

Rachel Rose *Wil-o-Wisp*

Curated by Erica F. Battle

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo
2nd November 2018 – 3rd February 2019

Rachel Rose (United States, born 1986) is the inaugural recipient of the Future Fields Commission in Time-Based Media, an initiative that supports the creation of innovative new work in video, film, performance, and sound by emerging artists. Rose's commissioned video installation, *Wil-o-Wisp*, marks her first work based largely in live action, which she combines with her hallmark video editing to explore how coincidence and the practice of magic influence the fate of a woman in rural England in the 1500s and 1600s.

Rose frames the story of her protagonist, Elspeth Blake, against the setting of the Enclosure Movement, the systematic privatization of common land in England that spurred tumultuous, violent upheavals in agrarian life. Elspeth is first introduced as a wife and mother in 1570, when her daughter, Celestina, sneaks out of the house at night, an act with grave consequences. In 1603, Elspeth reemerges as a mystic, healing a man through transference—channeling the life force from one being to another through magic. Spied on by a townsman and reported to the town's prefect, Elspeth is led away to face persecution.

These chapters of Elspeth's life are modeled after accounts of healers persecuted for their practices, which were considered deviant and threatening within an increasingly regulated society. Weaving together the harsh realities of the rural English landscape with ghostly sprites and the ethereal forces of magic, Rose questions how our perceptions of the world, and of others, can so radically change within the fluctuating norms of society and the seismic shifts of history.

Rose's installation evokes these shifts in its materials, producing a moiré effect—a shimmer-like rippling of light—through two layers of scrim that line the interior of the room.

Rachel Rose: *Wil-o-Wisp*/The Future Fields Commission is organized by Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo with the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The Future Fields Commission in Time-Based Media is

a collaborative initiative between the Museum and the Fondazione. It is a platform to support the production and co-acquisition of work by compelling new voices in video, film, sound, and performance every two years. The work by Rachel Rose *Wil-o-Wisp (Moiré Installation)* will be jointly acquired by the two institutions.

In support of the activities of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo

