

PRESS RELEASE

Stranger Approaching
organized by Erin Leland

September 8 – November 3, 2019

Michael Almereyda
Ida Applebroog
Gregg Bordowitz
Mary Ellen Carroll
Kevin Jerome Everson
Natalie Frank
Oto Gillen
Mark Kent
Jill Magid
Lili Reynaud-Dewar
Aura Rosenberg
George Segal

Stranger Approaching brings together twelve artists, filmmakers, and writers to center around the fable, and more broadly, literature as a scripting method. Observational description and memoir act as a choreographing device and often, the resulting sculptures, films, drawings, photographs, performances and texts have the capacity to read as parables.

In the belief that language emerges from lived experience, *Stranger Approaching* addresses writing through performance. Cast as protagonists in their own narratives, many included artists pass from one state to another in the span of a physical journey. As much a passing of time, as a passing from place to place, character transformation occurs on the precipice between the animalistic and the human, the intimate and the remote, the nostalgic and the foreboding, the invasive and the guarded, and through a resistance to death by a narrativizing of life.

Joan Didion's opening line from *The White Album*, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live," finds its inverse in this exhibition: We live in order to tell a good story.

Quaint and moralistic, some parables read like lessons. In others, fate takes a turn, and the tale ends in a non-sequitur. Not all fables have a logic, but instead, a desire to encounter the unknown: the wind reappears throughout the exhibition as an invisible undercurrent drawing characters back into their improvised path.

When we finally got to the end of the road, it was pitch black. One shape loomed, and that was the shape of the person directly ahead, in which there was no difference between one dark shape, and the dark shape of everything else. Feeling the way forward by reaching one arm out in front, the hand was lost to itself in the dark well, and any direction became a route. Even more, the world felt afloat in the night. A miniature object, an ordinary thing.

In the course of the exhibition, Gregg Bordowitz will present ROM COM - a live performance in the gallery featuring stories from and about the book of Job, Song of Songs, meditation, civil disobedience, rock'n'roll, and more. The talk follows from a continuum of performances, and considers the ongoing love affair with G-d through the colliding forms of comedy, musicology, and Torah commentary.