsessively panning the photographic surfaces. In a momentary zoom out, Downey reveals a figure poised aloft in a concrete hole, arms goofily extended to mime the gentle slope of a hilly horizon line. This visitor is reenacting the form of a place in the distance—a place they aren't—as a means of bodily connecting with it.

Being bodily in the mix goes beyond reframing the landscape; it also reframes the modality of political participation. If *What we came to see* suggests a queering of monumentality and political subjecthood, Downey reenacts that queering when they themselves get into the image, and get the image moving. Unlike the dynamic of separation that supports the distinctions of Western CIS image-making—for example separating figure from ground or spectator (demos) from monument (hero)—Downey likens their process to a composting worm that reprocesses and regurgitates its surroundings, flattening distinctions. Downey refers to the sites of these video performances as "liminal or transitional," but it is worth noting that most (factory, museum, office building, convent) are also institutional sites. So, in meshing with these spaces—infiltrating the apparatus of power with a genderqueer body that defies distinctions—Downey gnaws at their authority and at their capacity to regulate who or what goes where.

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Artist Bio: Kerry Downey (b.1979, Ft. Lauderdale) is a genderqueer artist and educator based in New York. Downey's interdisciplinary practice explores embodied forms of resistance and transformation. They use experimental strategies to draw connections between interior worlds and sociopolitical landscapes. Downey's lifelong experiences in queer and artist collectives, their work with people with dementia and other disabilities, and the close overlaps between their art practice and teaching, have all utilized art as a strategy for engagement and care.

Downey's first major publication, *We collect together in a net*, was published by Wendy's Subway in 2019. They have exhibited at the Bureau of General Services-Queer Division (New York, NY); Queens Museum (Flushing, NY); Bard CCS / Hessel Museum (Annandale, NY); Danspace Project (New York, NY); Knockdown Center (Maspeth, NY); Kate Werble (New York, NY); Cooper Cole (Toronto, CA); CAVE (Detroit, MI); and Taylor Macklin (Zurich, CH). Downey is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Grant and Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant. Artist-in-residencies include Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, ME; Triangle Arts Association, Brooklyn, NY; SHIFT at EFA Project Space, New York, NY; the Drawing Center's Open Sessions, New York, NY; and the Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT. Downey participated in the Queer|Art|Mentorship program in 2013 (paired with Angela Dufresne). Their work has been in Artforum, The Brooklyn Rail, and The Washington Post.

Downey spent over a decade running community-based arts programs at The Museum of Modern Art; they have recently taught at Rhode Island School of Design, Parsons/The New School, City College, and at Hunter College. They are a 2022-23 visiting critic/artist in the Art Department at Williams College.

Gallery Location: New Media Artspace at Baruch College, Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

Gallery Hours: The New Media Artspace is open to the CUNY community during regular library hours. Members of the public may visit the virtual exhibition on the gallery website, www.newmediartspace.info, or contact newmediaartspace@gmail.com to arrange an in-person visit by appointment. For updated information, please check the gallery website or dial a docent at 646-312-1664.

The New Media Artspace is a teaching exhibition space in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Baruch College, CUNY. Housed in the Newman Library, the New Media Artspace showcases curated experimental media and interdisciplinary artworks by international artists, students, alumni, and faculty.

About Baruch College: [Baruch College](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/) is a senior college in the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](http://www.cuny.edu/) with a total enrollment of more than 17,000 students, who represent 160 countries and speak more than 100 languages. Ranked among the top 15% of U.S. colleges and the No. 4 public regional university, Baruch College is regularly recognized as among the most ethnically diverse colleges in the country. As a public institution with a tradition of academic excellence, Baruch College offers accessibility and opportunity for students from every corner of New York City and from around the world. For more about Baruch College, go to <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/>.

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